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**CONTENT – SOMMAIRE – INHALT – CUPRINS**

OANA-CORINA FILIP, On Friendship – Cicero vs. John of Salisbury .....	5
EMILIA FAUR, The Dynamic of the Avant-garde Group Around <i>Unu</i> Literary Magazine .....	17
P. ALPÁR GERGELY, The Speech Act of Referring .....	37
RALUCA MARINELA SILAGHI, The Theory of Intersubjectivity in the Work of Alfred Schutz .....	51

RAMONA NICOLETA ARIEȘAN, Art and Its Reflections Moments and Portrets in the Mirror .....	71
ANDRA MAVROPOL, Play and Ritual. Ontological Aspects of Photography.....	85
ERIKA FÁM, Media. Mediality. Image – Media-Philosophical Investigation in the Image-Research.....	101

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## ON FRIENDSHIP – CICERO VS. JOHN OF SALISBURY

OANA-CORINA FILIP\*

**ABSTRACT.** *On Friendship – Cicero vs. John of Salisbury.* On the topic of friendship, a clear filiation can be traced between Cicero and John of Salisbury. However, it is not a mere quotation, but an organic evolution of thought. For both philosophers friendship appears as supporting social and political relations, thus making the existence of the commonwealth possible. Their views on the different characteristics of friendship are at the same time both shared and different, thus tracing a development of the concept.

**Keywords:** *John of Salisbury, Cicero, Friendship, Philosophy of Language, Political Philosophy*

### Cicero and John of Salisbury

When considering the link between John of Salisbury's writings and those of Marcus Tullius Cicero, a filiation can be easily noticed. John expressly acknowledges his position as a follower of Cicero's philosophy, which he also embeds in his work in less obvious ways. In the "Prologue" to his *Policraticus*, John of Salisbury calls himself a follower of the New Academy and invokes Cicero as its figure of authority:

in philosophy I am a devotee of Academic dispute, which measures by reason that which presents itself as more probable. I am not ashamed of the declarations of the Academics, so that I do not recede from their footprints in those matters about which wise men have doubts. Although this school may seem to introduce obscurity into all matters, none is more faithful to the examination of truth and, on the authority of Cicero who in old age took refuge in it, none is on better terms with progress.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, Brepols, 1993, ed. Keats-Rohan, Book I: "in philosophic is Academic disputans pro rationis modulo quae occurrebant probabilia sectatus sim. Nec Academicorum erubesco professionem, qui in his quae sunt dubitabilia sapienti ab eorum vestigi is non recedo. Licet enim secta haec tenebras rebus omnibus videatur in ducere, nulla veritati ex aminandae fidelior, auctore Cicerone qui ad eam in senectute divertit, nulla profectui familiarior", transl. Carry J. Nederman.

His appreciation for Cicero's texts can be seen throughout the entire work of *Policraticus*, either through direct quotation of the latter's texts, or by adopting and developing some of his concepts. Such is the case of friendship, a topic of significant importance in John's political and linguistic philosophy.

Friendship in itself appears mentioned few times in the *Policraticus*, however its opposite according to John, flattery, occupies the entire third book of the treatise. Here flatterers are defined, classified, their strategies of deceiving are described and the reader is warned on how to proceed against them. It is by contrast to flattery that friendship is mentioned and presented. John of Salisbury's theory of friendship is largely indebted to Cicero's treatise *Laelius or On Friendship*. It is by no means a mere imitation of Cicero's ideas, but an evolution starting from them and going a step further.

### Definition and Origins of Friendship

While Cicero proposes a definition of friendship through Laelius's mouth "I used to share with him my concerns on matters both public and private, I associated with him at home and abroad on military service, and we had what constitutes the very essence of friendship, namely complete community of wishes, interests and opinion",<sup>2</sup> John does not venture to do so on his part. He gives no clear definition of friendship, neither in itself, not in opposition to flattery. On the other hand, John provides a list of traits in which friendship originates:

The good will of all is indeed to be cultivated, for it is the source of friendship and the first step to affection, but cultivated without staining honour, by zealous service, by the path of virtue, by the fruit of service, and by sincerity of speech. Add too steadfast consistency in word and deed, and truth, which is the foundation of all duty and good. Virtue seeks the esteem of the good and even of all men, if that be possible, but scorns to attain it by degrading means.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Cicero, 15, "On Friendship" in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, p. 153.

<sup>3</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, Brepols, 1993, ed. Keats-Rohan, Book III, 5. "Este quidem omnium captanda benevolentia, quae fons amicitiae et primus caritatis progressus est; sed honestate in columi, officiorum studiis, uirtuti sua, obsequiorum fructu, integritate sermonis. Ad sit et fides, dictorum scilicet factorum que constantia, et ueritas quae officiorum et bonorum omnium est fundamentum. Gratiam bonorum sed et omnium si fieri posset uirtus appetit, sed adeam de dignatur per sordes accedere", transl. Joseph B. Pike.

Cicero too attributes the origin of friendship to virtue “For there is nothing that inspires affection more than virtue, nothing that attracts us more powerfully to love the one who possesses it, since it is their virtue and integrity that makes us in a certain way feel love even for those whom we have never seen.”<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, he gives virtue not only the benefit of being at the source of friendship, but also of guaranteeing it further on “There are, of course, those who place the highest good in virtue, and this is indeed a noble sentiment, but this very virtue is the creator and protector of friendship, and without virtue there are no means by which friendship is able to exist.”<sup>5</sup> He also discusses the source of friendship starting from a linguistic point, by analysing the origin of the Latin word for friendship, *amicitia*:

For the first thing that promotes the establishing of goodwill is love (*amor*), from which is derived the word ‘friendship’ (*amicitia*). For it is true that many times practical advantages are obtained even by those who are cultivated under the pretence of friendship and honoured to gain a temporary benefit; but in friendship there is nothing false, nothing pretended, and whatever there is within it, is genuine and proceeds willingly. It is therefore my view that friendship has its origin in nature rather than in need, and that it derives more from an attachment of the mind together with a sense of affection than from a calculation of how much advantage the relationship will bring.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the fact that both authors agree on virtue as a main source of friendship, together with affection, it can be observed that John stresses the role of truthfulness in a manner that Cicero does not. His emphasis on truthfulness provides in fact his personal definition of virtue as “steadfast consistency in word and deed, and truth”. This may originate in Cicero’s description of the qualities to be looked for in a potential friend:

Now the basis of that stability and steadfastness that we seek in friendship is trustworthiness; nothing is stable which is without trustworthiness. Besides, it is reasonable to select someone who is frank in nature, sociable and sympathetic, that is, one who is affected by the same things as oneself; and all these things tend towards trustworthiness.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Cicero, 28, “On Friendship” in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, p. 158.

<sup>5</sup> Cicero, 20, “On Friendship” in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, p. 155.

<sup>6</sup> Cicero, 27-28, “On Friendship” in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, p. 157–158.

<sup>7</sup> Cicero, 65, “On Friendship” in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, p. 169.



However, there is a significant difference between Cicero's recommendation of traits in a friend and John of Salisbury's strong focus on truthfulness as a definition of virtue. It is this definition that John uses in the *Policraticus* to split society into frivolous individuals (flatterers, Epicureans, lay and clerical tyrants) and virtuous individuals (friends, philosophers, priests and princes). Human interaction is also classified by John in two categories: friendship and flattery. These divisions all share the same criterion, that of whether a person's acts are in accordance with their words, that is whether they are truthful. Such a criterion is legitimate in the context of language being regarded as strictly truthful in nature. Because if "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"<sup>8</sup> and Christ as God said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life"<sup>9</sup>, then the Word is truth by definition and, consequently, language in its original state is truth by definition. As a result, language becomes an ethical instrument and its accordance to deeds marks virtue.

A progression in the sources of friendship can be seen, starting from the ancient Greek conception that friendship is solely possible amongst kin, evolving through Cicero's conception that family ties and belonging to the same people favour it, but virtue makes it possible

It seems clear to me that we were born into this world with a certain natural tie of association between us all, but one that gains in strength the nearer we are placed to one another. And so there is a greater closeness with our fellow countrymen than with foreigners, and relatives are closer than strangers; with these, Nature itself has created a tie of friendship, but it is one that lacks stability; for friendship surpasses family connections in this respect, that goodwill can be eliminated from family connections but not from friendship; once goodwill is removed the name of family connections remains but that of friendship vanishes. The clearest way, however, to appreciate the power of friendship is this, that out of the infinite number of ties that bind the human race together and have been fashioned by nature itself, friendship is something so compressed and so narrowed that every example of true affection is found either between two persons, or among just a few. For friendship is nothing other than a shared set of views on all matters human and divine, together with goodwill and affection, and I am inclined to think that, with the exception of wisdom, it is the greatest gift bestowed on man by the immortal gods.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> John 1:1.

<sup>9</sup> John 14:6.

<sup>10</sup> Cicero, 19-20, "On Friendship" in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, p. 155.

and reaching John’s conception that truthfulness is the basis of friendship:

Perhaps as importantly, at least in the context of John’s immediate concern with courtly flattery, virtue stands in close and irrevocable connection to truth. Since virtue requires knowledge of the good, which is grounded in truth, as John says above, the bond of friendship must rest on the commitment of the friends to seek and respect the truth. As a general precept of his thought, John emphasized that open and free debate and criticism formed a crucial quality of the public spheres of the court and of the school. Individuals should be protected in their liberty to engage in conscientious, constructive reproof of the morals of others and to challenge ideas that do not meet up to rational evaluation. (John’s concept of liberty in this regard will be elucidated more fully below.) Likewise, people should be prepared to listen to and consider seriously such honest criticism when it is rendered. This quality seems particularly necessary in the case of friendship, which is guided by truthfulness.<sup>11</sup>

For both Cicero and John friendship has a clear social role, being paramount for the existence of society. While John takes it to the point that it defines any health social interaction, Cicero states its importance clearly “But only remove from the world the tie of goodwill and not one house or city will be able to stand, not even the tilling of the land will continue.”<sup>12</sup> In addition, both authors agree that true friendship is extremely scarce, as Cicero states through his character Laelius:

And so I am not so pleased by my reputation for wisdom, mentioned recently by Fannius and certainly undeserved, as I am by my hope that the memory of our friendship will last forever; and I take all the more delight in this thought since in all the course of history scarcely three or four pairs of friends have reached our ears; I believe there is hope that the friendship of Scipio and Laelius will be known in this group for posterity.<sup>13</sup>

John agrees to this view, referring himself to the above mentioned passage:

This results from the fact that if there is no advantage to be gained it is the rare person, non-existent I may say, who cherishes friendship for its own sake. In the cycles of eternity, in such a lapse of time, amid such a multitude of varied persons, as Laelius put it, scarce three or four pairs of friends are found.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Cary J. Nederman, “John of Salisbury’s Political Theory”, in *A Companion to John of Salisbury*, ed. Christophe Grellard and Frederique Lachaud, Leiden: Brill, 2014, 262–263.

<sup>12</sup> Cicero, 23, “On Friendship” in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, p. 156.

<sup>13</sup> Cicero, 15, “On Friendship” in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, pp. 153–154.

<sup>14</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, Brepols, 1993, ed. Keats-Rohan, Book III, 7, “Quod ex eo constat quod, sic esset utilitas, rarus aut nullus est qui propter se uirtutem amicitiae colat. In tot circulis

In opposition to Cicero, who does not explicitly mention a potential cause for the scarcity of true friendships, John considers the reason to be that most people seek friendships for some sort of gain. By contrast, Cicero argues repeatedly that no material gain can be compared to friendship itself and that friendship does not arise out of need, but is a gift from nature:

Yet the strengthening of love is caused by the receiving of kind acts, by the observation of the other's warm feelings and by the increase of familiarity. When these are added to that initial stirring of the mind and of amorous feeling, goodwill surges up like a flame, truly amazing in its intensity. If any men suppose that this stems from weakness and from the desire of each of us to secure someone who will enable us to gain what we lack, then the origin they leave friendship is a mean one indeed, very far from aristocratic, if I may so express it, as they have us see it as born of Poverty and Insufficiency. If this were the case, the man who had least self-confidence would be the one most fit for friendship; but reality is far different from this. For a man excels in seeking out and maintaining friendships in direct proportion to his capacity for self-reliance and his being so fortified by virtue and wisdom that he has need of no one else, considering all things that concern him as within his own control.<sup>15</sup>

According to him, the experience of empathy is the greatest advantage provided by friendship. It is this empathy that gives individuals an impulse to rise from wretched situations and to develop.

For friendship makes good fortune shine with greater brilliance and, by sharing and dividing bad fortune, eases its weight on one's shoulders. Moreover, while it is the case that friendship contains a host of considerable advantages, it surely surpasses all other things in this respect, that it casts a bright light of hope into the future and does not allow a man's spirit to grow weak to stumble. For the man who looks at a true friend is looking, as it were, at a reflection of himself. For this reason friends who are absent become present, those in need become rich, those who are weak become strong, and, a more difficult thing to say, those who are dead become alive: so great is the esteem that follows after them among their friends, so deep-felt the longing, so potent the memory, that it seems through this that the departed ones are happy in death, the living who grieve worthy of men's praise.<sup>16</sup>

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saeculorum, in tanto aetatum lapsu, in tanta multitudine et differentia personarum, vix, utait Laelius, tria inveniuntur aut quattuorparia in amore" transl. Joseph B. Pike.

<sup>15</sup> Cicero, 29-30, "On Friendship" in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, pp. 158-159.

<sup>16</sup> Cicero, 22-23, "On Friendship" in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, p. 156.

## Friendship is Possible Only Amongst Virtuous Men

Since virtue is considered to be the basis of friendship, it derives from here that friendship is possible only amongst virtuous men. Cicero goes on to explain what he means by good or virtuous men:

But let me say, as my first point, that in my view friendship can exist only among men who are good. Now I have no wish to prune that definition right back to its roots, as those men do who show more subtlety in discussing these matters – perhaps correctly but not very beneficially for ordinary purposes. They say that no one is a good man if he does not possess wisdom. This may well be true, but their understanding of wisdom is such that no one on earth has to this day attained it. But what we should concentrate on are those things that are available in ordinary life, in our own experience, not those things that are only imagined or wished for. Never would it be asserted by me that Gaius Fabricius, Manius Curius and Tiberius Coruncanius, whom our ancestors judged to be wise, were wise by the standard the philosophers apply. And so let them keep to themselves their name of wisdom, which attracts both envy and misunderstanding, as long as they grant that those men were good. Yet not even this will they do; they will say that only a wise man is entitled to be called good. Let us therefore proceed using our own homespun wisdom, as the saying goes. Men who behave and live in such a way that praise is bestowed on their honesty, integrity, fairness and generosity, and who are entirely free from greed, sensual desire and presumption, and possess great strength of character, like those men I recently named – such men let us regard as good, in accordance with their reputation hitherto, and also worthy of receiving this name, since, as far as is humanly possible, they follow Nature, the best guide for living well.<sup>17</sup>

John of Salisbury, on the other hand, starts from the statement that friendship is based on virtue and therefore can occur only between good men, but instead of depicting the traits of good men further, he directs his attention on illustrating that friendship cannot occur between vicious men:

It has indeed been a question whether affection or friendship can exist between vicious men. The decision was finally reached that this bond can exist only between the virtuous. To be sure there is a harmony between rakes and rascals, but this is as far removed from friendship as light is from darkness. Though at times evil as well as good men may have similar desires or dislikes, they do not thereby attain

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<sup>17</sup> Cicero, 18-19, "On Friendship" in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, pp. 154–155.

the rank of friendship. Consequently, Sallust, most outstanding of Roman historians, and even Cicero laid down the rule that what is called real friendship among good men goes by the name gang among evil ones. Although the vicious man cannot be a friend because his vices prevent, and though he may not be an object of respect, yet he will be an object of fear if by his cognizance of secrets he can strike terror into the heart of his confederate. The words of the moralist are to the point:

He never thinks he owes you aught; he never  
Makes a gift, who shares with you a secret  
That is not vile to know.<sup>18</sup>

In this instance, John generally talks about vicious men, without setting apart the tyrant as a special category, despite the fact that further on in his book he extensively addresses the issue of the tyrant. Cicero does the opposite on this matter. He does not talk about the possibility of friendships amongst vicious men in general, but refers only to the tyrant, for which he states that friendship is impossible, since they are both too afraid and too feared to have friends:

This is, indeed, the life lived by tyrants, one in which, of course, there can be no trust, no affection, no confidence in the permanence of goodwill, where every action creates suspicion and anxiety, and friendship has no place. For who would love either the man he fears, or the man by whom he believes he is feared? It is true that tyrants are cultivated by men who affect friendship for a time, to gain their own advantage. But if, as often happens, they should chance to fall from power, then one understands how poor they were in friends.<sup>19</sup>

John positions this question in the larger discussion about whether the rich are capable of friendship. He does not totally deny the possibility of the rich having friends, but states that it is very rare, almost not existent “In any case the rich man realizes that he is merely an acquaintance, never or rarely a friend.”<sup>20</sup> Cicero does

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<sup>18</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, Brepols, 1993, ed. Keats-Rohan, Book III, 12, “sit amen inter malos caritas aut amicitia esse potest; hoc et enim quae situm est. Sed tandem placuit eam nisi in bonis esse non posse. Magna utique inter molles et malos concordia, sed ea tantum a caritate discedit quantum lux distat a tenebris. Et licet inter dumm ali, sicut et boni, idem uelleuel idem nolle possint, amicitia et amentitulum non assequuntur. Vnde et Crispo historicorum inter Latinos potissimo, sed et ipsi Ciceroni placuit in malisfactionem esse quod in uiris bonis uera amicitia est. Sed quam uis uitiosus praepediente malitia amicus esse non possit, et si non uenerabilis, uerendustamenerit qui conscientia secretorum conscio terrorem potest in cutere. Scitum est illud ethici quia *nil tibi se debereputat, nil conferetumquam, qui te participem secreti fecit honesti*”, transl. Joseph B. Pike.

<sup>19</sup> Cicero, 53-54, “On Friendship” in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, p. 165.

<sup>20</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, Brepols, 1993, ed. Keats-Rohan, Book III, 12, “Utique diues familiaris esse nouit, amicus num quam autraro”, transl. Joseph B. Pike.

not take the rich as a homogeneous category, but refers only to the extremely rich as potentially having difficulties in being friends with others. However, in Cicero's view such a situation is not caused by others not genuinely desiring true friendship with the very rich, but by the rich's disregard for the importance of friendship:

Now, just as this man's character, as I said, prevented him from winning true friends, so the riches and influence enjoyed by men of power often stand in the way of true friendships. For not only is fortune itself blind but also it generally makes blind the men it has embraced, with the result that, as a rule, they are swept away by pride and inflexibility. Nothing in the world can be more intolerable than a fool who is blessed by fortune. And we may observe that men who previously were affable in character are changed by power and influence and prosperity; they spurn old friendships and favour new ones. But what is more foolish, when men have the resources, the influence and the opportunity to gain whatever they wish, than to acquire the other things which money can buy – horses, servants, splendid clothes, costly tableware – but not to acquire friends, who are, if I may so put it, the best and the finest kind of furniture for life? Indeed, when they are procuring those other things, they do not know for whom they make these purchases or for whose sake they go to all this trouble; for each of those things belongs to the one who can gain them by his strength. But when it comes to the friendships he has, each man enjoys a permanent and fixed ownership of them, so that, even if those acquisitions, which are, effectively, gifts of fortune, should continue as his property, it remains true that a life devoid of friends and abandoned by them cannot be a happy one.<sup>21</sup>

As a result of friendship's limitation only to the virtuous, in order for it to be maintained, only honourable deeds can be asked of friends. Friendship cannot be used as a pretext for betraying one's country or committing a vile deed. The reason behind it is that friendship implies both parties, the demander and the provider, to be virtuous, or a vile act cannot be demanded or provided by a virtuous man. John of Salisbury only mentions this rule of friendship he takes up from Cicero, but does not go into much detail about it "It has become a law governing friendship that only what is honourable may be required of friends or be conferred by them."<sup>22</sup> Cicero, the initial exponent of this rule of friendship, goes into significantly more detail about the matter before concluding it:

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<sup>21</sup> Cicero, 54-55, "On Friendship" in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, p. 166.

<sup>22</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, Brepols, 1993, ed. Keats-Rohan, Book III, 11, "Et lex amicitia e illa prae ualuit qua sola honesta appeti licet ab amicis aut fieri", transl. Joseph B. Pike.

It is, therefore, no excuse for wrongdoing that you have committed wrong for the sake of a friend; for since it was a belief in each other's virtue that brought you together as friends, it is difficult for the friendship to continue, if one forsakes the path of virtue. But there would be nothing wrong in laying down a law, that it is right, either to grant a friend his very wish, or to obtain our every wish from them, given that we are endowed with perfect wisdom; but the friends I am speaking of are those before our eyes, the ones we are able to see or have heard of in history, those known to everyday life; from men who belong to this category should we draw our examples, but especially, I accept, from those who approximate most to wisdom.<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, let us enact this law concerning friendship, that we should not request shameful things, nor carry them out, if asked. For it is a shameful excuse and one that must in no circumstances be accepted for a man to plead, in the case of wrongdoings in general and especially of those against the Roman state, that he acted in the interests of a friend.<sup>24</sup>

### Flattery is the Enemy of Friendship

Both Cicero and John of Salisbury consider flattery as being the exact opposite of friendship. Moreover, they depict it as a destroyer of friendship and of virtue. On the one hand, John extensively treats the issue of flattery throughout his third book of the *Policraticus*, going into classifications of flatterers and exposing their harmfulness in much detail. In fact, the frivolous courtiers about whom John writes in the first three books of the *Policraticus*, discussing their vices (hunting, gambling, drinking, and going to fortune-tellers, superstitions) can all be catalogued as flatterers. When talking about how flattery affects friendship, he considers that criticism from a friend should always be preferred to flattery, as the former is aimed at correcting the individual and thus embittering him, while the latter makes him sink even more into vice:

Then too, our critic is either friend or foe. If a foe offers an insult he has to be endured; if a friend makes a mistake he is to be put right; if he should do the instructing he should be given attention. He who gives erroneous praise confirms the error, while a flatterer allures and leads into error.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Cicero, 37-38, "On Friendship" in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, p. 161.

<sup>24</sup> Cicero, 40, "On Friendship" in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, p. 162.

<sup>25</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, Brepols, 1993, ed. Keats-Rohan, Book III, 14, "Et enim aut inimicus reprehensurus est aut amicus. Si inimicus insultat, ferendus est. Amicus autem si errat, docendus. Si docet, audiendus. Laudator uero et errans confirmat errorem et adulans illicit in errorem", transl. Joseph B. Pike.

On the other hand, Cicero does not go as far as to make out of flatterers an ethical category. He highlights the role of friends' advice in life, even when it is under the form of criticism:

So let this be enacted as the first law of friendship: that we should ask of friends only what is honourable and that we should act honourably on behalf of friends; we should not even wait to be asked, but should constantly show enthusiasm, never hesitation; as to counsel, we should not be afraid to offer it freely; in friendship the influence of those friends who give good advice should be of first importance, and it should be applied when there is need for advice, not only openly but sharply as well, if occasion demands, and, once applied, it should be obeyed.<sup>26</sup>

He goes on to present different tactics to pose the truth to a friend, as the friend's openness to criticism may vary and may endanger the friendship. Cicero emphasizes nonetheless that, in a friendship, the truth is absolutely necessary.

The truth can create trouble, if indeed it gives rise to dislike, which poisons friendship; but complaisance is much more troublesome, as it is tolerant of a friend's misdeeds and allows him to rush away out of control. The greatest fault, however, is in the one who rejects the truth and is driven to a position of self-deception by his complaisance. Accordingly, in this matter it is necessary to employ all reason and care, firstly that advice is offered without acrimony, and secondly that criticism is free from insult. And in the case of complaisance (since we are happy to adopt Terence's word), let courtesy be present, and let flattery, that encourages faults, be banished afar, since it is not even worthy of a free man, let alone a friend; we do not live on the same terms with a tyrant as we do with a friend. But if a man's ears are so closed to the truth that he is unable to hear what is true from a friend, one should lose all hope for the health of his morals.<sup>27</sup>

If a friend is unable to handle the truth from another friend, then, in Cicero's opinion, the friendship is to be abandoned, as the friend has morally decayed beyond repair. Cicero only suggests that in the case of a tyrant flattery would be permitted, but he avoids making such a claim. John of Salisbury, however, goes further and states that in the case of the tyrant flattery is the only solution. This is because the tyrant is not only deaf to the truth, as the friend in Cicero's example, but also the tyrant can and would harm any critic.

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<sup>26</sup> Cicero, 44, "On Friendship" in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, p. 163.

<sup>27</sup> Cicero, 80-90, "On Friendship" in *On Life and Death*, Oxford University Press, 2017, ed. Mirriam T. Griffin, transl. John Davie, pp. 175-176.



## Conclusion

All in all, it can be easily observed that, on the topic of friendship as in many others, John of Salisbury is greatly indebted to Marcus Tullius Cicero's works, fact which he does not hide, but, on the contrary, shows overtly through direct quotation and by mentioning Cicero as his source. But it is not a mere adoption of Cicero's opinion that we see in the *Policraticus*, it is an organic evolution, due to the change in view upon language inside John's cultivated Christian circle. Both authors consider that friendship is based on virtue and cannot exist without it, but John takes the concept forward and makes truth the defining mark of virtue. Both consider that friendship is scarce, but give different reasons for it. Both name flattery as the enemy of friendship and advise towards honesty amongst friends, be it even harsh. Both show reluctance to the possibility of friendship existing amongst the rich. Both deny its possibility in relation to tyrants. However, in the middle of all shared views, John of Salisbury in each instance takes Cicero's ideas, adapts them, and develops them.

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## THE DYNAMIC OF THE AVANT-GARDE GROUP AROUND *UNU* LITERARY MAGAZINE

EMILIA FAUR\*

**ABSTRACT.** *The Dynamic of the Avant-garde Group around Unu Literary Magazine.* Going through the history of *unu* literary magazine, the article describes the dynamic relationship of its group members taking into account their artistic and cultural-political stance. The evolution of the group towards a radical approach and its “ideology” is grasped on taking on two study cases: the *Contimporanul–unu* debate and the relationship carried among the group’s members. The purpose of the study is to point to how the group’s “ideology” had an impact on its progress and dynamic constitution. Moreover, finally, the study indicates how the internal and exterior pressure led to the magazine’s dissolution.

**Keywords:** *Romanian avant-garde, unu, Contimporanul, intellectual history*

### Introduction

The purpose of the paper is to describe the internal dynamic of *unu* literary magazine: one of the most influent magazines of the Romanian avant-garde from the 1930’s. We start from the first moment when the group turns towards a more radical approach, in 1930, asserting its specificity on the Romanian cultural scene (the *Contimporanul–unu* debate) and go further into describing how the radicalization of the group’s ideas nurture a group ideology, changing the group dynamics and the magazine’s content and subject matters (1930-1932). We will argue that the internal disagreement and the external pressure are those who, in the end, lead to the disappearance of the magazine. Documents that will serve our inquiry are the articles released in *unu* (1930-1932), the group’s members’ correspondence and the documents found in the Secret Police’s archives.

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### ***Unu: literary “institution” of the Romanian avant-garde***

*Unu* literary magazine came on the Romanian avant-garde scene in 1928, bringing together some of its most important exponents. The magazine appears under the direction of the poet Sașa Pană. A military doctor by profession, Pană will support by his own financial means the magazine during all of its years of existence. Its main collaborators were former contributors of *Contimporanul* (1922-1932), the most long-lived avant-garde magazine, and for a good part editors of the defunct *Integral* (1925-1928). Ilarie Voronca and Victor Brauner were already well known for their contribution to the single issue of *75 H.P.* and as the inventors of the so-called “picto-poezia”. Gheorghe Dinu alias Stephan Roll, an ambitious poet and columnist, friend of the former two was part of the *unu* group from the beginning as well. The young poet Geo Bogza was acquainted to the group through Gheorghe Dinu. Ion Călugăru, prose and theatre writer, former collaborator at *Integral* and redaction colleague with the above mentioned came on board as well. Other contributors and friends include M. H. Maxy, painter and theoretician of the avant-garde movement, leading figure of the *Integral* magazine, B. Fondane (poet), Mihail Cosma alias Claude Sernet, Moldov (poet), A. Zarembo (poet), Marcel Iancu (architect, theorist), Dan Faur (poet), etc.

Lasting for almost five years at a time when the literary magazines often had an ephemeral existence, *Unu* makes for a good case study of the Romanian avant-garde and its evolution. Constantly up to date with the trends of the European avant-garde, *unu* announces its novelties and directions, from the new magazine releases to the new art manifestoes. Moreover, *unu* keeps a close connection with the French surrealist movement in particular, noting their every step and sometimes mimicking its stances.

