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FROM THE SOCRATIC MAIEUTIC TO HEURISTIC STRATEGIES IN EDUCATION (II)

BY

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Abstract. The article aims to discover the specific aspects of the Socratic maieutic and the conceptual relation between the Socratic maieutic and the heuristic strategies of modern education. The methods used are: text analysis and comparative study. If the Socratic maieutic is in its essence a heuristic educational strategy, by presenting modern current educational strategies, the following common elements are identified and put under discussion: moving the educational centre of gravity from the teacher to the student, from memorizing knowledge to discovering it, to reflexivity and self-reflexivity, from a given educational process to a built and won one.

Keywords: Socratic maieutic; heuristic strategies.

1. Introduction

The filiation of an idea, the starting point of a concept are important for its evolution and manifestation. Why did Socrates remain with the title of the “teacher” of mankind? The purpose of his life was educating the young generation in the spirit of the truth and the good, through the maieutic method. Is the Socratic maieutic, in one form or another, also kept in the thesaurus of the educational concepts and methods at present? Is it worthy to be perpetuated in the education in the following centuries, or not?! What is the relation between

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the Socratic maieutic and the modern, heuristic methods in the modern and current education? Does a conceptual bridge exist between the Greek antiquity in education and the current society of knowledge? Can the Socratic maieutic be this bridge?

2. Heuristic Strategies in Education

2.1. Definition and Classification

We approach the teaching strategy with its known significations (Albulescu, 2000; Ionescu 2005; Cerghit 2006; Oprea 2007) as the creative interaction between objects, contents, methods, means and forms of organization and assessment of the educational process, conceived, designed and implemented by the teacher, with the purpose of teaching-learning-assessment. We emphasize *involving the objectives* in the teaching strategies, because we consider that, in the current pedagogy, the teaching and educational objectives have a generative and decisive role related to the contents, methods, means, and forms of organizing the educational process. The teacher in the educational practice is surely the one who emphasizes more or less one of these components. The most popular types of teaching strategies after Nicola (2000), Cucoş (2002), Cerghit (2006), Oprea (2009) are:

1. **inductive strategies**, whose teaching approach is projected from particular to general;
2. **deductive strategies**, whose teaching approach is projected from general to particular, from laws or principles to materializing them into examples;
3. **analogical strategies** by means of which teaching and learning unfold at the same level of generalization, helped by the models;
4. **transductive strategies**, such as explanations using metaphors;
5. **mixed strategies**: inductive-deductive and deductive-inductive;
6. **algorithmic strategies**: explanatory-demonstrative, intuitive, expositive, imitative, programmed and algorithmic;
7. **heuristic strategies** – of elaborating knowledge by self-effort of thinking, **using brainstorming, discovery, modelling, issuing hypothesis, heuristic dialogue, experiment**
8. **of investigation, assault of ideas, having the stimulation of creativity as an effect.**

The **heuristic strategies** focus the teacher-student-student communication on searching and exploring, to reach to the expected result: discovering a new set of knowledge. The questions which are an invitation to action, a ferment of the mental activity, an instrument to get the information (Ioan Cerghit), can be spontaneous and premeditated.

2.2. Types of Questions

In his effort to lead the students, by questioning them, to discovering and acquiring a new set of knowledge, the teacher can call for many types of questions. Giorgio Gostini (1996) classifies and characterizes them as follows:

a) **limited or close questions** – which can allow only one correct answer: judge, comparison, decision;

b) **broad or open questions** – to which the students can answer by choosing from multiple and different ideas, according to their level of education, possibilities, interests;

c) **stimulating questions** through which the teacher stimulates the learners to express themselves more amply and clearly, without tracing a certain direction to their thinking.

Through **the limited and close questions** the teacher has the initiative of prospecting; the students are led to the answer expected by the teacher, they become dependent on the teacher's thinking and cannot be offered the possibility of expressing their feelings, ideas, personal experiences; the learners do not have the responsibility of searching for a way leading to a certain aim, the aims being set by the teacher; the answer to these questions does not lead the students to identifying the structure of knowledge on the whole; the only one that appreciates the value of the answers given by the learners is the teacher.

Analysing these questions and their characterization by Gostini, we can observe that they are totally in favour of the teacher, they maintain his/her central position in the educational process, the initiative, organization, leading, assessment of the educational process are made by the teacher.

The broad and open questions are, according to Gostini, much more generous because: they encourage the student's initiative; they foster the students' judgement and the individual making of reasoning; the student has the possibility of analysing, comparing, and evaluating himself; the learner is led to elaborate the whole structure of the knowledge that was taught; the student develops and express his feelings, his own experiences; the learner can criticise and assess his own activity and the one of his colleagues.

Through the open questions the initiative of knowing, judging, structuring what to learn, choosing various answers, assessing, expressing feelings and attitudes belong to the student. Thus, in the centre of the educational process lies the student, not the teacher.

Stimulating questions – stimulate the students in search for the answer, urge them to express themselves broader and more clearly, without imposing a certain direction to their thinking.

The operation for any of these types of questions depends on the intended objective, on the content they refer to, on the students they are

addressed to. Depending on the specific features of the questions which trigger the answer, Ioan Nicola (2000) distinguishes the following types of conversations:

- a) conversation based on close questions;
- b) conversation based on a chain of open questions;
- c) conversation based on stimulating and exploratory questions.

Depending on the intended purpose, the following types of questions can be used (Nicola 2000):

- **reproductive** questions, which serve to update the learned set of knowledge, to check it;
- **reproductive-cognitive** questions, used for updating some information, on the basis of which new information is acquired;
- **hypothetical** questions, used for determining the working hypothesis;
- **convergent** questions, which make the students build analyses, summaries, comparisons, explanations,, associations of ideas;
- **divergent questions**, which guide the students' thinking on original paths, emphasise the diversity of solutions;
- **assessing questions**, through which the students are asked to make value judgements.

According to Nicola (2000) the heuristic strategies do not ensure only a simple exchange of information; more importantly, they also ensure *building new ideas starting from other ideas*. As a means of stimulating the students' intellectual activity, the teaching technique of communication by using questions and answers is valuable under the following conditions:

- if it *permits the student enough initiative*, by using some broad questions, which determine research;
- if it allows enough *time* for building the answer;
- if the students benefit from *freedom of action*, which allows them to choose the necessary ways and means of expressing their thinking;
- if it encourages the students' development of judgment and critical spirit;
- if it allows the learners the *responsibility* and time to control, complete and correct their own answers;
- if it cultivates the *spirit of cooperation, and also of confrontation* in choosing the solutions, rivalry and competition being avoided;
- if it permits expressing some complementary points of view.

In conclusion, we notice that questions remain the main instrument for guiding the student's mental and practice activity in discovering knowledge, in organizing, structuring, and expressing it. This is not true about any kind of questions: only the open, stimulating, hypothetical, convergent, divergent, reproductive-creative, and also assessing questions should be taken into consideration. These questions can form the heuristic

strategies, if they meet certain conditions: the student's initiative, time, freedom of action, the student's responsibility.

2.3 Heuristic Methods of Teaching-Learning-Assessing

Combining more criteria of classification according to several authors (Claparede, 1909; Gagne, 1975; Okon, 1978; Ionescu, 2005; Cerghit, 2006; Oprea, 2007), we can list the following heuristic methods: 1. heuristic conversation; 2. problematization; 3. debate; 4. case study; 5. project; 6. brainstorming; 7. simulation; 8. group work method; 9. jigsaw method (the mosaic); 10. peer teaching/learning method; 11. cube; 12. pair changing; 13. cause diagram; 14. cognitive map (conceptual); 15. lily flower method; 16. I know/I want to know/I learned; 17. reading and thinking streamlining; 18. thinking hats methods; 19. synectics; 20. technique 6/3/5; 20. Phillips method; 21. learning through discovery.

Although different, these methods, techniques and procedures of teaching-learning and assessing of the educational process have common features regarding the **creativity criterion**. Applying this criterion to identifying the creative aspects in the students' personality, to the students' involvement in creative activities, to the creative linking between students, to the students' development of creativity, we identified the common features of these methods:

1. the main character of the educational scene is **the student**;
2. the student – guided by the teacher – has or can have **initiative** in the knowledge approach, in identifying the problems, in structuring them, in assessing and expressing them;
3. the student's activity is based on and also develops the student's **interests, abilities and skills**;
4. the student develops himself/herself as a **personality** as well as a **group member**;
5. these methods aim not only at forming and developing the student's mind, the cognitive aspects of his personality, but also at developing the **affective, motivational and volitional** aspects;
6. the student is trained to involve himself/herself **in organising and assessing the educational activity**;
7. combining the creative methods, techniques and procedures leads to heuristic strategies which can satisfy all the functions of the teaching methodology: **cognitive, educational, instrumental, normative**.
8. the heuristic educational strategies can be used for **all the lesson types**: teaching, communicating knowledge, retaining and consolidating, revising, assessing, forming skills and abilities, developing competences;

9. these strategies lead to the explicit developing of the **students' responsibility**, by consciously taking various roles, solving problematic situations or even conflicts inside and between groups.
10. **The heuristic strategies of teaching-learning-assessing are developed and based on the moral basis of the students' personalities, by training self-esteem and respecting the others in work and creative groups.**

To identify the common aspects between Socratic maieutic, cognitivism, constructivism, heuristic strategies in education, we have devised the Table 1.

Table 1
Comparative Analysis of the Educational Characteristics of Socratic Maieutic, Cognitivism, Constructivism, and the Heuristic Strategies in Education

Socratic maieutic	Educational cognitivism	Educational constructivism	Educational heuristic strategies
The magister has <i>the initiative</i>	The teacher <i>initiates</i> knowledge	The teacher or the student <i>initiates</i> knowledge	The teacher or the student <i>initiates</i> knowledge
Close and open questions	Close and open questions	Open questions	Open questions
Inductive reasoning	Inductive/deductive/transductive/mixed reasoning	Inductive/deductive / transductive/mixed reasoning	Inductive/deductive/transductive/mixed reasoning
Methods used: <i>dialogue, questioning</i>	Methods: <i>dialogue, debate, questioning, case study</i>	<i>Cognitive</i> and action methods	<i>Cognitive</i> and action methods
<i>Reflexivity and self-reflexivity</i>	<i>Reflexivity and self-reflexivity</i>	<i>Reflexivity and self-reflexivity</i>	<i>Reflexivity and self-reflexivity</i>
The disciple's <i>responsibility</i>	The student's <i>responsibility</i>	The student's <i>responsibility</i>	The student's <i>responsibility</i>
The disciple's <i>autonomy</i>	The student's <i>autonomy, group collaboration, confrontation</i>	The student's <i>autonomy, group collaboration, confrontation</i>	The student's <i>autonomy, group collaboration, confrontation</i>
Magister as a <i>guide</i> of knowledge	The teacher- <i>adviser</i>	The teacher- <i>adviser</i>	The teacher- <i>adviser</i>
<i>Creativity +morality</i>	<i>Creativity</i>	<i>Creativity</i>	<i>Creativity</i>

3. Conclusions

In conclusion, we can consider the Socratic maieutic as a bridge between the ancient heuristic education for good and truth, to the current education of creativity, with the following arguments which represent the features of **the Socratic maieutic common to the heuristic strategies of teaching**: the magister or **the teacher initiates** knowledge by using questions.

The process of knowledge is **open to the student/disciple** through his past but also present experience by using observation, questioning, experiment, conversation, argumentation, simulation, discovery.

The stimulation of the student's **reflexivity and self-reflexivity**, through which knowledge is permanently updated, both in the students' mind and in their way of expressing and formulating.

The method of discovering knowledge is **the teacher-student interactivity**, the student-student interactivity through which the teacher mediates knowledge and negotiates its results.

Emphasis on the teacher's role of **adviser and guide** in discovering knowledge.

Personalizing education, because both maieutic and the current heuristic strategies focus on the learners with their interests, necessities, skills, according to the ancient goal: know yourself!

Searching for the truth of mankind, through the action upon oneself: consequently, if we want to know the truth and to develop the wish for the truth in ourselves, we must start by working upon ourselves

Combination of creativity with morality: responsibility, recognition, evaluation, virtue.

Current education must still work on the last meeting point between creativity and morality because if in antiquity the moral goals of education were well stated, in current education they have been overshadowed by the scientific and intellectualist goals. Not to mention virtue...