### ***Jockeying for position unu’s self-imposed role on the cultural scene***

*Unu* group constantly asserted its specificity on the Romanian cultural scene, reacting not only to the mainstream but also to the other avant-garde groups. Behind this continuous self-affirmation stood the effort of maintaining the creed and image of the *avant-garde*, seen as an artistic movement that was arguably to shape the way out of the horrors of the century and bring about a new and better society.

In doing so, *unu* was bolstering their group individuality while jockeying for position on a dynamic cultural scene, which understandably led to shifts in their own “ideology” as well. At first, there is the clear delineation set by *unu* from

*Contimporanul*. As we shall see, in 1930 *Unu* reacts to *Contimporanul*'s program that seemed to be unfit for the title of avant-garde magazine, having settled up for a mainstream evolution, and declares itself the defender of the new avant-garde art principles. At this point, its denunciations come from an aesthetic or rather cultural-political standpoint. In 1931-1932, however, *unu* inches closer to a more radical approach. Fuelled by similar evolutions in France and maybe motivated by a need to give new dimensions to the Romanian avant-garde project, towards the end of 1931, different political ideas creep into the magazine's articles and poems. Speaking about the "modernist movement" in Romania M. H. Maxy describes *unu*'s position as being of a more contemplative than activist complexion and insists that such a stance must be overcome.<sup>1</sup> However, the reluctance of some of the members and the pressure exerted by the law enforcement agencies made the task difficult and, finally, led to the dissolution of the group and the closedown of the magazine at the end of 1932.

### ***Unu vs. Contimporanul***

Though it is not the first registered attack *unu* directed towards *Contimporanul* and its contradictory content, the confrontation between *Contimporanul* and *unu* brings to the fore the divergent paths followed by the two avant-garde magazines.

The trigger of the attack is Marinetti's visit in 1930. The Romanian-Italian Cultural Association invited Marinetti to hold three conferences in Bucharest. The leaders and the rank and file of *Contimporanul* attend the conference and would not lose the occasion to rub their shoulders with the great figure of the Italian sister movement. *Contimporanul* obtained the rights to publish the poem wrote by Marinetti during his visit to Moreni, on the same occasion, and proudly announced the appearance of the poem called "The Fire of the Moreni Derricks", sneering at the "lowely" envious critics:

„**F.T. Marinetti** which was exquisitely welcomed at Bucharest at the Romanian Academy, at *Contimporanul*, at the Intellectual Union and to S.S.R. by the »Balkan bootlickers« (as the poet from »**Gândirea**« said) has set up [sic!] the poem »The Fire of the Moreni Derricks«, which will appear in the next issue of »*Contimporanul*«.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> M. H. Maxy, "Contribuțiuni sumare la cunoașterea mișcării moderne de la noi" ["Small contributions towards the understanding of our modern movement]. *unu*, Year IV, No. 33, February 1931.

<sup>2</sup> R. D., "Note, cărți & reviste" ["Notes, books & magazines"], *Contimporanul*, Year IX, No. 93-94-95, 1930.

Marinetti's ideological proximity to fascism was surely known to *Contimporanul*. As was his newly acquired status as member of the Italian Academy. Neither was all this strange to *unu*. They criticized *Contimporanul* for giving in to the obsession of "promoting the Romanian art abroad with the price of fostering ex-avant-garde fascist artists, meanwhile academically institutionalized, such as Marinetti"<sup>3</sup> and for being interested only in the symbolic capital that comes with it. Precisely the association with an artist that had relinquished his status as avant-garde artist once taken the academic profession was the target of *unu*'s critique.

*Unu*'s reaction in the sharp diatribe called "Coliva lui Moș Vinea" ("Moș Vinea's funeral cake"), signed by the editorial board, puts the matter in black and white:

„We witnessed with a barely whispered sadness to the pitiful bogging down of »*Contimporanul*«, and to the embarrassing decrepitude of its collection from the past five years [...] To make our position clearer, [...] and to dissipate all confusion between us and Ms. Vinea's magazine, we want to underline the following contradictions of »*Contimporanul*« [...] The contrast between the drawing set on the first page of this magazine and the attacks on its last page against any new [art] demonstration, the false pretence of harbouring a daring and innovative spirit, entirely contrarious to its summary and collaborators, the praises brought to »*Adevărul Literar*« and the white hems of Otilia Cazimir, whose verses signed Emil Rigler-Dinu, Camil Petrescu, Paul Papădopol often reproduce; and especially its ability to arrogate only the goods and the parade of some artistic stances (we haven't forgotten Marinetti's visit) which imply, first and foremost, sacrifice and solitude. Still, we cannot cotton on how is it possible to associate – within the pages of a magazine which once claimed a new vision – Ms. Marcel Iancu, former Zürich revolutionary, to Princess Marthe Bibescu.”<sup>4</sup>

Surely, *Contimporanul*'s editorial policy of publishing without any discrimination, from manifestoes against the cultural establishment to articles and poems by institutionalized members, does not escape the eye of *unu*.

Moreover, the collaboration with Princess Marthe Bibescu, an exponent of the bourgeoisie, which *Contimporanul* additionally named "ambassador", was accounted as "compromise with the bourgeoisie"<sup>5</sup> – a stance that contravenes the avant-gardes demeanour. The above-mentioned critique refers to an article that

<sup>3</sup> Paul Cernat, *Avangarda românească și complexul periferiei*, Ed. Cartea Românească, București, 2007, pp. 173–174.

<sup>4</sup> UNU, "Coliva lui Moș Vinea" ["Moș Vinea's Funeral Cake"], *unu*, Year III, No. 29, September 1930.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Cernat, *op. cit.*, pp. 241–243; Stelian Tănase, *Avangarda românească în arhivele Siguranței*, Ed. Polirom, 2008, p. 32.

Princess Bibescu had published in *Contimporanul* titled "Iuliu Maniu"<sup>6</sup>. Hereunder, Iuliu Maniu is portrayed as martyr who "suffered from an Idea", the idea of national unity and who paid his price for it. Obviously, though there is no reference to be found in the avant-garde's article, the nationalism exposed in Princess Bibescu's column must have not passed unnoticed.

Furthermore, there is also the supposition that *unu*'s critique towards *Contimporanul* had political reasoning. Paul Cernat claims that what is being criticized in the complacency towards bourgeoisie has something to do, as well, with its "fascist connotation",<sup>7</sup> that *unu* assign. On the same note, Stelian Tănase argues that *Contimporanul*

„publishes a text by Marthe Bibescu, which stirs up the reply of those around *unu*. *Unu* rejects Marinetti's literature from an aesthetic point of view, but also from a political one (those around *unu* were leftists, and the Italian poet was fascist)".<sup>8</sup>

However, at this stage, there seems to be a lack of arguments to underpin a direct connection between the groups' attitude towards *Contimporanul* and a denunciation of fascism, bearing in mind only its similes with the surrealist group. We found no concrete evidence in *unu*'s articles that would point to a straightforward accusation of fascism directed towards *Contimporanul*.

We can only assume that Stelian Tănase's assumption is related to the fact that he considers that *unu* was mimicking the gestures of disobedience and the interactions identified among the surrealist groups around Breton. For instance, the Romanian historian argues that "Moș Vinea's funeral cake" is being written in the same key as "Le Cadavre" – a brochure released on January 15<sup>th</sup> 1930 as a reaction to the *Second surrealist Manifesto* (1929) formulated by the surrealist members that were set apart from the group around Breton, presumably because they did not want to surrender the movement into the hands of political agitators. Indeed, the Romanian avant-garde was well aware of the schism marking the Parisian surrealist movement, delivering news regarding its status. For that matter, the announcement of the appearance of the surrealist brochure is signalled in the Issue No. 23, on March 1930:

"**LE CADAVRE** is the name of the brochure Robert Desnos, Ribemont-Dessaignes, André Masson, Georges Limbour, Dida de Mayo, Antonio Artaud, Seiris, Prevert, Vitrac and others had printed following their taking apart from the »Revolution Surréaliste« group".<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Marthe Bibescu, "Iuliu Maniu", *Contimporanul*, Issue No. 93-94-95, 1930.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Cernat, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

<sup>8</sup> Stelian Tănase, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>9</sup> "Vestiar", *unu*, Year III, No. 23, March 1930.

The note signals that at this point *unu* embraces the position of the artists cast away by Breton. *Unu* seems to share its point of principle that art must be separated from any utility. That means, art should not adopt political ideas, but operate on a spiritual level. A pure language was to be the means of liberating man and society from all prejudice (ethnic, sexual or by other nature) and from its present rational imprisonment. Behind the disapproval of *Contimporanul*, one can read not only the disgust for the bourgeois and cultural establishment and its arrivistes, but also the deeper creed that art should not have any finality:

*„It should be known once and for all: CONTIMPORANUL has nothing in common with our enthusiasm and youth, with the art and spirit which we represent here, at this hour. And we have one more thing to add: even if there was no question of the doubtful flagrant stance of Contimporanul, the art movement which they want to stand for, »constructivism«, where they settled since its appearance, it is entirely alien to »Unu's« current views, that demand a conduct torn apart from reality, totally out of the constructivist utilitarianism”<sup>10</sup>.*

We can conclude, for now, that *unu* was poised on stressing out its position, status, and individuality as opposing that of the other cultural institutions (from mainstream magazines to the national editing houses) stating their aesthetic principles and avant-garde policies. Their creed was to further shape their group “ideology” and the content of the magazine.

## **The relation between the members of *unu* circle**

### ***Group cohesion and the craving for more***

At the first sight, the main concern of the group was to foster their mutual artistic friendships and to bolster their position as a group against the establishment, much in the vein of the first, “anarchic” avant-garde. For the most part, the contributors were writing literary pieces, remembering their encounters, their experiences and creeds, dedicating poems and prose to one another, announcing new book appearances and issuing favourable reviews of the recently released books of their colleagues. For instance, B. Fundoianu dedicates a poem called “Priveliști” (“Sights”) to Ilarie Voronca, Raul Iulian writes “Lui Ilarie Voronca” (“To Ilarie Voronca”);<sup>11</sup> Stephan Roll imagines the meeting between “Margitte și Victor”<sup>12</sup> (“Margitte and Victor”), Sașa

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<sup>10</sup> UNU, “Coliva lui Moș Vinea”, *unu*, Year III, No. 29, September 1930.

<sup>11</sup> *Unu*, Year III, No. 22, February 1930.

<sup>12</sup> Victor Brauner and his wife Margitt Kosch.

Pana dedicates her a poem "Margitt, ascultă" ("Margitt, listen"), Ilarie Voronca recalls his meeting with "GEO BOGZA", an encounter mediated by Roll;<sup>13</sup> etc. The same issue (No. 23, March 1930), announces the upcoming book releases at Unu publishing house: *Zodiac (Zodiac)* and *A doua lumină (The second Light)* by Ilarie Voronca; *Moartea vie a Eleonorei (The Living Death of Eleonora)*, *Steaua inimii (The Star of the Heart)* and *Scurt Circuit (Short-circuit)* by Stephan Roll; *Pictopoiezii* by Ilarie Voronca and Victor Brauner; *Diagrame (Diagrams)* by Sașa Pană, and the list goes on.

By the end of 1930, the tensions that were building up in the back stage, as we shall see in a moment, still don't seem to find space in the pages of the magazine: Ilarie Voronca nostalgically remembers his encounter with Victor Brauner, whom he highly praises; Moldov dedicates a poem to Geo Bogza ("Serpentina" / "Serpentine winding"), Gheorghe Dinu writes a piece of prose ("Statuia din aier" / "The Statue of Air") dedicated to Edy (Ilie Voronca); *Plante și Animale (Plants and Animals)*, *Brățara Noptilor (The Night's Bracelet)* and *Calea Laptelui (The Milkway)* by Ilarie Voronca receives favourable critique (in "Pulsul recenziei" / "The Pulse of the Review").<sup>14</sup> Still, by 1931, in "Chronicle on a Confeta" Stephan Roll remembers his meeting with Edy and Nesty (Mihail Cosma alias Claude Sernet) in "the chambers of Poldy, which remains still the same delicious friend".<sup>15</sup>

But there is more than meets the eye. As in any given group that perceives itself as such, there is a distribution of roles and many stories of friendship, loyalty, ambition and betrayal that articulate the group's dynamics. The tensions between the group members of *unu* stem from the need to keep their program on the role and improving their status on the avant-garde scene. Stephan Roll and Victor Brauner were the hardliners. They push for ideological discipline and they were also the self-entitled trendsetters, the ones that strive to set the course for *unu* and for the "true" Romanian avant-garde movement. Sașa Pană, the editor in chief and mecena, tries to accommodate the different opinions within the group. However tolerant, he insists on a common position of the group that is to be reflected in the magazines pages, yet shows reluctance to adopt a "radical political" stance. He is left nursing a hornet's nest.

In 1930, Sașa Pană writes two letters to Geo Bogza, the young avant-garde poet and collaborator at the magazine, recounting the group's meetings at Ilarie Voronca. Their content summarizes the groups' present state and the problematic relationship between the members in wake of significant shifts of course:

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<sup>13</sup> *Unu*, Year III, No. 23, March 1930.

<sup>14</sup> *Unu*, Year III, No. 21, January 1930.

<sup>15</sup> *Unu*, Year IV, No. 36, June 1931.



„The last events that completed the Atlantis from secolul,<sup>16</sup> though they have no strength any more to affect me, immunized by the bruises from the last three months; I feel the *refrigerate* [condition], getting more and more intensified, between Nesty [Mihail Cosma alias Claude Sernet] and Edy [Ilarie Voronca] and between Nesty and myself. At the last visit made to Edy, Ny Claude Sernet dodged even a »good day«.”<sup>17</sup>

And:

„the body of all crossed people who gave their hands at the arrival and departure, and intermezzo they're kind of like this:

Voronca, Sașa Pană ≠ Roll

Sașa Pană ≠ Claude Sernet

M. H. Maxy, Coana Mela [the wife of M. H. Maxy] ≠ Roll

Poldi Mieznik, Ronca [the sister of Victor Brauner] ≠ M. H. Maxy, Coana Mela”<sup>18</sup>

The point of the matter seems to be the fact that Stephan Roll and Victor Brauner (probably in incongruent agreement with Maxy) insist on taking a left its position. Sașa Pană agrees on principle but calls for caution and cannot help notice that the shift may endanger some of its members and even the magazine. Pană himself, as an army doctor, fears losing his job and livelihood, and others, too, seems to find it hard to conjoin their interests with that of the group, as, for instance, Ilarie Voronca, who “enjoys his bath in tepid waters”.<sup>19</sup>

### The Secret Police

There is something to say, indeed, about the obvert censorship exerted in the young Romanian democracy of the interwar period and its role in the evolution of the avant-garde. The state's Secret Police practically surveyed all publications. Its purpose was to spot any danger to the “national unity” and to counteract those believed to plan to overthrow the social order. Its preoccupation was to survey and take hold on clandestine activities and suspicious sponsorship. One of its main targets was the “communists”, even more so after the party was banned in 1924.

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<sup>16</sup> A gathering place of the avant-garde from Bucharest, also known by the name “Lăptăria lui Enache” (“Enache's Dairy”), owned by Enache Dinu, the father of Gheorghe Dinu, alias Stephan Roll, one of *unu's* collaborators.

<sup>17</sup> Sașa Pană to Geo Bogza, “XLV, București 18. XI. 930”, in Mădălina Lascu (ed.), *Epistolar avangardist*, Ed. Tracus Arte, București, 2012, p. 95.

<sup>18</sup> Sașa Pană to Geo Bogza, “XLVI, 24. XI. 930”, in Mădălina Lascu (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 95–96.

<sup>19</sup> Sașa Pană, *Născut în '02*, Ed. Minerva, București, 1973, pp. 300–301; p. 305.

Numerous magazines were being withdrawn from the shelves if its collaborators were suspected of having communist partisanship or if the articles contained words or ideas that sent to Marxist or revolutionary theories, or simply because they were supposedly financed by states or entities assumed to propagate the “red doctrine” – such as France Legation, URSS, and Czechoslovakia.<sup>20</sup>

Though its attention was directed towards any sign of menace to the Romanian state, there are various documents that point to the fact that the surveillance went further than that. That is, the Secret Police maintained a close interaction with the Police, the Courts and other administrations, requesting registered documents and information, more, asking for public institutions’ supervision and investigation when an article or text were considered to have pornographic content, requesting that the authors should be sent into court by the accusation of crime against social morality – yet, this was beyond its attributes. That transformed the Secret Police in a mores’ police. Avant-garde artists and publication, not to mention “communist” artists were prime targets. Not unexpectedly, *unu* magazine and group were under the eye of the Secret Police. Already on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 1930 Secret’s Police files registers that

„In its own collaborators belief it is a literary periodical pertaining to the new art. Now [...] either the new art is too profound for our discernment, or the content of this magazine is almost entirely incoherent, with explicit pornographic tendencies. [...] In our humble opinion this magazine, not promoting the Romanian culture in the slightest, spoils the taste of our youngsters and is utterly intolerable due to its evident pornographic [content] and other [delicts].”<sup>21</sup>

A copy of the magazine is sent to the Council of Ministers’ President (General Directorate for the Press) on January 16<sup>th</sup> 1930.<sup>22</sup> On December the 12<sup>th</sup> 1930 is opened a surveillance file of the magazine recommending that any prior pornographic reference in the pages of the publication should be retrospectively documented and referred to the Court.<sup>23</sup>

### **Geo Bogza’s trial**

We came across the information in the Secret Police’s documents that the January issue of the magazine (no. 32) was seized on grounds of public morality infringement.<sup>24</sup> In their own explanation of the events that appeared in the next

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<sup>20</sup> Stelian Tănase, *op. cit.*, pp. 34–36.

<sup>21</sup> Stelian Tănase, *op. cit.*, pp. 227–228.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 229–230.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 231–232.

issue, the culprits were a poem and an article by Geo Bogza, which were considered to have pornographic content. The editorial board confronted the accusers, mockingly denouncing other publications that might be found guilty of the same charge:

„For a poem and an article signed Geo Bogza the former issue of the »Unu« magazine was seized. To a new abet of this perversion, we notify the judicial official of the Bucharest’s Police Prefecture the existence of the following volumes and magazines in which the words may defy the public morality:

1. Ion Barbu, *Joc secund* (Edit. Cultura Națională, 1930), »Mouths yawn when Nastratin«. – p. 88.
2. Mihail Eminescu, *Poesii* (Ediția Titu Maiorescu 1889 și următoarele) »Kamadeva The Indic God«. – p. 309. [...]”.<sup>25</sup>

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of October of the same year, Sașa Pană announces Geo Bogza that he received a Court citation and he has to appear as defendant on 29 Mai on Court. Worried, he writes to Geo Bogza that he should keep this information for himself, „because Edy [Ilarie Voronca] might fear to collaborate [at the magazine]”.<sup>26</sup>

On November 13<sup>th</sup> 1931, the volume *Poemul invectivă* (*The invective poem*) by Geo Bogza was seized and its author was brought into justice, the trial being set at Ilfov Court, Section V.<sup>27</sup> The whole group rallies to support him. Voronca seems especially active, trying to find good lawyers and using his connections to convince high profile men of letters to defend Bogza’s character in the court. He writes to Bogza about his endeavours in his part, noting, among others, the hilarious reaction of Eugen Lovinescu, that seems ready only to send a letter of support, but declining to appear in person since he “dislikes going out”.<sup>28</sup>

Geo Bogza will be eventually pardoned.

### **Ilarie Voronca’s contradictory loyalties**

The unwanted attention it received from the Secret Police worried the group and made some of the senior editors fearful and hesitating. After all, there were (public) jobs on the line, if not their good names in the society. Sașa Pană records in a letter to Bogza an early attempt from the Secret Police to intimidate him:

<sup>25</sup> Sașa Pană, “acvarium”, in *Unu*, Year IV, No. 33, February 1931.

<sup>26</sup> Sașa Pană to Geo Bogza, “LVIII, 15. III. 931”, in Mădălina Lascu (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>27</sup> Stelian Tănase, *op. cit.*, p. 66; Stelian Tănase, *op. cit.*, pp. 69–71.

<sup>28</sup> Ilarie Voronca to Geo Bogza, “XLVIII, [București, 26 noiembrie 1931]”, in Mădălina Lascu (Ed.), *op. cit.*, p.212.

„I was looked for, in absence, 10 or 12 days ago, by some individuals from the Secret Police and they asked Margareta if this is the location of the editorial office, if journalists are coming here, if people are gathering here, etc... and [they said] I will get an »invitation«. I haven't got one yet.”<sup>29</sup>

If Sașa Pană makes the matter rather impassible, one of *unu*'s constant contributors, Ilarie Voronca, seems at the brink of panic. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 1930, Ilarie Voronca writes to Geo Bogza:

„Please try not to write to me now about some persons, my letters might be intercepted.”<sup>30</sup>

Already considering the possible disadvantageous outcomes, he tries to accommodate the artistic mission of *unu* with both his job as a clerk in the state administration and his reputation as a writer, as he puts it on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1930, in another letter to Bogza:

„I will not use names because my letter might get on someone else's hands. I hope you will cotton on to it solely by the allusions: Thursday, my director told me he received a complete dossier, having the address of the Secret Police, which stated the measurements against »unu« magazine, being accused of breaking the decency laws. He also drew my attention to the fact that I should stop collaborating with the magazine. He asked me to intervene and tell my friends to stop writing pornographic [literature]. They can make modern art if they wish so, but stop writing vagina etc. You can only imagine my disgust. I have a two months leave, but I will only receive my pay cheque afterwards. Therefore, I had to put up with it, temporary, for two months. If I find something [else], I quit. [...] I put »unu« above any job in the world. So »Unu« must continue [...] but I must not publish – until I get my salary – to create the impression I settled down.”<sup>31</sup>

Perceived as hesitations, Ilarie Voronca's worries and fear of penalties might have drawn the first fight between him and Gheorghe Dinu (Stephan Roll). Ilarie Voronca accuses that Gheorghe Dinu assumed an (unwanted) hard line leadership at *unu*, demanding full commitment to the group and its mission of promoting the new art, in any given circumstances, which was clearly detrimental

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<sup>29</sup> Sașa Pană to Geo Bogza, "XLIX, Galați 23. XII. 1930", in Mădălina Lascu (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>30</sup> Ilarie Voronca to Geo Bogza, "XXIV, Luni 8. XII. 1930", in Mădălina Lascu (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.186.

<sup>31</sup> Ilarie Voronca to Geo Bogza, "XXV, Duminică [14 decembrie 1930, București]", in Mădălina Lascu (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 187–188.

to his own interests.<sup>32</sup> During the 1930s, he continues to publish occasionally in the magazine, but the relations between the two were hardly peaceful.

The relations among the group members get more and more tensioned. The news that Ilarie Voronca collaborates at *Contimporanul* and meets with other group members that were once the target of *unu's* critique (Lovinescu, Perpessicius, etc.); and additionally, that he will publish at *Cultura Națională* and signed up for S.S.R. (the Romanian Writers Society), enraged them. Any of these misdeeds would have been too much: publishing in the despised *Contimporanul*, or mingling with inimical literary figures, or (oh, horror!) becoming a member of the detested bourgeois institution of writers, the S.S.R and publishing at one of the institutionalized editing houses. Voronca had done it all – and will face the consequences. The letter sent by Sașa Pană to Geo Bogza is telling:

„I will not sum up for you, I will not recall any of the harsh discussions with Roll and Voronca, took until the release of No. 40; nothing of the immense false disquiets and compromises that agitated Voronca (anxious about the fact that someone might find out that he signed up to S.S.R., anxious by the visits made to Lovinescu, Perpessicius, (maybe even Dragomirescu), anxious that some one might find out that he is printing, by paying, (he is editing...) 50 % a book to *Cultura*, anxious, anxious due to so many things that have nothing in common with »Unu«, except his great talent, of an authentic poet, a talent which [...] I take and keep to the bottom standard; at the level of the free horizon of the last floor, I place the loyalty, the lack of compromises.”<sup>33</sup>

The compromises that Sașa Pană underlines are enough to bring the end of the friendship between Voronca and Roll. To top it all, Voronca sends an article to Sașa Pană containing allegations towards Stephan Roll and Victor Brauner. Apparently, the article falls on the hands of Stephan Roll, before its expected release. As punishment for its backstabbing attempt, Roll writes a sharp reply and Voronca is informed that he should choose whether the articles will appear side by side in the upcoming magazine release or whether he prefers to publish it separately in a later issue. The dispute is recorded in two of the letters send by Voronca to Geo Bogza on 29<sup>th</sup> of October and 30<sup>th</sup> of October 1931.<sup>34</sup> Voronca complains about the fact that an unfair public infamy was to be put into stage.

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<sup>32</sup> See for instance the letter sent by Ilarie Voronca to Geo Bogza, "XXIV, Luni 8. XII. 1930", in Mădălina Lascu (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 184.

<sup>33</sup> Sașa Pană to Geo Bogza, "LXXVI, 23 Noiembrie 1931", in Mădălina Lascu (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>34</sup> Ilarie Voronca to Geo Bogza, "XLII, [București, 29. X. 1931]", in Mădălina Lascu (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 203; Ilarie Voronca to Geo Bogza, "XLIV, Vineri, ora 10 dimineața, [București 30 octombrie 1931]", in Mădălina Lascu (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 205–207.

However, the two articles never make their way into the pages of the magazine. The only negative remark that was actually registered was the critique that Roll brought on his decision of publishing to *Cultura*, an unfavourable review to his *Incantations* and a harsh critique for his acts of compromise.<sup>35</sup> As Sașa Pană underlines:

„There never was an infamy directed towards Voronca and no intrigue. Voronca left »Unu« the day his postponements [sic!], his lack of courage and the entire row of his ambiguities reached the bearable aggregation; and it was enough that I slightly shake the branch. I congratulate myself for doing so before the release of *Incantations*.”<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, Voronca would not go down easy. As his frustration reaches its peak, he presumably tried to dissuade others from collaborating with *unu* and goes as far as to accuse its former colleagues of lack of probity, if not plagiarism

„His article [Roll’s] from the last published issue, full of inaccuracies, reproduces – when he’s speaking about war – an article of mine, published in »Integral« and in *A doua lumină* [*The Second Light*] (I think »pe marginea unui festin« [»On the Feast«]). I can’t help telling you about the huge fabrications Sașa writes in his notes talking about infamous movies (which he had not seen, I did) or vice versa, Nesty broke any connection with them (without my intervention) and the ignoble Sașa keeps writing him.”<sup>37</sup>

A few days later, on 15<sup>th</sup> February a new letter arrives to Bogza. It is content, full of bitterness, points out Voronca’s inconstancy:

„You got me all wrong when I told you to collaborate at »Unu«. I told you that with the same open heartedness with which I pushed Roll (I thought I was pushing him, but he actually took pleasure in it) into collaborating at »Contimporanul«, from which I parted.”<sup>38</sup>

By now, his dismissal was irrevocable. This time, the breakup and Voronca’s disgrace is brought in public. In the June issue, Voronca is publicly shamed:

<sup>35</sup> See roll [sic!], "acvarium", in *unu*, Year IV, No. 41, December 1931.

<sup>36</sup> Sașa Pană to Geo Bogza, "LXXVI, 23 Noiembrie 1931", in Mădălina Lascu (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>37</sup> Ilarie Voronca to Geo Bogza, "LV, [București 30 ianuarie 1932]", in Mădălina Lascu (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 221–222.

<sup>38</sup> Ilarie Voronca to Geo Bogza, "LVI, [București, 15. II. 1932]", in Mădălina Lascu (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 222.

„Voronca! Stop tearing up the posters, stop hiding our magazine under the piles of the other magazines in the bookstores. [...] It's useless and – especially – it just shows your exasperation, which is the fury of a hem, of the author constrained to support himself through lies and an entire system of petty schemes [...] Calm yourself down, hide yourself [...] We promise this is the last time we take care of you, no matter what [...] Lay on your dandruff the golden soup of the moon and flannels on top of your everlasting rheumatisms and settle down: your fury is useless and comic and epileptic.”<sup>39</sup>

The text is accompanied by a picture with the explanatory note: “Our friend Gheorghe D’Unu received the Legion of Honor Croce and the rank of knight.” The issue also contains a picture with Stephan Roll and Ilarie Voronca having the explanatory note:

„Snapshot: Ilarie Voronca, and twice that time Stephan Roll.  
Above: I. V. after the S.S.R. operation”<sup>40</sup>



The message was clear. Voronca was cut down from the group. In a letter to Geo Bogza, Gheorghe Dinu justifies the decision:

„For two months now, I intended to write to you about a whole series of avatars and conformism that came about. [...] The last month's event, when I had to speak out loud about the breakup – even though I might be wrong, I was convinced that was the manner in which I had to respond to the situation. [...] I am not sure which of us was discredited, Voronca or myself. [...] I could not understand Voronca and

<sup>39</sup> “UNA – PARK”, *unu*, Year V, No. 46, June 1932.

<sup>40</sup> Sașa Pană, “Reportaj: Motociclistul morții”, in *Ibid.*.

I came to find he was doing a thousand things behind our back. You'll say that he's a poet and that we have to overlook his mistakes. It was exactly what I've been doing for the past 3 years. [...] I guess Voronca didn't have an artistic honesty. And the day he came spitting in front of and on Victor and Nesty and myself, which, however, were less guilty of innocent concessions and infamy, I had to give it to him."<sup>41</sup>

All in all, it should be noted that the cultural-political stance and group ideology become the principle and base for friendship among *unu* collaborators. Voronca's inconstancy and cowardly attitude did not match Roll's expectations; therefore, his company was never to be sought again.

### Year 1931-1932: the shift

By the end of 1931, the content of the articles that the magazine displays reveal a number of explicit political ideas. The reason that lay behind this shift from its older position, seems to be, as already noted, the need for a change in the plan of the magazine. A radical (leftist) approach would have differentiated the avant-garde's position compared to the mainstream cultural movement, for a second time – the first being its delimitation from *Contimporanul*.

Through its informants, the Secret Police is well aware of the shift and its motives. Mihail Dan, ex-editor in chief of *unu* (and the "mole" of the authorities) recalls the events in a Secret Police report:

„»UNU«.Body of »surrealist« literature (a euphemism of a tolerated dotage). [...] The group wanted to represent a conterminous movement with the French one, which has, at least, the excuse of a sincere evolution and of a long-lived culture. [...] The undersigned was the magazine's chief-editor for three months. The group had no effect on him. Therefore, he is perfectly healthy [...] When the French group took a political stance – politically militant, along the literary one [...] on our parts the question of a political forwardness was raised. Our moral and material director being a military man ceded the direction of the magazine to me. A program has been written in that sense by St. Roll (poet, dairyman and communist) and the activity begun."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Stephan Roll to Geo Bogza, "XXVII, [decembrie 1931 – ianuarie 1932]", in Mădălina Lascu (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 57–58.

<sup>42</sup> Stelian Tănase, *op. cit.*, pp. 232–235.



Indeed, most of the militant articles are written by Stephan Roll, accompanied by prose pieces authored by Ion Călugăru. As for the “French connection”, the opinion seems to bear some truth. On October 1931, a signal written by Roll announces in an enthusiastic tone the earlier release of “Nouvel Age”, a French literary magazine under the direction of Henry Poulaille, writer of proletarian literature and political activist:

„**NOUVEL AGE.** An issue dedicated to U.R.S.S. Over 30 young signatures, all from one country, which, for most, is plagued by a red hydra. Their literature comes from the lowest parts, by the shoulder of the proletarian raising his hammer; by the mechanic covered in the black hoarfrost of the factory [...] A vigorous life, an unstoppable élan, an enthusiasm and an emulation unique in the history of human civilization development raises in a shout. Their example today, when we witness a general fall [...] feels you up with upraise and gives your heart a punch towards it.”<sup>43</sup>

The shift in the editorial policy is evident when compared with the silent siding with the *Le Cadavre* against the revolutionary surrealist movement a couple of years before. Now the cause is not as much literary, but rather that of the oppressed, hungered and abused “proletarian”, at a turning point of history:

„You will be his victims, you will be his winners. [...] Your destiny is twice written in your palm. Take your fist and punch this head [...] and you will carry on starving and others will come to take your crystal coffin in which you'll lay pale and surreal like a princess of your glorious and woefully past, [that] of historical materialism.”<sup>44</sup>

The same year, in December, a new article called “Cuvinte fără degete” (“Words with no fingers”) signed Stephan Roll appears in *unu*. Its author declares its sympathy with the Russian revolution and describes its process as one that will, probably, finally decode the new human structure:

„A new pragmatism, a new unanimous proletarian transformation of the individual [...] A new humanism, not in the sense of a benign moral as that of Tolstoy, but one of a more advanced, more universal potency. I know a newer testament: the political economy; I know a Jesus far more crucified and more prophetic: the proletarian. [...] And maybe Majakovsky, maybe Alexandru Block, maybe a part of the Russian dynamism, or the Russian people with its fantastic resource, will give, in a certain sense, the meanings of our structure.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Stephan Roll, “Represalii”, *unu*, Year IV, No. 39, October 1931.

<sup>44</sup> Gheorghe Dinu, “Chiromancie”, *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Gheorghe Dinu, “Cuvinte fără degete” [“Words without fingers” n.], *unu*, Year IV, No. 41, December 1931.

His celebration is accompanied by a prose by Ion Călugăru called “Turbine Retorice” (“Rhetorical Turbine”), which narrates the story of a Russian soldier on the battlefield with its comrades. To accentuate the revolutions loses and the hardship, the fight for socialism is described in sombre lines. The soldiers, victims and heroes of the time, are portrayed as merely disposable objects. More, the act of war is described as necessary and above all morality:

„We do not enforce a moral stance on you, but discipline. Whoever breaks the discipline will be shot. We do not ask you to pass out of love for humans, as it has been preached beforehand[...] but we want you to defend the revolution by defending yourself [...] We ask you *to kill* in order for us to accomplish socialism.”<sup>46</sup>

Material written in the same vein and spirit appear throughout the 1932 issues. In January, for instance, in an article called “În 1931 Pictura” (“In 1931 The Painting”) Gheorghe Dinu welcomes the new age that the proletariat announces<sup>47</sup> and in the March issue he writes a poem where he imagines a reencounter with a feminine instance met at a time when: „With great steps life passed through the fortress / Through the proletarians thin as alcoves”.<sup>48</sup> Last, but not least, in the June issue of the magazine he underlines the amplitude and the impact of the Russian revolution, at the turn of the century, a revolution that will shape a new and improved society:

„Promiscuity, as a result of the war and of the Marxist prophecy that was being carried out, reigned everywhere. Even in the East, where the proletarian revolution had taken place, establishing a new rhythm of the times, there was also a chaos and a blockade that didn’t let you hear or see anything precise as to the arrangements for the new world, the rebuilding and the start of a new age. [...] There was something happening there, on Volga’s lands, a movement which, if once ignored, had begun to raise thoughts. The revolutions that took place in the rest of Europe seemed small, pigmy compared to the effort and the proportions of this effort from the East.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ion Călugăru, “Turbine retorice” [“Rhetorical Turbine”], in *Ibidem*.

<sup>47</sup> Gheorghe Dinu, “În 1931 Pictura” [“In 1931 The Painting” n.], *unu*, Year V, No. 42, January 1932.

<sup>48</sup> Stephan Roll, “Inaugurarea primăverii” [Inaugurating Spring], in *unu*, Year V, No. 43, March 1932.

<sup>49</sup> Stephan Roll, “Scurt circuit. Ilarie Voronca »ACT DE PREZENȚĂ«” [“Short-Circuit. Ilarie Voronca »TAKING NOTICE«], *unu*, Year V, No. 46, June 1932.

### The magazine ceases its appearance

By publishing articles containing explicit political ideas, the magazine's director feared that his position as army doctor might be endangered; in spite his earlier attempt to protect himself by ceding the editorial position to Mihail Dan. To avoid consequences, Sașa Pană finally decides to stop the publication of the magazine altogether at the end of 1932. Mihail Dan recalls the event:

“[Victor Brauner] gave indications for the release of the new issue of *unu* under new conditions, that were to be applied had Sașa Pană not decided to stop its publication altogether for all the troubles it put him through already.”<sup>50</sup>

Apparently, this was not the first misunderstanding between Victor Brauner and Sașa Pană. As Mihail Dan points out, Sașa Pană was being „cursed on numerous occasions in writing [...] for his indecisions”.<sup>51</sup> But why don't his fights with the collaborators suffer the same outcome as seen in the case of Voronca? How come he remains the chief editor at *unu*? Mihail Dan argues that the group agreed to a compromise: “He was deemed to be loyal, and the matter was settled in that he would continue to make the same literature as always, while the rest of the group – activist literature.”<sup>52</sup>

Yet, a simple pledge of allegiance would have been insufficient. We assume that his stay at the magazine was warranted by the fact that he provided the financial means for its existence. Under these circumstances, its non-interference politics and its tolerance were being acceptable. Still, he had the last say. When in 1934 Roll requests the name of the magazine to revive its appearance, Sașa Pană refuses. The situation should point out to how important the magazine's continuity was in the eyes of its collaborators. This would be also the reason why Stephan Roll, Victor Brauner, M. H. Maxy and others saw the chance of introducing a straightforward and bold direction – it was a granted possibility due to the magazine's endurance, its promise of perpetual evolution; and, in order to sustain such an evolution, it had to be constantly radicalized.

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<sup>50</sup> Stelian Tănase, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

## Conclusion

The clear delineation from *Contimporanul* points to the fact that the avant-garde group around *unu* disagreed with their program, a program that revealed *Contimporanul*'s compromise with the bourgeoisie and its contradictory summary, which violated the avant-garde aesthetic and cultural-political principles. Declaring itself as defendant of the new avant-garde art principles, *unu* maintains its aesthetic or rather cultural-political standpoint, accepting no compromise from part of the magazine's collaborators. However, such loyalty to the avant-garde cause proves to be problematic. First, there is the question of how *unu* program should be implemented and what were to be the direction of the group and the content of the magazine. Constantly struggling to establish a position on the cultural scene, *unu* takes a radical position adopting in the late 1931 and 1932 political ideas.

The internal disagreements accentuate once the question of the radicalization of the groups ideas evolve. Then, there is the external pressure exerted by the Secret Police, who menaces to disrupt *unu*'s activity and to break the ties between its members. Fearing the penalties they might face, some of the avant-garde group members temper their rebelliousness. Unwilling to accept a compromise or a deviation of its natural course – that of changing the world through art – Stephan Roll and Victor Brauner, the hardliners and self-entitled trendsetters from *unu*, push for an ideological discipline and strive to set the course for *unu* and for the “true” Romanian avant-garde movement and, therefore, decide to remove all the disruptive elements. The case of Ilarie Voronca is telling.

All things considered, it should be noted that the presence of the political ideas in the magazine's articles are merely signs of the group's creed. Their urge to take action in the active transformation of the society through art – a position that implied taking part to a political cause –, defined the manner in which by 1931-1932 the *unu* members saw their mission. That did not mean that the *unu* searched for ways of entering or establishing a political institution. They were considering the Russian revolution more an example of how a new world can be brought into existence. It is merely a question of artistic ambition: to bring forth a new social order and free the society from its prejudices (ethnic, sexual or by any other nature). Nevertheless, as expected, the Secret Police saw in the avant-garde only a disruptive element, a group that was boldly opposing the present state of affairs. Assuming there was something dangerous in their approach, even though they could not lay the finger on it, the control body acted upon it. Unfortunately, the tensions gathered inside the group and the pressure exerted by the Secret Police bring the magazine to its end at the end of 1932.

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## THE SPEECH ACT OF REFERRING\*

P. ALPÁR GERGELY\*\*

**ABSTRACT. The Speech Act of Referring.** According to the speech-act theory whenever we utter a sentence, we perform two acts: the act of referring and that of predicating. By referring, we set out an object that we speak of, and by predicating, we attribute a feature to the object. My paper is a short presentation of Gottlob Frege's theory of meaning and Bertrand Russell's theory of description. I will try to outline the core concepts and thoughts/arguments that even today define the debate about reference in the analytic tradition.

**Keywords:** *Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, referring, description, names, sense, meaning, reference*

### Gottlob Frege

#### *Frege's Previous Stand and Its Critique*

Frege in his study, *On Sense and Meaning*, examined the problem of meaning through the question of identity (equality). His point of departure is very clearly presented at the beginning of his article: 'Equality gives rise to challenging questions which are not altogether easy to answer. Is it a relation? A relation between objects, or between names or signs of objects?'<sup>1</sup> Frege's question is whether identity is defined as the identity of two objects, or rather as the identity between the names of these objects. Mark Sainsbury underscores the fact, that before his current one, Frege had a different theory, outlined in the *Begriffsschrift*.

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<sup>1</sup> Gottlob Frege, "On Sense and Meaning", in Ed. Brian McGuinness, *Collected Papers on Mathematics, Logic, and Philosophy*, Basil Blackwell, 1984, p. 157.

According to his previous view, which after a while he rejected as a false one; two names were considered identical if the names referred to the same object. This is called the metalinguistic standpoint, according to which identity is seen as a relation between the names of objects.<sup>2</sup> Considering the metalinguistic view a problem arises: if identity statements express a relation between names of objects, in what measure do they describe the world (if in any), or do they just concern the language? According to the metalinguistic standpoint identity statements don't concern the world, but the language, in which case 'the sentence  $a = b$  would no longer refer to the subject matter, but only to its mode of designation; we would express no proper knowledge by its means. But in many cases this is just what we want to do.'<sup>3</sup>

Frege revised his previous theory and proposed a new one, saying that 'if the sign "a" is distinguished from the sign "b" only as an object (here, by means of its shape), not as a sign (i.e. not by the manner in which it designates something), the cognitive value of  $a = a$  becomes essentially equal to that of  $a = b$ , provided  $a = b$  is true. A difference can arise only if the difference between the signs corresponds to a difference in the mode of presentation of the thing designated. Let a, b, c be the lines connecting the vertices of a triangle with the midpoints of the opposite sides. The point of intersection of a and b is then the same as the point of intersection of b and c. So we have different designations for the same point, and these names ("point of intersection of a and b", "point of intersection of b and c") likewise indicate the mode of presentation; and hence the statement contains actual knowledge. It is natural, now, to think of there being connected with a sign (name, combination of words, written mark), besides that which the sign designates, which may be called the meaning of the sign, also what I should like to call the sense of the sign, wherein the mode of presentation is contained.'<sup>4</sup>

According to Frege's new theory, it is not just the reference, namely the object that is relevant in case of an identity statement, but also the meaning.<sup>5</sup> The following two examples will shed light on why Frege's new theory managed to grasp the main point of the issue:

(1) Phosphorus is identical with Phosphorus.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Mark Sainsbury, "Filozófiai logika", in Ed. A. C. Grayling, *Filozófiai kalauz*, 1997. p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> Gottlob Frege, "On Sense and Meaning", in Ed. Brian McGuinness, *Collected Papers on Mathematics, Logic, and Philosophy*, Basil Blackwell, 1984, p. 157.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 157–158.

<sup>5</sup> Throughout this article the word 'meaning' stands for 'sense' when directly quoting Frege, and the word 'reference' stands for 'meaning' in the same case.

(2) Phosphorus is identical with Hesperus.

Both of these statements express identity, however there is a major difference between the two examples. In case of (1) the identity expressed is self-evident. The structure of the statement is

(3)  $a = a$ .

In Kantian terms: both (1) and (3) are a priori and analytic statements. It is as if we said

(4) All bachelors are unmarried,

since the identity is based solely on the examination of the language. We need not know anything about the world to be able to decide on the truth-value of (1), (3) or (4). (2) however resembles the following structure

(5)  $a = b$ .

We cannot decide on the truth-value of (2) without examining *a* and *b* separately, and then deciding on their identity. (2) is not an a priori analytic statement, but it has cognitive (informative) value. When the Babylonian astronomers discovered the truth of (2), they did not just simply discover a trivial identity, for if this was the case, they would have had discovered the identity of Hesperus and Phosphorus previously. However, this was not the case. The ancient astronomers found out something new. They have realized that Phosphorus was the same as Hesperus, and that they were both names of the planet Venus. Both Hesperus and Phosphorus, like 'the point of intersection of *a* and *b*' and 'the point of intersection of *b* and *c*' refer to the different modes of defining things and thus have cognitive value.

As a summary: Frege by considering (1) as trivial, and (2) as informative, discovered that the meaning of (1) and (2) are different. It was clear for him, that if the informative values of two sentences differed, the meaning of the two sentences also differ. If we considered the sentences

(1') The names 'Phosphorus' and 'Phosphorus' refer to the same object, and

(2') The names 'Phosphorus' and 'Hesperus' refer to the same object,



both an expression of Frege's previous metalinguistic view – and compared them to (1) and (2) – the ones expressing Frege's new theory – we would reach the conclusion that the meaning of sentences (1) and (2) differ, but would face two difficulties nonetheless. First we would immediately notice that while (2) provides information about the world, (2') states something about the language, and secondly knowing that the act of naming is a conventional act (2') would inform us about the arbitrary nature of this conventional act. Nevertheless, the identity of Phosphorus and Hesperus cannot be a matter of a conventional act.

Based on (2) and (2') Frege concluded that identity (equality) is not a relation between the names of objects. This was in fact the reason that made him give up his previous position and recognize that when one examines the sign, besides the object of a sign, the meaning of it has to be considered too. It also explained the fact that the meaning and the truth-value of sentences (1) and (2) differed.

Frege's theory successfully deals with the issues that represent a challenge for the Millian theory of names. According to John Stuart Mill, names do not have a meaning (connotation), only a reference (denotation). Mill's theory is a denotative theory of meaning, which essentially 'identifies the essence of a linguistic expression with the reference of the expression',<sup>6</sup> in our case identifies the sense of a name with its reference. Frege with the help of (1) and (2) pointed out, that although both the names of 'Phosphorus' and 'Hesperus' refer to the same planet (the planet Venus), the sense or the meaning of the two sentences are different.

Let us now turn to Frege's theory of meaning.

### ***Frege on Meaning***

In his study, Frege analyses the tripartite relation between a sign, its meaning, and the reference. He claims that 'The regular connection between a sign, its sense and what it means is of such a kind that to the sign there corresponds a definite sense and to that in turn a definite thing meant, while to a given thing meant (an object) there does not belong only a single sign. The same sense has different expressions in different languages or even in the same language.'<sup>7</sup>

According to Frege, every sign has a meaning, and every sense has a reference, that is an object that it refers to. Consider for example the name 'Aristotle'. The name 'Aristotle' has the following meanings: 1. the ancient philosopher born in

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<sup>6</sup> Márton Miklós, "A referencia problémái", *Kellék*, 2005, 27–28. p. 142.

<sup>7</sup> Gottlob Frege, "On Sense and Meaning", in Ed. Brian McGuinness, *Collected Papers on Mathematics, Logic, and Philosophy*, Basil Blackwell, 1984, p. 159.

Stagira; 2. Plato's most famous disciple; 3. Alexander the Great's master; and then there is the name's reference, which was Aristotle the man. After this Frege make the following remark: 'It may perhaps be granted that every grammatically well-formed expression figuring as a proper name always has a sense. But this is not to say that to the sense there also corresponds a thing meant.'<sup>8</sup> It may seem to us that Frege contradicts himself. Earlier we saw that he claimed, that for every sign there is a corresponding meaning, and for every meaning there is a references; and now he is claiming, that for every sign there is a meaning, but not in every case there is a reference that corresponds to a certain meaning. It is not hard, however, to follow Frege's argumentation. He says that every grammatically well-formed expression has a meaning, but this meaning does not always have a corresponding object attached to it.

There are cases in which the object in the world is missing, but this does not entail, that that particular expression does not have a meaning. Take for example the expression 'the largest natural number'. We know that the largest natural number does not exist, because we can always name a number that is larger than the number preceding it; this, however, does not prevent a competent user of the language from understanding the meaning of the expression. We can of course always add such expressions to the list as 'Odysseus' (or any of the mythological characters) or 'Winnie the Pooh' (or any of the fictional characters), etc.

Consider the sentence

(6) Odysseus was set ashore at Ithaca while sound asleep.

Most probably, Odysseus did not exist in real life. This however, does not stop us from understanding the sentence (its meaning). In connection with (6) Frege draws our attention to a different problem.

We saw earlier, that the meaning of the names is given by those definite descriptions that satisfy the reference of the names. This was the case with 'Aristotle'; the definite descriptions (ancient philosopher born in Stagira, Plato's most famous disciple; master of Alexander the Great) gave us the meaning of the name, and the reference (Aristotle himself) satisfied these meanings.

Besides names, Frege successfully applied the meaning–references pair to sentences also. He observed, that substituting a word with another word that has the same reference changes the thought expressed by the sentence, but not the truth-value of the sentence. In case of (1) and (2) the sentences' truth-values were the same, while their meanings differed. According to Frege, the meaning of the two

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*.

names were different, but their reference was the same. It was this thought that Frege applied to sentences too.

Returning to (6) Frege claims, that although the sentence is a meaningful sentence because everyone knows what we are talking about, it does not have a truth-value. We cannot decide whether the sentence is true or false. Based on this thought Frege reached the conclusion, that for us to know a sentence's truth value the names in that sentence must have a references. Therefore, in order for one to decide on a sentence's truth-value, one must designate the references of the names in that particular sentence.

It should not be a problem, says Frege, if a sentence does not have a truth-value and we are only interested in its meaning. Good instances are in this case both the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. We understood and enjoyed both of these works (we didn't consider them meaningless like Mill's theory did), but the minute we became interested in the truth value of these epic poems' sentences – beyond their meaning – the references of the names' have become important.

By underscoring the importance of meaning beyond that of the reference, Frege made a revolutionary step in the philosophy of language: he developed a two-dimensional semantics, in which both meaning and reference play a crucial part. By doing so, he showed that Mill's theory, which reduces a name's sense to its reference, could not be complete. Frege also showed that the meaning is not only important in case of the names, but also in case of the sentences. What he could not deal with properly though, was the problem concerning the truth-value of sentences, in which fictional entities are present; this is because according to Frege's theory we cannot decide on the truth-value of sentences that contain names without a reference.

## **Bertrand Russell**

### ***Russell's Theory of Description***

Bertrand Russell presented his theory of description in his study entitled *On Denoting*. We can briefly summarize Russell's theory in the following way: the base of the theory is a proposition  $C(x)$ , in which  $x$  is an undetermined variable. After this Russell introduces the indefinable basic expression ' $C(x)$  is always true', and then interprets the most fundamental denoting expressions of 'everything', 'nothing' and 'something' with both the help of the proposition and the indefinable basic expression. According to his definitions the meaning of these denoting expressions are

Def 1 C(everything) = 'C is always true';

Def 2 C(nothing) = "'C(x) is false" is always true';

Def 3 C(something) = 'It is false that "C(x) is false" is always true'.<sup>9</sup>

According to Russell, denoting expressions<sup>10</sup> do not have a meaning; however, every expression that has a denoting expression as its part has a meaning. Thus, the expression 'a man' does not have a meaning, whereas if we said 'I met a man', the expression would have a meaning and could be interpreted according to the above-mentioned definitions.

After the most fundamental denoting expressions, Russell zeroes in on the analysis of the definite descriptions, expressions containing the word 'the'. According to him, 'these are by far the most interesting and difficult of denoting phrases.'<sup>11</sup> Whenever a definite expression occurs, it expresses singularity (uniqueness), like in the sentence

(7) X was *the* father of Charles II.

Russell claims that by uttering this sentence 'we not only assert that x had a certain relation to Charles II, but also that nothing else had this relation.'<sup>12</sup> With this thought, we arrived at one of the strengths of the Russellian theory.

According to Russell, one of the tests of any theory of description is the problem of uniqueness. It is the criteria of uniqueness that helps us to decide on a sentence's truth-value. Russell says, that if there is no unique being to which what we say applies, the sentence is false. This thought makes Russell reject Meinong's theory, which 'regards any grammatically correct denoting phrase as standing for an object.'<sup>13</sup> According to Meinong's idea, both the largest natural number and the king of France are objects that is things that exist.

This, however, can easily be considered a violation of the law of contradiction, because Meinong's idea takes the present king of France both an existing entity and

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<sup>9</sup> Bertrand Russell, "On Denoting" *Mind*, Vol. 14, No. 56, (Oct., 1905), p. 480.

<sup>10</sup> 'By a "denoting phrase" I mean a phrase such as any one of the following: a man, some man, any man, every man, all man, the present King of England, the present King of France, the Centre of mass of the Solar System at the first instant of the twentieth century, the revolution of the earth round the sun, the revolution of the sun round the earth.' *Ibidem*.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*. p. 481.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*. pp. 481–482.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*. p. 482.

a non-existing one at the same time. If this is true, such theories have to be eliminated. The criteria of uniqueness is not only breached in cases where there is no object satisfying the conditions presented by the sentence, but also in cases where more than one object satisfy these conditions. This is the case with the sentence

(8) The door is creaking.

(8) is false, because the criteria of uniqueness is not satisfied, since there is more than one door in the world.

After the criteria of uniqueness, Russell focuses on the criticism of Frege's theory. Although Frege successfully applied his sense–reference distinction to sentences containing non-existing entities, he could not resolve the problem of truth-values in regards to these sentences. Frege considered (6) to have a meaning, but could not decide on its truth-value, because the name 'Odysseus' didn't have a reference. From this point of view, Russell's theory is more efficient. Russell claims that whenever we have to deal with a sentence that contains a name without a reference, we will consider the sentence to be false. In this respect, Frege's views are similar to those of Meinong, because it considers fictional entities to be real entities, and that is clearly not the case.

Based on the former paragraph we might consider that Russell's view is an enhanced version of the Fregeian one, and that this latter one is the basis of Russell's theory. If we pay close attention however, we will see that Russell's theory is a completely different theory from that of Frege's. While Frege applied the sense–reference distinction to all sentences, Russell did not consider the distinction and built his theory on a completely different principle.

### ***Russell's Reading of Frege***

It was Imre Ruzsa, who in his study *Russell kontra Frege* underscored Russell's mistake about the Fregeian theory. The study focuses on a problem (according to Russell: 'in case of the definite descriptions differentiating between sense and reference leads to inevitable confusion')<sup>14</sup> that was mostly overlooked by the critics.

The critics did not pay enough attention to the fact that Russell identified the denoting sign (that is the word) with its meaning, and hence he could not differentiate between a denoting expression and the quotation of the same denoting expression.

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<sup>14</sup> Ruzsa Imre, "Russell kontra Frege", in *Tertium non datur*, Ed. Máté András, Ruzsa Imre, Osiris, 2000, p. 54.

If we want to say something about the meaning of an expression, says Russell, we should put the expression between quotation marks. Ruzsa disagrees with Russell, claiming that we put an expression between quotation marks, if we want to talk about the name of the expression. Ruzsa also points out that this resolution of Russell leads to a complication from the start.

Consider the following examples

(9) The centre of mass of the Solar System is a point, not a denoting expression.

(10) The 'centre of mass of the Solar System' is a denoting expression and not a point.

(9) is correct, (10) however can only be accepted with certain reservations, that is only in the case when the expression enclosed in quotation marks serves as the name of the expression. (10) thus cannot be accepted if it serves as the sense of the expression. According to Frege's theory, we cannot say about the 'centre of mass of the Solar System' that it is a denoting expression. Apparently, Russell made Frege's theory more complicated, and thus misinterpreted it. Frege advised us to talk about a C expression's meaning using the phrase 'the sense of the expression C', but Russell did not differentiate between the sign and its sense.

In order to show Russell's error Ruzsa suggests us to use

(11) MEAN C

for an expression's meaning, and

(12) DEN C

for an expression's reference (an object that is denoted by an expression, that is the denotatum), and let 'C' be a variable that can only be substituted by a linguistic expression. In case we do not follow these restrictions, complications illustrated by the following example will occur:

(13) MEAN (the president of France), DEN (the president of France).

Since the president of France is not a linguistic expression but a person, it can neither have a meaning, nor a reference; unlike in the example

(14) MEAN ('the president of France'), DEN ('the president of France'),

where 'the president of France' is a linguistic expression that has both meaning and reference.

Let us now focus our attention on an issue that was raised by Russell, and see why he did not agree with the Fregeian solution, and whether his criticism of it was well founded.

***Russell's resolution***

According to Russell's

(15) The author of Waverley is Scott.

(16) Scott is Scott.

(15) and (16) are identity statements, but they differ in that George IV. did not want to know whether (16) was true. Based on this Russell concluded that (15) and (16) are not identical sentences, although

(17) DEN ('the author of Waverley') = DEN ('Scott') = Scott.

Russell claimed, that the two sentences differ because in case of (15) not only the reference of the expression 'the author of Waverley' is relevant, but also its meaning. Russell eliminated the meaning. According to him, a definite description does not have a meaning. Russell dismissed the concept of meaning when he reconstructed the structure of the definite description 'the author of Waverley' in the following way:

(18)  $\exists x \{ [ \forall y (Wy \rightarrow x = y) ] \& Sx \}$ .

In this case, Frege would claim that the truth value of (15) and (16) are identical, but

(19) MEAN ('the author of Waverley')  $\neq$  MEAN ('Scott'); the case is rather

(20) MEAN (the author of Waverley) = MEAN [DEN ('the author of Waverley')].