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DE LA MAIEUTICA SOCRATICĂ LA STRATEGIILE EURISTICE ÎN EDUCAȚIE (II)

(Rezumat)

Lucrarea își propune să descopere specificul maieuticii socratice și relația conceptuală dintre maieutica socratică și strategiile euristice ale educației moderne. Metodele folosite sunt analiza de text și studiul comparativ. Dacă maieutica socratică este în esență ei o strategie educațională euristică, prin prezentarea strategiilor educaționale moderne și actuale se discută și se identifică elementele comune: deplasarea centrului educațional de greutate de pe profesor pe elev, de pe memorarea cunoștințelor pe descoperirea lor, pe reflexivitate și autoreflexivitate, de la un proces educațional dat la unul construit și câștigat.

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FACTORS INFLUENCING COMMUNICATION IN THE PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

BY

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Abstract. This paper is a descriptive study of the professional context, the purpose of which is to identify the analysis criteria specific to human communication that takes place in a work environment, i.e. professional communication. Current theories on communication, which are presented in the first part of the paper, enable us to identify a model of the extensive communication model designed along the dimension individual-social. The paper describes in a distinct manner the communication techniques seen as possible ways of forming communication competence and it brings to the fore the issue of communication professionalism. The second part is an analysis of the professional context seen in the complexity of its external determinations on the physical and psycho-social dimensions. The introduction of some physical dimensions, such as space, time, microclimate, which are specific for the professional activity in a certain domain, represents a new perspective in approaching this phenomenon. Components which are quite rarely discussed in communication studies, such as culture and the organizational climate are identified as descriptive elements for the professional environment, and, as such, they are proposed as possible analysis criteria for professional communication. The conclusion of this article defines professional communication and enlists the main categories of impact factors.

Keywords: the theory of communication; professional communication; professionalism of communication; professional environment.

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1. Introduction

Theorizing communication has been an old preoccupation of human society. Rules of rhetoric – the art of oral discourse – have been known since ancient times and have been refined over the millennia from multiple perspectives; the in-depth knowledge of communication as a process, however, has been quite recently approached from a scientific point of view. Starting with mid-20th century, the modeling of the communication process has witnessed a continuous evolution, from simple linear relations between units with different roles (Shannon & Weaver, 1949), to complex circular, interactive models that involve contextual elements or transactional, “encounter” models (Hybels & Weaver, 1986), according to which the message is generated by the specificity of the encounter, in a concrete situation, between the participants in the communication process.

Becoming aware of the importance of communication in everyday life has led to the accelerated development of research, both in the sense of an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon and the process, and in the sense of diversifying the perspectives: cybernetics, the theory of information, psychology, sociology, pedagogy, linguistics being just the most prolific ones. The continuous diversification of approaches have turned the theory of communication in a transdisciplinary domain, used for knowing and regulating an infinite diversity of particular situations, pertaining to the individual, domestic, educational, commercial, organizational and managerial, institutional or mass spheres.

The issue we focus on in this article is related to the identification of analysis criteria in an environment that is extremely important both for the adult person and for society, *i.e.* the professional environment.

2. The Theory of Communication and its Elements

Many synthesis studies try to structure the literature in the field according to various tentative approaches in defining communication. In this respect we will mention in what follows the studies that can be considered a landmark in the field.

Dance and Larson (1976) identified over 120 definitions for the term *communication*. For our analysis it is worth pointing out that felicitous communication also involves interpersonal understanding regarded as “a personal ability to accurately anticipate attitudes, beliefs and values” (Dance & Larson, 1976, 123).

R. Craig (1999) describes seven perspectives, traditions which represent different categories in approaching the human communication phenomenon: 1) the rhetorical tradition, that approaches to communication seen as the art of

practicing public speaking; 2) the semiotic tradition, which approaches communication as a mediator of human relations through signs and symbols; 3) the phenomenological tradition, that emphasizes the importance of dialogism; 4) the cybernetic tradition, that views communication as information flux; 5) the socio-psychological tradition, which reveals communication as an interaction among individuals; 6) the socio-cultural tradition, which views communication as production and reproduction of the social order; 7) the critical tradition, based on the idea that through communication any hypothesis can be questioned.

Craig's holistic vision on communication is applied by Littlejohn and Foss (2011, 65) in analyzing the contexts of communication. The extended model of the communicative context elaborated by the above-mentioned authors shows that the inclusive spheres grow from communicators/dialogue partners, message, conversation and their relationship – the first contextual sphere, to the group context, the organizational context, mass communication to the wider context, the cultural and macro-social context. Each sphere of this inclusive structure may be known through the congruent analysis of several categories of theories, traditions, identified by Craig. The model proposed suggests that a communicative sequence can have a determination in a narrower or wider context, it can also generate effects in the context in which it was achieved, in integrated or integrative contexts. For example, a conversation between two people is determined by their individual peculiarities, by the message transmitted and by the relationship between the interlocutors; the analysis of the conversation can go deeper, both towards causes and effects, to the groups the communicators belong to and to their reference groups, to the organizations the messages or the communicators themselves imply, up to the cultural environments they represent and to society in general.

Side by side with the theories of communication there appear in the public space a series of conceptualizations of various regulating/self-regulating principles of communication regarded as communication techniques. Their purpose is to reach certain goals pertaining to various states – cognitive, affective, value configuration states, or certain action goals – generating various types of behavior. The main techniques fall into the empathic ones – focused on the communication partner, the assertive techniques – centered on the speaker and the pragmatic ones, centered on the situation, on the communicative goal (the topic, the problem under discussion). Regarded from the point of view of nondirective psychotherapy, (Rogers, 1985) empathic communication is manifested as an attitude of active and transparent understanding of the other, while maintaining one's own beliefs and values. Assertive communication is the technique that enables the assertion of the ego, of one's own will without authoritarianism, the change of the other "through the democratic means of authentic expression of one's own opinions and conceptions" (Gavril Jitaru, 2015, 7), through the sincere expression of one's own feelings and expectations

regarding the others (Helena Cornelius, Shoshana Faire, 1996). Pragmatic communication presupposes the interlocutors' detachment from emotions, sensibility and affective needs, the use of instruments in order to solve problems, as well as transparent negotiation.

The current article views human communication from a phenomenological perspective, as a behavioral manifestation that can be perceived and interpreted on the basis of personal experience, including those based on the knowledge of psychological or sociological principles. Communication is the process that ensures links between different people, their interaction being reflected in the dynamics of cognitive states and of the participants' simultaneous and/or successive, immediate or ulterior behavioral manifestations.

The terminology used in our study is the psycho-sociological one based on the definition formulated by Ana Tucicov-Bogdan (1981, 54) for interpersonal communication as "a fundamental way of the individuals' psycho-social interaction, achieved by means of reality's symbols and social-generalized significances, with a view to obtaining stability or certain behavioral modifications at the individual or group level". The approach differs from the semiotic, or rather linguistic interpretation, that defines social interaction in its far and complex finality at personal level as a "member of a certain culture or society" (Fiske, 2003), a person for whom an organized group of signs has similar meanings and generates reactions that are similar to those of the community he/she belongs to. In what regards the efficiency criteria of interpersonal communication, we can refer to the conditions proposed by Straton N. (apud Gavrilă Jitaru, 2015, 12), *i.e.*, message reception, comprehension, acceptance and reaction. We consider that these qualities, which can be analyzed in their turn in the diversity of their determining variables, are sufficient in order to direct the analysis of a communication sequence towards the main approach directions: receptivity orients the analysis towards the physical environment in direct relation to the participants' sensorial perceptions, intelligibility directs it towards the communicators' cognitive dimension, acceptability implies the affective-motivational dimension generated by conversation, while the reaction indicates the evolution of the interpersonal dimension towards the communicative goal. The acquisition of language as a result of living one's life, the use of appropriate vocabulary, suited to the social referential environment, to the community or communities in which a person lives will result in the spontaneous acquisition of communicative abilities, of a certain style which permits an individual to obtain what he/she aims at obtaining from the others through interpersonal communication. When the goal is to achieve what must be achieved, we speak of an assumed social position. In this case, spontaneous communication should be strengthened, completed or compensated through conscious learning, through the acquisition of a communicative style meant to lead in an economical and comfortable manner to

the achievement of the communicative goals. This is professional communication.

In our view, communication professionalism has a double value determination: the economic, efficiency value is measured by the achievement of the communicative goals in a concrete situation; the psycho-social value (a) refers to the psychological cost which appears as a result of obtaining the expected reaction, expressed in the state generated by the effects of communication on a personal level, from the physical state in the dichotomy exhausted – relaxed, to the affective state regarded along the dimension frustrated-satisfied, to (b) the organizational climate given by the impact of communication on the group as such, along the dimension agreeable – tense.

3. The Professional Environment

The term *environment* refers to a complex, physical, perceptible reality, but also to a subjective, self-perceived reality expressed through someone's behavior. One definition makes the difference between the personal context, a subjective reality, a reflection of the world on a psychic individual level influenced by personal knowledge and experience, and the external context – physical, social and cultural – which appears in many concrete forms. Bonfrenbrener (1982) indicates the following as specific criteria for the external context: space, time, characteristic features, occupations, participants and their roles. If we admit that space and time generally define all phenomena, we notice that these criteria complete and integrate at least what Littlejohn and Foss' extended model of communicative contexts includes in the first reference sphere, i.e. the communicators, the message and the interpersonal relationships. We use in a professional context criteria used to reveal the identity elements of the physical and psycho-social communication context.

3.1. The Physical Complexity of the Professional Environment and Its Impact on Interpersonal Communication

Traditionally speaking, the work space is a well-defined one, specific for each profession. Depending on the specific activity, the characteristic work spaces may be open – e.g. in agriculture or constructions – or closed – e.g. mines, tunnels, inside buildings, greenhouses. Other characteristics refer to adequate size and width, suitable for the number of people and the technical means used for the activity, or, respectively, the information exchange frequency inherent in the respective activity. Another spatial variable is that of the mobility. Some professions are related to a fixed space (a stand, a car), while others presuppose a wide, indefinite space, such as those associated with couriers, social assistants, transporters. The specific space and its size have an impact on communication, accessibility of perception, physical demands, as well as on the participants' comfort characteristic.

The time specific for a professional activity refers to its duration, to its program, and also to the way it unfolds from the point of view of the day- night alternation. As far as duration is concerned, some rules or formal regulations related to the respective professional are generally obeyed: work conventions stipulated by contract that define the daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly duration of the activity. Such activities have also a predictable program, and in the case of continuous economic activities they can also include a day/night alternative program. In such situations, the participants' communication is facilitated by explicit procedures and customs. There are professions which are not time-bound, such as those related to the scientific, design or creative, artistic fields, professions with a great degree of subjective determination. In such professions interpersonal communication is freer, less formalized.

The physical characteristics specific to the professional work environment refer to the concrete technical equipment necessary for the professional activity, to the people working in those spaces, and the value of the micro-climate factors existing in those spaces. These characteristics give identity to:

- industrial spaces – halls, sections or production workshops – seen as spaces endowed with specific technical equipment, characteristic materials and products, populated with specialists having concrete, assigned jobs, noisy, hot and/or strenuous environments;
- offices – administrative, design, commercial offices – regarded as closed spaces, warmer or less warm, with more or less light or air, endowed with desks and desktop computers, occupied by civil servants/office workers, file shelves, impatient clients;
- other spaces: laboratories – research or investigation labs, various offices – consulting rooms, counselor or consultancy offices -, educational spaces – lecture rooms, classrooms, school labs, a.s.o.

In what concerns the microclimate, there are, inevitable discomfort factors specific for a certain professional activity, e.g.: darkness in mines, noise in metallurgy, heat in bakeries; working with people who are more or less understandable and calm. Tolerance to such factors and assuming the specific of one's profession are necessary in working under the conditions of any profession.

Communication among the various professionals working in these spaces is influenced by specific conditions understood both as form – written or oral –, as means of expression – verbal or nonverbal –, as well as paraverbal, and is marked by the affective-motivational state of the participants. The conditions lacking comfort tend to distort communication, either in the reception process, or under the aspect of acceptance and reaction.

3.2. The Psycho-Social Dimensions of the Professional Work Environment

Starting from an empirical, experiential, deductive and projective interpretation of the direct communicative context in a professional work

environment, we appreciate that from a psychological, sociological and cultural point of view professional communication can be defined by a multitude of variables: (A) objective-formal variables, acting on the cognitive level, and (B) subjective-informal variables, acting on the affective-emotional level.

The necessary and sufficient conditions that permit communication between two persons are stipulated in the early work of Th. M. Newcomb (1965): (1) sharing the same referential reality by the communicators and (2) using a common code by the participants. These conditions cover the cognitive dimension of our analysis.

(A1) In the professional work environment, the referential reality represents the subject of professional activity, which can be simpler in the case of operational, execution activities, and complex in the case of leadership and/or conception activities. Regardless the complexity, professional reality can be described through: the goal, the manner in which the goal is achieved, the results efficiency standards and, respectively, the operators' performance standards.

Placing everything in a nutshell, the knowledge of the professional activity referential reality may be represented by answers to questions such as: What must I achieve? How should I proceed? How much do I have to obtain in a time unit? Analyzed through the framework of the extensive communicative context model, however, we are capable of understanding the referential reality of communication in a professional work environment in its complex determination: What I have to achieve has a more or less rigorous technical identity, but it also has a past and a future perspective; How I should proceed has an operative succession well formalized by means of existing procedures, but it also displays problematic situations when I must intervene or I have to accept unexpected requests; The efficiency standards are relative, they can be modified depending on the situation, the organizational institutional climate, under the influence of the political, economic, cultural social factors. From this perspective, the object of communication in the professional work environment becomes a dynamic reality. Its knowledge by the participants implies the sharing of a common information area, as well as different individual elements, which are, however, compatible. For example, the team leader is informed about a fault in the item that is being manufactured; this is information outside the common information area shared with the subordinate employees.

(A2) Specialized language is permeated by specific terminology, abbreviations and symbols, some of which are general, while others are specific to that specialized field or even to a technology producing company. The issue at stake in the communication process between specialists from different levels, different generations or cultures, with different experience backgrounds, refers to the adaptability of specialized vocabulary. The issue of vocabulary adaptability is also important in the communication process between specialists

in different field when they need to solve together a certain problem, or they need to devise together great, strategic projects.

The socio-professional elements that have an impact on message acceptability in a professional environment are the position and the organizational culture.

(B1) The position refers to the formal position of a post in the organization organigram. The person occupying a post assumes the respective position, *i.e.*:

- the adequate qualification;
- the performance standards needed to fulfill the position goals;
- the institutional formal leadership, subordination and collaboration standards which it implies;
- the responsibility for the subordinates' work quality;
- a certain area of lexis used in conversation and growing complexity of specialized vocabulary in direct relationship to the hierarchical position occupied.

In a hierarchical organization, except for the extreme positions – the peak and the basis of the pyramid –, each position has a double hypostasis: that of a leader of the group one belongs to and a subordinate in the group of the superior hierarchical level. The person occupying this position will respect the group norms; will adapt his/her behavior to the expectations which are favorable for the generation of results he/she is responsible for, so as the messages sent may be accepted by the group.

The interactional value of communication, the intensity and meaning of the integrated answer may also be influenced to a significant degree by psycho-social elements with a significant affective load.

Status and role are psycho-sociological concepts that define the situation of a certain individual in the actual relations with the co-participants in a common activity. This dimension is given by the psycho-affective relations of sympathy-antipathy and trust. Status refers to a person's position in a group, seen as a primary group, which may or may not correspond to the formal position.

The person having a formal function in a working structure can have a similar informal position, e.g. the formal team leader is the group leader if he is accepted, followed with conviction by the members, or he can have a different informal position, in which case he is isolated by the group, he is not accepted or obeyed. The role refers to the manner in which a person having a certain position accomplishes his/her characteristic obligations. The quality of the role accomplishment generates the person's informal role. The person's communicative competence, the quality of the professional discourse, the capacity to "dress up" one's message in a form which is agreeable to the team members have a heavy impact on the person's status, and implicitly on the

person's power of determining the other's actions in the proper direction, with the required intensity.

(B2) The organizational culture refers to the organization identity elements assumed by the members of that system. Assuming such elements by the newcomers is a necessary condition for their integration in the organization community. The widely-known theory regarding the organizational structure belongs to Edgar Schein, summarized in 1992 during a management seminar; the organizational culture is presented as a hierarchical system along the dimension concrete – abstract, in which the perceptible elements are certain artifacts – symbols, logos, uniforms etc., and representative conduct imposed by the deciding factors; the next level is that of the targeted values, the organization's strategy and philosophy, the essence of the organizational culture being the unconscious assuming of values and hopes, perceptions, thoughts and feelings which spontaneously motivate the human being. The organizational structure integrates the new employees in the already existing conventions of the organization, making them assume the toleration limits regarding dress code, behavior, language, attitude, efficiency, utility and flexibility within the organization and even outside it. The organizational culture expresses the tradition of that organization, as it has been elaborated on the basis of the integrated experiences throughout its existence.

Closely linked to the organizational culture is the organizational climate which represents the atmosphere in a relative present, based on the current experience and state of some new or old members that pass through stages of significant change.

The members' compliance with the organizational culture creates a comfortable organizational climate, in which each member communicates in a relaxed manner with the others. Insatisfaction among members of a subgroup, sometimes even the insatisfaction of a single member regarding work, leadership, work conditions, available means, etc., can generate uncomfortable dispositions for the respective people and lead to group tensions; in such cases personal communication is disturbed, the tensed atmosphere influences the quality of communication, especially the message acceptance.

4. Conclusions

Current communication in a professional environment is characterized by a great variety of themes: personal conversations, supportive conversations, relaxation conversations, a.s.o. Taking into account the discussion above, we can define professional communication as being represented by unitary conversational entities of interpersonal communication that can be associated to a qualified activity for the achievement of the lucrative objectives of a team in an organizational context. Professional communication becomes specific under the influence of the physical and psycho-social environmental factors.

The main factors influencing professional communication have been related to the conditions relating to the quality of communication, both from an economic point of view, the efficiency of communication being given by variables such as receptivity, intelligibility, acceptability and the expected reaction, as well as from a psycho-social aspect, referring to the psychological cost acceptable to the partners in communication and to the organizational climate which is comfortable to the majority of people involved.

Being aware of the factors that have an impact on communication permits us to identify in the professional environment the risk factors and those that favor professional communication both on its economic as well as on its psycho-social dimension. Starting from this, the initiator of communication can choose the communication techniques that are best adapted to the context.

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FACTORI DE INFLUENȚĂ A COMUNICĂRII ÎN MEDIUL PROFESIONAL

(Rezumat)

Lucrarea prezintă un studiu descriptiv al mediului profesional, în vederea identificării criteriilor de analiză a comunicării umane care are loc într-un context

lucrativ, al comunicării profesionale. Teorii actuale asupra comunicării, prezentate în prima parte permit identificarea unui model al contextului extensiv al comunicării pe dimensiunea individual – social. Se prezintă distincțiile tehnicilor de comunicare ca posibile modalități de formare a competențelor de comunicare și se aduce în discuție profesionalismul comunicării. În a doua parte se prezintă o analiză a mediului profesional în complexitatea determinărilor sale externe pe dimensiunea fizică și psihosocială. Introducerea dimensiunii fizice precum spațiul, timpul, microclimatul, specifice activității profesionale într-un anumit domeniu, se constituie într-o perspectivă înnoită de abordare a fenomenului. Componente mai rar puse în discuție în studiile privind comunicare precum cultura și climatul organizațional sunt identificate ca elemente descriptive ale mediului profesional, implicit propuse ca posibile criterii de analiză a comunicării profesionale. În concluzie se definește comunicarea profesională și se enunță principalele categorii de factori de influență.

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APPLICATIONS IN EDUCATION OF THE RATIONAL- EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOUR THERAPY (REBT): CURRICULA OF EMOTIONAL HEALTH FOR TEENAGERS

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Abstract. The article underlines the need for extension of the cognitive and emotional development of the teenagers, carried out by the objectives of the formal teaching, in view of mental health. The therapeutic model REBT (Rational-Emotional and Behaviour Therapy) applied in education led to the appearance of curricula of development of the emotional intelligence, conceived by Ann Vernon. We analyse the elements of newness and creativity of this programme, which can be a source of inspiration and trust in change for the specialists in the field of psychological and educational psychology.

Keywords: REBT; emotional health; adolescents; counselling; emotional development.

1. Introduction

Cognitive development is an important objective not only in formal education, but also in the professions (psychologist, psychotherapist, psychological counsellor, psychiatrist), that deal with man's mental health. The role of the cognitive factors in the clinic and educational field was underlined in works by authors such as Alfred Adler (1870-1937) and Karen Horney (1885-1951). But none of them has created an autonomous approach, focused on the cognitive aspect (and its consequences in the answers of the human subjects),

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conceptualized in a simple, clear and pragmatic form, the way the American psychologist Albert Ellis did. The context of the “cognitive revolution” in psychology (initiated and promoted by Noam Chomsky and others) favoured imposing this paradigm, which has evolved from the rational to the rational-emotional and behaviour psychotherapy (REBT), to the cognitive-behavioural one (by the contribution brought by Aaron Beck and others). The rational-emotional and behaviour therapy (REBT) by Albert Ellis is considered nowadays the most influential at clinic and non-clinic level, with important philosophical and cultural implications (David, 2006, p. 43).

The applications of the principles of REBT in the educational field have been numerous and prolific at all the levels of development (children, young people, adults) beginning with 1970. Rational Emotional Education (REE) (having as first programme of implementation in Living School, led by the Institute for a Rational Living in New York) was consolidated by the ample and creative contributions brought by Ann Vernon (professor emeritus at University of Northern Iowa in the USA). REE implies a systematic curricular approach of the emotional education, having as major objective teaching children and adolescents the abilities of rational thinking (for them to succeed in solving more efficiently the personal/school problems) and the assimilation of some rational coping strategies to minimize the emotional distress (Vernon, 1998, p. 6).

The purpose of this paper is to analyse *a programme for developing emotional intelligence*, conceived by Ann Vernon, based on a therapeutic clinic model, underlining the strong points of the programme. The dynamic and complex model (based on experiential exercise) suggested by Ann Vernon in her work “Passport for Success” is a comprehensive curricula that can also help the adolescents in the education institutes in Romania to understand the typical, normal problems of the development stage they are facing, be more prepared for the social and cultural changes of life, avoiding the unhealthy ways of facing these problems.

Emotional development is presented in the National Curriculum in Romania, under Counselling and Orientation for classes IX-X and XI-XII, at the module of Self-knowledge and personal development and Communication and social abilities. The space dedicated to emotions and emotion management is reduced compared with the development of other abilities for success and career for the adolescents. That is why the topic of the analysed programme is a convincing argument for the need for an extended space dedicated to the development of emotional intelligence of the young high school students, and implicitly to offer special attention to counsellors, teachers and parents for this topic.

We present below the principles of REBT on which was based the Rational Emotional Education (REE), materialized in psycho-educational programmes with major beneficial impact on a complete and harmonious development of children and adolescents.

2. Principles and Model of REBT

Rational-emotional and behaviour therapy (REBT) is based on the assumption that what we think determines directly what we feel and the way we behave, based on the model ABC of the emotional problems. REBT is based on several major principles presented below (Ellis, 1994; Ellis & Dryden, 1997):

- a. negative, dysfunctional emotions are caused by absolutist, rigid thoughts, also called irrational;
- b. irrational thoughts (convictions) can be replaced with rational thoughts (convictions), having as result moderate, functional emotions;
- c. irrational/dysfunctional thoughts (convictions) can be identified and changed;
- d. their change is done by cognitive and/or behaviour techniques, scientifically validated.

These principles were the basis for the elaboration of a rigorous therapeutic model, the **model ABCDEF** initiated by Ellis (1962) and then developed by A. Beck (1976), which has suffered new modifications till the present day. Its main elements are:

- 1° Activating event (activating events) **A** – can be an external or internal/subjective situation (emotions, behaviour, etc.).
- 2° Thoughts (convictions) of that person (beliefs) **B** – caused by A and at the same time mediate the way of perceiving and representing A in the subject's mind.
- 3° Processing consequences (consequences) **C** - are affective-emotional, behaviour and psycho-physiological/biological responses.
- 4° Restructuring the dysfunctional and/or irrational thoughts is done by their disputing - **D** (disputing).
- 5° Then there follows an assimilation of some new functional and/or rational thoughts instead of the dysfunctional and/or irrational thoughts (a new, efficient philosophy) - **E** (effective);
- 6° The subject will experience new emotions (which are in fact the old ones experienced at another intensity) - **F**.