We arrive at (20) based on

(21) MEAN (C) = MEAN [DEN (C\*)],

where [DEN (C\*)] is the quotation of the linguistic expression; so the final solution would be

(22) DEN ('the author of Waverley') = the author of Waverley = Scott.

According to Ruzsa, 'Russell deems it chaotic, that wanting to speak about the meaning of an expression C, we arrive at the meaning of C's reference.'<sup>15</sup> Russell's remark is wrong, says Ruzsa, because in (21) 'we need to substitute C with the description (and not with its quotation), and substitute C\* with the description's quotation.'<sup>16</sup> The above-mentioned examples show quite correctly, that Russell identifies an expression with the quotation of the expression. Russell instead of using the quotation marks appropriately, thus differentiating between an expression and that same expression's quotation, from the start presupposes that these two are identical; and wrongly says about Frege's idea that 'the relation of the meaning to the denotation involves certain rather curious difficulties, which seem in themselves sufficient to prove that the theory which leads to such difficulties must be wrong.'<sup>17</sup>

Now that we have seen Russell's mistake, we can safely say that he misinterpreted Frege's theory, and wrongfully criticized it, because as Ruzsa puts it 'the real important remark is that this text [Russell's that is] doesn't concern Frege's theory of meaning.'<sup>18</sup>

We also have to be careful when, at another point, Russell seemingly also criticizes Frege's position. For Frege, names and definite descriptions belong to the same logical category, and the function of both names and definite descriptions is to refer to objects. From a Fregeian point of view names and definite descriptions are referring expressions, thus the name 'Aristotle', as well as the definite description 'the ancient philosopher who was the master of Alexander the Great' refer to Aristotle. Russell does not accept this view, but shares Mill's thoughts, according to which the only function of a name is to name objects. However, Russell differentiates between logically proper names and names. Logically proper names have to name an existing

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15 Ruzsa Imre, "Russell kontra Frege", in *Tertium non datur*, Ed. Máté András, Ruzsa Imre, Osiris, 2000, p. 59.

16 *Ibidem*, p. 60.

17 Bertrand Russell, "On Denoting", *Mind*, Vol. 14, No. 56, (Oct. 1905), p. 485.

18 Ruzsa Imre, "Russell kontra Frege", in *Tertium non datur*, Ed. Máté András, Ruzsa Imre, Osiris, 2000, p. 62.



object; otherwise they are not considered names. He then defines logically proper names with the help of the definite descriptions, and says that names like 'this', 'that', 'I' and similar expressions are logically proper names.

Now the following question arises: what can we say about names like 'Odysseus', 'Frege', etc., names that we usually regard as proper names? Russell claims, that because it is not certain that these names actually name an object or a person (we can question the existence of the name's reference), they cannot be considered logically proper names; they are in fact definite descriptions. Russell's argument for his claim is that the structure of the logically proper names is very different from the structure of the definite descriptions. The structure of a sentence containing logically proper names can be defined with a propositional function. For example the structure of the sentence

(23) I am a writer

is  $Fa$ , where  $F$  stands for a predicate and  $a$  stands for a logically proper name. In contrast with (23) the structure of the sentence

(24) The king of France is bald,

which doesn't contain a logically proper name, is more similar to the structure of

(25) Every French king is bald  $\forall x (Fx \rightarrow Bx)$ , or with

(26) There is (exists) a French king  $\exists x (Fx \& Bx)$ .

(25) and (26) are quantified propositions. Considering the structure of (25) and (26), the structure of (24) can be represented as

(24')  $\exists x \{ [Fx \& \forall y (Fy \rightarrow x = y)] \& Bx \}$ .

The reading of (24') is: there is one and only one object, which is the king of France, and that is bald. The most important characteristic of Russell's theory is that the speaker commits herself to the existence of an object, at the same time the speaker also commits herself to the fact that there is only one object of that sort, and then she says something about the object; in other words: it attaches a predicate to the object. A sentence containing a definite description asserts that there is only one object that satisfies a certain attribute; in case of (24) the king of France satisfies

the attribute of baldness. A negative sentence, or negation that contains a definite description on the other hand claims, that there is no object that has a certain attribute.

(27) The king of France does not exist.

The logical form of (27) is

(28)  $\sim\exists x \{ [Fx \ \& \ \forall y (Fy \rightarrow x = y)] \}$ .

By making (28) the interpretation of (27), Russell found a solution for the problem of sentences that state the existence of non-existent objects. Thus, we are not bound to accept, that besides those objects that really exist, there are – in the sense that they exist – also objects that do not exist, for in (28) we do not assert nonexistence, but negate existence.

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## THE THEORY OF INTERSUBJECTIVITY IN THE WORK OF ALFRED SCHUTZ

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**ABSTRACT.** *The Theory of Intersubjectivity in the Work of Alfred Schutz.* The world of daily life is based on intersubjectivity, on the daily social interactions of the members of the community who live in common, each besides the others, undertaking a multitude of meaningful inter-relating activities sharing in the same time (the living present) and space. The intersubjectivity of the social world is built together with and for the others, whom I may effectively know by directly interacting with them, or whom I may not know at all. My relationship with these others may be of different degrees of closeness (when my experience of another is of a *We*-type relationship) or of foreignness (when my experience of my contemporary is of a *They*-type relationship). I'm directly experiencing the other, having immediate access to his subjectivity when we are engaged in a face-to-face interaction, which requires that we share a common sector of space and time.

**Keywords:** *intersubjectivity; the reality of everyday life; the mutual tuning-in relation, We-relationship; Thou-orientation; They-orientation; typifications; subjectivity*

### Introduction

Our world is composed of many realities (the reality of daily life, the world of theatre, the world of play, the world of science, the world of dreams, the world of art, etc.),<sup>1</sup> that one may simultaneously access and which may yield different

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<sup>1</sup> „But there are several, probably an infinite number of various orders of realities, each with its own special and separate style of existence. James calls them »sub-universes« and mentions as examples *the world of sense or physical things* (as the paramount reality), the world of science, the world of ideal relations, the world of »idols of the tribe«, the various supernatural worlds of mythology and religion, the various worlds of individual opinion, the worlds of sheer madness and vagary.” Schutz (1945), 207.

„This world is certainly a »sub-universe« or »finite province of meaning« among many others, although one marked out as ultimate or paramount reality.” Schutz (1945), 230.

subjective experiences, experiences linked between them only by the fact they belong to the same subject. Between these realities, the reality of daily life is the supreme, primordial one. It is an inalienable reality, a self-evident fact that cannot be doubted in any circumstance, certain and shared through the reciprocal social interactions taking place between the members of the community that live in the common scene of life.<sup>2</sup>

The world of daily life is not a private world distinct for every singular individual, it is an intersubjective world, common to all the individuals, inside which they interact and act on the scene of life in function of their pragmatic individual interests.<sup>3</sup> The world of daily life has existed since before my birth and will continue to exist when I shall be no more. For this reason, it may be considered as being continuous, the tense corresponding to it being the present continuous of the „here and now“. The actual present plays an essential role in the construction of daily-life reality, of social interactions and of the individual identity.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> „As said, for Schutz the world is social, entirely and »from the start«. When a person comes into the world, the latter is already pre-given as cultural and intersubjective: a world built, shared, and handed down by others. The natural attitude itself, as a basic aspect of the everyday life-world, is social. I assume as given the objective, real, nature of the world and presume that my certainty is socially shared.“ Muzetto (2006), 19.

<sup>3</sup> „We stated before that the world of daily life into which we are born is from the outset an intersubjective world. This implies on the one hand that this world is not my private one but common to all of us; on the other hand that within this world there exist fellow-men with whom I am connected by manifold social relationships.“ Schutz (1945), 218.

„In its broadest sense, he uses the term »life-world« (as Husserl uses the term »natural attitude« in *Ideas 1*) to designate the province of reality in which man continuously participates in ways which are at once inevitable and patterned“ (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973: 3). On other occasions (although inconsistent), he uses it to refer to a „world of working“ (*Wirkerewelt*) as distinct from a world of consciousness (1962: 222). Elsewhere it is a „background“ (1962: 57), and „the province of practice, of action“ (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973: 18). Costelloe (1996), 251.

This world, he declares for example, „is not my private world but an intersubjective one, and, therefore, my knowledge of it is not my private affair but from the outset intersubjective or socialized“ (Schutz, 1962: 11). Again, „the world of daily life is by no means my private world but is from the outset an intersubjective one“ (Schutz 1962: 312). Costelloe (1996), 253.

<sup>4</sup> „In fact, the present is the privileged time frame for the construction of fundamental reality, of action, and of identity.“ Muzetto (2006), 5.

„The present truly remains the privileged time of human existence. The present is the time that plays a strategic role in the construction both of the reality of the everyday life-world and of the reality and identity of the Self.“ Muzetto (2006), 25.

## The World of Everyday Life as an Intersubjective World

The world of daily life is based on intersubjectivity, on the daily social interactions of the members of the community who live in common, each besides the others, undertaking a multitude of meaningful inter-relating activities sharing in the same time (the living present) and space.<sup>5</sup> Interaction with the other implies the other's existence as a possible receiver and interpreter of transmitted significance and this may take place only inside daily reality.

This means that any form of communication between an individual and others presupposes the objective taking place of an event or of a series of events in the exterior world that function, firstly as an expressive schema for the emitter's thoughts, and secondly as a perceptive and interpretative schema for the receiver, who assigns it meaning and classifies it into a certain category of events. In other words, communication with another implies the performance of certain (verbal and/or non-verbal) actions in daily life, actions that the other interprets as signs for the message which I want to transmit.<sup>6</sup>

The intersubjectivity of the social world is built together with and for the others, whom I may effectively know by directly interacting with them, or whom I may not know at all.<sup>7</sup> My relationship with these others may be of different degrees of closeness/spontaneity (when my experience of another is of a *We*-type relationship) or of foreignness (when my experience of my contemporary is of a *They*-type relationship). I am directly experiencing the other, having immediate access to his subjectivity irrespectively of the degree of closeness of our relationship, when we are engaged in a face-to-face interaction, which requires that we share a common sector of space and time, both of us being situated in the „here and now“ present.

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<sup>5</sup> „The world of daily life is not a private world. It is common to my fellow men and me. Other men whom I experience in this world do not appear to me in identical perspectives. They present themselves to me under different aspects and my relations with them have different degrees of intimacy and anonymity.“ Schutz (1976), 22.

On the one hand, the intersubjective nature of the world must be assumed because „we live in it as men among other men, bound to them through common influence and work, understanding others and being understood by them“ (Schutz, 1962: 10). Costelloe (1996), 253.

<sup>6</sup> „Social actions involve communication, and any communication is necessarily founded upon acts of working. In order to communicate with Others I have to perform overt acts in the outer world that are supposed to be interpreted by the Others as signs of what I mean to convey. Gestures, speech, writing, etc., are based upon bodily movements.“ Schutz (1945), 218.

<sup>7</sup> „The world is experienced by the Self as being inhabited by other Selves, as being a world for others and of others.“ Schutz (1976), 20.

When engaged in face-to-face interaction, a member of the society orients his awareness towards the interlocutor, the latter either being considered as someone important for me or as a mere contemporary. This Thou-orientation constitutes a characteristic of the subjective consciousness of every human being, essential for the achievement of all social face-to-face interactions between the members of the community.<sup>8</sup> Such orientation towards the other can be either a unilateral one (if you are ignoring my attempt at dialogue) or a reciprocal one (both dialogue partners turn towards each other and recognize each other as subjects).

Self and sociability are intertwined in a dialectics of intersubjectivity that emerges both in the interactions of the *We*-type as well as in those of the *They*-type.<sup>9</sup> I am able to attain access to the whole self of another and to his awareness only through such face-to-face interactions taking place in the concrete present of „here and now“. Besides these instances, only a partial self of the other may be glimpsed, since a specific other cannot be defined in his totality through any past event (for example: when you are reading these sentences, through them you will have access only to what I have thought on the subject at the moment I was writing them, not to me as I am) or through projecting my knowledge of his past into a predicted future. Without direct face-to-face contact, one may reach only an abstracted other, considered as an individual of a certain type, who belongs in a certain category of individuals that have certain specific traits and that fulfil certain social roles.

### **1. The Mutual Orientation to the Other that is Specific to Face-to-face Interactions Within the *We*-relationships**

A common intersubjective world, accessible to both individuals partaking in a face-to-face interaction, is built from material provided by the mesh of constant face-to-face interactions between the members of society and by concrete common experiences lived in *We-Relationships* or *Mutual-Tuning-in Relations*.<sup>10</sup> The *We*-

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<sup>8</sup> Overall, Schutz (1967, p. 9) emphasizes, „Living in the world, we live with others and for others, orienting our lives to them“. Ritzer (2003), 361.

<sup>9</sup> "Each of (the social world's) sphere and regions is both a way of perceiving and a way of understanding the subjected experiences of others". Selfhood and sociality are thus conjoined in a "dialectic of intersubjectivity" (Schutz 1964, p.145), which takes shape from *They-relationships* as well as *We-relationships*. In the end, Schutz scopus shows how thoroughly "They" and "We" are implicated with one another." Ritzer (2003), 361.

<sup>10</sup> "The beginning point for an analysis of the intersubjective world is the *We*-relationship I share with those fellow-men with whom I participate in direct spatial-temporal encounter - my consociates. The experience of the *We* is primordial. It is gained by the presence of men in the world, not by

type relationship models the structure of face-to-face situations of human interactions, containing the essential characteristics for any social relation, and it is the only kind of dialogic relation in which we may find the intentional reciprocal orientation of individuals towards each other.<sup>11</sup> Interhuman relations of the *We*-type imply the reciprocation of the orientation towards the interlocutor, the sharing of one's thoughts and worldview realized in the „here and now“ present, the augmentation of knowledge on the other and on the surrounding environment, and the construction of a common world based on an already recognized and shared structure of relevance.<sup>12</sup>

The reciprocal orientation towards the other presupposes my direct experience of the other considered as a conscious person, an individuality coexisting with me in spatial and temporal proximity, having life and consciousness similar to mine.<sup>13</sup>

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induction or a theoretical proof. We come here to an experiential bedrock of the social: the *We* of direct, shared, face-to-face encounter is, from the standpoint of the ego's participation in the social world, an experience *sui generis*." Natanson (1970), 109.

"Rather, "the world of the *We* is not private to either of us, but is our world, the one common intersubjective world which is right there in front of us. It is only from the face-to-face relationship, from the common lived experience of the world in the *We*, that the intersubjective world can be constituted. This alone is the point from which it can be deduced."" Natanson (1970), 110.

"Two reciprocal Thou-orientations form a *We*-relation, the nucleus of the social world, 'the systemic root of a shared world' (Natanson, 1977: 110)." Muzzetto (2006), 20.

<sup>11</sup> „Hence, we may say that concrete social relations in face-to-face situations are founded upon the pure *We*-relation. Not only is the latter logically prior to the former in the sense that it contains the essential features of any such social relation; the grasp of the specific traits of the partner which is an element of concrete social relations presupposes the community of space and time which characterizes the pure *We*-relation. The pure *We*-relation may be thus also considered as a formal concept designating the structure of concrete social relations in the face-to-face situation." Schutz (1976), 28.

„Schutz, in his phenomenological studies on the social world, has systematically analysed the nature of social relationships between individuals, and has arrived at an originating point involving intersubjectivity. This point is described by what he calls the Pure *We*-relationship." Grinnell (1983), 185.

„All the other manifold social relationships are derived from the originary experiencing of the totality of the Other's self in the community of time and space. Any theoretical analysis of the notion of »environment« – one of the least clarified terms used in present social sciences – would have to start from the face-to-face relation as a basic structure of the world of daily life." Schutz (1945), 221.

<sup>12</sup> „Third, and most important, there is thereby constituted a »*We*-relation« – a relation that transcends both of the individually unique biographical situations- in terms of which you and I, »*We*« share in a living present, which is our living present, the thoughts embodied in your speech." Zaner (1961), 82.

<sup>13</sup> „An essential feature of this »Thou-orientation« is that the other person exist, but not that he have characteristics of one kind or another." As Schutz (1967 p. 163) puts it, „It is the pure mode in which I am aware of another human being as a person". Grinnell (1983), 188.



Therefore, the orientation towards the other is a meaningful form of communication taking place between individuals that recognize each other and relate to one another as subjects, being open one towards the other as well as towards the significance of their individual actions; in other words, they have unconditional trust in each other.<sup>14</sup>

Openness towards the other implies preoccupation for him, caring for what happens inside and outside him, with the same attention and interest that he has for his own self, as well as attention to and responsibility for one's own actions, in order to obtain the desired response from the other,<sup>15</sup> proving the efficiency of the interaction.<sup>16</sup> The open orientation towards the other maintains and sustains the possibility of reciprocation from the other, the possibility that the other will adopt the same attitude, preoccupation and interest towards me, in other words it offers

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„Through the turning towards the Other which Schutz calls Thou-orientation, I apprehend the Other directly, as a person, as a being like me. The Thou-orientation is a universal form in which an Other is experienced »in person«” (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973: 62). „This is how I apprehend the Other's subjectivity.” Muzetto (2006), 19.

„To say that the world is experienced as »ours« from the outset is to hold that my fellow-man is initially recognized as a »someone« (not a »something«) and, further, a someone like me. In my face-to-face encounter with the Other, it is he as person who is grasped rather than a creature with the anatomical features which permit the human observer to classify him as a member of the same genus. It is in what Schutz terms the »Thou-orientation« that the Other is experienced as a person: I am already Thou-oriented from the moment that I recognize an entity which I directly experience as a fellow-man (as a Thou), attributing life and consciousness to him. However, we must be quite clear that we are not here dealing with a conscious judgment. This is a prepredicative experience in which I become aware of a fellow human being as a person.” Natanson (1970), 103.

<sup>14</sup> „In-order-to become aware of such a situation, I must consciously pay attention to a fellow-man, to a human being confronting me in person. We shall term this awareness *Thou-orientation*.” Schutz (1976), 24.

„The Other must make it possible for me to respond, and I must make it possible in advance for him to appeal, by my very being open to him. This »must« expresses the condition without which the We-relation could not arise: »being open to« or availability. By »giving credit to« or »keeping faith with« the Other, as a Thou, a genuinely creative reciprocity becomes possible. This »mutual tuning-in relation«, then, whose fundamental stratum is the interlocking of time dimensions, becomes an interlocking of mutually recognizing actions, that is, a mutual tuning-in of reciprocal concern: love.” Zaner (1961), 93.

<sup>15</sup> „Thus the genuine appeal is a free act, »without strings«. The We-relation stands under the possibility which is essential to it, of failure; it is accompanied by a fundamental risk, and therefore it is constituted as a test, or trial (*épreuve*); for this reason it is essentially subject to betrayal, by the Other as well as by myself.” Zaner (1961), 92.

<sup>16</sup> „Accordingly, to be open to the Other as a Thou, and thus to the subjective meaning of his actions, is possible only in so far as I »give him credit«, at the outset and without strings for being a person; that is, to be open to him is to care what happens to him as himself. I must make it possible in the first place for the Other to become himself; what happens after depends on this.” Zaner (1961), 92.

the other the necessary means to answer my expectations and to be, and remain, open towards me.<sup>17</sup>

### **a) The Access to the Other's Subjectivity. Understanding the Subjective Significance of My Partner's Actions Within the Dialogical We-relationship**

*a.1. Direct observations. The analyse of the verbal and non-verbal corporal clues of my dialogue partner as a mark of his expressiveness*

Face-to-face interaction gives me access to the subjectivity of the other, enabling me to obtain a pure experience of him (the experience of his personhood) considered as a conscious human being similar to me, without permitting direct access to the specific content of this conscience.<sup>18</sup> I acknowledge and accept that despite the fact that we live in the same common world of daily life, each individual is unique in his biographical situation, distinct from all others in his thought and in his subjective life, each having his own distinct experiences, his own interiority, his own points of view, his own system of relevance.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> „Holding myself open to the Other, I hold out to him the possibility for his own being open to me. Care, in this sense, is precisely a creative reciprocity in which, by my »tuning-in« to the Other, and his to me, I in some way make it possible for him to respond freely to me: caring for him, I make it possible for him to be able to care for me (and, dialectically for himself). I collaborate in his freedom and he in mine, and it is precisely through freedom that he is truly Other and I truly myself.” Zaner (1961), 93.

<sup>18</sup> „All experience of social reality is founded on the fundamental axiom positing the existence of other beings »like me« (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973: 61). I know – all of us who live in the natural attitude 'know' – with absolute certainty that the Other is similar to me and is endowed with a body and a consciousness like I am. Yet, even in the sphere of the everyday world within my actual reach and representing my centre of reality, I can directly assure myself only of the existence of the Other's body, not of his consciousness, to which I have no direct access. Nevertheless, I assume with absolute certainty that the Other is a psychophysical unit. I interpret the changes I see in the Other's body as signs of a conscious experience. I 'know' that the lived experience is 'co-present'.” Muzetto (2006), 19.

<sup>19</sup> „»How is a common world«, Schutz asks, »in terms of common intentionalities possible? « How, that is to say, does it come about that in spite of the fact that I, being »here« and the centre »O« for a system of coordinates defining my surrounding world, and you, being »there« and the centre »O« for a similar set of coordinates defining your surrounding world (you forming a part of my surrounding world and me forming a part of yours)- how do we come to have something in common (an object, a project, ultimately a common world)? How is it possible that although I cannot live in your seeing of things, cannot feel your love and hatred, cannot have an immediate and direct perception of your mental life as it is for you- how is it possible that I can nevertheless share your thoughts, feelings and attitudes? For Schutz the »problem« of intersubjectivity is here encountered in its full force.” Zaner (1961), 75–76.

Starting from here, I may understand the other, relate to him and form an opinion on him, in function of how he appears to me. I do not have access to what goes on in his mind nor to what reasons guide his actions. I may only observe his reactions, his non-verbal expressions and the behaviour he adopts during face-to-face interactions with me, trying to decipher the subjective significances of his actions and the interest he is investing in our conversation and in me as a dialogue partner. Each action and experience lived by someone has only one true subjective significance, the way in which it really is perceived by its author. I may approximate this significance only through interior reflection and analysis of the verbal and non-verbal messages emitted by him during face-to-face interaction. The subjective significance perceived by each of the members of the interaction can never be perfectly identical with that perceived by the other participant, or, for that matter, by an outside observer, since each individual, in his uniqueness, has a unique vantage point, a unique perspective, lodged in his individual experience.<sup>20</sup>

I participate in the other's conscious life the moment I am engaged in a concrete *We*-type relationship and am interacting face-to-face with that other, who is present in front of me with a maximum of symptoms of his subjectivity.<sup>21</sup> To participate in the other's conscious life and in the construction of his verbal experiences is not the same as talking with the other. To talk with the other means to transmit messages and to receive information in return. For participating in the construction of the other's verbal experiences inside a *We*-type relationship, I must not only be attentive and receptive to the information I'm receiving, but I also must reach an understanding of the other's subjective interpretation and significance of his own words and experiences.<sup>22</sup>

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„But Schutz asks, is then communication, whether by means of the spoken word, the expressive gesture, or a non-cognitive communicative scheme (such as music)- or does communication presuppose, on the contrary, the existence of a more fundamental social interaction, which would then be the basic intersubjective connection between man and fellowman? This question is obviously central, not only for philosophy but also for the social sciences in general.” Zaner (1961), 76.

<sup>20</sup> „This definitive circumstance means social scientists need to remain vividly aware of how the meaning of my action necessarily differs for the actor, for the actor's partner in a *We*-relationship, and for the observer who is not a participant in that relationship (Schutz, 1962, p. 24). We have already seen that lived *we*-relationships vary enormously in immediacy, intimacy, and intensity, so that the »outside« observer and the »inside« participant are more or less dissimilar in their points of view. They cannot make precisely the same objective sense of the actor's subjective meaning. Their respective positions entitle them to differing degrees of familiarity with and knowledge of the actor's relevancies, biographical situation, and typical in-order-to and because motives.” Ritzer (2003), 369.

<sup>21</sup> „This relationship in which the partners are aware of each other and sympathetically participate in each other's lives, for however short a time, Schutz calls the »Pure *We*-relationship«.” Grinnell (1983), 188.

<sup>22</sup> „If you speak to me, for example, I understand the objective sign-meaning of the words. But, since I »participate« in the step-by-step constitution of your speaking experiences in the contemporaneity of the *We*-relation, I may also apprehend the subjective configuration of meaning in which the words stand for you.” Schutz (1976), 25–26.

The experiences shared inside the living present of face-to-face interactions do not belong exclusively to either of the members of the interaction, belonging to both in common. I will relate to these experiences as to indicators of the subjective intentions of the other, based on my experience of the other as a peer who shares experiences with me inside the spatial and temporal community, which is the *We*-type relationship. This means that in order to be able to understand the subjective configuration of the words the other is transmitting, it is necessary that both of us situate ourselves in a *We*-type relationship.

Empirical observation of the other will enable me to associate aspects of my own consciousness with aspects of the other's consciousness. Each may understand the other in the „here and now“, in the immediate flux of his own subjective consciousness, on the basis of empirical observation of the behaviour, gestures and attitudes manifested by the other during the face-to-face interaction.<sup>23</sup> During face-to-face communication, thought is articulated through verbal expressions which are necessarily accompanied by non-verbal corporal clues (the intonation of the voice, facial expressions, gestures, body posture, the direction of the gaze) that, if observed, may be attributed meaning.

The objective aspect of the face-to-face communicative act, in both its verbal and non-verbal elements, enables the bridging of the intersubjective gap separating the distinct consciousness of the dialogue partners situated in the *We*-type relationship, leading to a quasi-simultaneity or synchronization of their thought processes.<sup>24</sup> This is the experience of an *alter ego* that is to be found in the simultaneity of the concrete present, described in the work of Alfred Schutz as „the general thesis of the existence of an *alter ego*“.<sup>25</sup> Due to this simultaneity, both of

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<sup>23</sup> „But only in the ongoing *We*-relation may I directly apprehend the outcome of my partner's plans by witnessing the course of his action.“ Schutz (1976), 31.

<sup>24</sup> „The social relationship, therefore, consists of a mutual *Thou*-orientation between the person and the other. It takes place in the »face-to-face« situation that is characterized by »spatial and temporal immediacy« between the individuals. It is the occasion when there is an actual simultaneity with each other of two separate streams of consciousness“ (Schutz 1967, p. 163), „as was described earlier“. Grinnell (1983), 188.

<sup>25</sup> „Only in my straightforward attitude do I apprehend the Other as himself present, given. Thus, for Schutz, the alter ego is that subjective stream of thought that can be experienced in its living present. I experience the Other straightforwardly in the living present as that subjective stream of thought with which I share this present in simultaneity; that is we grow older together. This experience of the alter ego in living simultaneity Schutz calls »the general thesis of the alter ego's existence«. The thesis implies, he goes on, that this stream of thought that is not mine shows the same fundamental structure as my own consciousness. This means that the other is like me, capable of acting and thinking; that his stream of thoughts shows the same through and through connectedness as mine. ... It means, furthermore, that the other can live, as I do, in his either acts or thoughts, directed towards their objects or turn to his own

us experience our actions as a series of events that takes place in an exterior time, as well as in the interior time of the perception of each, the two dimensions of time joining in a single flux, the concrete present specific to the reality of daily life.<sup>26</sup> The expressed thoughts of the other become through exteriorization a common element of the living present, which both dialogue partners share during face-to-face interaction.

Understanding specific aspects of the other's conscious life as elements of concrete face-to-face social relations is interdependent on the commonality of space and time as essential aspects of the *We*-type relationship. We both share a connection between us in the space-time commonality offered by daily reality. In a *We*-type relationship, the self of the other reflects mine, me being a part of the other's world while the other is a part of mine, each one's own experiences becoming our, shared in the exterior world of daily life. In this case, we may say that the two partners grow old together, sharing each other in the interior and exterior dimensions of the concrete present.<sup>27</sup> My experience of the other is a direct one for as long as I am involved with him in a *We*-type relationship, in which I participate to the common flux of our shared experience, I recognize the other as

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acting and thinking that, consequently, he has the genuine experience of growing old with me, as I know that I do with him. Thus I share the *We*-sphere straightforwardly, but I apprehend the *I*-sphere only reflectively." Zaner (1961), 83–84.

„Therefore, I can experience the lived behaving of the other (i.e., in the flow of duration) even though it is inaccessible to the other. Similarly, the other can experience my behaving even though it is inaccessible to me. As a result, I can define the alter ego as »that subjective stream of thought which can be experienced in its vivid present«. One's experience of the other's stream of consciousness in the vivid present, Schutz (1962, p. 174) calls the »general thesis of the alter ego's existence«.” Grinnell (1983), 187.