Albert Ellis (Ellis, 1962; 1994) identified general cognitive evaluative structures involved in pathology. From absolutist, inflexible thinking (demandingness) derive three irrational convictions: *catastrophic feeling* (awfulizing), *lack of frustration tolerance* (low frustration tolerance) and *global evaluation*.

3. Advantages of the Curricula “Passport to Success” in Counselling Adolescents

The programmes conceived by Ann Vernon for each education cycle (I-V, VI-VIII, IX-XII), using the principles REBT, show us the care for the happiness of children and teenagers who are facing normal problems of

development and new stressors. She understood that being a child and an adolescent today is more difficult than 10-20 years ago, that is why she conceived and implemented a preventive curricula that minimises the intensity, severity and duration of the problems, even if they cannot be all eliminated. (Vernon, 1998, p. 6)

This analysis stops at the psycho-educational programme for adolescents, called **“Passport to success”** and underlines briefly the elements of newness, creativity and efficient psycho-therapeutic and psycho-educational approach. As for the *form/structure* of the programme, we noticed the following aspects:

a. The topic is structured on four modules of development: 1. personal, 2. emotional, 3. social and 4. cognitive, gathering 16 topics for each class (IX-XII). It can be used in the classroom or during counselling in small groups, and with some adjustment also in the individual counselling.

b. Personal development does not include the others, but it is treated separately, referring to the development of personal identity, a major problem for the adolescents aged 14/15 -18/19 years old.

c. The activities/topics are structured as standard, comprising: the perspective of the psychology of adolescents' development, objectives, materials, procedure, discussions (with content questions and customized questions), follow-up activity (practicing the abilities). The developmental perspective offers information on the needs and problems typical for the adolescents (early, middle and late). The content questions set the concepts acquired and help the processing of the activity, and the customized questions encourage the adolescents to apply these concepts in their life.

As for the *content* of the programmed, we noticed the following:

a) The principles of REBT and of the psychology of development are applied in the four fields: personal, emotional, social and cognitive, which offers a selection of the most sensitive problems faced by an adolescent, a psycho-therapeutic approach of depth, without excluding the informational/content component of the topics. Only a psychotherapist with experience in interventions in the adolescents' problems could suggest such topics: invincibility and its consequences, mistaking personal value for performances, negative thoughts and monitoring them, fear of independence, self-abuse, “emotional strata”, the painful feeling of love, separation and rejection, dependence in unhealthy relations, realistic thinking, difficult/dangerous decision, consequences of decision, relation between emotions-thoughts-behaviour, control of confusion, transition after high school, etc.

b) Each module approaches a specific topic and then relates it to the others, integrating them in a natural and attractive way, which offers the adolescent an integrative perspective of their development. (We have already seen how the model REBT integrates the three aspects: cognitive, emotional

and behavioural). For example, at the module of personal development (of identity) in the class XI, for the topic “Who am I: inside and out”, after discussing the two perceptions of self, we go to self-acceptance, where adolescents are stimulated to try new ways of thinking, feeling and behaving to find out more about themselves. At the module of social development, abilities of rational thinking are applied to interpersonal relations (class IX). There are activities that underline the relations between emotions and competitiveness, emotion and peer pressure, their rejection, healthy and unhealthy emotions and dependence on the others. The red thread of the programme remains the development of emotional intelligence, which ties together all the modules, giving them coherence and consistency.

c) The programme values in an excellent way the model REBT by Ellis, being presented explicitly in class X, at the subject “Modification of emotions” (Vernon, 1998, p.97). It is applied on a typical case for adolescents, after which it is consolidated by other topics, from other modules and follow-up activities. The model ABCD is accessible and presented to the teenagers in a captivating way, not only in the causal relation thoughts-emotions-behaviour, but also in the way of disputing/confronting the irrational thoughts that decrease the negative emotions and, consequently, the self-harming behaviour.

d) The abilities that such a programme forms are diverse and with different psycho-educational and social impact. Thus are formed abilities which are extremely important for an adolescent, regarding several levels of their personality: self-knowledge, self-evaluation, judgement, emotional and stress management, inter-relation, rational thinking (without cognitive distortions or irrational thoughts/convictions), receiving and giving feedback, stopping the vicious circle of rumours, gossip, ungrounded suppositions, taking decisions, solving problems, time management.

e) The programme goes beyond the psycho-educational valences of a project of group counselling, by the therapeutic value it has, trying to teach adolescents what mental and emotional health means, how to maintain it and what are the effects of losing it (from crises, troubles, functional suffering to pathological ones). Adolescents learn psycho-therapeutic abilities to maintain their own psycho-emotional balance by: self-acceptance, self-esteem, meta-communication of emotions, transformation of negative dysfunctional emotions into negative functional emotions, identifying and changing negative/irrational thoughts, developing realistic thinking, changing behaviour by changing thinking.

4. Conclusions

This approach has brought to attention five essential aspects in the topic of psycho-educational counselling for adolescents.

a) The big changes the Romanian society goes through require flexible

mechanisms of adaptation, and without learning them, it leads to crises and psychological troubles with the risk of becoming pathological. Adolescents are a vulnerable group that needs support to face the problems of personal, educational and social growing up. Being an adolescent today is more difficult than in the past, that is why it is necessary a cognitive and emotional development for them. Instead of being limited only to the objectives of formal education, they should share a larger perspective, of mental and emotional health, materialized in programmes specially conceived in this sense.

b) The adolescents' crisis under various aspects affects parents, teachers, schools and themselves, even though each of them tries to solve it at their level, without facing it constantly and fully. Many teachers and parents reach the excess of authority because "this is the only way... to tackle it" and "control them", and adolescents reach self-abuse, self-aggression in various forms, without knowing how to manage confusion and helplessness.

c) The programme conceived by Ann Vernon brings forward the most delicate moments of adolescents becoming mature and it is an excellent guide for counsellors, psychologists and school psycho-educators who want to communicate using the adolescents' "language" and listen to their most intimate needs.

d) The advantages of the programme were highlighted and the benefits of applying the therapeutic model REBT in education were underlined, with effects in the long run, i.e. all life. An adolescent who "learns" inner well being and has the landmarks of emotional health will be an adult more than functional or successful – a healthy adult from the psychological point of view, which will be reflected in several fields.

e) The programme brings not only inspiration, but also gives trust to practitioners, who use it partially or temporarily, strengthening the conviction that the emotional development of children, teenagers and adults should become a priority on the agenda of those who take decisions at high level in Romania.

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APLICAȚII ÎN EDUCAȚIE A TERAPIEI RAȚIONAL-EMOTIVE ȘI
COMPORTAMENTALE (REBT): O CURRICULĂ A SĂNĂTĂȚII
EMOȚIONALE PENTRU ADOLESCENȚI

(Rezumat)

Articolul subliniază nevoia de a extinde perspectiva dezvoltării cognitive a adolescenților, realizate prin obiectivele învățământului formal, spre orizontul sănătății mentale și emoționale. Modelul terapeutic REBT aplicat în educație, prin programul conceput de Ann Vernon este o dovadă a beneficiilor pe termen lung pe care le pot avea adolescenții în gestionarea maturizării lor. Sunt analizate elementele de noutate și creativitate ale acestui program, care poate fi o sursă de inspirație și încredere în schimbare pentru specialiștii din domeniul consilierii psihologice și educaționale.

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SOCIAL COMPETENCE AND PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE IN THE TECHNICAL FIELD

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Abstract. Changes of the contemporary global society call from its citizens' complex skills to meet the challenges of the economic, political or social transformation. Social competence and civic competence arise as a goal of the global society, because they incorporate the skills of the individual, which enable self-management, as well as skills of optimal coordination with the community space where the individual belongs. This paper summarizes the idea that professional training is not the only advantage that the individual must have for success. They also need a high level of emotionality, of social adaptive ability and competence of civic involvement. It is proved by research findings in the field that job performance is facilitated by the development of social competence in future professionals. The paper also proposes the integration of structured personal development internships for students in the technical field in general, but, very importantly, for students who will be the future teachers in the technical field.

Keywords: social competence; civic competence; professional competence; emotional intelligence; personal development.

1. Social Competence and Professional Performance – Interferences

Resulting from some general and special psychological abilities, professional formation and experience in activity, professional competence also implies abilities specific to social competence. The evolution of the research in

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this field underlines the complementary character of intelligence, social and emotional abilities in the personal and professional success.

The concept of intelligence is used to help understand our own behaviour and the others' behaviour, or highlight the competence. Without doubt, the beginning of the 20th century is characterised by the appearance of tests of intelligence. After Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon (1904, 192) formed the first "metric scale of intelligence" there was an intensification of the practitioners' interest in these instruments. Nicolae Mitrofan (2001, 63) reminds that with the beginning of WWI, there appeared the request to create some tests that can be applied to large groups of subjects in a short time. That is how the group tests for human abilities appeared (the Army Alpha and the Army Beta), elaborated by a team of psychologists under the coordination of Robert Yeakes. Making up group tests determined the appearance of the tests of aptitudes, tests of interests, tests of personality. With the appearance of the scales of intelligence Wechsler, there is a turning point in psychometry, as absolute newness appearing the possibility to calculate the IQ performance. During their development, the tests prove their superiority because of some superior psychometric qualities or because they are more appropriate for some specific problems discovered by the theoretical extensions. Gradually, it was the passage from the classical tests of intelligence evaluation to tests that include in their structure the social and emotional dimension. It is known the impact produced on the realization of the intelligence tests by the theory of Robert Sternberg (1981) (triadic model), the theory of Howard Gardner (1993/2006) (multiple variants of intelligence) or the theory of Daniel Goleman (1995/2001) (emotional intelligence).

Howard Gardner (1993/2006), in his theory regarding the multiple intelligence, gives an important place to the non-intellectual factors of personal and social category, essential for the success in the social and professional life of the individual. He introduced the concepts of interpersonal and intra-personal intelligence. Even though these multiple types of intelligence were highlighted, still the problem of the role of affectivity, emotional intelligence was approached by Daniel Goleman (1995/2001). In his vision, the emotional competence is formed by: knowledge of one's own emotions, emotion management, motivation, recognizing others' emotions and social abilities.

Important research (Barth, 2003; Conway *et al.*, 1999; Eisenberg, 2001) underlined the fact that emotional intelligence has major implications, together with logical intelligence, in the complete formation of the individual's personality, assuring their social and professional success.

It is known the fact that in modern society, dominated by strong conflicts and interests, professional formation is not the only strength one must have to obtain success. It is also necessary a high level of emotionality. The reality created by the period of economic, political and psycho-social crisis that our country is going through, with implications on the way of reporting of the

society against children, is a favouring factor to create a tension state, unsafe, where the degree of the individual's estrangement increases, hence the negative emotionality. Thus, it is not enough for our society to assure for the individual conditions only for the professional formation, because success represents the efficient combination between high IQ (intelligence coefficient) and EQ (emotional coefficient).

Intellectual competence is involved in carrying out operations, processing problems, while emotional competence helps us build efficient mutual relations, understand and interpret human actions, take decisions based on the others' rights, expectancies, and needs, as well. Emotional competence is directly involved in the individual and group performance, leading activity, management of social changes, and adaptation to these changes.

The social abilities represent a dimension of emotional competence. The abilities are perfected and through strategies of formation and exercise they become competence. In relation with the social abilities, the concept of social intelligence is also developed. As Paul Popescu Neveanu says (1979, 370), social intelligence assures the "quality and efficiency of social adaptation, knowledge about social relations and actions, solving psycho-social problems." Thus, when we talk about this type of intelligence, we refer to the way in which a person takes part in a team, gets the others' appreciation and respect by understanding, communication and cooperation, we thus follow the person's behaviour in the inter-human relations in different situations.

An interesting point of view is presented by Mihai Drăgănescu (2003, 17), who considers artificial intelligence as a highlighted form of social intelligence, by the way it is formed. The systems of artificial intelligence (cell phones, computers, robots, satellites, rockets, programming languages, chat groups, email) widen the sphere of communications and human relations and coexist with social intelligence. So, social intelligence does not manifest itself only in direct relation, face-to-face, between individuals, but also consists in the ability to value the multitude of communication systems to achieve the social and professional performance objectives.

Social competence is outlined as performance field of social intelligence and comprises abilities of analysis and understanding of interpersonal relations, of communication, conflict solving, cooperation, being pro-social, participating efficiently in the community life. It is thus prefigured the relation between professional, social and civic competence.

The obligatory correlation between social and professional competence is underlined by Michael Argyle (1994/1998) by the two meanings it forms regarding social competence: the social competence that comprises general abilities related to carrying out aims and motivations of the individual, and the professional social competence related to work, the capacity to stimulate and determine the others to obtain the efficiency in exerting their profession.

Another argument to study social competence in relation with

performance, success and professional competence is offered by the same author when he proposes an inventory of the fields of activity that request the development of the social competence of the human resource involved: transmitting knowledge (teaching in education); obtaining information (interviews, surveys); changing attitudes, beliefs or the other's behaviour (propaganda, sales, formation); changing the emotional state of the other (management of hostile behaviour); changing the other's personality (psychotherapy, educational therapy); activity in a task that implies cooperation (activity in the economic and administrative field); supervising and coordinating a group (leading, management, arbitration).

The development of social competence is an essential condition to value the intellectual equipment and the professional success, since the individual performance in organisational contexts depends on the way the person succeeds in communicating and cooperating with the others, the way in which they are able to manage teams, conflicts, etc.

2. The Role of Social Competence in Developing Participative Professional Patterns

Relevant research shows important results on the development of the civic competence and the value of the social competence in the process of civic competence development.

Arthur A. Stukas, Gil E. Clary and Mark Snyder (1999, 15) prove that social learning, by participating in community activities (service learning) determines the increase of social responsibility and altruistic motivation. The authors mentioned remind of previous research (Billig and Conrad, 1997; Melchior, 1999; Scales and Blyth, 1997) that underlined the fact that the youth involved in learning programmes by participating in community actions manifested a high level of citizen abilities, especially social and civic responsibility. The participants appreciated their substantial contribution to developing the community.

Peter C. Scales, Dale A. Blyth, Thomas H. Berkas and James C. Kielsmeier (2000, 332) present in "Journal of Early Adolescence" the results obtained after the research carried out in 29 high schools: the students who participated in the learning programme by participating in community activities were assessed as benefiting from multiple possibilities of personal development and manifested a high level of social responsibilities. Also, it was noticed an increase of the level of preoccupation towards the others' well being, and the efficiency in the helping behaviour. This research underlines the interdependence between the social and the civic competence.

Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963/1996, 150), who bring one of the crucial contributions to the theory of democracy, mention in the volume "Civic culture. Political attitudes and democracy in five nations" the

characteristic of democracy – that “power on the significant authority decisions in a society is distributed among the population.” Maintaining a stable democracy, underline the authors, depends on the extent to which people acquire a certain level of political culture and a certain set of political and civic attitudes. The citizen must take part in “the government business,” be aware of the way in which decisions are taken and affirm their conceptions. The fact that common people do not live according to the normative theory of democracy expresses the deficiency in the field of civic competence, social competence respectively, translated into passivity and indifference.

The norms of citizen behaviour underline the participative aspects of the political culture. It is necessary for the democratic citizen to be well informed, active and involved in politics, able to take decisions regarding the interests and principles promoted. In the same volume (Almond & Verba, 1963/1996, 145), it is shown that democracy is based on the individual’s ability to participate locally, manifesting constantly the feeling of knowledge and understanding of the social and political dynamics.

The democratic person is preoccupied profoundly by the general well being and is interested in cooperating and acting towards everybody’s well being. They admit to the uniqueness and value of each individual, regardless of race, religion, occupation of social status. They are aware of the value of the experimental methods, planning and evaluating results. The democratic individuals value the civic freedom that the democratic society offers, and assume the responsibility of defending this freedom both for themselves, and for the others. They take the lead in the situations where they feel able, but accept the others’ suggestions too, when they prove to be more appropriate. They are sincerely preoccupied with the problems the democratic society faces and promote the free expression on topics in controversy.

We notice that in the structure of civic competence we can identify abilities belonging to social competence, such as: communication, empathy, assertiveness, abilities to solve conflicts, presenting the self, etc. The citizen who is civically competent is an active citizen, sure of the ability to participate in taking decisions and exerting political influence (Almond & Verba, 1963/1996, 160). A civic behaviour requires the citizen to dispose and operate with a set of competences, among which civic and political competences are important. On analysing the aspects of civic competence, Septimiu Chelcea (2002, 158) underlines that it results from the “interest that people have in the problems of governing, and the level of information on the situations of general interest.”

As a synthesis of the various approaches (Chryssochoou & Lavdas, 2003; Kirlin, 2003; Lupia, 2003), civic competence appears as the ability to access and interpret information, take decisions to assure the public and citizens’ security in a democratic and culturally diverse society, and promoting interdependence and partnership, as well as the orientation towards the initiation

of projects and the ability to implement them. In the sphere of civic competence are included, apart from the components mentioned, also the capacity to analyse a social situation, transmit and share the synthesis of ideas, as well as the orientation towards the initiation of projects and the ability to implement them. There is a certain agreement in the literature in the field on the strong determinations of the non-political on the democratic participative behaviour, expressed by two big dimensions: trust and social cooperation.

Recent studies underline the dependence of civic competence on the existing opportunities for the development of social abilities. As Adrian Neculau says (1983, 56), "the change from the stage of egocentricity to understanding the other's point of view, thus gaining psycho-social competence, is a necessary condition to develop a behaviour of cooperation and some moral norms promoted by society." It is thus necessary to acquire some models of social action, to learn some psychosocial behaviour that can ensure the development of a participative lifestyle. In the individual's formation, the objectives are not confined to acquiring knowledge and social attitudes, but they extend to identifying some solutions for their transformation in action models of psychosocial training of the future adult, the citizen. The attitudes of social trust and cooperation can produce individuals who are more agile in the political activity, and prepare the citizens for political cooperation. The development of communication, the stimulation of some cooperating behaviour, being involved in action and helping others increase in individuals the feeling of community and belonging to a group (Schifirneț, 1999, 63). They represent solutions that Constantin Schifirneț formulates in order to solve the social dilemma where the individuals face the alternative of maximizing their own interests and maximizing the public good. We can thus avoid the installation of the mechanism called "the free rider", who refuses getting involved and refuses to bring his own contribution to the community.

The relation of complementarities between the professional and social competence represents a fertile field to manifest the individual's civic competence, assuring the premises of their involvement in solving the problems of the citadel. The individuals who benefit from a superior professional formation and are able to assert themselves socially by maintaining the quality of interpersonal relations multiply their chances of becoming a factor of decision in the social and political context. Among these three dimensions, there can be noticed a relation of circularity. The youth who are in the specific stage "in the formation of their personality and the acquisition of significant characteristics for the future social integration" (Mărginean, 1996) will later demand the professional success based on the stimulation of social competence and the acquisition of civic participation abilities.

In a brief presentation of the ways of getting involved of social abilities in manifesting civic competence, we can underline the following directions:

1° The communication in form of discussion is an angular stone in the public field, a nucleus generating the civic engagement (Dahlgren, 2005, 34);

2° The conversation supposes sociability, and the political discussion implies solving problems, finding solutions to conflicts;

3° Empathy, by the emotional and predictive forms, contributes to the stimulation of social participation, valuing equality and promoting the democratic ideals;

4° Assertiveness assures the capacity to state one's personality, express personal opinions, defend one's own and the others' rights, and the courage to assume responsibility and participation in social and political decisions;

5° The feeling of self-confidence and the ability of self-presentation (assertiveness) increase trust and civic affinity.

3. Social Competence – Educational Considerations

Pedagogy and psycho-sociology are called today to offer solutions to the problems and challenges that appear in the field of management and professional performance. Thus, success in management is conditioned, as stipulated by Robert Kreitner (1992, 78), by the association at individual level of the abilities, motivation and opportunities. Also, it is considered that the solutions of emergent creativity are favoured by the effect called "de Medici" (Johansson, 2004, 14), which means to associate information and elaborate syntheses of ideas from a diversity of scientific fields and cultural environments.

I consider that, from this point of view, the research in the field of stimulation, development and manifestation of social competences associated to professional competences can lead to solutions expected by the managerial practice. P

Professional competence is supported by the sphere of social abilities, in viewing and consulting the opportunities that can appear in the individual's activity, and lead to performance in profession. Social competence represents a factor of flexibility, permeability and extension of the limits for professional competence.

The lack of social competence, in the case of a performing specialist, can contribute to failure both in the personal destiny, and in the profession. Also, the presence of social competence cannot replace the absence of the adequate professional formation, the effect being in the end failure. The inexistence of a continuous and supported relation between professional and social competence in the dynamics of the individual's adaptation can determine consequences both at individual and socio-professional level. Lack at the level of social competences, at the level of self-knowledge, communication, empathy, assertiveness, self-esteem, produces rejection and social isolation, anxiety and dissatisfaction.

All these impose the introduction in schools and at the level of various structures of learning and teaching programmes of training and development of social competence. Acquisitions can turn into the capacity to interact with the others and initiate behaviours of cooperation, increase of self-esteem, asserting one's own personality, valuable implication in decisions at group level, community and society level. Personal development as objective of the initial formation represents an educational need strongly highlighted in the students' behaviour who are preparing in the technical field. If in the school context, the professional competences are developed is followed by subjects of study, courses, the didactic activities being focused exclusively on them, the competences regarding personal development are followed sporadically, discreetly, and without systematization. Iolanda and Nicolae Mitrofan (2015, 24) suggest stages of personal development of the students during the period of the initial formation of the teaching staff. We can think that this extended didactic competence that includes personal development, as well as competences for the personal development of the students could represent a managerial and educational objective in the formation of the teaching staff in the technical field. More than that, the engineers' formation to carry on their job in the social global context at the moment imposes attending a stage of personal development that could assure them a harmonious personality, the development of social abilities, self-affirmation, responsible social participation and complete professional development.

At the level of the European Union there have been introduced eight key competences, representing a combination of knowledge, abilities and attitudes that are considered necessary to fulfil and for personal development, active citizenship, social inclusion and labour occupation (European Commission/EACEA, 2012). These are: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, math competences and basic competences in science and technology, digital competences, social and civic competences, spirit of initiative and entrepreneurship, awareness and cultural expression. Each of these key competences benefit from the same percentage in the individual's formation; that is why personal development, the stimulation of social and civic abilities in relation with the professional development of the individual should be among the educational objectives related to the formation of the future engineer.

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COMPETENȚĂ SOCIALĂ ȘI PERFORMANȚĂ PROFESIONALĂ ÎN DOMENIUL TEHNIC

(Rezumat)

Schimbările societății contemporane la nivel mondial solicită de la cetățenii săi abilități complexe pentru a răspunde la provocările transformărilor de ordin economic, politic, social. Competența socială, precum și competența civică apar ca un deziderat al societății globale, deoarece ele încorporează acele abilități ale individului ce-i permit să se autoguverneze, într-un efort de self-management, dar și abilități de corelare optimă cu spațiul comunitar căruia îi aparține. Lucrarea de față sintetizează ideea că pregătirea profesională nu este singurul atu de care trebuie să dispună individul pentru obținerea succesului, ci este necesar și un nivel ridicat de emoționalitate, de abilitate adaptativă socială și competență de implicare civică. Se demonstrează, prin rezultate ale cercetărilor în domeniu, că performanța profesională este facilitată de dezvoltarea competenței sociale la viitorii profesioniști. De asemenea, se propune integrarea unor stagii structurate de dezvoltare personală pentru studenții din domeniul tehnic în general, și pentru studenții din domeniul tehnic-viitoare cadre didactice, în particular.

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TRAGEDY IN LITERATURE A CONCISE ANALYSIS

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Abstract. This paper defines and analyzes the concept of tragedy in literature, as we can hardly conceive the tragic in the absence of the tragic heroes or of the exemplary situations from theatrical representations and novels. The Greek philosopher Aristotle is the first one to offer the humanity an indirect determination of the concept of tragic and all technical terms, “catharsis” is probably the one most often used in relation to tragedy. After Aristotle, the tragic occupied a special place in philosophy, in the idealistic metaphysical systems, where the tragic disposition is obvious in the man’s possibility of recognizing the fact that he depends on mysterious forces, that pleasure, affection and life itself are transient. Further on, modern philosophy achieves an interpretation of the tragic phenomenology as a constituent part of the human experience. In literature, there is the classical tragedy, the one which begins with the Greek culture, where the human being is in conflict with the incomprehensible forces of the universe. In France with Corneille and in England, rather earlier, with Marlowe and Shakespeare there was a measure of tragic grandeur and this is what we feel to be tragedy today. Later, novel writers become critics of life, observers of the human condition in a philosophic sense who portray the struggle for a tolerable existence.