<sup>26</sup> „In simultaneity we experience the working action as a series of events in outer and inner time, unifying both dimensions into a single flux which shall be called the living present.” Zaner (1961), 81.

„This sharing of the other's flux of experiences in inner time, this living through a living present in common, constitutes the mutual tuning-in relationship, the experience of the »We« which is at the foundation of all possible communication, »and thus of intersubjectivity.«” Zaner (1961), 81.

<sup>27</sup> „In the face-to-face situation the fellowman and I were partners in a concrete *We*-relation. He was present in person, with a maximum of symptoms by which I could apprehend his conscious life. In the community of space and time we were attuned to one another; his Self reflected mine; his experiences and my experiences formed a common stream, *our* experience; we grew older together.” Schutz (1976), 38.

„My participating in simultaneity in the ongoing process of the Other's communicating establishes therefore a new dimension of time. He and I, *we* share, while the process lasts, a common vivid present, *our* vivid present, which enables him and me to say: »*We* experienced this occurrence together«. By the *We*-relation, thus established, we both – he, addressing himself to me, and I, listening to him, – are living in our mutual vivid present, directed toward the thought to be realized in and by the communicating process. *We grow older together.*” Schutz (1945), 219–220.

a subject and I am attentive and receptive to what the other transmits me.<sup>28</sup> Now I reflect on our common experiences, on the other and on the relation between us, I no longer have direct access to the other's experiences, distancing myself from the other, severing the link of the *We*-type relationship and, implicitly, the face-to-face interaction.<sup>29</sup> In this situation, I shall no longer consider my peer as a fellow subject equal with me in rights and freedoms, as being actively involved in a *We*-type relationship and as a dialogue partner with whom I was sharing similar experiences. The other will become a simple object for my thoughts, while I shall no longer harbour any interest on what he may try to transmit me.<sup>30</sup>

*a.2. The reciprocity of perspectives. „To take the role of the other“ in order to see things from his point of view*

During daily life, the individual is capable of reaching understanding of the other's actions only by placing himself in the other's place and imagining that he would be in the same situation as the other, performing the same actions, determined by the same motives as the other. In order to be able to adopt the point of view of the other, the individual temporarily has to become, from a participant in face-to-face interaction, an astute observer of the other's manifest actions as dialogue partner.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> „My experience of the fellow-man is direct as long as I am straightforwardly engaged in the *We*-relation, that is, as long as I participate in the common stream of our experiences. If I think and reflect about our experience, this directness is broken. I must interrupt my straightforward engagement in the *We*-relation. In a manner of speaking, I must step outside the face-to-face situation. While I was engaged in the *We*-relation, I was busy attending to you; in order to think about it, I must break off the immediate rapport between us. Before I can reflect about our common experience its vivid phases, in which we were jointly engaged, must have come to a stop.“ Schutz (1976), 26–27.

<sup>29</sup> „Straightforward engagement in the *We*-relation is possible only in the ongoing experiences of a face-to-face situation, while reflection is *ex post facto*. It begins after the concrete *We*-relation has come to an end.“ Schutz (1976), 27.

<sup>30</sup> „The more I am involved in reflecting upon the common experience, the less directly do I live it and the remoter is the living, concrete human being who is my partner in the *We*-relation. The fellow-man whom I experience directly while I am busily engaged in our common experience becomes a mere object of my thought as I begin to reflect about us.“ Schutz (1976), 27.

<sup>31</sup> „An utterance that momentarily upsets or disorients a partner in a close *We*-relationship, typically reflects at least a short term disjuncture between the relevancies of the speaker and those of the listener. Beyond such relationships, the failure to understand – that is, the failure to grasp the subjective meaning of an Other's action – points to a standing divergence between Ego's and Other's systems of relevancies. In order to understand the Other, Ego must temporarily set aside his or her own relevancies enough to adopt the Other's point of view and thus grasp what she or he meant by a given action or a course of actions.“ Ritzer (2003), 367.

Understanding the other's action requires one to "take the role of the other", as George Herbert Mead has written in "Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviourist", as well as Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, in "The Social Construction of Reality". In the works of Alfred Schutz this concept appears as „reciprocation of perspectives", which describes the process enabling individuals to construct an intersubjective world,<sup>32</sup> by starting from accepting the assumption of the uniqueness of all individuals, each with his own opinions and perspectives on both his peers and the social world. Even if the access to the subjectivity of the other is a direct one and even if both of us are sharing the same space-time dimensions, it does not mean that I can transpose myself in the other's person, experiencing what the other feels or thinks.<sup>33</sup>

The reciprocation of perspectives requires that both observer and observed share the same system of relevance, homogenous in its structure and content, by which they assume their stance towards every action. In the absence of such a shared system of relevance, it will not be possible for individuals to reach a common understanding of the subjective significance they attribute their actions, each one believing in the rationality of their own actions, while distrusting the correctitude of those made by the other.<sup>34</sup> What is relevant for one of the individuals might not be for another, due to their different practical purposes. In such a case, the individuals cannot reach an understanding of the subjective meaning of each other's actions, because their systems of relevance are in disjunction, instead of being joined, shared, as they are in a *We*-type relationship.

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<sup>32</sup> „The third postulate – the »reciprocity of perspectives« – is designed to demonstrate how individuals, despite being separated by time and space, manage to constitute an intersubjective world." Costelloe (1996), 254.

<sup>33</sup> „As fellow-man, however, I can share a great deal with the Other: I can gain direct access to him as a Thou in the *We*-relationship and I can share a certain dimension of time through the fact that my alter ego and I grow older together. But even in these immediacies, I do not »become« the Other nor do I enter mysteriously into his lived experience. Sharing is not invading." Natanson (1970), 113.

<sup>34</sup> „Schutz (1962, p. 29) emphasized that the general thesis of the reciprocity of perspectives ... presupposes that the observed and the observer are sharing a system of relevancies sufficiently homogeneous in structure and content for the practical purpose involved. If this is not the case, then a course of action which is perfectly rational from the point of view of the actor may appear as non-rational to the partner or observer or vice versa." Ritzer (2003), 366.

### **b) The Access to my Own Subjectivity. The Importance of the Reciprocity of Perspectives Within the Interior Self-reflection**

The necessity for the reciprocation of perspectives and for taking on the role of the other in order to understand the subjective significance of the other's actions underline the essential part played by our peers both during daily life interactions as well as at the moment when an individual may gain access to his own subjectivity through interior reflection, exercised both on his own person as well as on his interactions with others during face-to-face interactions, placing himself in the place of the others and trying to see the situation through their points of view. This attests the fact that the individual is never utterly alone, neither in his daily social life, nor in his own interiority.

Face-to-face interactions are the only kind of interactions through which I may gain access both to the subjectivity of the other and to my own. Each one may have access to his own self, his own subjective consciousness only through retrospective interior reflection on past experiences that have made their mark upon him, stored in his long time memory. When engaged in self-reflection, I shall have to take into account the image I have formed on the other during our face-to-face dialogue and to consider also the other's opinion, his point of view on me, which the other has directly expressed at that moment, even if I am aware that there is a strong possibility that our perception of what happened in our environment has changed with age.<sup>35</sup> I can remember the other's opinion based on the symptoms of his subjectivity, still alive in my memory. The facility with which I can recall the body language expressions transmitted by the other during our face-to-face dialogue is due to the benefit of the *We*-type relationship, which allows both partners the possibility of verifying, correcting and enriching their knowledge of each other, as well as that of their social world, by having lived alongside each other for a certain time span.

My self-knowledge is a detailed one, since I have access to the memory of my past, to the experiences I have accumulated in time and to the events that have marked me. It is a retrospective knowledge, based on interior reflection upon one's self. However, the symptoms of my subjectivity are not as accessible to my

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<sup>35</sup> „When I have a recollection of you ... I remember you as you were in a concrete *We*-relationship with me. I remember you as a unique person in a concrete situation, as one who interacted with me in the mode of »mutual mirroring« described above. I remember you as a person vividly present to me with a maximum of symptoms of inner life, as one whose experiences I witnessed in the actual process of formation. I remember you as one whom I was for a time coming to know better and better. I remember you as one whose conscious life flowed in one stream with my own. I remember you as one whose consciousness was continuously changing in content.” Ritzer (2003), 359.



introspection as those of the other are through empirical observation on the body language expressions transmitted by the other during the living „here and now” present from inside a *We*-type relationship.<sup>36</sup> For this reason, it is considered that the pure sphere of the *We*-type relationship concerns the fact that I know the other better than he knows himself and vice versa. I have immediate access to the subjectivity of the other and a better knowledge on him due to the meeting of our gazes and the reciprocation of our mirroring in each other’s eyes, these being possible only in the framework of face-to-face interaction from inside the *We*-type relationship. Because of this, it is considered that each one is the witness of the birth the individual experiences of one's dialogue partner, and of the reciprocal orientation towards the other.<sup>37</sup>

## 2. *They*-orientation Within the Social Interactions Between Individuals as Contemporaries

Our experience of others becomes distanced or anonymous when, despite the fact that we turn our attention towards them, there is no face-to-face interaction. In such a case, the other is no longer considered as being my partner in a *We*-type relationship, but only as a contemporary of mine.<sup>38</sup> The relationship between individuals as merely contemporaries is essentially characterized by being oriented towards *Them*.

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<sup>36</sup> „Since I perceive the continuous manifestations of my partner's conscious life I am continuously attuned to it. One highly important consequence of this state of affairs is the fact that my partner is given to me more vividly and, in a sense, more »directly« than I apprehend myself. Since I »know« my past, I »know« myself in infinitely greater detail than anyone else. Yet this is knowledge in retrospect, in reflection; it is not direct and vivid experience. Hence, while I am straightforwardly engaged in the business of life, my own self is not present to me in an equally wide range of symptoms as is a fellow-man whom I confront in the Here and Now of a concrete *We*-relation.” Schutz (1976), 29.

<sup>37</sup> „The lived *we*-relationship stunning possibilities. It means that I can »keep peace with each moment of (my partner’s) stream of consciousness as it transpires« thus making me »better attuned to him (or her) than I am to myself«; it means that whether we join hands or not, we do join glances, eventuating in an »interlocking of glances« and a »thousand – faceted mirroring of each other«; it means that we »witness the literal coming-to-birth of each other’s experiences«.” Ritzer (2003), 35.

<sup>38</sup> „... the ego is able to advance from the experience of the Thou in the *We*-relationship to the increasing stages of anonymization which mark its genesis and destiny as a contemporary with other contemporaries, as a successor to predecessors, and as a predecessor to successors.” Natanson (1970), 111.

The orientation towards *Them* is the mode in which our awareness grasps contemporary individuals with whom we have never interacted until present or such individuals with whom there has been face-to-face interaction inside a *We*-type relationship, but it was since discontinued.<sup>39</sup> My partner from the *We*-type relationship becomes my contemporary when the face-to-face interaction ceases. At that instant, the other disappears from the concretely lived present of my awareness, although the link that has already been established between us persists, as our knowledge of and feelings for each other continue to exist.<sup>40</sup> We continue to share the same temporality even when spatial contiguity ceases. I know that he continues to exist in the same present as it is here (for me; but we do no longer share the same physical environment, being in different places from each other) and now (which we continue to share as contemporaries).

We both continue to exist in the same present of now, time flowing the same for both of us, but we no longer have access to each other's subjectivity, no longer being in the face-to-face interaction of the present of here. The relation between people that are not present simultaneously in the same place is different from face-to-face interaction, where the emphasis was on the reciprocal mirroring of gazes and on having direct experience of the dialogue partner, an experience that persisted in its effectiveness even after the actual interaction has ceased.

At the end of the face-to-face interaction, when the other becomes merely a contemporary, from being my peer in a *We*-type relationship, I cease to have direct access to his subjective life. When I am experiencing the other as merely a contemporary, it is an experience of an abstracted individual, characterized by a high degree of anonymity and impersonality, while the immediateness of the experience is greatly diminished, lacking the directness of the face-to-face situation.<sup>41</sup> I can no longer immediately experience the existence of the other, lacking direct access to

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<sup>39</sup> „Contemporaries are not present in person, but I do know of their co-existence with me in time: I know that the flux of their experiences is simultaneous with mine. This knowledge, however, is necessarily indirect. Hence, the contemporary is not a Thou in the pregnant sense that this term has in a *We*-relation. These terms describe the social topography of my Here and Now, whose contents are, of course, continuously changing. The reference point is always my present experiences. A mere contemporary may be a former fellow-man, and I may be counting on meeting him again face-to-face in a recurrent pattern.” Schutz (1976), 42.

<sup>40</sup> „As a rule we see no reason why a fellow-man who was a partner in a concrete *We*-relation, with whom we interacted, whom we have loved or hated, should turn into something »different« merely because he happens to be absent at the moment. We still love him or hate him, as the case may be, and nothing in the routine of everyday life compels us to notice that our experience of him underwent a significant structural modification.” Schutz (1976), 38.

<sup>41</sup> „In contrast to the way I experience the conscious life of fellowmen in face-to-face situations, the experiences of contemporaries appear to me more or less *anonymous* processes.” Schutz (1976), 43.

his individuality and uniqueness. Since we cannot directly interact with those who are our contemporaries, our understanding of them must be a deductive and discursive one, made up out of interpretative schema that correspond only to the social world in general and to our set of expectations with regard to them. These expectations stem from the previously had face-to-face interactions with the respective other and will be either confirmed or denied by the next face-to-face interaction with him.<sup>42</sup> I have to start from the premise that the other has remained unchanged since the last time I saw him, although I am theoretically aware that he must have accumulated various new experiences while we lacked direct contact. Without the concrete quality of the face-to-face interaction, I can relate to him only in this way, until such time as we meet again face-to-face, giving me the possibility to confirm or modify my presuppositions.<sup>43</sup>

The *They*-type relationship refers to anonymous individuals that are framing each other reciprocally under a certain typology, as being a certain kind of individuals, instead of considering each other in their concreteness, as subjects whose consciousness may be directly experienced in a *We*-type relationship.<sup>44</sup> In other words, if in *We*-type relationships the interactions are taking place between concrete singular subjects, each unique in their biographical situations that cannot be generalized, in *They*-type relationships the interactions are taking place between types of individuals considered as anonymous, typified, the uniqueness of whom is disregarded, and who are being assigned to a certain social group with whom they presumably share common passions, activities, responsibilities etc.<sup>45</sup> The other is

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<sup>42</sup> „I ascribe, therefore, to my partner a scheme of typifications and expectations relative to me as a personal ideal type. A social relation between contemporaries consists in the subjective chance that the reciprocally ascribed typifying schemes (and corresponding expectations) will be used congruently by the partners.” Schutz (1976), 53.

<sup>43</sup> „I hold on to the familiar image I have of you. I take it for granted that you are, as I have known you before. Until further notice I hold invariant that segment of my stock of knowledge which concerns you and which I have built up in face-to-face situations, that is, until I receive information to the contrary.” Schutz (1976), 39.

<sup>44</sup> „The object of the *They*-orientation is my knowledge of social reality in general, of the conscious life of other human beings in general, regardless of whether the latter is imputed to a single individual or not. The object of the *They*-orientation is not the existence of a concrete man, not the ongoing conscious life of a fellow-man which is directly experienced in the *We*-relation, not the subjective configuration of meaning which I apprehend if experiences of a fellow-man constitute themselves before my eyes.” Schutz (1976), 43.

<sup>45</sup> „The ideal type is anonymous in relation to any existing person. Hence, the contemporary – who can be apprehended only as an ideal type – is anonymous in this sense.” Schutz (1976), 48.

„As social relations in face-to-face situations are based on the »pure« *Thou*-orientation, so are social relations between contemporaries based on the »pure« form of the *They*-orientation. This means that while face-to-face social relations are constituted in the reciprocal mirroring of direct

no longer considered as a subject, being reduced to the status of an object, an animated utensil, and our relationship itself becomes typified, empty of life, thus meaningless.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, considering concrete individuals as individual types has its uses in orienting oneself through society, since ideal types are more easily understood as concrete living individuals are, because the common stock of social knowledge available to all members of society offers detailed information on ideal individual types and not on actual individual people with their subjective life. The other as my contemporary remains relevant to me only insofar as he proves to be a typical performer of the social role I have attributed to him, therefore for as long as I remain oriented towards him as towards an individual type in general and not as a specific individual.

If in *We*-type relationships, the emphasis is on understanding the subjective meaning of the other's actions, in *They*-type relationships it lies on typifying the behaviour, actions and attitudes of my contemporary. I will deduct and typify both the behaviour and the actions of my contemporary in function of the characteristics of the type of individual under which I have classified him.

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experiences of the Other, the Other is given only as an ideal type in social relations between contemporaries. A person involved in a social relation with a contemporary must be content with reckoning that the Other whom he grasps by a more or less anonymous typification is in his turn oriented to him by means, of typification. Social relations involving mere contemporaries have a hypothetical character." Schutz (1976), 53.

„Only in the face-to-face relation, however fugitive and superficial it may be, is the Other encountered as a unique individual, with his own biographically determined situation. In all other dimensions of the social world, the Other is experienced and apprehended as »typical«, in terms of typical motives, attitudes and behaviour. Nevertheless, Schutz emphasizes, even in the face-to-face relation of consociates, the partners enter into social action with only a part of their respective personalities; that is, you and I encounter and have to do with one another most often in terms of »social roles«." Zaner (1961), 88.

<sup>46</sup> „In the They-relation my partners are not concrete and unique individuals, but types." Schutz (1976), 45.

„In order to grasp the concept of fullness, it seems fruitful to turn to the work of Gabriel Marcel, who, in emphasizing that the concepts of »the full« and »the empty« are far more descriptive of human reality than any other, seems to use these concepts in much the same way that Schutz intends them. Similarly, Marcel has shown throughout is work that in so far as I regard the Other as a mere object (in Schutz's terms, as »typical« or »anonymous«), I tend to ignore him as this person, and he becomes »just anyone«. As a consequence of this reduction our relationship more and more »empty« (»typified« or »anonymous«), my fellowman becomes typified and consequently myself am typified (absorbed in »playing a role«, that is, in »shamming«). Conversely, the more I am able to understand him from his subjectivity (the subjective meaning is actions have for him), or as a Thou, the more intimate he becomes to me: »our« relationship becomes »fuller«, we are truly »with« one another and we confront each other as persons." Zaner (1961), 91.

## Conclusion

The *They*-type relationship, in which I consider my contemporary as an anonymous individual, part of a category of individuals having in common certain characteristic traits, may become again a *We*-type relationship, but this last one cannot be identical with the pure relationship of before, in which we have been involved as dialogue partners.

The passage from the *They*-type relationship back to the *We*-type one takes place in the moment we find ourselves again in a face-to-face situation where I will have to apply the typifications I am using on my contemporary who, in this case, is proven a concrete individual, whose conscious life unfolds before my eyes. As this interaction is happening in the „here and now“ present, I will have to consider my contemporary as both a type of individual and as singular.<sup>47</sup> My access to his conscious life will not be a direct one, as it was in the case of the pure *We*-type relationship, requiring an act of interpretation.<sup>48</sup> In other words, we find ourselves again in a face-to-face situation where each of us will have to correlate our presuppositions and expectations concerning each other with the actuality of the other's presence.

Since memory tends to abstract the lived encounter, classifying the encountered other as an intelligible instance of an ideal type, this typification that the other has underwent through in my consciousness in the interim of his actual absence from face-to-face interaction must be overcome for me to be able to relate to him as to a living subjectivity (the same requirement standing for the other as well).

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<sup>47</sup> „The objective matrix of meaning which originated in the construction of typical experiences of typical contemporaries, coordinated with typical performances, may be retranslated into subjective configurations of meaning. I apply the typifications that are part of my stock of knowledge to concrete fellow men in face-to-face situations. I apprehend the fellow-men as individuals »like others« of a designated type. At the same time, these fellow men, as partners in a *We*-relation, are experienced directly. Therefore, they are »people like others« and yet unique individuals, endowed with a conscious life which goes on before my eyes. This double status of a fellow-man is the basis of a further, more complex transposition: the contemporary who is basically apprehended by me as a type is conceived of as an individual endowed with a »genuine« ongoing conscious life. However, I do not grasp his conscious life directly, but only by an act of interpretation. Therefore, the contemporary ultimately remains a type whose consciousness, too, is »typical« and, in that sense, homogeneous.” Schutz (1976), 47.

<sup>48</sup> „The existence of the contemporary is not directly experienced, whether it be assumed, considered likely, or even taken for granted.” Schutz (1976), 48.

A passage from *They*-type to *We*-type relationship takes place, for example, in the case of an individual attending a stage play.<sup>49</sup> For as long as the staged performance happens, the individual, as spectator, is situated in face-to-face interaction with the actor on stage, but the actor will not relate to the individual spectator in a similar fashion, considering the respective spectator just as an anonymous individual, part of the public.

Another passage from *They*-type to *We*-type relationship is the one through which a new *We*-type relationship is established during a first face-to-face encounter. The other encountered here was previously just a contemporary, possibly utterly unknown, and hence completely anonymous with regard to his subjective character. My first impressions on the other are necessarily of a typifying kind, and these must be passed through in order to reach understanding of and contact with the subjectivity of the other.

As this interaction is happening in the „here and now“ present, I will have to consider my contemporary as both a type of individual and as singular. My access to his conscious life will not be a direct one, as it was in the case of the pure *We*-type relationship, requiring the interpretation of the symptoms of the other's subjectivity that are unfolding before me. A similar process, and a similar willingness to understand me, must take place on the other side. Finally, a common ground of shared values and interests must be found before the new *We*-type relationship may be established.

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<sup>49</sup> „In general, we must observe that the transition between the structure of *We*-relations and the structure of *They*-relations is fluid. When I attend a performance in a theatre, for example, I am face-to-face with the actor. Yet I am relevant for the actor merely as an anonymous member of the audience.“ Schutz (1976), 54.

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## ART AND ITS REFLECTIONS MOMENTS AND PORTRETS IN THE MIRROR

RAMONA NICOLETA ARIEȘAN\*

**ABSTRACT. Art and Its Reflections. Moments and Portrets in the Mirror.** This article is supposed to discuss the fact that art is a form of communication, that through it we are interconnected, that it is something mesmerizing that can be either very easy or very hard to understand. It all comes down to our perceptions, our perspectives that can change the way we see reality. It only takes a moment for the unthinkable to become reality. We all live a strange life in a strange world, but did our little experience and existence across the world and the universe teach us something? Or was it just in vain?

**Keywords:** *art, artwork, reflections, perception, connection*

### The Border and the Skyline between Art and the Artist

In a continuous escape of space and time, at the border and the skyline between art and the artist, we find our tumultuous origins, defragmenting the intense and deep surrounding reality. No chip is without its own ambiguity. We are composed of fragments that make up our own existence, and when they are fully understood, certain mental and spiritual states transgress and continue to be, to exist to take another form or substance, to adapt and to live. Each and every one of us is surrounded by several realities. Thus, they seem to represent important elements of life that deserve to be studied, understood, expressed and recorded.

„The art work opens up in its own way the Being of beings. This opening up, i.e., this deconcealing, i.e., the truth of beings, happens in the work. In the artwork, the truth of what is has set itself to work. Art is truth setting itself to work. What is truth itself that it sometimes comes to pass as art? What is this setting-itself-to-work?”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger, „The Origin of The Work of Art”, in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, transl. by Albert Hofstadter, Harper Colophon Books, New York, San Francisco, London, 1975. p. 39.



For centuries, art thanks to her reflections on humanity has evolved and changed both the world and her own perceptions on us and vice versa. A person is born and at some point dies but during that whole life feels the need, nearly constant, to make himself seen, heard, etc. There are ways and ways through which each of us is manifesting or trying to say something, but I think that art is the perfect tool through which we can do this.

„Truth is never gathered from objects that are present and ordinary. Rather, the opening up of the Open, and the clearing of what is, happens only as the openness is projected, sketched out, that makes its advent in thrownness. Truth, as the clearing and concealing of what is, happens in being composed, as a poet composes a poem. [...]The nature of art, on which both the art work and the artist depend, is the setting-itself-into-work of truth.”<sup>2</sup>

Art is a form of expression, a form of emotion. It is not only a cultural fact. It carries with it the passage towards creation: „*The Muse*”. The artist is free, indeterminate to express their own inner desires and experiences. A society lives in a body of time, of the spirit. The human kind represents art and art represents the human kind.

„The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist. Neither is without the other. Nevertheless, neither is the sole support of the other. In themselves and in their interrelations artist and work *are* each of them by virtue of a third thing which is prior to both, namely that which also gives artist and work of art their names – art.”<sup>3</sup>

Heidegger wonders [...] can art actually be an origin? Where and how does art exist? Art is nothing more than a word that is no longer true. If it is intangible and you cannot put your hands on it, it is as if it is not real, but in fact, it exists. For both Joyce and Proust, we remain suspended between time and memories. Time and space are discontinuous. Balzac was saying that the artist is loaded with a messianic force. Nothing brings us closer or somewhat closer to us than art does. As Heidegger said:

„The nature of art would then be this: the truth of beings setting itself to work. However, until now art presumably has had to do with the beautiful and beauty, and not with truth. The arts that produce such works are called the beautiful or fine

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 72–73.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 17.

arts, in contrast with the applied or industrial arts that manufacture equipment. In fine art the art itself is not beautiful, but is called so because it produces the beautiful. Truth, in contrast, belongs to logic. Beauty, however, is reserved for aesthetics.”<sup>4</sup>

Art must be. Art has to exist. We interconnect through it. Even though it creates some sort of paradox that does nothing but maybe give us another day, another tomorrow. It is a continuous flow that does not disturb our perpetual existence, but on the contrary, is the constant of time leading us towards innovation, creativity, and bringing us closer to one another. It is the inner space and the desire within us that goes through the moment, starting from our own perceptions, both inner and outer, regarding a vision over the world and over our existence, sometimes fragmented, fuelling the discovery of that inner reality and the subjective relativity of perception, which exists in the consciousness of the fragile nature of ephemeral in each of us.

„We inquire into the nature of art. Why do we inquire in this way? We inquire in this way in order to be able to ask more truly whether art is or is not an origin in our historical existence, whether and under what conditions it can and must be an origin. Such reflection cannot force art and its coming-to-be. Nevertheless, this reflective knowledge is the preliminary and therefore indispensable preparation for the becoming of art. Only such knowledge prepares its space for art, their way for the creators, and their location for the preservers.”<sup>5</sup>

Thus, art not only invites us to look at the world from a conformist or nonconformist point of view. As spectators or participants, we find ourselves either through painting, theatre, literature, freeing us from certain prejudices and constraints, perhaps some standards imposed by society or certain cultures. All these constitute a human show that can define the content of the moment, the need for self-assertion, the belief that art is part of the world in which we live. Heidegger said:

„We, however, have to take works as they are encountered by those who experience and enjoy them. However, even the much-vaunted aesthetic experience cannot get around the thingly aspect of the artwork. There is something stony in a work of architecture, wooden in a carving, coloured in a painting, spoken in a linguistic work, sonorous in a musical composition. The thingly element is so irremovably present in the artwork that we are compelled rather to say conversely that the architectural work is in stone, the carving is in wood, the painting in colour,

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 78.

the linguistic work in speech, the musical composition in sound. 'Obviously,' it will be replied. No doubt. But what is this self-evident thingly element in the work of art?"<sup>6</sup>

Silent and spontaneously, probably far from reality, the writer wants to say what he feels. Even if these writings contain a truth passer-by, they represent a step forward in the gradual process of evolution, a process only known by the author. He can remain silent, unreachable, but sure of himself. As a human being, he is heading towards his own horizon.

The question of Heidegger's being did not lead to an answer, but to a deadlock. She gave meaning to philosophy in the Western world; And gave, as a simple question, the depth of art [...], language, culture, even technique, and ultimately mankind.<sup>7</sup>

Heidegger would need a complete universal. Therefore, he found it in the people, in a privileged situation that belonged to the people. He performs the existential analysis of human law, different from Sartre, specifically as a step in understanding the true meaning of the creature, while Sartre makes the human existence a step towards a better analysis of the existence. Therefore, the search is for Heidegger: being-human-being, and for Sartre: human-being-human.

Maybe we all live a borrowed life, for just a few moments, months or years. Maybe everything that exists only in our imagination or the mere consciousness that creates some possible links between our existence and us. Morality is not a decision. There is no enlargement, without errors. Thus, through art, her reflections upon us can be one of the safest ways of communication with the exterior and the interior, with us and with the world.