Keywords: tragedy; catharsis; Moira; limit; tragic hero.

Ever since Aristotle wrote his *Poetics*, tragedy began to arouse deep interest in the minds of the philosophers, writers and critics through centuries of

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cultural creation. It has a rich history for it seemed to extract its immortal vigor from the great anxieties and the permanent restlessness of the human spirit; questions about man's place in a universe that apparently has reasons which cannot be explained, the need of finding a meaning to the unknown in human destiny stood probably at the basis of creating tragedy in different ages of literary effervescence.

Aristotle's famous definition of the tragedy as being a mixture of pity and fear and having as main objective the purification of low feelings in the human nature gave birth to contradictory interpretations up to the Freudian ones nowadays.

"A tragedy, then, is the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in language with pleasurable accessories, each Kind brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a dramatic, not in a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions" (Aristotle translated by Bywater, 1954, 35).

Of all technical terms, "catharsis" is probably the one most often used in relation to tragedy. Scholars agree that Aristotle created it because he wished to counter Plato's argument that the poets were to be blamed and exiled, because their arousing of emotions worked against a man's duty to follow the dictates of reason. Combating this, Aristotle asserted that the emotions, particularly those of pity and fear, being aroused in tragedy were also "purged" and tragedy could "exorcise".

Whether Aristotle meant catharsis in this way, whether his definition of tragedy renders or not the complexity of the tragic impact, we still may wonder. But one thing is certain: through these words, the Greek philosopher is the first one offer to the humanity an indirect determination of the concept of tragic.

People became aware of the existence of the tragic phenomenon by means of theatrical representation; the tragic began to be an aesthetic project. The human mind was capable of considering the tragic only through the forms of art and the European thinking did not know to define it explicitly, but just in relation with its dramatic expression. Therefore, the discussions about the tragic prove to be discursions about tragedy; and if we can hardly conceive the tragic in the absence of the tragic heroes or of the exemplary situations is due to the role of the tragedy in the knowledge of the tragic phenomenon.

After Aristotle, the tragic occupied a special place in the idealistic metaphysical systems. Integrated in the process of the relationship between man and the universe, it became a fundamental metaphysical reality. For Schopenhauer, it meant the affirmation of the immanent suffering of life, but also the supreme triumph of the Ideas, even if the man had to die. The aesthetic idealism defined the tragic on the basis of an ethical conception that had in view the most profound meanings of the human personality, in conflict with the forces which exceed it.

The tragic disposition was identified in the man's possibility of recognizing the fact that he depends on mysterious forces, that pleasure, affection and life itself are transient. This leads to a feeling of inexpressible melancholy against which there is no means of defense but the awareness of a calling that transcends the limits of the earthly existence. In conclusion, life in this world might mean nothing, every sufferance must be endured and every obstacle surpassed for the unique purpose of asserting the possible divine character of our spirit. This is why in tragedy, the man's struggle with destiny finishes in a sort of ideal harmony.

Hegel's theory adds subtle, but decisive interpretations to the rich history of the tragic value. The tragic is seen in the idea of conflict and clashing; the conflict between two "ethical substances", both representing authentic moral forces is the core of the real tragedy that must end in reconciliation. Sophocles' *Antigone* makes us aware of the clashing between two obligations, the one to the state and the other to the family. Both *Antigone* and *Creon* are guilty in their exclusive devotion to their own ideal. *Antigone* dies and *Creon* is punished through the death of his son and wife. In Hegel's interpretation, *Antigone's* death is subordinated to the settling of the final harmony, to the resolution of the conflict. Tragedy does not necessarily imply the physical death of the hero; in the end, *Oedipus* finds his inner peace, for he experiences a transfiguration, becoming aware of the unity and the harmony of "the moral substance".

If we were to summarize some the ideas presented before, we could assert that the tragic offers an interpretation to the relation of the individual with the universal order. In this context, tragedy becomes the illustration of the necessary fight between man and destiny, a fight that finishes in harmony for man is victorious, even if he is physically defeated.

A concluding definition of the tragic, based on the history of all that was written on this topic during ages of criticism and also, on personal reflection is provided in a generous study realized by Gabriel Liiceanu in his book *Tragicul. O fenomenologie a limitei și depășirii* (1993). According to him, the tragic can be defined in terms of the relation between the human conscience and the concept of the limit. The tragic situation is only compatible with finite conscious beings in confrontation with the limit. The tragic appears when the individual provokes his limits and is punished for doing so. Liiceanu achieves an interpretation of the tragic phenomenology as a constituent part of the human experience by describing the possible attitudes towards the concept of the limit. When confronted with the tragic, which is a necessary condition of human existence, the common consciousness has the tendency of diminishing the limit by insisting only on the dimension of the present (the principle of "carpe diem") or by ignoring the limit as a remote experience that will not reach the self. But any attempt of revoking the tragic represses the fact that the human spirit dissociates itself from its own ontological condition; in other words, the man refuses to live his existence and humanity to live its history.

At the aesthetic, that is impersonal level, tragedy appears to us something very precise, for it is defined as a contradiction, an opposition of elements which cannot be reconciled; in this context it is quite clear that the hero has no possibility of escape for he is confronted with a situation in which he is not allowed to choose in order to solve the conflict.

In different ages, cultural values have changed and the perspective of critiques upon tragedy and the tragic phenomenon witnessed modifications according to the cultural standards of each age. The approaches to tragedy depend very much on the cultural moods and the public and, from this point of view, we identify three forms in the literary manifestation of the tragic.

There is a classical tragedy, the one which begins with the Greek culture, where the human being is in conflict with the incomprehensible forces of a super-nature: the hero fights against fatality, Moira guides the destinies of people and the protagonists are deprived of free will. The neo-classical tragedy, the one in which Corneille and Racine excel, develops an inner conflict between two elements that cannot be reconciled: reason and feeling. The heroes are usually torn apart by passion and duty and their unhappiness comes from their incapacity of making peace between the split parts of their personality. In the modern tragedy, the hero is provided with more consciousness of his own limits in an indifferent universe. The protagonists experience the "hybris", that is they are challenged to overpass their own limits; they become individuals with a keen awareness of what they are in relation with society and the world. As we can notice, the emphasis has moved from the exterior conflict (the tragic hero is at the will of a blind fate and the forces which are against him cannot be controlled) to an inner one (the protagonist is aware of his tragic condition and often finds himself in a moral dilemma which proves to be unsolvable in a world that does not understand his standards).

In analyzing the tragic value, we noticed that the tragic is the result of an inner process taking place in man's soul. The sufferance of the tragic is determined by the conflict of a person with external or internal forces which overwhelm the self. In this context, it is proper to emphasize the human nature of the tragic value. The agent of the tragic must be a human being, but not a common one. We have already asserted that the tragic finds its most accurate and obvious manifestation in the literary form of the tragedy; consequently, we will pay special attention to the tragic hero and to his sinuous course of dramatic existence

For centuries, the central place in tragedies was given to heroes and kings. In the Greek theatre the actor was representing a King or a hero, speaking with a poet's majestic words, necessarily inducing awe and expressing a sense of being "above" even as he falls. The dramatic tragedy from antiquity to the 19th century implied a concern with people in high place, surpassing the moral of the human nature. In a modern tragedy the author has to give us the sense of extraordinary by taking a few normal people and providing them with a growing

awareness of the way things are in the human condition. The central figure of the tragedy has to express a sense of eminence through the possession of a special virtue and dignity or through the particularity of distress.

The tragic hero experiences a fall in his impressive evolution. Aristotle, on one of the passages from the *Poetics* insisted that it came through “hamartia”, an error of judgement which allowed disaster in. This has been usually interpreted as involving a kind of “poetic justice” or as the result of a “fatal imperfection or error” of an evil or a totally good hero. The tragic process of events which includes ultimately the personal disaster of the characters makes people aware of a common fatality. The tragic fall seems to be determined by the existence of an implacable necessity on and cannot establish for certain whether the hero’s free will is involved in the process. Critics have argued that tragedy allows a minimal free will in the fact that a particular act sets off the train of events which leads to disaster, that what follows is beyond human control.

The question of free will to the tragic hero remains a highly dubious one in tragic writing. We are shown how things are, or as they appear to be to a writer who sees man’s condition as ultimately inseparable from disaster. Moira, at least for the later Stoics, was in some terms the equivalent to our “fate”: it meant rather the total sum of all things that have been and will be; it can be seen as independent of time, independent of gods, through whom it was nonetheless mediated to men. Although the notion of “timelessness” seems to underlie most of the major Greek tragedies, a man could accept or even will his particular “Moira”. Necessity neither requires, nor invites cooperation, but somehow the tragic hero seems to cooperate in its working for he is not necessarily free from profound guilt. Through his passion or through the excess of his passion, he becomes guilty, he suffers and has to be punished. The necessary connection between the guilt resulted from passion and the sufferance provoked by guilt is tragic.

From the very beginning, the actor of the Greek chorus told of man’s subjection to the gods, of the ineluctable result of the evil act, of the fact that through suffering men had the opportunity of growing. For the Greeks, tragedy was a rite in honor of the presiding god Dionysus, whose priests were present at the performance in reserved seats.

In the Middle Ages, the term tragedy lost all connection with the idea of performance. At that time, tragedy was simply a story which ended unhappily, offering a warning that, if one were not careful, final unhappiness would be expected.

During the Renaissance, a line of theorists commented on the *Poetics* and prescribed for contemporary writers rigorous rules that were remote from Aristotle’s generally descriptive method.

“The Renaissance degree of reverence for the tragedy of antiquity was so great that for a long time, the dramatists could see and

present the human condition merely as it was presented to them in the mirrors that others had made for the reflection of a vision appropriate only to their time and place” (Leech, 1992, 18).

The major change comes in France with Corneille and in England, rather earlier, with Marlowe and Shakespeare. There was a measure of tragic grandeur in Corneille, while Racine gave us what we feel to be tragedy today. For all its difference in style and form, Racine’s work offered us an analogue to the major English tragedies of the seventeenth century.

None of the dramatists in the nineteenth century thought in terms of a “tragic sense of life”; this was a development of the nineteenth century when Hegel, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche laid the foundations of a new attitude towards tragedy. “The tragic sense of life” goes beyond the idea of didacticism, which was the official Renaissance view, beyond the idea of “poetic justice” which remained in the end of the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, writers agreed that our situation is necessarily tragic, that all men exist in an evil situation and are anguished because they are aware of life traps and consequences. The change in philosophical approach to tragedies was of major importance in modern thinking and was relevant for the concept of human life intimately associated with the consciousness of the time.

In the nineteenth century, many people wrote tragedies with the ancient or Renaissance examples still dominant on their thought; all the major Romantic and Victorian poets made an attempt at rivaling Shakespeare and this pattern of things continued even in the first years of the twentieth century. Although the writers of the twentieth century refused to set themselves as tragic writers, they created drama in which they responded to the human situation in a way we can call “tragic” in the traditional sense.

But ever since the eighteenth century, the tragic note has passed beyond the drama. Although Aristotle in Chapter 4 of the *Poetics* declared that tragedy and epic were close in the “objects” of their “imitation”, that is they presented the same kind of materials, but in a different manner, he still emphasized that tragedy differs from epic primarily in being intended for performance in a theatre. Since Richardson’s *Clarissa Harlowe*, the novel began to use a theme and a structure comparable with those of tragic drama. Stendhal’s *Le Rouge et le Noir*, Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary*, Melville’s *Moby Dick*, Hawthorne’s *Scarlet Letter*, Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* are a few of the examples that come most readily to mind when talking about novels which have given to our time a full sense of what it is to live in a tragic situation. These are examples of epic in which we have “tragic moments” in a context that is characterized by amplitude and variety, rather than concentration and crisis, as in theatrical performances.

Since the nineteenth century, novel writers have become critics of life, observers of the human condition in a philosophic sense who portray the struggle for a tolerable existence, for some equilibrium in the prevailing discord; the latent antagonisms and strife of the sexes, and all the other

obstacles besetting the human path represent their dramatic subject. Tragedy is the place of alien forms controlling human existence; as in the Greek theatre, writers give life to heroes and heroines who become helpless victims of inscrutable powers at work. Under the implacable force of Moira, they struggle hopelessly in the net, finding that life is a constant state of damnation. Generally, the modern writers' characters are as simple and as ordinary as possible; they show a certain blankness of feature and they lack sharp individualizing lines. Their importance is in their being tragic representatives of the human race today worrying with destiny. These men and women are not abstract things but live, identifiable beings torn apart between their aspirations and their performances, between their will and their compulsive emotions, between the illusions of their pride and the realities of their self-ignorance.

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TRAGEDIA ÎN LITERATURĂ

Scurtă analiză

(Rezumat)

Această lucrare definește și analizează conceptul de tragedie din literatură, având în vedere că nu ne putem imagina tragicul în absența eroilor tragici sau a situațiilor exemplare din reprezentațiile teatrale și din romane. Filozoful grec Aristotel este cel care oferă prima oară omenirii o definiție indirectă a tragicului și dintre toți termenii tehnici, "catharsis-ul" este probabil cel mai des folosit în relație cu tragedia. După Aristotel, tragicul a ocupat un loc special în filozofie, în sistemele metafizice idealiste, în care emoția tragicului apare ca fiind evidentă în posibilitatea omului de a recunoaște că depinde de forțele misterioase, că plăcerea și iubirea sunt trecătoare. Apoi, filozofia modernă realizează o interpretare a fenomenologiei tragicului ca parte constituantă a experienței umane. În literatură, avem tragedia clasică, în care omul este în conflict cu forțele de nepătruns ale universului. În Franța cu Corneille și în Anglia cu Marlowe și Shakespeare, a existat o măsură a grandorii tragice și aceasta este maniera în care percem tragedia în ziua de azi. Mai târziu, scriitorii de romane devin critici ai vieții, observatori ai condiției umane în sens filozofic, care descriu lupta pentru o existență tolerabilă.

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THE LYRICISM OF DRAMA – TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

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Abstract. Tennessee Williams, an original and brilliant creator, was the poetic innovator of American dramaturgy of the 20th century, the drama-master of a whole generation of remarkable playwrights. His works are constructed on a psychological basis, with lyrical elements that built a special universe. In his plays, Williams wrote about the social and moral decline of the South, about a dying and *weakened* world, lacking moral balance and lofty ideals. His works are intensely autobiographical, but not in the direct meaning of the word. His writing reflects the emotional side of his experiences, i.e. the way life events can shape the inner self. Williams' plays, with all their melodramatic accents, are actually deeply human and thrilling, while the ineffable dramatic lyricism mainly emerges from the poetry of the text basically constructed on the reflections on the alienated human condition in a hostile space.

Williams' poetic visions, his remarkable characters, the whole universe of his plays, were actually a "*response*" to reality, if not even an attempt to defy. The outstanding feature of his plays is the link between the realistic detail and poetic sensitivity. The language of his dialogues is straightforward, but remains essentially poetic. So are his characters. So is his entire dramatic world as it emerges in one of his most remarkable plays, *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Keywords: lyricism; character; human communication; realism; poetical.

"What is straight? A line can be straight, or a street, but the human heart is curved like a road through mountains." (Tennessee Williams)

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In one of his interviews for *The Paris Review* (www.theparisreview.org/3209/the-art-of-theatre-no-5-tennessee-williams), Tennessee Williams stated that he was born to be a writer: “*I was born a writer. I think. Yes, I think that I was*”. This must have been true, since Williams started writing at the age of twelve. This happened as a consequence of a rather strange life experience. Besides changing him physically, the episode marked a radical turning point in the development of his personality and determined the writer’s lifetime *emersion* into the imaginative. This chapter in his life was a kind of mystical experience on the verge of dying, a curious and unexplained disease the doctors could not find any explanation for. But Williams (according to his own characterization) was a target “*hard to hit*”: accordingly, he survived, but the epiphanic episode brought changes, the first and most important one being that he took up writing.

Two major fears crossed his existence: the one of getting mad (and thus *rewriting* the sad destiny of his sister Rose, who had been prematurely put into a hospital of mental diseases), the other of not having time to finish his work, of dying before accomplishing all his creative projects: “*Everyone is afraid of it, (death) but I’m no more than most, I suppose. I’m beginning to reconcile myself to it. I’m not reconciling to dying before my work is finished, though.*” The only solution he saw in the exhausting and long fight with his own *demons* was writing: the refuge after damaging experiences, the one and only modality to accept reality. That is the main reason why much of the thematic core of the Williams’ plays can be identified in the writer’s personal experience, in his life marked by alcoholism, episodes of depression, loneliness and mental *slippage*. Nevertheless, in spite of all contradictions and self-destructive tendencies, *the demons* of his restless existence could not replace the powerful imaginative and artistic gifts he was endowed with.

For Tennessee Williams the process of writing was tense and, to a certain extent, for him as a person, quite exhausting. Williams made a lot of rewriting what caused the critics believe he was anarchistic, if not even dangerous. He deeply visualized the work and knew beforehand how the *final product* would look like. Williams was not interested whom he was writing for (although he was deeply aware of the fact that the public should not be bored), being totally oriented to his own self, to his memories and experiences. He was not interested in public success either. Moreover, success would bring him restlessness, sometimes even depression. When, for instance, *The Glass Menagerie* premiered in 1945 and the public was curious to see the new kind of theatre they had heard about, the instant success of the play did not bring any contentment to the writer:

“*The sudden success? Oh! It was terrible! I just didn’t like it. If you study photographs taken of me the morning after the huge reception it got in New York, you see I was very depressed.*” (www.theparisreview.org/3209/the-art-of-theatre-no-5-tennessee-williams).

Williams' works are intensely autobiographical, but not in the direct meaning of the word: they reflect the emotional side of his life and the way events would shape the inner self. Here is how Williams himself characterizes the process of writing, mainly the occurrence of ideas and visions that were to be subsequently embedded in the final version of the plays:

"The process by which the idea for a play comes to me has always been something I really couldn't pinpoint. A play just seems to materialize, like an apparition, it gets cleaner and cleaner. It's very vague, at first, as in the case of "The Streetcar...", which came after "The Menagerie". I simply had the vision of a woman in her late youth: she was sitting in a chair all alone by a window, with the moonlight streaming in on her desolate face and she'd been stood up by the man she planned to marry" (www.theparisreview.org/3209/the-art-of-theatre-no-5-tennessee-williams).

At the same time, besides visualizing, writing meant for Tennessee Williams a process of satisfying the *inner* ear, the perceptions of it: the writer would hear his characters speak and even talk out the lines while writing.

Williams' main goal as an artist was to depict the truth of life (no matter how shocking it could be) in a beautiful manner. The sources of inspiration were actually the materialization of more or less blurred visions and ideas, tracing back into youth memories and experiences. The lyricism of his plays comes from his intrinsic poetical nature and from the belief that poetry is not exclusively connected with the genre as such, but it can be identified in dramas, stories and plays as well. What Williams brilliantly performed in his plays was the link between the realistic detail and high poetic sensitivity.

A master of composition and character construction, *"a brilliant creator of theatrical atmosphere, providing spectacular acting parts, especially for young men and older women"* (Taylor, 1987, p. 297), Tennessee Williams was an innovator whose works are constructed on deep psychological basis, to which *commands* to moral and spiritual order regarding both the individual and society were added. Till the 20th century, the American theatre, which mainly focused on improvisation, imitation and entertainment, mainly emerging from the European influence, has lacked resolute doctrinaire basis; and yet, at the beginning of the century, an incredible revival in playwriting marked the birth of American realism, within which the essential themes of playwriting were deeply rooted in social reality.

Tennessee Williams' works, much influenced by Chekov, reflected the social and moral decline of a dying and *weakened* world with no moral equilibrium or lofty ideals. In the misleading space of the South, the heroes of his plays will fail in their attempt of salvation, mainly because they are given the chance for doing it. That is the reason why their inside drama is of utmost intensity that emerges from the discrepancy between the world around and that of illusions. Moreover,

“Williams...created moments of almost incredible sincerity, in which the characters do not stop at a mere change of ideas in order to satisfy social conventions, but engage in a dialogue that expresses what they really think, a dialogue that is the accurate expression of their subconsciousness and becomes an embodiment of a final agony, of a totally repressed interior life” (Blumenfeld, 1998, pp.112-113, my trans).

The dominant vision of the plays is “*a lyrical one, a luxuriant sensitivity, reminding the heavy odor of equatorial flora*” (Drimba, 2008, p. 291, my trans.), while the emotions they generate are overwhelming and highly thrilling. Williams approaches the characters as individual worlds in which the essential traits point to “*the instinctive aspects, their sensitivity and behavior, to their wish for moral redemption*” (Drimba, 2008 p. 291, my trans). From such perspective, the characters are endowed with special sensitivity that is capable of constructing ideal images about existence and its deep meanings. Their *troubled* consciousness will eventually lead to dramatic interior dissatisfaction, haunting loneliness, neurosis, sexual obsession, physical and moral damage. The melodramatic accents are actually deeply human, while the dramatic lyricism emerges from the poetry of the text that is basically constructed on the reflections on the alienated human condition in hostile space.

Williams’ controversial play, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1984. It brought its author great success and stirred critical dispute on the spot. It remains one of the most intriguing of his texts, *a riddle that has not been solved yet*. The initial title of the play (“*Blanche’s Chair in the Moon*”), Williams was not satisfied with, originated in his sister’s illusory and unhappy love affairs, in her tumultuous destiny and the subsequent mental decline. Moreover, the whole genesis of the play, a text that has “*all the familiar props of his drama - a slightly grotesque faded-genteel older woman, a young innocent, a tough young hero, a run-down Southern background*” (Taylor, 1978, p. 296) can be found in certain memories, places and names that had deep significance for the writer.

In the paper editions of the play, the text was accompanied by Williams’ “*A Streetcar named Success*”, an essay on the role of the artist in society. Here are the artist’s quintessential ideas regarding the birth of artistic creation in which the main source of inspiration is the interest in genuine and deep human emotions:

“Then what is good? The obsessive interest in human affairs, plus a certain amount of compassion and moral conviction that first made the experience of living something that must be translated into pigment or music or bodily movement or poetry or prose or anything that’s dynamic and expressive – that’s what’s good for you if you’re all serious in your aims” (Williams Tennessee, Quotes in http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/t/tennesse_williams).

Accordingly, Williams' major themes mainly refer to the feelings of sin and punishment, to desperate atonement – all these embedded in the artistic visions of special lyricism and in the psychological analysis of the characters.

The structure of the play is complex, while the drama gets prevailing sexual and biological implications that are dominated by overwhelming instincts. Williams' theatre is highly realistic, while the realistic and psychological elements occur in the violence of certain relationships or in strident attitudes. His fascinating characters are in conflict with themselves and with the surrounding reality that does not match their illusions and dreams.

The introductory passage is a lyrical description of the South, in a page that seems to have been taken from a novel:

"The sky that shows around the dip white building is a peculiarly tender blue, almost a turquoise which invests the scene with a kind of lyricism and gracefully attenuates the atmosphere of decay. You can almost feel the warm breath of the brown river beyond the river warehouses with their faint redolence of bananas and coffee. A corresponding air is evoked by the music of Negro entertainers at a barroom around the corner." (Williams, 1974, p. 13).

Blanche's arrival in such a world is perceived as an unusual and strange event, the heroine being depicted as a woman belonging to different time and space. The novelistic way in which Williams describes Blanche is revealed through details of clothing:

"Her appearance is incongruous to the setting. She is daintily dressed in a white suit with a fluffy bodice, necklace and earrings of pearl, white gloves and hat, looking as if she were arriving at a summer tea or cocktail party in the garden district. There is something about her uncertain manner, as well as her white clothes that suggest a moth" (Ibidem, p.15).

Her feeling of loneliness is accompanied by the obsessive wish of communicating with the others: *"I want to be near you, got to be with somebody, I can't be alone"* (Idem, p. 23). In the final scene of the play, Blanche will state that her loneliness, which eventually damaged her, was, from time to time, dependent on the kindness of people she would meet by accident.