„In such knowledge, which can only grow slowly, the question is decided whether art can be an origin and then must be a head start, or whether it is to remain a mere appendix and then can only be carried along as a routine cultural phenomenon.”<sup>8</sup>

For an artist, and not only, I believe there are a few degrees of freedom for a personal vision, and that probably this is the moment that the creator of faces comes into place. As with any work of art, there are certain strict criteria, generally related to the aesthetics of the work. The realism and the inner beauty conveyed

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> Constatntin, Noica, „Meditații introductive asupra lui Heidegger” (studiu introductiv), in Heidegger, Martin, *Originea operei de artă*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1995. p.17.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Heidegger, *op. cit.* p. 78.

through art can exceed certain limits that bear the experimental seductiveness of a new century, a new era in which we are surrounded by technology. The art world and art itself are having both an interior and exterior struggle. Representation, or through representation, we open a world of inspiration that is located at the border and the skyline between art and the artist.

„This knowledge becomes all the more necessary when we risk the attempt to bring to view and express in words the thingly character of the thing, the equipmental character of equipment, and the workly character of the work.”<sup>9</sup>

Any work of art, regardless of the category, has a story and a history. A story of its own, even if it is real or invented and reproduced by its shape. In the moment in which the artist exposes his excitement or imagination, he communicates with him and with us through an invisible touch, through a way of communication, which is the window to the soul, feeling shared through his own creation.

„Whenever art happens – that is, whenever there is a beginning – a thrust enters history, history either begins or starts over again. History means here not a sequence in time of events of whatever sort, however important. History is the transporting of a people into its appointed task as entrance into that people's endowment. Art is the setting-into-work of truth. In this proposition an essential ambiguity is hidden, in which truth is at once the subject and the object of the setting. However, subject and object are unsuitable names here. [...] Art is historical, and as historical, it is the creative preserving of truth in the work. Art happens as poetry.”<sup>10</sup>

Thus, you can open channels of communication that will stump for an undefined time any request or retrieval. Any artist in all his art has a ritual that will maintain the structure of its exposure in his own speech, the message that can be sent and received by the other.

„Are we in our existence historically at the origin? Do we know, which means do we give heed to, the nature of the origin? Or, in our relation to art, do we still merely make appeal to a cultivated acquaintance with the past?”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 77.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 78.

There are controversies, as in any field; there are limits that some believe they may not be exceeded, or boundaries that can somehow be passed, without you being noticed by the person next to you. This might be the way some artists are born and it may also be the way they find their own path leading to creation or maybe abandon, in which the idea of transposing might scare them or make them feel the need to distance themselves into something spiritual or something above that.

„In the work of art the truth of an entity has set itself to work. [...] The being of the being comes into the steadiness of its shining. The nature of art would then be this: the truth of beings setting itself to work.”<sup>12</sup>

Any observed or unobserved experience, any feeling and perception can lead to contradictions, to a point of view that starts from our daily mashup, made by our mind and our soul. Somewhere far away, whether we choose to admire, or to create art, we are somewhat interconnected and so communication, regardless of its form becomes possible for each of us. Art and its muses take us far away on a carpet so thin that almost makes us feel like we are floating above the various forms and texts or images created by us. Heidegger asks whether

„But then where in how is this general essence, so that art works are able to agree with it?”<sup>13</sup>

The artist is like a face maker, where it is about sculpture, painting or photography, theatre, literature and so on. Aesthetics speak for themselves, our own perceptions do the same, but then where does the concept of beautiful fit in, or the border and the skyline between art and the artist.

„In the work, the happening of truth is at work and, indeed, at work according to the manner of a work. Accordingly, the nature of art was defined to begin with as the setting-into-work of truth. Yet this definition is intentionally ambiguous. It says on the one hand: art is the fixing in place of a self-establishing truth in the figure. This happens in creation as the bringing forth of the unconcealedness of what is. Setting-into-work, however, also means the bringing of work being into movement and happening. [...] Does truth, then, arise out of nothing? It does indeed if by nothing is meant the mere not of that which is, and if we here think of that which

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 36.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 37.

is as an object present in the ordinary way, which thereafter comes to light and is challenged by the existence of the work as only presumptively a true being."<sup>14</sup>

I believe everyone's work is both intrinsic and fascinating, because the whole inner process is much more complicated and hard to reach or express in its perfection and plenitude. Heidegger says:

„Yet truth is put into the work. What truth is happening in the work? Can truth happen at all and thus be historical? Yet truth people say, is something timeless and supertemporal. [...] If, however, the reality of the work can be defined solely by means of what is at work in the work, then what about our intention to seek out the real art work in its reality?“<sup>15</sup>

### **The concept of beautiful**

Regardless of the angle from which we look at or observe, regardless of any ups and downs, there is beautiful everywhere. The concept of beautiful represents not only an aesthetic value but also a fundamental one, through which we attribute it, under diverse moments and portraits in the mirror everything that art has managed to express until now as well as everything it will manage to express in the future. Art implies creation. Beauty can be found not only in art but also everywhere. One wonders, surely, why a painting today is looked at differently, or the music of Beethoven was not heard by his contemporaries? For the simple fact that our senses, including that of reality, are evolving. In his assumption Gadamer, in „The relevance of the beautiful“:

„Thus our exposition of the symbolic character of art returns to our original considerations concerning play. There too we noticed that play is always a kind of self-representation. This fact finds expression in art through the specific nature of *repraesentatio*, that increase in being that something acquires by being represented. If we wish to grasp this aspect of the experience of art in a more appropriate fashion, then I think that idealist aesthetics must be revised accordingly. We have already prepared the ground for the general conclusion to be drawn from this: all art of whatever kind, whether the art of a substantial tradition with which we are familiar or the contemporary art that is unfamiliar because it has no tradition, always demands constructive activity on our part.“<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 71.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 38.

<sup>16</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, „The Relevance of the Beautiful“, in *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, trans. Nicholas Walker, ed. Rober Bernasconi, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986. p. 37.

Suppose that there is a category dedicated to aesthetics absolutely, which represent the object of aesthetics and that of the sublime; does the existence of beauty through its indescribable aesthetic transposition or debated, lead towards such understanding and discovery (a form of art, or art as the form itself)? As well as Gadamer claims:

„The beautiful is what can be looked at, what is good-looking in the widest sense of the word. [...] Hence, the idea of the beautiful closely approximates that of the good (agathon), insofar as it is something to be chosen for its own sake, as an end that subordinates everything else to it as a means. For what is beautiful is not regarded as a means to something else.”<sup>17</sup>

What does the man tend to, in his soul, both inside and outside, or while creating a work of art. Maybe they all represent a journey towards himself or towards each other. While existing somehow independent of any reality we will come to realize eventually that any aesthetic value can be found in the concept of beautiful. However, beautiful is not only about aesthetics. Whatever is beautiful can be found in anything, almost anywhere and almost any time. (Even if they are apparently linked to each other, they are still however different). We come to realize that any aesthetic value or aesthetics cannot predict or guess. It is created and it creates not only through the soul but also through intuition and inspiration. Everything that is nice through the first forms through which we are given, in the form of its own tastes and perceptions, it creates a vision for man over everything that exists. Even if it is assumed that the beautiful is given or takes the form of pleasure, which depends on the structure of an object or a thing, it is there. As Gadamer says:

„The basis of the close connection between the idea of the beautiful and that of the teleological order of being is the Pythagorean and Platonic concept of measure. [...] As we can see, this kind of definition of the beautiful is a universal ontological one. Here nature and art are not in antithesis to each other. This means, of course, that concerning beauty the priority of nature is unquestioned. Art may take advantage of gaps in the natural order of being to perfect its beauties. But that certainly does not mean that »beauty« is to be found primarily in art. As long as the order of being is itself seen as divine or as God's creation – and the latter is the case until the eighteenth century – the exceptional case of art can be seen only within the horizon of this order of being.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Transl. rev. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, Continuum, London – New York, 2006. p. 473.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, 474.

We could say that the concept of beautiful can be paired with things that we consider favourable to us, or with a state of exception. The beautiful itself opens a gate, regardless of its form, or ontological horizon, being a link between an ideal and real. And if you were to talk about some playful form, with a certain interpretation, Gadamer mentions in his work, „The Relevance of the Beautiful”, about the game (that game) like a space which any work of art leaves, all the time or at the same time, in order for the participant to incorporate and seize. Thus, this game specifically identified by Gadamer, a game of intelligence, of instinct and imagination in what Kant calls *judgment of taste*.

„Thus, understanding is not playing, in the sense that the person understanding playfully holds himself back and refuses to take a stand with respect to the claim made on him. The freedom of self-possession necessary for one to withhold oneself in this way is not given here, and this, in fact, is what applying the concept of play to understanding implies. Someone who understands is always already drawn into an event through which meaning asserts itself. So it is well founded for us to use the same concept of play for the hermeneutical phenomenon as for the experience of the beautiful.”<sup>19</sup>

Finally, we reach the conclusion that beautiful does exist. Hence derives the concept of beautiful, precisely because it is divided into different directions. He can be transposed, converted or taken to the climax. There is beautiful in everyday life, not only in art and through art, but it exists beyond all this: in both society and nature and especially in human behaviour. I think beauty is one of the highest levels of becoming that can be achieved by mankind. Perhaps we cannot specify exactly what beautiful itself is because beautiful, if we look at it and analyse it as an aesthetic value, it is the subject to sudden changes of meanings. As affirm Hofmann, „*there is a rule of taste, based on which we can determine what is beautiful*”. Perhaps there is beautiful everywhere. You just have to open your soul. Hence, Gadamer, regardless of the reflections towards art, knowledge and his own perspective on hermeneutics, believes the concept of beautiful (as a transcendental one), to be as follows:

„The beautiful appears not only in what is visibly present to the senses, but it does so in such a way that it really exists only through it – i.e., emerges as one out of the whole. The beautiful is of itself truly »most radiant« (to ekphanestaton). The sharp division between the beautiful and what has no share in the beautiful is, moreover, a fact that is well established phenomenologically.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 484.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 476.



Art can be a renewal of life, a gate to another world, a world of beauty and discovery of your own self. The concept of beautiful opens a continuous gate without allowing the time to stop. As man and existence consists of deep feelings, thoughts, and experiences that are leading towards an abstract form of understanding. He is, perhaps, a subtle and sublime network full of reflections, just like the portraits in the mirror. These reflections create an imperceptible link system, stretching over time and transcending beyond us through art.

Any look in the history of aesthetics shows us that art and literature are related to the concept of intuition and, at least the latter, to the value concept of plasticity. Indeed, it is one of the most recent problematic domains of philosophy, but its foundation is clearly established with the delimitation of the concept and the critique of "pure" reason, which believes that it only comes to knowledge through concepts.<sup>21</sup>

In relation to aesthetics, Hegel's concept is based on a thesis that art is the appearance of the idea in both sensitive and concrete, it not being designed unless it has a spiritual sense. Such art is not only a great way or affirmation of freedom but is a pure form of transposition and expression. Note that Hegel asserts that specifically in art we must admit our own freedom of creation. This form of freedom is one of the main forms of manifestation of the soul and the freedom of the spirit. Therefore, art is free and unlike the minor art, can express the truths of the spirit and the soul.

With Hegel, the subject of aesthetics is neither beautiful nor taste, but art in its autonomy. In addition, the art of its historical becoming, the necessary alienation that accompanies its „progress” and the plan to disappear. [...] after Hegel, now that the autonomy of art appears as the autonomy that was in fact, it becomes possible to observe that the Hegelian dialectics maintained a systematic confusion between the positions of the amateur, the critic, the historian and the aesthetician. For even the amateur and the critic are forced by Hegel to sit down, like the historian and philosopher, in the speculative point of view of a finite history.<sup>22</sup>

We find that for Hegel, aesthetics should not prescribe rules for the artist and the work of art, but rather, should consider and analyse that beautiful exists in those works of art. Moreover, if there is a method to define beauty, or the concept

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<sup>21</sup> Hans-Georg, Gadamer, „Intuiție și plasticitate”, in *Actualitatea frumosului*, trad. Val. Panaitescu, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2000 p. 143.

<sup>22</sup> Thierry de Duve, *În numele artei: Pentru o arheologie a modernității*, Editura Idea Design&Print, Cluj-Napoca, 2001.

of beauty in art and beyond, we should reflect on those moments and moments in the mirror, so the structure of the aesthetic object in its authentic form will eventually become its most pure form.

Remembering a feeling is always a feeling, while remembering knowledge is not necessarily a knowledge. [...] Aesthetic judgment compares comparable things when experiencing a current sentiment with the updating of past feelings. The feelings are thus kept by both the memory and its guardians; there are also the feelings of forgetfulness, the signs of repentance, the mandatory repetition of what, not in memory, returns to it from somewhere else.<sup>23</sup>

There is a beginning and an ending for any emotion or anything. Finally, we note that they are all a transposition and a combination of general, of perceptions and of the particular. There is a significant portion of a work of art that creates its own melancholic world.

These feelings can be the subject of interpretations, just as interpretations can awaken feelings. This results in a stratified complex of sense and feelings that alternate the interpretations attempted in relation to what was felt and the feelings felt about what was signified. [...] „This is art“ can retreat into experience and be covered under sedimentary layers of sense and afflictions that are hard to distinguish and thereby „unconscious“.<sup>24</sup>

Everything that transcends must have an existence and significance for the human soul, for this sensitively intangible that lies in each of us. Perhaps art should not only be, but it is designed and created to emanate the essence of ourselves.

Everyone and everybody can make an idea about art, or even more, more or less simple or complex, inculcated or cultivated, homogeneous or heterogeneous, conventional or bold. Some, less privileged or less sensitive, are limited to the ideas of art that they share with their social group or strive to adopt those that are imposed by the dominant class. They are conformists [...].<sup>25</sup>

For example, an artistic portrait like the Mona Lisa or La Gioconda (an incredible painting, which has crossed many people's lives over the time; the work of art done by Leonardo da Vinci, in the 1503-1506, representing a woman covered

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 39.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 40.

by a thoughtful expression, mysterious, covered by a sublime smile which can be barely seen) where we are talking about a work of art older than 500 years, that has lasted through the ages and has crossed generations transcending art through the world and beyond us. A work of art in which our attention is drawn by the man's spiritual expression. Gadamer believes that:

„In understanding we are drawn into an event of truth and arrive, as it were, too late, if we want to know what we are supposed to believe. Thus there is undoubtedly no understanding that is free of all prejudices, no matter how much the will of our knowledge must be directed toward escaping their thrall.”<sup>26</sup>

There are those who create art for the future. In addition, that future is now. Thus, building and exploring, we are going to a place unknown and boundless. Be sure to catch and preserve the beauty of the unseen and hidden, because in the end nothing matters more.

### **Conclusions and remarks**

Art is not only a cultural phenomenon. It is an expression of our feelings, of our inner self. Art is one of the most important things in life, it is something that can transcend our existence beyond, because it can be saved and also recreated over and over again. It is something that each and every one of us can understand in a special and particular way. However, in the end we are all able to communicate through art in general and within every piece of art in particular. It seems that we live in different worlds, but I think at some point somehow, somehow, we actually live in the same world. So the question is: what makes us so different between one another? I think it is all about your own world, your perception and the way you can change your own reality.

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<sup>26</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Transl. rev. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, Continuum, London – New York, 2006. p. 484.

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## PLAY AND RITUAL – ONTOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

ANDRA MAVROPOL\*

**ABSTRACT.** *Play and Ritual – Ontological Aspects of Photography.* This research aims to analyse the ontological aspects of photography that relate to its lack of objectivity, namely the concepts of ‘play’ and ‘ritual’ that are important parts in photography’s being in the world. Acknowledging that what appears on the surface of the picture is the result of distortions caused by the technical praxis or by the photographer’s intentional intervention, one should be bound to question photography’s realism. My claim is that the apparently objective picture depicts, in fact, a constructed image that implies a creative process in which the photographer, the model and the spectator are involved. The paper follows Andre Bazin, Jean Baudrillard and Roland Barthes’ discourses about the ontology of photography, through an analysis of its ritualistic aspect, which involves a process of recreating reality through play. The importance of this paper can be highlighted by the fact that it offers an insight into a problem that is often overlooked: the photographic image’s lack of objectivity is rarely questioned on one hand, and on the other, subjectivity can be noticed through the way in which one relates to the photographic image, since it has the ability to depict a person or a scene that can trigger some sort of a personal response to that image in the spectator.

**Keywords:** *photography, ontology, objectivity, play, ritual*

### Introduction

The idiom “a picture is worth a thousand words” best describes the common trust that humans have in the technical images’ objectivity. Starting from this empirical observation, I will argue that the photographic image may be just as arbitrary as language, and thus it is more ‘subjective’ than one might incline to think. In order to organize the visual discourse of the world, one may discern between

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'sensory images' that are affecting nerve organs, 'mental images', such as memories, and images that have a physical support or projections.<sup>1</sup> In this sense, a distinction between the terms 'image' and 'picture' should be made: a picture is an image that has a material support (canvas, glass, film, paper). Therefore, the photograph classifies as the latter category. This is particularly relevant while discussing the difference between analogue and digital photography, which does not present any interest to this research.

Despite this difference between the terms 'image' and 'picture', I noticed that in the English translation of Benjamin's essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media" by Edmund Jephcott, Rodney Livingstone, Howard Eiland, and Others from 2008, the term 'picture' appears in the text a single time, describing 'moving pictures'.<sup>2</sup> Benjamin uses the term 'image' in order to describe the content of the picture, which is the subject of his study. In the essay "A Short History of Photography" the term 'picture' occurs more often, but only to denominate the physical photographs. The same issue can be noticed while reading Flusser's *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* in the *European Photography* journal, where 'picture' occurs two times: 'to draw a picture of freedom'<sup>3</sup> and 'a picture of machines as slaves'<sup>4</sup> seem to evoke a 'mental picture' rather than an image with a physical support.

Thus, 'image' is preferred to 'picture'. Following these two authors' reasoning, I will use Flusser's concept of 'technical image' in order to denominate the content of the photographic picture. In comparison to the 'mental image', that is by default personal, thus 'subjective', the 'technical image' appears to be 'objective'. Actually, the so-called 'objectivity' comes after the 'realistic' feature of the photograph. Therefore, the reasoning behind it is the following: because the visual content that is perceived while looking at any picture seems to resemble 'reality', then it must be 'objective'. It is 'realistic' when compared to painting, for example, but does that grant the picture objectivity? One of the reasons for this deficiency is the fact that we relate to photographs in different ways than with paintings. This is well illustrated by André Bazin in terms of anthropological and psychoanalytical theories, which point out the human desire of surviving death, on one side, and the need of creating 'an ideal world in the likeness of the real'.<sup>5</sup> On a different note, because language is

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<sup>1</sup> Codoban, Aurel, *Imperiul comunicării. Corp, imagine, relaționare*, Idea Design & Print, 2011, p. 27. (translated by myself)

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin, Walter, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Flusser, Vilem *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, European Photography, 1984, p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> Flusser, Vilem *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, European Photography, 1984, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Bazin, André, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image", *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1960, p. 6.

subjective, one is inclined to believe that other means of representing reality, such as the technical images, might not be. Having into consideration the way in which the photographic picture is made, namely knowing the input and the output, but having no power over the black box of the apparatus, gives us the first hint of the lack of objectivity of the image. Another important argument to be considered is the way in which the subject as *operator* relates to the ‘world’ – what makes the decision to photograph something and exclude something else?

On a less obvious note, a question that needs to be taken into consideration is in what ways do the photographs change the ways in which we relate to the world? In the case of post-production images are manipulated not in order to render reality better, but in order to change it, to intrude the ‘real world’. In this context, Jean Baudrillard claims that the technical images are witnessing the disappearance of the world. I agree with his thesis to the extent that if we perceive pictures as real (as depicting reality) it affects our own relation with reality. Are technical images ‘copies’ of ‘reality’ or is ‘reality’ reconstructed according to ‘pictures’? Following Baudrillard’s reasoning, I claim that photography, or any technical image for that matter, is not merely a means of representation, but a means of creation. In this context, photography is neither ‘realistic’ nor ‘objective’, because its purpose is to change reality. If we perceive it as ‘real’, it is affecting our relation with the world. It is a vicious circle in which ‘photography’ and ‘reality’ have come to determine each other.

### Some ontological aspects

In order to outline the actors involved in the photographic process I am going to use Barthes’s terminology, namely *operator* and *spectator*, to denominate the photographer and the viewer of the picture. Additionally, by the term *image* I mean what the spectator sees in a picture, a “three dimensional projection on a flat surface”.<sup>6</sup> Thus, I will refer to the image as the visual content of the picture.

Having the possibility to capture a unique moment in time, photography is conditioned by several requirements demanded by its users and its spectators. Most of the time, the belief commonly associated with the analysis of a photographic image is the objectivity of that image, that is implied because of the apparatus’s possibility of reflecting a fragment of reality. Even if this constitutes the operator’s

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<sup>6</sup> Codoban, Aurel, *Imperiul comunicării. Corp, imagine, relaționare*, Ideea Design & Print, 2011, p. 32. (translated by myself)



intention or it is just an expectation from the spectator, a closer analysis shows us that the representation of a fragment of reality is usually mistaken for reality itself.<sup>7</sup> My claim is that what can be seen in the picture as an objective rendering of reality is in fact a scene, a trim, a cut-out scape intentionally selected by the operator in order to satisfy his/her aesthetic or conceptual ambitions. As Sergei Eisenstein points out,

Photography is a system of reproduction to fix real events and elements of actuality. These reproductions, or photo-reflections, may be combined in various ways. Both as reflections and in the manner of their combination, they permit any degree of distortion - either technically unavoidable or deliberately calculated. The results fluctuate from exact naturalistic combinations of visual, interrelated experiences to complete alterations, arrangements unforeseen by nature, and even to abstract formalism, with remnants of reality.<sup>8</sup>

In order to enter the ontological substratum of images, Flusser proposes dividing images into two categories: on one side, there are traditional images, made by man, and on the other side, there are the technical ones, manufactured through an automated process with a minimum human input.

Ontologically, traditional images are first-degree abstractions, since they were abstracted from the concrete world. Technical images, for their part, are third-degree abstractions; they are abstracted from texts, which- in turn are abstracted from images which were themselves abstracted from the concrete world.[...] Ontologically, traditional images mean phenomena, while technical images mean concepts.<sup>9</sup>

What is the basis of Flusser's claim according to which texts are abstracted from images? His main argument is drawn from a close examination of the meaning of the verb 'to express' – basically because when we write, we express something. Thus, 'to express' could mean either 'to press from somewhere against something', or, on a less obvious note, 'to press out from inside'.<sup>10</sup> In other words, in order to write, a certain mental image or concept needs to be expressed into words.

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<sup>7</sup> Susan Sontag in the introduction to her book *On Photography* (pp. 1–2) claims the following “To collect photographs is to collect the world.”, “To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed.” & “Photographed images do not seem to be statements about the world so much as pieces of it, miniatures of reality that anyone can make or acquire.”, which are hyperbolized statements used in order to emphasize the extent to which our relation with the world mediated by the lens of the apparatus goes.

<sup>8</sup> Eisenstein, Sergei, *Film Form. Essays in Film Theory*, Hancourt Brace Janovich, 1949.

<sup>9</sup> Flusser, Vilem, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, European Photography, 1984, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Flusser, Vilem, *Gestures*, University of Minnesota Press, 2014, ‘The Gesture of Writing’, p. 21.

Furthermore, etymologically speaking, ‘to express’ as in ‘to press from the outside’ can be applied to photography, as the gesture of taking a photograph implies pressing the shutter release button in order to create a picture with the purpose of expressing the operator’s ideas. In this context, one can consider painting a representative of traditional images and photography a representative of technical images. With the purpose of acceding to a better understanding of photography’s being-in-the-world, its comparison with painting is mandatory because the latter is a medium that at a certain point in time was preoccupied with trying to copy reality onto the surface of its support.

### **Painting and photography – matters of realism**

André Bazin explains how at a certain stage of its evolution, more precisely in the XV-th century, “Western painting began to turn from its age-old concern with spiritual realities expressed in the form proper to it, towards an effort to combine this spiritual expression with as complete an imitation as possible of the outside world.”<sup>11</sup> In order to deliver a representation as close to reality as possible, a new means had to be invented to respond to the requests of that certain stage. Thus,

The decisive moment undoubtedly came with the discovery of the first scientific and already, in a sense, mechanical system of reproduction, namely, perspective: the camera obscura of Da Vinci foreshadowed the camera of Niepce. The artist was now in a position to create the illusion of three-dimensional space within which things appeared to exist as our eyes in reality see them.<sup>12</sup>

In this framework, the mimetic expectation of painting has been exceeded by the invention of *camera obscura* that led to the invention of photography. “In achieving the aims of baroque art, photography has freed the plastic arts from their obsession with the likeness. [...] Photography and the cinema on the other hand are discoveries that satisfy, once and for all and in its very essence, our obsession with realism.”<sup>13</sup> If one were to make a comparison between the painter’s and the operator’s specific skills, one would observe that, the difference lies in the demand of mirroring reality. Osip Brik, a member of the Russian formalist school, claims that the painter’s duty is subordinated to requirements that are specific to the medium of painting, namely maintaining a certain distance from trying to reproduce reality.

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<sup>11</sup> Bazin, André, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image”, *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1960, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 7.

Should these requirements not be respected, the consequence is the possibility of being confused or associated with the operator of a photographic apparatus. The latter seems to perform according to the programme of the apparatus that grants the possibility of a fragmentary mirroring of reality, not as much to his own intention. In other words, the operator's creative intention must adapt to the apparatus's programme.

The painter's task certainly does not consist in showing an object as it is but rather in recreating it in a painting according to different, purely painterly laws. What do we care for how an object looks? Let observers and photographers deal with that, we – the painters – make pictures in which nature is not the subject but merely an initial impetus for ideas. The painter not only has the right to change reality, it is virtually his duty to do so; otherwise he is not a painter but a bad copyist, a photographer.<sup>14</sup>

Limiting photography to a means of reproduction of reality was a widespread assumption in the XIX-th century, when artists rejected any technical intrusion in their works.<sup>15</sup> Because of its contribution to science, photography used to be removed, at its dawning, from the art world. The main reason why photography was considered a threat was the possibility of making endless copies of the same image, thus threatening originality. Ergo, artists were deliberately avoiding technical means of producing images. Even so, W. Benjamin admitted that a “very precise technique might offer a magical value to its products”,<sup>16</sup> a value that one cannot find in a painting. The magical element resides in the accurate representation of the human subject, which can grant the photograph access to the *auratic art*.

This category includes, according to Benjamin, art works that still keep a component in their ontology that can be traced back to the age-old liaison between art and ritual. The *aura*, a key concept in Benjamin's philosophy, is a point of reference for the work of art in the transition to the age of mechanical reproduction. The *aura* is “the unique value of the »authentic« work of art” which has a religious substructure, “which was, originally, the support of its past use value”.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Brik, Osip, Photography versus Painting, 1926, p. 455, in *ART IN THEORY: An Anthology of Changing Ideas 1900-1990*, Ed. By Charles Harrison & Paul Wood. pp. 454–457.

<sup>15</sup> Benjamin, Walter, “A Short History of Photography”, *Screen*, Volume 13, Issue 1, 1 March 1972, p. 5–6.

<sup>16</sup> „the most exact technique can give its products a magical value which a painted picture can no longer have for us.” In Benjamin, Walter, “A Short History of Photography”, *Screen*, Volume 13, Issue 1, 1 March 1972, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> Benjamin, Walter, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008, p 24.

For Benjamin, photography is a means of reproducing more than an artistic possibility, because of the absence of *aura*. The lack of aura is given by the ontological distance from the 'cult value'<sup>18</sup> of the technical image. Despite the fact that it may seem that only the technical image lacks the *auratic* component, all works of art are lacking it more or less, starting from the secularization of art in general. The main consequence in this context was the substitution of the concept of *aura* with that of *authenticity*.<sup>19</sup> A first reading of "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" might concede that Benjamin excludes the possibility of photography having an *aura*, a trace found only in the high arts. However, "in photography, the exhibition value makes the cult value take a secondary place".<sup>20</sup> The cult value and its essential component, the *aura*, are maintained just in portrait photography, which can have the purpose of commemorating a subject that is no longer alive. "But as the human being withdraws from the photographic image, exhibition value for the first time shows its superiority to cult value."<sup>21</sup>

Baudrillard also associates photography with ritual, but on a less positive note, calling photography's phenomenology a 'negative theology'.<sup>22</sup> The reason why he does so is that he associates the means by which one can know the world with the ways in which photography works.

It is 'apophatic', as we used to call the practice of proving God's existence by focusing on what he wasn't rather than on what he was. The same thing happens with our knowledge of the world and its objects. The idea is to reveal such a knowledge in its emptiness, by default rather than in an open confrontation (in any case impossible). In photography, it is the writing of light which serves as the medium for this elision of meaning and this quasi-experimental revelation (in theoretical works, it is language which functions as the thought's symbolic filter).<sup>23</sup>

On a different note, when painting's concern turns towards something besides the imitation of reality, the painter and the photographer's peculiarities are growing further apart. Accordingly, the idea of the bad copyist, that is the photographer, is adopted and overstated by the painting schools of the mid-nineteenth century

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p 25.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 27.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Baudrillard, Jean, *Photography or The Writing of Light*, a translation of: „La photographie ou l'écriture de la Lumière: Littéralité de l'image", in *L'Échange impossible*, Galilee, Paris, 1999, p. 175–184.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*.

such as Impressionism, Cubism, Suprematism, and so on.<sup>24</sup> Thus, „the painters' repudiation of the idea of reproducing nature marked a decisive divide between photography and painting.”<sup>25</sup>

Returning to the question of objectivity, Terence Wright, in his article “Photography: Theories of Realism and Convention”, presents the hypothesis according to which realism in photography is rarely questioned, along with the arguments that sustain this theory. The main reason for photography's affiliation to realism occurs mostly because of the way in which the making of the image resembles the way in which the human eye works. Thus, “the instrument itself, the camera, is called on to explain the mechanics of visual perception.”<sup>26</sup> Following the eye-camera analogy, those that stand by the objectivity of the photographic image perpetuate the theory according to which the “instrumentality” of the photograph is given by a causal relation between the environment and the photographic image, that is “»transcribed« from Nature”.<sup>27</sup> Actually, because “the retinal image is flat and reduced in size suggests we learn to perceive by association, making unconscious inferences from the retinal image.”<sup>28</sup> As Wright observes, “these theories, assuming two-dimensional vision to be immediate, primitive or sensory, suggested that any experience of an objective world is secondary, derived or perceptual.”<sup>29</sup>

As an outcome to these hypotheses, negative responses from the psychological theorists emerged in a short time. “Psychological theory now rejects the retinal image as the basis of visual perception.”<sup>30</sup> Consequently, Wright calls forth James Gibson's critique of the ‘eye-camera analogy’ that “shift the emphasis from the passive registration of retinal images to perception based on an active engagement with the environment. [...] The perception of the world does not depend on a succession of retinal snapshots.”<sup>31</sup> Thus emerged a series of iconoclastic theories that went against the grain, contesting the universal beliefs praising the objectivity of the photographic image.

An important point of view is that of Nelson Goodman who „believes that photographs, and other pictorial images based on linear perspective systems, are so unlike »normal« perception that they are entirely conventional. Closely akin to

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<sup>24</sup> Brik, Osip, *Photography versus Painting*, 1926, p. 455, in *ART IN THEORY: An Anthology of Changing Ideas 1900-1990*, Ed. By Charles Harrison & Paul Wood. pp. 454–457.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>26</sup> Wright, Terence, “Photography: Theories of Realism and Convention” in *Anthropology and Photography 1860-1920*, Ed. by Elizabeth Edwards, Yale University Press, 1992, p. 18.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 19–20.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 20.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 21.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 21.

language, as arbitrary systems of representation, they only appear realistic because we have learned to see them as such.”<sup>32</sup> Basically, „representation is a matter of choice on behalf of the artist and habit on the part of the observer.”<sup>33</sup> These assumptions lead us to consider the reading of the photographic image to be a learned habit. The acquired habit can be very well linked to the functionality of the *black-box*, a concept that is used to describe technical devices that we know how to use, but know nothing about the ways in which they function. Regarding the way in which a technical image is perceived – we know the input, namely what is photographed, and we know the output, namely what comes out of the black-box as something similar to the input, the picture – gives insight into how there are taken into consideration only the two (input and output), leaving aside the actual black-box, what remains hidden from the human eye. The relation between the input and output leaves us thinking that photography is a mirror or a window. Nevertheless, acknowledging the specificity of the black box, namely leaving things in the dark, we cannot accept as easily that the photograph is just a representation of reality any longer.

As Flusser claims, in order to be critical of the objectivity of photography we must be critical of what is inside the black box.<sup>34</sup> The fact that it is habitual of not being critical and just accepting the input/output as the basis of how a camera works, strengthens the hypothesis that the way in which humans relate to technical images is culturally determined. The set of rules that link the input to the output, that the black box consists of, is accepted as it is, without the need of verification. Regardless, the way in which the apparatus serves its purpose, in this case to take pictures, is transmitted through documents such as user guides that are made by technical experts. Still, the operator and the spectator have no control over the contents of the black box.

Another problematic issue is that, at least concerning photography, there can be two types of black boxes: one of the analogue apparatus and the other of the digital camera. Regarding the analogue apparatus, one can notice an actual connection between the input and the output that is given by the support material, for example, the film. If we take into consideration the film, we might find it easier to identify how the *camera obscura* works, and thus, shed some light onto the black box, literally and figuratively.

The way in which light interacts with the photosensitive pellicle proves that there is some sort of continuity between the input and the output and gives us a hint about the meaning of the word ‘photography’ – the writing of light, as Baudrillard

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 24.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 25.

<sup>34</sup> Flusser, Vilem, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, 1984, p. 11.

pointed out in his article with the same name.<sup>35</sup> However, when it comes to digital photography the process of creating images is entirely different because of the lack of a single material support. The support is replaced with data, which is not tangible.

The digital image is made out of pixels (pieces of data), which is the smallest structural unit of the image, such as the phoneme is for language. As long as there can be traced similarities between the digital image and language, proves once more that the technical image is something that is produced on one hand, and something that is perceived by means of analogy.

As Bazin points out,

“The quarrel over realism in art stems from a misunderstanding, from a confusion between the aesthetic and the psychological; between true realism, the need that is to give significant expression to the world both concretely and in its essence, and the pseudo realism of a deception aimed at fooling the eye (or for that matter the mind).”<sup>36</sup>

An accurate example is the case of socialist realism in which what was portrayed as ‘real’ was far from ‘reality’, but was, at the same time, a model for how ‘things should be’. Then, “photography became the most important artistic tool in shaping the collective consciousness with the purpose to create a New Soviet Man.”<sup>37</sup> According to Boris Groys, in spite of the elites’ effort to impose socialist realism to the masses, the latter were more attracted towards another form of fictional life, namely Hollywood films and popular music that were more entertaining and easier to relate to, rather than dialectical materialism or avant-garde art.<sup>38</sup>

In fact, the ‘realism’ in ‘social realism’ was just as fictional as film and ‘popular culture’ because it was imposed by the elites as something that the masses would be attracted to, in order to adhere to the avant-garde ideal of life. An example of socialist propaganda can be seen in the artwork for “Soviet Union” magazine that was distributed to non-socialist states.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Baudrillard, Jean, *Photography or The Writing of Light*, a translation of: „La photographie ou l’écriture de la Lumière: Littéralité de l’image”, in *L’Échange impossible*, Galilee, Paris, 1999, p. 175–184.

<sup>36</sup> Bazin, André, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image”, *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1960, p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.lensculture.com/articles/staging-staging-happiness-the-formation-of-socialist-realist-photography> – accessed 30. 07. 2017.

<sup>38</sup> Groys, Boris, “The Total Art of Stalinism. Avant-garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond”, Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> <https://sovietbooks.wordpress.com/2012/04/19/soviet-union-magazine/>

## Ritual and play

Bazin affirms art's ritualistic value through an analogy with the cult of the dead and with the human desire of not perishing along with the corporeal body. "If the plastic arts were put under psychoanalysis, the practice of embalming the dead might turn out to be a fundamental factor in their creation."<sup>40</sup> This can be directly related to photography, a fact confirmed by Barthes, which implies a "micro version of death"<sup>41</sup> of the subject. Thus, the photographic image could be ontologically defined by the concept *imago*,<sup>42</sup> which assumes maintaining an appearance of being alive, aside from the fact that the corporeal body is alive or not. Art's ritual function is aimed against death, and "the image helps us to remember the subject and to preserve him from a second spiritual death".<sup>43</sup> Considering photography's concern with death in Barthes's *Camera Lucida*, one is likely to observe that there is something specific about the language used. Sarah Sentilles, in her article "The Photograph as Mystery: Theological Language and Ethical Looking in Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*", analyses exactly that specificity: she argues that Barthes's language that is used to investigate photography's ontology is a theological one.

For example, concepts such as "revelation", "resurrection", "*acheiropoietos*", "transcendence" and "soul"<sup>44</sup> used to describe photography confirm that its specificity can be traced back to the origin of all that can be called art, namely the ritual.

On the same note as Barthes, Baudrillard insists on the fact that the act of taking a photograph of a subject (human) contributes to that subject's symbolic death. His main arguments include photography's capacity to coercing the subject to silence and immobility, by freezing its appearance into the image. "Photography helps us filter the impact of the subject. It facilitates the deployment of the objects's own magic (black or otherwise)." Additionally, it is worth mentioning that Baudrillard takes the objectivity issue even further, claiming, that the world lacks it completely. According to Baudrillard, there are a number of facets of the image that need to be considered: (1) "reflecting a profound reality", (2) "disguises and distorts a profound reality", (3) "disguises the absence of a profound reality", (4) "it does not have any

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<sup>40</sup> Bazin, André, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image", *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1960, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Barthes, Roland, *Camera Lucida. Reflections on Photography*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1981, p. 14.

<sup>42</sup> 'mască mortuară' in Codoban, Aurel, *Imperiul comunicării. Corp, imagine și relaționare*, Idea Design & Print, Cluj-Napoca, 2011, p. 42.

<sup>43</sup> Bazin, André, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image", *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1960, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> Sentilles, Sarah, "The Photograph as Mystery: Theological Language and Ethical Looking in Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*", *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 90, No. 4, University of Chicago Press, Oct 2010, pp. 507.



contact with reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum".<sup>45</sup> There is an interchangeable play between the image and the world in Baudrillard's theory, insisting on the fact that the experience of the world is mistaken for the experience of the image. Starting from the creation of the technical image the experience of the world is not direct anymore, but it is mediated by a certain medium (photography, film).

The miracle of photography, of its so-called objective image, is that it reveals a radically non-objective world. It is a paradox that the lack of objectivity of the world is disclosed by the photographic lens (*objectif*).<sup>46</sup>

Along these lines, one can observe that the magical aspect that Baudrillard associates with photography is different from Barthes's – while the latter is focused on reducing photography's purpose to 'embalming' the dead, the former is more concerned with the relation between photography and reality. What they have in common is that photography is a trace for something that no longer exists – for Barthes it is a trace of a person that no longer exists, and for Baudrillard it is a witness of the dispersion of the world.

Against meaning and its aesthetic, the subversive function of the image is to discover literality in the object (the photographic image, itself an expression of literality, becomes the magical operator of reality's disappearance).<sup>47</sup>

As to the concept of play, Baudrillard claims that through the photographic lens (that is supposed to be objective) the world itself (which is non-objective) may come to appear as objective. This complicity between the world and the apparatus constitutes the play:

Technique becomes an opportunity for a double play: it amplifies the concept of illusion and the visual forms. A complicity between the technical device and the world is established. The power of objects and of 'objective' techniques converge.

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<sup>45</sup> "it is the reflection of a profound reality; it masks and denatures a profound reality; it masks the absence of a profound reality; it has no relation to any reality whatsoever; it is its own pure simulacrum." in Baudrillard, Jean, *Simulacra and Simulation*, University of Michigan Press, 1994, p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> Baudrillard used a wordplay on the French 'objectif', which means 'lens' and the fact of being 'objective' in order to highlight the dissonance between the name of the component and its actual function. Baudrillard, Jean, *Photography or The Writing of Light*, a translation of: „La photographie ou l'écriture de la Lumière: Littéralité de l'image", in *L'Échange impossible*, Galilee, Paris, 1999, p. 175–184.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*.

The photographic act consists of entering this space of intimate complicity, not to master it, but to play along with it and to demonstrate that nothing has been decided yet.<sup>48</sup>

In this context, the concept of ‘play’ can also include a sort of ‘performance’ on a smaller scale (it is not just the world as a whole that is caught acting). Both Barthes and Baudrillard agree that photography involves acting on behalf of the person that is being photographed. The fear of ‘not looking good’ in the photograph compels one to act in front of the camera. Even the whole idea of ‘modelling’ is based on ‘play’, not as an action that has its own purpose, but as ‘playing dead’ by being still, a stillness that involves controlling gestures and facial muscles in order to satisfy the apparatus’ purpose of objectifying everything that is alive. Therefore, the ‘model’ is acting out first of all for the apparatus, and secondly for the spectator.

That is why, this whole scene resembles a ritualistic act on behalf of the model – acting in order to compel the almighty apparatus to be kind and give back a good picture. If the subject does not act in any way, chances are the apparatus will not be so kind as to make a ‘good picture’. The operator in this context has their own purpose, that of an intermediary between the model and the apparatus. Like a priest, he is the mediator between the human subject and something beyond human control, not for the sake of good fortune, but for the sake of aesthetics. The final result is, accordingly, the picture as *acheiropoieta*. Drama, like any other art form, emerged from ritual and so, acting out in order to make something come true becomes part of the play the human subject has to perform in front of the apparatus. Because the pictures are ubiquitous and because the photographic lens is inescapable in society nowadays, a mutual determination between the world and photography has been established.

Therefore, events happen in the world in order to be documented by the apparatus and archived by humans in order to be ‘shared’ as trophies of personal experience. In order to be worth keeping and sharing, the world must present itself in a certain way for the apparatus, and that is why Baudrillard acknowledges that a form of complicity between photography and the world exists, through which they influence one another in a vicious circle. Consequently,

photography is also a drama, a dramatic move to action which is a way of seizing the world by »acting it out«. [...] Through photography, it is perhaps the world itself that starts to act and imposes its fiction. Photography brings the world into action (acts out the world, is the world’s act) and the world steps into the photographic act (acts out photography, is photography’s act).<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem.*

## Final remarks

“Realism” and “objectivity” are two concepts that have been associated with photography since the invention of the medium. The first aspect that contributed to this association was its comparison to painting, facilitating to see that photography depicts the outside world more accurately than the media that preceded it, hence making it easier to describe it as ‘realistic’. Another important feature is the fact that the picture is not directly man-made, and so it has *anacheiropoietia* peculiarity that would grant its ‘objectivity’. Although there are reasonable arguments for photography’s ‘realistic’ and ‘objective’ traits, such as the eye-camera analogy, we must take into consideration elements such as the ‘black-box’ that disables us to control what is going on inside the apparatus.

Thus, following Flusser’s reasoning, photography is not a mirror of ‘reality’, but a conceptualization of it. An important thing that was considered in this research was that the perception of the image itself is problematic. If it is the same as the perception of the real world or if the reading of the image is learned by association determines whether one can correlate ‘realism’ and ‘objectivity’ with photography. Some authors, such as Wright and Goodman believe that the reading of a picture is similar to using language, therefore, a learned habit. The reason I agree with this association is that the structure of language and of the picture seems to be similar, to the extent that they are constituted by small meaningless (by themselves) units such as the phoneme and the pixel, that make sense only as a whole. I do not personally agree with the fact that the photographic product, namely the picture, can be mistaken for reality, as Sontag claims, but I do believe nonetheless that photography has a substantial role in our relationship with the world.

This construction that is the photograph is a blending of a reflection of reality and a trace of the operator’s view on the world. In my opinion, the purpose of photography is to create and preserve a scene that is in accordance to the operator or the spectator’s view on reality. Not merely a reflection of reality, but a model for reality. Nowadays, with photography’s pervasiveness and with social media depending on it, we interact with it in a sort of ritualistic way: we take our daily dive into social media where we have a different persona and we communicate through pictures and ‘likes’. By means of ‘play’, we recreate reality according to our social belief system. Although the ‘ritual’ in photography was mostly associated with death and remembrance in the past, I believe nowadays it is much more concerned with immortality. Due to various media, we compare ourselves not to others, but to the representations of others, and some of us even resort to body modifications in order to be ‘picture perfect’.

Having into consideration that ‘real life’ has started to change in order to ‘look good’ on screens proves that our experience of the world is not direct anymore, but it is mediated by our relation with pictures and social media. Hence, Baudrillard’s claim about the disappearance of reality is not farther from the truth, since there is an interchangeable play between the world and the technical image of the world provided by photography and film.

In conclusion, photography’s ‘objectivity’ and ‘realism’ is relative to the concept of ‘play’ which is demanding a form of acting on behalf of the model or even the whole world, and which sets into motion a vicious circle in which one is uncertain whether the world determines the technical image or otherwise.

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## MEDIA. MEDIALITY. IMAGE – MEDIA-PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATION IN THE IMAGE-RESEARCH

ERIKA FÁM\*

**ABSTRACT. Media. Mediality. Image. Media-Philosophical Investigation in the Image-Research.** The concept of the media has been redefined many times; the medial interpretation of postmediality is only a critique of existing media-approaches and actuality. The concept of media is hardly going to disappear, its use has become increasingly popular, and the range of interpretation has become wider, the Media Studies brings together more and more sciences; it is not a limit science, but a cumulative science. In W. J.T. Mitchell's approach, the media is more than a medium, the media is a relation, there is no pure media, and all media are mixed. Breaking down the idea of the mixed media, we could make parallels/contrasts between the concept of total mediality and the concept of postmediality. Postmediality sees a way in the passing by overtaking of the concept of media (Manovich) in aesthetics, visual theory, art theory, media theory, but perhaps most of all the media concept should be sought as it is, just a different type of media use which has become commonplace in the digital-galaxy. Totalmediality is trying to point out the use of new media, and beyond this to the open media borders, overlappings, while the media is not just carrier material but also form. The study treats totalmediality as theoretical possibility for overcoming postmediality in Mitchell's interpretation of media and emphasizing the dominance of visuality in the media-applications.

**Keywords:** *media, postmedia, totalmedia, social media, community media, image, image theory*

### Media as a Bottle

The concept of media occupies a prominent place in everyday usage, not only as a technical term, but also as a very convenient collective noun. We have long forgotten the basic meaning of the media, which simply means mediation,

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mediating regardless of the how of the mediator and the medium. The difference between the terms media and medium can cause confusion: referring to media, we think of some technical, mostly mass media phenomenon or electronic media, while we relate the term medium to the intermediary subject,<sup>1</sup> all this with a sense of Wittgensteinian language games, because of meaning-fossils ossified in language use.<sup>2</sup>

If we accept that everything that is used as traveller is media<sup>3</sup>, not necessarily for the transmission, portage or storage of messages, information, since we ourselves function as medias carrying feelings, thoughts, and memories. Nonetheless, we have to stick to the material aspect of the traveller, since we have to assume it is a perceivable reality in order for it to be able to transmit something. If we consider media as purely information traveller, it is inevitable to think according to Umberto Eco's linear model, where the transmitter, receiver and message are the cornerstones of the mediation. This is a very straightforward task-action line, requires any element of the flowchart for axiomatic reasons only. However, if we take into account any media – and there is no use to limit it to arts in order to see that – the receiver always takes the message, or not, in a hypothetical, aleatory, random and very undeterminable way.

McLuhan<sup>4</sup> considered media as a human being, the extension of the human body and spirit. We can see that the media is always a replacement, a supplement, aid, which is useful and used for reaching a special goal, resulting even in joy, catharsis, but also manipulation and vulnerability. It seems that it would be more fortunate, if we did not differentiate between the receiver and transmitter, but simply refer to users and focus on the how of media usage, instead of the identity of the transmitter and the receiver or the infiltrated noise, as we can never talk about a perfect receiver, a perfect transmitter or a perfectly delivered message.

The media is just like a message in a bottle, most of the time one has to take into account the time difference, a book is also information in a bottle, written 120 years ago. At this point it is important to talk about the intermediate processes of mediatisation as well, since the book was published just two years ago, the content has not changed, the media format is the same, as the text remained, but

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<sup>1</sup> The term *medium* is usually used to describe a person who has some kind of intermediary role; the general meaning of the word is related to spirituality, angels, spirits, and mediators.

<sup>2</sup> In fact, we are talking about the same term: the Latin *medium* in the singular and the English *media* in the plural version have gained different meanings in Hungarian.

<sup>3</sup> Ein *Medium* (v. lat.: *medium* = Mitte(lpunkt), Zentrum, dazwischen liegend, in der Mitte befindlich; Plural *Medien* oder *Media*) ist im allgemeinen ein Träger oder ein Übermittler von Jemandem oder Etwas.

<sup>4</sup> McLuhan *Medien* Erweiterungen unserer menschlichen Sinne, des Körpers und des Geistes sind.

it appeared in an altered medial environment since we are not reading the writer's manuscript, but a processed, different material, a printed book. The intermediate mediatisation, media/medium exchange, cannot be considered a negative phenomenon, as the content of the text remained; the text has not been damaged; only the traveller has been altered.

Certainly, the reader's attitude changes, but this is only a frame problem, like lighting or temperature in the reader's room, let us not pursue the line with the reader's wool socks through his/her biologist diploma, recalling his/her upbringing, education and the multitude of childhood experiences.

Medias co-exist, not specifically in the context of multimodality, but as each other's aids, building, forming each other, not merely co-existing but generating, creating, complementing, becoming part of each other. When we see a theatrical performance, we usually meet with a complete, written text, the transmission, actualization of a dramatic work. We get into indirect contact with the written text together with the acting, the living, spoken word, the directorial frame, the background. We cannot see the initial<sup>5</sup> medial presence, but it is reflected in several different media: the actor, the theatre, objects, the set, costumes, music and human voice.

The media acts as a bottle that stores the message, the lucky users who encounter it, have access to the stored content.

### **The Media/Medium as Relationship**

W. J. T. Mitchell, in his book entitled *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* developed a specific model, possibility of the media definition. Mitchell explores solely the relationship between image objects and media, and formulates the fundamental thesis, as follows: Each image object manifests itself merely through a kind of medium – in colour, stone, words or numbers.<sup>6</sup> In this case it is not of primary importance what can be considered an image, but how does an image exist. It is clear, that an image has to take shape to some extent: it has to become visible, audible, thinkable, and perceivable to the world. At this point, I am only dealing with the mediality of the materialized image; I do not discuss the problem of mental images.<sup>7</sup>

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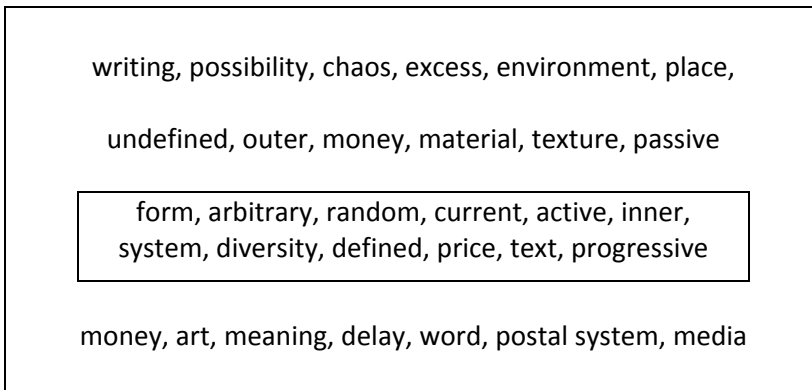
<sup>5</sup> The manuscript.

<sup>6</sup> „Ein Bildobjekt vermag nur in bzw auf irgendeinem Medium zu erscheinen – in Farbe, Stein, Wörtern oder Zahlen. Doch wie verhält es sich mit dem Medien?“ – W. J. T. Mitchell: *Das Leben der Bilder. Eine Theorie der visuellen Kultur*, Verlag C. H. Beck, München, 2008. p. 167.

<sup>7</sup> Mitchell – who among other things – analyzes ontological status and manifestations of the image, points out the difference between the concepts of image and picture (a differentiation simplified in English language use by the presence of these two separate terms and he builds his theory on this



In Mitchell's interpretation media is relation: the media is always »in between«, a »mediator«, a space, a path or a stone, which connects two different things.<sup>8</sup> As opposed to Umberto Eco's linear model<sup>9</sup> (sender/emitter – noise – transmitter – signal – channel – signal – receiver – message – receiver), Mitchell undertakes a concentric media interpretation.



slight difference between the two terms) and discusses the mental and material image. „Bilder (images) sind immaterielle symbolische Formen, die von wohldefinierten geometrischen Formen über fast formlose Massen und Räume, erkennbare Figuren und Ähnlichkeiten bis zu wiederholbaren Gestalten wie Piktogrammen, Ideogrammen und alphabetischen Buchstaben reichen. Gemälde (pictures) sind die konkreten, materialen Objekte, in oder auf denen immaterielle Bilder (images) erscheinen. Man kann ein Gemälde (picture) aufhängen, aber man kann kein Bild (image) aufhängen. Das Bild (image) scheint ohne irgendein sichtbares Hilfsmittel zu schweben. Es ist das, was vom konkreten Bild (picture) abgehoben, in ein anderes Medium transferiert, ja sogar in eine sprachliche Ekphrasis übersetzt werden kann. Das Bild (picture) ist das Bild (image) plus der materielle Träger, es ist die Erscheinung des immateriellen Bildes (image) in einem materialen Medium.“ – W. J. T. Mitchell, *Bildtheorie*, Suhrkamp, 2008, p. 285. Mitchell calls this duality of image-picture as a kind of Platonism, more precisely a perverted Platonism, as the two terms can be traced back to the relationship of idea and realia. „Images are immaterial, symbolic forms such as well-defined geometric shapes, the almost shapeless masses, spaces, recognizable figures and their look-alikes, the repeatable pictograms, ideograms or characters. Pictures are concrete, material objects, objects in which the immaterial images appear. A picture can be exhibited, hanged, but an image cannot (...) The picture is the thought, the immaterial image and the material traveler (media).“

<sup>8</sup> „Möglicherweise besteht darin das grundlegende Paradoxon, das dem Medienbegriff als solche innewohnt. Ein Medium ist ein „Mittleres“, ein Zwischending bzw. Ein (Ver)-Mittler, es ist ein Raum, ein Pfad oder eine Bote, der zwei Dinge miteinander verbindet – einen Sender mit einem Empfänger, einen Schriftsteller mit einem Leser, einen Künstler mit einem Betrachter oder (im Falle eines spirituellen Mediums) diese Welt mit demnächsten.“ – W. J. T. Mitchell, *Das Leben der Bilder. Eine Theorie der visuellen Kultur*, Verlag C. H. Beck, München, 2008. p. 168.

<sup>9</sup> Die Modell Umberto Eco: Quelle – Geräusch – Sendegerät – Signal – Kanal – Signal – Empfängersgerät – Botschaft – Empfänger

Mitchell's Luhman-diagram builds on Luhman's relationship of system-environment and form-media. The receiver is missing from Mitchell's non-linear model, it is not a targeted model, but it determines the relationship between media and form as a set of conditions, a rising possibility.

The form is the inner content, the media is the traveller, the form defines the genre, and mediality is displayed through a variety of projections. It is not about the message anymore, but rather about presence, ready-made product that is not a specific postal package, a product with a forwarding address; it is an independent, open condition, not a personal, non-individual-oriented, but available, accessible.

In Mitchell's context media appears as landscape,<sup>10</sup> locations, and rooms, as available for everybody. This kind of metaphorical identification is not unusual in Mitchell's creation of concepts, since he considers images to be entities similar to organisms, to living beings. The argumentation is authentic, as the life of pictures (not their setup or structure) corresponds to the scheme based on which living beings are called living beings. More specifically, the images are not living beings, but they behave like them, we relate to them as we do to living beings, their use, their story is the same sequence of events known from wildlife.

Mitchell attaches an interesting question to the problem of mediality in general; he raises attention to the fact that the problem of mediality of media theory<sup>11</sup> should be discussed: what kind of media and tools should theory use and in which media should it manifest itself? In the late 70s, Gábor Bódy formulated the question whether film theory should also be a film or not. These are thought-provoking questions, a self-reflexive media theory problem, which is one of the unexplored areas of the given science.

## Mixed Media

Mitchell formulates, defines the concept of media in ten points.

1. Medias are modern inventions that exist since human thinking.
2. Rebellion against new medias is as old as Methuselah himself.

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<sup>10</sup> „Wenn wir die Medien in einem anderen Sinne »adressieren«, das heißt, wenn wir sie verorten, ihnen einen Ort, eine Adresse zu weisen, dann besteht die Herausforderung gerade darin, sie zu platzieren und sie als Landschaften oder Räume zu betrachten.“ – W. J. T. Mitchell: *Das Leben der Bilder. Eine Theorie der visuellen Kultur*, Verlag C. H. Beck, München, 2008. p. 174.

<sup>11</sup> „Eine Theorie der Medien, die diesem wegfóhlt, hat sich nur daran zu fragen, was Medien sind und was sie bewirken, sie muss auch die Frage stellen, was das Medium der Theorie selbst sein könnte.“ – *ibidem*, p. 174.

3. Media is system and environment at the same time.
4. There is always something outside the media.
5. All medias are mixed medias.
6. Spirit, understanding, consciousness, thinking are all media.
7. Images are the leading medias.
8. Images live in medias, as organisms do in habitats. (All organisms have habitats.)
9. Medias do not have well-defined places or available addresses.
10. We turn to the medias, and similarly, medias turn to us.<sup>12</sup>

I have neither the possibility nor do I intend to analyse in detail the media term formulated in the above ten points within the framework of this paper. However, I try to focus on two statements: on one hand, I intend to confirm the thesis that every media is mixed media; on the other hand, I will try to think further the statement that images are leading medias.

Indeed, no media can be considered pure media. The word itself is mixed media; it is both verbal and visual at the same time: we read it, we see it as letters, in written form, we visually identify it, and then we get close to the content, to the uttered word. This is the simplest, most banal example, but in fact, each media carries on or in itself other medias or is in very close relationship with others. A press photo, the title of the photo, the environment of the exhibition, the lighting of a theatrical productions, a poem from an audiobook, the space of a performance, the structure of a film, all of these assume co-existing medias.

If we narrow down the concept of mixed media, we get to the art theory problem of repetition. It often occurs that various medias migrate, immigrate to other medias, not necessarily as parasites, but establishing possible coexisting life forms. Think of the picture poem, the collage, the simple illustration, the typeface, or even the oldest form, the calligram.

In the case of traveling medias, let us concentrate solely on image/visual medias and examine how do they co-exist and transplant.

It is not unusual that a photo, photos, paintings or other images are displayed in a film, a photo may picture a painting or the photo itself can be the frame, the latter is often used to illustrate press products or studies, visual theory, film essays, technical books. Let us narrow the phenomenon of image transplantation further down and concentrate on films. The film is suitable to include, to record, to show within moving image frames any other media of visual (and not only) length. The picture within a picture (whether or not we are talking about two frames or the

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 177.

pictures melt into each other, in the latter case the guest image, the immigrant-image acts as a moving picture, it has no privileged place in the actual sight, it is added to the other frames, this is called linear editing. If the frame is displayed in the frame, we are dealing with double editing: one linear and one vertical, that is deep editing) always breaks the usual film sequence, even if it is an extraneous film clip that is included, though in this case we are talking about similar media.

The picture within the picture always rearranges the focal point of the host image, more precisely; it expropriates it, as in this case we pay attention to the picture within the picture, especially if it is highlighted in a specific frame. The included picture and thus the sequence will be privileged as compared to the details of the rest of the images and sequences. At the same time, the internal content is reorganized, it emerges, and it regresses in order to give place to the newcomer. (It is a kind of blessed state, pregnancy/expectancy, the duality of giving up and enriching manifests itself in every recipient film image.) Of course, the incoming picture is also in regression, it adapts and fits into the film image as foreign element; it gradually overtakes the properties of the film image without completely losing its medial nature and real content. In the case of exponential images, we are actually talking about a double transformation: both images, both medias are modified and a particular media complex<sup>13</sup> is formed.

If we see a photo on the film sequence, we can perceive it only in the rhythm and movement of the film image, here the photo loses its properties in order to become a still image and to allow us to set its perceptual contact time, it loses its unique character as well, since it contextualizes, it appears in the environment of the film. The photo is only indicatively, what it used to be, it is no longer its real self, but a migration product, which has evolved into a moving image, its time has been redefined by the new topos of which it became a part.

In Kurosawa's film entitled *Dreams* we encounter a media composition of special effects: in a dream scene, we see Van Gogh's paintings full screen size, in moving image quality. We identify the image, especially as these are famous paintings, but despite its display as moving image, it cannot lose its textural nature, the painting reclassifies as moving image is remedializes several times, it takes a new medial shape, as in a few seconds later, the film sequence does not show the record of a still image, but rather the Van Gogh picture behaving as background for a moving film character, that is, the landscape fixed into painting is revitalized: the painter walks through the landscape, the painting. The director makes use and

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<sup>13</sup> Some examples of films illustrate the characteristics of coexisting, intertwining medias: Zoltán Huszárik, *Szindbád*; Vera Chytilova, *Sedmikrasky*; Woody Allen, *Play it again; Sam*; Jean-Luc Godard, *À bout de Souffle* and so on.

confirms the great possibility of global mediality. Derek Jarman uses a similar camouflaged media change in his movie entitled *Caravaggio* in which the viewer can hardly distinguish between film images made of paintings and tableau vivant, as the structure and content of the living images is exactly the same as the structure of Caravaggio's paintings.

The concept of multimedia is very frequently used in cases when multiple media are juxtaposed. However, we should see that this concept assumes a serial connection, the parallel of media-existence. Most of the time, or rather without exception, medias in contact with each other, are not independent of each other, they do not pass each other without coming into contact.

Therefore, I find it more appropriate to use the term total media or global mediality. In my interpretation, global mediality is the phenomenon when two or more media come into contact with each other and in this relationship they begin to develop each other and themselves, they adapt, they reorganize, they create a special mixed, complex media form. In addition, as according to Mitchell, there are no clear, but only mixed medias, then global mediality would be the life form of mixed media, because they merge, they melt into each other thus creating the medium, or rather media, because there are only media communities.

### **Images as Organisms – Media as Habitats**

It can be added to the definition of media that media is not clearly<sup>14</sup>, as Mitchell points out, of material nature, but of dual nature, like the light, it has a wave and particle nature at the same time, the particle nature refers to the material nature, the waves or the mental nature show the ways of manifestation, this can be called genre, more specifically or by way of illustration: the material aspect of a given media may be represented by a computer, a DVD player, a DVD and the genre that is visualized through the computer and the other tools, would be the film itself, which is concept, directing, theatrical work, colour, shape, etc., all together, but no longer as material presence, but seen as an entity modified, transformed into film.

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<sup>14</sup> „Medien sind nicht einfach nur Materialien, sondern (wie Raymond Williams einst bemerkte) materielle Praktiken, die Technologien, Fertigkeiten, Traditionen und Gewohnheiten beinhalten. Das Medium ist mehr als das material un (entgegen McLuhan) auch mehr als die Botschaft, es ist mehr als einfach nur das Bild plus dessen Träger – es sei denn, wir verstehen unter Träger ein Trägersystem.“ – W. J. T. Mitchell, *Das Leben der Bilder. Eine Theorie der visuellen Kultur*, Verlag C. H. Beck, p. 162.

Medias – in Mitchell’s approach – are not only material by nature, but they include technology and tradition simultaneously. The media is more than message and more than materialism, more than the image and its traveller. According to Mitchell, every image needs a place to live, to exist and the media ensure this.

It is not a good idea if we pay attention only to the material nature of the media, as media is only a possibility, a possibility that makes it possible for a message to be sent, the media is potentiality for the appearance of the message, because without it is simply an unattainable idea, thought, feeling, concept, which exists inside us and for ourselves, the existence-for-the-other framework is provided by the media.

McLuhan’s famous thesis is: The content of a media is always another media. There are no clear medias,<sup>15</sup> and it increasingly becomes clear that medias co-exist. The images are regarded as organisms/living beings<sup>16</sup> – as understood by Mitchell, not based on their structure, but based on their usage, life events (they are born, used, thrown away, privileged, banned and then they disappear, they die, they are destroyed). How do images resemble organisms? Are they born? Do they die? Can they be killed?<sup>17</sup>

Anyway, images have their own lives, in the sense in which they take part in everyday life, their users’ lives, their private, intimate lives are shaped by usage, while they can migrate from one culture to another or become victims of iconoclasm, they can be destroyed, their usage, presence may be prohibited.

Therefore, wherever images are, they need living space. Mitchell believes that the medias are capable of providing space<sup>18</sup> for the images. Similar to living beings, the images can migrate from one media world to another, as a verbal picture can experience rebirth through a painting or a photograph, a media can move into another one. In Mitchell’s view, the media is ecosystem,<sup>19</sup> a living world, a living space.

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<sup>15</sup> „Es gibt keine „reinen“ Medien (beispielweise eine reine malerei, Bildhauerei, Architektur, Dichtung oder ein reines Fernsehen).....“ – *Ibidem*, p. 181.

<sup>16</sup> „Wie Organismen können Bilder von einer Mediumwelt zur anderen ziehen, so dass ein verbales Bild in einem Gemälde oder einer Fotografie wiedergeboren werden kann und sich ein modelliertes Bild in die filmische oder die virtuelle Realität übertragen lässt. Aus diesem Grund scheint ein Medium dazu in der Lage zu sein, sich in ein anderes „einzunisten“, aus demselben Grund scheint es möglich zu sein, dass ein Medium in einem kanonischen Exemplar sichtbar wird...“ – *Ibidem*, p. 182)

<sup>17</sup> „Inwiefern ähneln Bilder Lebewesen? Werden sie geboren? Können sie sterben? Können sie getötet werden?“ – *Ibidem*, p. 72.

<sup>18</sup> „Bilder benötigen einen Platz zum Leben, und genau das ist es, was ein Medium ihnen bietet. Eine berühmte These McLuhans lautet, dass »der Inhalt eines Mediums immer ein anderes Medium ist.«.“ – *Ibidem*, p. 182.

<sup>19</sup> „Wenn Bilder Lebensformen sind und Objekte die Körper, die sie beseelen, dann stellen Medien die Lebensräume oder Ökosysteme dar, in denen Bilder lebendig werden.“ *Ibidem*, p. 162.

The design of media as message traveller and the image as a form with message content, is increasingly called into question, since they hardly behave as visual media, as a clearly outlined traveller that can exist anywhere, to anyone, at any time with the same content, they are just present.

The images, as Mitchell puts it, do not want anything,<sup>20</sup> they do not say anything, and they just are. The message is content attached to the images, it is not their own, it is not an internal component.

### Media-Connections

If we consider Mitchell's media interpretation as starting point, according to which there are no clear, only mixed media, it is completely clear that such concepts as multimedia, intermedia, hypermedia actually refer to the same content of media in general, namely that medias co-exist, we never experience them in singularity.

Before unfolding the problem of multimediality, intermediality, further investigation should be focused on two similar concepts. On one hand, I would like to concentrate on the concept of intramedia, which is primarily used to describe phenomena within a given media, in many cases having a self-reflexive nature.

Another level of intramediality is rarely mentioned, namely, that medias can over slide and in these cases we are not only talking about intermediality, but also about intramediality.<sup>21</sup> In many cases, transmediality is used to describe the phenomena of media change, as the novel adapted into film or composition entitled "Pictures of an Exhibition".<sup>22</sup> The term of transmediality, just like the term of intramediality, is suitable to denominate the processes of media migration. Today's most discussed issue among media analysts is the problem of post-mediality raised by Lev Manovich.

A photo is still a photo even if it appears in a film, only the perception changes; it acts like a moving image, but does not become one. Media forms have the potential to migrate into other media forms, the film could be read as a comic book

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<sup>20</sup> „Was Bilder wollen, ist nicht das gleiche wie die Botschaft, die sie kommunizieren, oder die Wirkung, die sie erzeugen (...). Bilder mögen ähnlich wie wir Menschen, nicht wissen, was sie wollen, ihnen muss durch einen Dialog mit anderen dabei geholfen werden, sich das, was sie wollen, wieder ins Bewusstsein zurückzuführen.“ – *Ibiden*, p. 66.

<sup>21</sup> Taking into account their etymological background, inter-mediality is medias existing next to each other, quite specifically, images and texts co-existing in a magazine, but if there is a picture taken of the text of the magazine, that is intramediality, as one media has incorporated another one, we are talking about being inside a media.

<sup>22</sup> Muszorgszkij piano cycle entitled "Pictures of an Exhibition" which he composed based on Viktor Hartmann posthumous exhibition.

as well, and the audiobook is a very good example for this kind of media migration phenomena. Medias transplant, transport, transposition, moreover, translate, the message becomes, of course, substantially changed, or moreover it may lose its original centre of gravity. Pictorial/visual repetition, image quotes, reproductions, collages are very good examples of media migration and coexistence.

When Manovich refers to new medias, he assumes a media mutation, more precisely; he does not consider media as media in its traditional sense. However, what is traditional media? Based on Mitchell's response, we can state that there is no old and new media, there is only media or medias, which exist in their diversity and abundance and must comply with only one criterion: to be mediators. Thus, we can question Manovich's statement that the new medias are no longer regarded as medias.

"The new forms (assemblage, happening, installation, performance, action art, conceptual art, process art, intermedia, time-based works) are no longer medias in the traditional sense, the constant addition of new technological forms to the old typology resulted in a new mutation of the concept."<sup>23</sup>

The various forms of media are significantly different in terms of appearance and the mode of mediating, but each serves the same purpose, to convey something, they act as storage and means of delivery or displays. The usage and the internal regularities of the medias do not alter the belonging of media to its general category. Manovich proves this with an interesting example: the possibility of digitalization – or more precisely the fact that mold/imprint of any media can be displayed on a web page, that is, I may encounter photos, photos made of photos, photos made of paintings or films made of photos – may lead to the disappearance of differences between medias. At this point, I turn back to the questions discussed in the first part of this paper, namely the definition of the media concept and the diversity of media. Let us start from the simple thesis that there is a great variety of media, these more or less co-exists, as demonstrated previously. The co-existence implies that certain medias migrate into a different media, thus ceasing to be the functions of given material designs, that is to say, a photo is no longer present due to the photo paper, but mostly in a digital environment, but apart from this the photo can be recognized and considered to be a photo.

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<sup>23</sup> In addition, if the traditional typology was based on difference in materials used in art practice, the new mediums either allowed for the use of different materials in arbitrary combinations (installation), or, even worse, aimed to dematerialize the art object (conceptual art). Therefore, the new forms were not really mediums in any traditional sense of the term. – Lev Manovich, *Post-media aesthetics*, [http://www.manovich.net/TEXTS\\_07.HTM](http://www.manovich.net/TEXTS_07.HTM).



“On the material level, the shift to digital representation and the common modification or editing tools which can be applied to most media (copy, paste, morph, interpolate, filter, composite, etc.) and which substitute traditional distinct artistic tools erased the differences between photography and painting (in the realm of still image) and between film and animation (in the realm of a moving image).”<sup>24</sup>

Manovich’s unilateral argumentation implies that he approaches today’s culture, media usage in an extreme way, from the user’s perspective and it is also not clear whether the software should have more legitimacy or the concept of media should be changed for the concept of software. The concept of software is strongly linked to computer data storage and processing, and this can hardly be said about culture medial environment in general, because if we approach the problem of media from the user’s perspective, it can be immediately seen that there hardly exists any general rule which would define or regulate usage, even if the traveller is nothing more than a website, where ready-made schemas are waiting for the user, however, the visitor may want to make use of several possible variations of combinatorics and his/her liberty is not limited by the ready-made instructions either.

“The traditional concept of a media emphasizes the physical properties of a particular material and its representational capacities (i.e., the relationship between the sign and the referent.) As traditional aesthetics in general, this concept encourages us to think about the author’s intentions, the content and the form of an artwork - rather than the user. In contrast with this, if we perceive culture, media, and unique cultural products as software, it will help us ensure focus on operations (called commands in programs) offered to the user. The focus is, therefore, shifted to the user’s abilities and behaviour.”<sup>25</sup>

It is also important to discuss, that the problem of aesthetics, that is the investigation of beauty in its traditional sense, has been reclassified and intertwined with a number of other sciences, but it cannot be ruled out completely. Moreover, without it the other sciences would also be more narrow-minded. The replacement

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<sup>24</sup> On the material level, the shift to digital representation and the common modification/editing tools which can be applied to most media (copy, paste, morph, interpolate, filter, composite, etc.) and which substitute traditional distinct artistic tools erased the differences between photography and painting (in the realm of still image) and between film and animation (in the realm of a moving image). – *Ibidem*.

<sup>25</sup> The traditional concept of a medium emphasizes the physical properties of a particular material and its representational capacities (i.e., the relationship between the sign and the referent.) As traditional aesthetics in general, this concept encourages us to think about the author’s intentions, the content and the form of an artwork -- rather than the user. – *Ibidem*.

of media by software would lock out none other but the user of its alleged scheme, system, since the software is based on automatism. The media is actually a created condition, which will fill its role when it comes into contact with its user, if it comes into contact again with the human dimension. The media was always used at least twice, once when uploaded with content, and when turning towards the media and its content out of curiosity.

“Therefore, instead of the term media, we could use the term software when discussing past media, i.e. what kind of informational operations does a certain media place at the user’s disposal.”<sup>26</sup>

### **Total-Media Versus Post-media**

According to the principle of postmediality we live in an age where the media as a concept is not suitable to describe different cultural processes and what we have called media has now changed to such an extent, that we need to change the way of thinking about it and related concept use.

However, it seems that media and software indicate completely different contents, not only in the meaning of the concept, but in the public mind and in targeted literature as well. Excluding the concept of media would be such a loss, as depriving ourselves of the concepts introduced by Greek philosophers, because they were not born in the digital era and thus are not admissible in an environment where there are many new phenomena and physical conditions around us. The differences between medias do not disappear, even if they come across each other in collective basin, such as a digital photo or a community site or an advertising space on the internet.

Painting, photography had not ceased with the emergence of television, nor did the printed press with the emergence of electronic media and audiobooks. It is natural, that the appearance of every new element involves some kind of lethargic, ominous fear that predicts the disappearance of an existing one and it is concerned about the exchange of places. In these cases, a complex process begins, medias do not actually change places, they do not exclude side-by-side existence or the possibility of existence within each other, and it is certainly not a primary consequence that the new media destroys the existing, old one, but what rather happens is that the older media becomes part of the new media, as these usually have a more comprehensive, overall character.

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<sup>26</sup> Lev Manovich, *Post-Media Aesthetics. The Media in Crisis*, [http://exindex.hu / index.php? l = en & page = 3 & id = 227](http://exindex.hu/index.php?l=en&page=3&id=227).

The age of media, medias is not over, on the contrary: the growing, fast multiplying medias result in a colourful and complex media system, where the relations between different medias become more varied, newer, unprecedented configurations are created and the co-existence of special shapes and forms appear. The concept of postmediality proves to be a decadent and destructive term, since it questions the legitimacy of the media in an era when the newest medias coexist with older one.

In the light of the latest media phenomena, when social, community media seems to be one of the leading phenomenon, the most appropriate term is global media, because medias are more and more intertwined, crucibles appear in which the imprints of previous medias are present as references. In the case of global media the materiality of media is transformed, it appears as part of another media, but as form, as having traveller quality and a specific option of expression, it preserves all of its characteristics (in most cases due to its imagery). It is important to note here that any media that has a substance-material dimension as well, (and all medias a material dimension as well), that is to say, it has a visual dimension as well, it can be treated as image, the process of summarizing can be realized specifically as a result of and through imagery.

To give a concrete example: the text, the visual imprint of the spoken word on a web page appears as an image, which due to its internal structure becomes readable, but we can also consider the pages of a book as visual manifestation, since first we have to see it all, in order to be able to read later on. Global mediality<sup>27</sup> does not represent anything other than Mitchell's sense of joint medial existence.

### **Hidden Subject – a Virtual Carnival**

Many people suspect that behind these community sites, virtual villages there is strong political background, monitoring information, which has lead several people to reject, leave the system, and move from the village.

This village<sup>28</sup> governed by these special rules resembles Béla Hamvas' Carnival, where everybody can select the costume and the role, communication is interrupted,

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<sup>27</sup> Interestingly enough, the concept of total or global is not part of the technical terminology, but it is present in the form of company names or names of websites.

<sup>28</sup> The choice of the term village is more relevant because its proximity is obvious, any member can be reached at any time, you can knock on anybody's door at any time, that is to say, you can check his/her profile – in this case it has to be taken into account that there is minimal security, that you can lock your door from strangers, that is data cannot be shared.

often unilateral, but not impossible, there are no constantly communicating communities, they comment on the comments randomly, therefore short texts, dialogues are created that remind the reader of Örkény's style. The subject is actually hidden in the sense that the user fully controls his/her reactions, situations and appearance. The costume is the information set that the user shares with the community, and this is only part of the real, even if the published information, text, images are regarded as documents, because the process of selection results in a distortion, which directs, regulates self-presentation, this being reinforced by the possibility that their truth and reality value is not checked, therefore, within the limited freedom – I am thinking of the fact that structural forms, sizes, quantities, the origin and selection of information are entirely left to the user. Hence the costume character of profile making: there is a possibility to wear a costume and change it whenever necessary. Most people do not make use of this option to its fullest, they are quite honest, but there is a kind of hiding in honesty as well, because you show the best and the most beautiful of yourself (*most* is, by the way, what some people chose to use, though small in number: the most mysterious, the most terrifying, the most disgusting and so on). It is definitely a self-publicity that can be positive or negative.

These virtual villages have special, fragile and highly variable structures, their functioning is determined most of all by pseudo-intimacy and quasi-honesty and their communication is also very specific. The social/community forum, such as Facebook, can hardly put all of its members into motion on a communicative level at the same time, therefore smaller chat platforms are formed, which can function with up to 25-30 participants at a time, but on average, there are 5-10 comments. The group of the readers, viewers is much larger, those who do not comment, just observe.

These atom-like mini forums create in many cases, compact mini-communities, as it can be observed that responses, posts, comments are given by more or less the same members. It can hardly be called a dialogue; it is more like a set, a pile of comments that start upon aphoristic observations, questions that then generate ironical posts, comments without having an exact line of communication.

### **Media Jams. The Image as Leading Media on the Web**

The most powerful feature of social media is that a variety of media meet, therefore, it can be considered a multimedial, intermedial phenomenon, but it is often called hypermedia as well. The concept of multimediality seems most

appropriate in the case of social media, as the majority of web pages compress multiple media, and at the same time we encounter intermediality on almost every Internet site, as one media covers the other. Hypermediality (the equivalent of hypertext) could actually be a common denominator of multimodality and intermediality, but neither of them can be considered the common denominator of websites; they can be used as characteristics, as features. Media jam is clearly noticeable on all Internet sites, as picture, audio, text and all of their subcategories are displayed, almost without exception, and they melt into each other, they intertwine.

The complexity of media jams puts the user in a difficult situation, because every time s/he encounters an Internet platform, s/he has to set up a hierarchy: on which component should s/he focus first and in what order is to set up between the sub-elements.

Needless to prove, it is everyday experience that images gain priority. At first, unwittingly, we concentrate on the visual components of an Internet site or social media, and only then begin a rational, controlled, conscious user attitude, in order to start selecting from the options (i.e. reading the text on the page or listening to the audio material that is available on the page).

The dominance of images is obvious. However, from where and how do images obtain superiority over other medias? According to Mitchell, images are leading medias. This is axiomatic meaning, without looking for the answer to why.

We could assume, in the case of a complex, global medial product that we turn to images because we understand them better, we can read and comprehend them at first sight. The question remains regarding the origin of image dominance; because we can hardly state that, we can read or comprehend images; however, their attraction, that influences our recipient attitude, is inescapable. Gottfried Boehm used the term *the power of images* in order to outline visual strength, energy through which images fascinate us, attract us, and use their power on us.

One of the controversial and open questions of image theory is how images are able to affect, to influence, how does the visual field of attraction develop and how does it affect us. It is not our intention here to discuss this problem in detail or to find answers to this; we rather analyse the role of the dominance of images, in social, community media. If you open a website, you first take a look at the images. On Facebook we look for and among pictures of long time, no see acquaintances, we might not even read where they live, what do they do, we go for the family album in order to have a peak into their lives, an Internet imprint of their world and only after doing so do we take some time to focus on the reading.

If we accept image dominance as axiom, it also becomes clear why is it that in the case of Facebook for instance, images are so important: users confirm their existence on the community forum first and foremost through pictures, moreover, most communication attempts start out as comments attached to images, pictures, these eventually grow into texts on the border of monologues and dialogues in the form of mostly short sentences, phrases or in the best case extended sentences or very short flow of thoughts.

Imagery has a significant role in editing websites, as the dominant media is the first to come into contact with the user. Website editors, bloggers or Facebook profile editors suspect, feel, know how important the used images are, therefore they select them carefully, while letting a specific form of manipulation work in the background. This kind of manipulation is not necessarily negative, but is rather present in the sense of forming, shaping, transformation and its didactic strength lies in the fact a photo, an image, a video material can create trends on the long run whether in the good sense of the word or having negative connotations. The lack of imagery in the case of the chat is quite strange, more specifically, in the case of the chat we meet with a primary level of text, which is later completed with other medias, including visual content as well.

Nevertheless, let us discuss chat as text-oriented phenomenon, where hiding is of main importance, where image dominance is deliberately eschewed, as if put between brackets and put aside for later, only as a reserve option. This is also interesting, because it is a unique phenomenon of virtual community sites, images do not dominate simply by being absent, but imagination is far more powerful, since it is only the presence of words, conversations that make up an internal image of the partner. In this case games, playing, imagination and the wide sphere of possibilities comes to the front, as the concreteness of the image would deprive – though virtually and on the level of imagination – the users of the best of the possible partners. Though user freedom in editing the webpage and self-portrayal is minimal in the case of chat forums, the freedom offered by *maybe* and *perhaps* in the sphere of thought and verbal expression is greater.

### **Online Touch – *Message Without Recipient, a Message to Everybody, a Message to Nobody***

In the case of chat, the most common form of communication is bidirectional. In the case of all other medias, including websites, news, sites, there is a clear feature: there is no specified recipient, and there is an undetermined, probable, possible, anticipated user group who is expected to attend, without having a precisely defined or quantified target audience. In the case of social, community sites, the

recipient is always self-appointed, random, casual user. Sending a message in this form assumes the existence of an entirely new communication system, which does not follow Umberto Eco's semiotic schema and does not use the simple sender-message-receiver schema, since we are dealing with a much more complex message, often without a receiver, these are internet messages in a bottle.

When these messages are created, there is no need to put the blame on the lack of marketing or the lack of users, it is rather availability and content that exclude certain users, moreover the subject may be excluding or delimiting. We do not deal with the form of Internet messages in bottles or with the case of personalized advertising when the message is directed to specific recipients, what we deal with instead are those contents as messages, information that are accessible to anyone. These messages can actually speak to no one and everyone, there is no personal connection between emitter and receiver, in fact, there is no connection between sender and receiver, and this is why we cannot talk about sender or receiver at all. In fact, we encounter this phenomenon on advertising pages (self-publicity), on informational sites, on entertainment pages (games) or on community pages.

If we take into account Mitchell's Luhmann diagram, which does not posit media in a linear system but as a circular model, you get a new interpretation of the concepts of message and receiver and emitter,<sup>29</sup> they can even be left out of the system.

Mitchell does not use the concept of emitter and receiver, he builds the concentric system on the relationship of form and media (medium - if the transmitter is a person) and media is present as an opportunity for the manifestation of form, without assuming targeted use, it is at hand, available to anyone. Of course, most of the media has a targeted audience, but this audience is fictitious, it is present on the level of planning, preparation, as idealized, ideal option, it helps in editing, in production and creation, but does not generate, create the audience itself, this is formed in a rather aleatory way, under the influence of a number of unforeseen factors. The media is actually that sphere of possibility sector, which, from the user's perspective, is unlimited, available to everyone. Community media usually has one condition: the user should sign up as member of the system, thus getting him/her involved and gaining access to his/her basic data and personalized communication in the form of emails, advertising can begin.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> This is not about the invalidity of Eco's model, but the existence of another possible model that is more and more perceivable in the case of newly emerging media forms. Eco's model is still functional in the case of emails, personal communication or traditional postal correspondence.

<sup>30</sup> The strategy of advertising pop-up windows on the internet is quite interesting: it works in a personalized way. Who has not experienced seeing in one or another corner of your mail account the advertisement of the online store or site where yesterday you bought something or wanted to buy something, but nonetheless spent some time on that site, you opened it, you showed interest and the next day you meet again.

Let us keep in mind the existing, wandering message that finds its target somewhere, somehow, at someone. The message without a recipient has a very interesting form, which is mostly used by travel agencies, the postcard without a recipient, which appears in your mailbox. At first, the you, the unnamed recipient, are glad that someone has been thinking about you, but you soon realize that it is an advertisement, the text is created in a very personalized manner, but it is actually the advertisement of a travel agency formulated nicely and in an attractive manner, but it not specially for you, it for everybody and nobody.

The message that most social networking sites carry are intended for both the personal and impersonal user, but not just for him/her. The message somehow manages to reach its destination without address and recipient, it comes to me in such a way that I choose it by a simple gesture, I make the Internet connection available, I give power supply to my computer, I open the Internet site and as a self-serving postman I let the online touch get to me, which I get by letting the mechanism operate that can touch anybody in the less physical sense of the word.

This can be understood as one form of vulnerability, or as a form of social expression of automatism or it can be viewed as a particular form of personal freedom.

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