The relationship between the romantic Blanche and the rough and ordinary Stanley may be approached in the perspective of the contradiction between appearances and the world around. Stanley is the pitiless force that will actually *destroy* Blanche, by trampling under foot her fragile dreams that keep her alive. In describing Stanley, Tennessee Williams focuses on the man's rough character and attitude to people and things around:

"Branching out from this complete and satisfying center are all the auxiliary channels of his life, such as heartiness with men, his appreciation of rough humor, his love of good food and drink and

games, his car, his radio, everything that is his, that bears the emblem of the gaudy seed-bearer.”(Idem, p.43)

The whole play actually revolves around the discrepancy between what actually lies inside people and the things they are forced to accept from the outer world. The winner in this *fight* is not the individual, but cruel reality that forces the characters to withdraw into their own, damaged self. Nevertheless, in spite of its *triumph*, reality will not be able to entirely destroy the magical world of man’s dreams. In the case of the sensual Blanche, her “*aspirations for the absolute and her passing through the inferno of vices will not annihilate her pure fond*” (Munteanu, 1972, p. 225, my trans)

Blanche Dubois dwells a dominantly symbolic space: the street in which she lives is called the *Elysian Fields* and one can get there by a tram named *Desire*. The outer space which she has to confront with is full of life, turmoil, dangers and libertinism. Blanche is predestined to follow the pattern of an existence that seems to have been *designed* beforehand: she loses the love of her husband who eventually commits suicide and this is the moment when she starts moving towards a tragic end, in a slow and painful process in which her subconsciousness will be constantly tormented. Moreover, according to Williams’ personal conviction, she cannot be accused for their deeds (the writer did not believe in collective guilt either), because she is the product of circumstances that actually dictate her how to react.

The wish - never satisfied - will direct her on the way of endless search that eventually will exhaust her, both physically and mentally. Blanche finds refuge in alcohol, but this will be an uninspired choice, since the habit will rummage her devastated soul, stimulating a sort of permanent mental unrest. She will steadily sink into her own obsession, losing self- confidence and accepting the crushing universe that destroyed what has been left inside.

Blanche actually lives the drama of a woman having few life-alternatives, a situation that will push her towards the existential inferno. Her drama occurs because she cannot contact the world around, nor can she communicate with it. Furthermore,

“in this universe that looks like a huge hospital of mental diseases, Williams’ heroes, who are built from a strange alloy of primitive sensuality and aspiration towards purity and absolute, cross their destinies, without being able to create a unity, in most significant of the situations.” (Munteanu, 1972, 222, my trans)

The feminine character will eventually get a tragic status: all her suffering, the huge amount of internal energy that emerges from the existential *struggle*, the pathetic accents of her miserable life will annihilate her special sensitivity which gradually fades and turns into a devastated and confused ego dominated by obsessions and instincts, by grief and anguish. She will be trapped in an upside- down world where abrupt sexuality replaces love and “*falsehood*” equates human communication.

The play was perceived both as a psychological drama and a social one. Blanche and Stanley are considered archetypes of different cultures and spaces, or, on the contrary, critically approached as isolated individuals. Moreover, one cannot speak about the main idea of the play or its exact meaning. The play actually speaks about human conflicts that do not necessarily characterize our epoch, but have not ceased to exist since old times.

Williams' poetic visions, his remarkable characters, the whole world of his plays, were actually a "response" to cruel reality, if not even an attempt to defy it. The language of his dialogues is straightforward, but remains poetic and unique in its substance. So are his characters. So is his entire dramatic world, a world "of confusion" (as Blanche herself stated), in which people are desperately searching for the magic of life. Moreover, as the motto of the play (taken from *The Broken Tower*, by Hart Crane) suggests, the world in which the individual feels insecure and betrayed is a "broken world" where love is nothing but a "visionary company", "an instant in the wind" and "a desperate choice." Nevertheless, tiny hope emerges from the conviction that it is love that can still drive things ahead, or to say it with Williams' words: "*The strongest influences in my life and my work are always whomever I love. Whomever I love and I am with most of the time or whomever I remember most vividly. I think that's true for everyone, don't you?*" (www.brainyquote.com).

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- * * www.theparisreview.org/3209/the-art-of-theatre-no-5-tennessee-williams.

LIRISMUL Dramei – TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

(Rezumat)

Tennessee Williams, un maestru al compoziției dramatice și al construcției personajelor, un creator strălucit și original, reprezintă vocea inovatoare a teatrului american al secolului al XX-lea. Dramaturgia sa este construită pe un solid fundament psihologic, cu elementele unui lirism de o factură aparte. Universul dramatic este cel al

Sudului, în care o lume fără echilibru moral și idealuri, își trăiește declinul. Dramaturgia lui Tennessee Williams este intens autobiografică, dar nu în sensul direct al cuvântului, ci în capacitatea pe care o are de a oglindi partea emoțională a experienței individuale. Accentele melodramatice ale scriiturii sunt profund umane și emoționează, în timp ce lirismul se naște din *poezia* aparte a textului.

Viziunile poetice, personajele, întregul univers sunt reacția de răspuns în fața unei realități dure care poate distruge emoțional individul. Ceea ce reușește Williams să realizeze în piesele sale, este legătura dintre detaliul realist, uneori dur și sensibilitatea poetică. Limbajul este direct, dar își păstrează, la rândul-i, substanța poetică. La fel se întâmplă și cu personajele și cu întregul univers al lumii dramatice, așa cum sunt acestea strălucit reprezentate în piesa *Un tramvai numit dorință*, unul dintre cele mai remarcabile texte ale autorului și ale dramaturgiei universale.

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EMERGENCE DE LA MÉMOIRE ROUAUDIENNE

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Résumé. À la suite des sagas modernes, l'œuvre de Jean Rouaud est le reflet d'un courant important dans la littérature contemporaine, à savoir le roman moderne de la mémoire. Depuis le surprenant prix Goncourt qu'il a reçu en 1990 pour son premier roman *Les Champs d'honneur*, Jean Rouaud, le vendeur de journaux, peut être considéré comme un auteur important de la vie littéraire française contemporaine. Dans sa chronique de la famille Rouaud, l'auteur condense, du point de vue thématique, les lieux de la mémoire *historique* et *Historique*, de sa famille et, respectivement, de la France du siècle passé: le quotidien concret des expériences privées de sa famille ainsi que les deux guerres mondiales, la modernisation de la France après 1945, la révolte estudiantine française des années '70.

Mots-clés: sagas modernes; roman moderne de la mémoire; autobiographie; mémoire collective; H/histoire.

1. Introduction: série moderne des romans-mémoire

« Familles! Je vous hais! Foyers clos; portes refermées;
possessions jalouses du bonheur »
André Gide - *Les nourritures terrestres*

Saga, mot d'origine scandinave, est, d'après le *Nouveau Petit Larousse en Couleurs* (1968, 831) le « nom générique d'anciens récits et légendes scandinaves, rédigés pour la plupart en Islande du XIIe au XIVE siècle». Ce

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genre de la littérature islandaise désigne la prose sous forme de conte ample dont le thème est *la destinée* d'une maison, *d'une famille*, voire d'une dynastie. Le style en était sobre, à caractère de chronique.

De grands écrivains du XIX^e siècle, à partir de Balzac jusqu'à Tolstoï et Zola, ont eu l'intention de rendre le roman l'équivalent moderne de l'épopée, écrivant, avec une distance ironique, la mythologie des nouveaux temps sur l'arrière-plan des permanences de l'être humain. Au XX^e siècle, Galsworthy et Thomas Mann poursuivent, eux aussi, dans *Forsyte Saga* et respectivement *La Maison Buddenbrook*, la destinée d'une famille et sa psychologie au fil des années, d'une génération à l'autre.

À la suite des *sagas modernes*, l'œuvre de Jean Rouaud est le reflet d'un nouveau courant important dans la littérature contemporaine, à savoir le roman moderne de la mémoire. Depuis le surprenant prix Goncourt qu'il a reçu en 1990 pour son premier roman, *Les Champs d'honneur*, Jean Rouaud, l'ancien vendeur de journaux, peut déjà être considéré comme un auteur important de la vie littéraire française contemporaine. Dans la *Chronique de la famille Rouaud* l'auteur condense, du point de vue thématique, les lieux de la *mémoire historique* et *Historique*. Il s'agit, notamment, de l'histoire de sa famille et, respectivement, de l'Histoire de la France du siècle passé. Ces h/Histoires incluent le quotidien concret des expériences privées de sa famille ainsi que les deux guerres mondiales, la modernisation de la France après 1945, la révolte estudiantine française des années '70. Au-delà du caractère autobiographique qui s'installe dès premières lignes de chaque roman, ils font aussi la preuve d'une profonde recherche de sa propre histoire et de l'identité au sein de sa famille - à la fois historique et Historique.

D'après Jens Oliver Müller, Rouaud crée « l'archéologie de soi-même » (cf. www.jean-rouaud.com) dans les lieux de la mémoire des événements cruciaux de l'Histoire française du siècle passé qui deviennent visibles et touchables au contact avec la mémoire de sa famille. Ainsi, par la voie de la mémoire - de la « mémoire collective » - Jean Rouaud saisit l'expression de la quête de son identité. Il redonne la parole et recrée l'histoire de l'existence de sa famille, de son enfance en reconsidérant avec amour les merveilles de la vie quotidienne.

2. Structure de la mémoire

« La mémoire est la condition de la poésie, le révolu, sa substance »
Cioran – *Cahiers*

La prémisse des romans rouaudiens est une profonde souffrance. Le titre, retentissant et pompeux de son premier livre, *Les Champs d'honneur*, renvoie, évidemment, aux champs de la guerre et à ceux qui y sont – glorieusement ? – tombés. L'équivoque phonétique du mot *champs* suggère les

chants d'honneur qui vont glorifier *Les hommes illustres* – mais le sont-ils vraiment ? – dans un monde qui essaie de prendre forme, de se clarifier, dans un monde à peu près compréhensible, à peu près démêlé et éclairé, dans *Le monde à peu près*.

Ces trois romans se complètent l'un l'autre les mêmes thèmes, les qualités de l'écriture et du cœur y étant identiques. L'illustration de la souffrance est spécifiée souvent dans ces trois romans dans un rapport de parallélisme avec l'Histoire – qui est pointée chronologiquement par des *regards* – à la fois *en avance* et *en arrière* – sur la famille, par des *contrepoints* personnels, souriants, ironiques ou pleins de sarcasme.

A l'exemple de Proust, avec lequel l'intertextualité est très claire, Rouaud rend la littérature apte à exprimer les problématiques, les sensibilités et les troubles de l'époque moderne, ainsi que de son âme. « Nous n'apprenons que par la souffrance » disait Proust (apud Keegan, *The Loire-Atlantique Cycle*, www.thesecondcircle/fjk/roua.html), et c'est par ses tourments que Rouaud réussit à déchiffrer les réseaux de « l'affaire – la grande » (Rouaud, 1997, 61), c'est-à-dire la mort, et à retrouver ce qui lui semblait introuvable – l'espoir ! À partir de petits indices (des noix, un dentier, quelques photos, un cahier à prières, le souvenir d'un « petit sourire malicieux et gêné » (Ibidem, 139) du « merveilleux papa pudique » (Idem, 140) questionné par les enfants sur la maternité) Jean Rouaud rassemble et recrée, petit à petit, l'histoire, afin de partir à la recherche de l'Histoire « majuscule » (Ibidem, 4^{ème} page de couverture) avec ses deux tourments mondiaux, « paysage de lamentation » (Idem, 151) et « berceau de tous les mystères » (Ibidem, 4^{ème} page de couverture).

La *mémoire rouaudienne* a pour chronotope la Loire inférieure, le pays de la Bretagne envahi par l'humidité, les brouillards et les vents du climat océanique, ainsi que par la durée de trois générations qui ont ressenti la succession des deux guerres mondiales. Nous ajouterions davantage un topoï complémentaire : le subconscient de l'auteur qui est sans cesse sondé « afin d'en extraire le sens, un sens qui vaille, solidairement, pour les vivants et les morts » (Héchichian, 1997, 18).

Cette compréhension de la matière de la mémoire n'est pas racontée de l'extérieur, mais elle est une manière de la revivre, un essai de la maîtriser à partir de son épiscentre même, afin de permettre finalement à l'auteur de dire : « Lorsque nous aurons ressuscité d'entre les morts nous serons avec nos corps tout neufs comme des collégiens empruntés » (Rouaud, 1997, 111). La profondeur de la souffrance de l'auteur qui engendre la ressuscitation des trépassés devient ainsi une « gymnastique de vieil enfant, manière comme une autre d'arrêter le temps » (Idem, 129).

Le fait surprenant dans cette expression de la trame du temps et du souvenir est la *disparition scénique du narrateur*. Tout comme dans un théâtre d'ombres chinoises, nous sentons, nous envisageons, derrière l'interface des faits marquants racontés, les émotions et les fibres (affectueuses ?) du narrateur.

Jamais explicitement proférées, de même que la présence du narrateur, elles transparaissent au-delà des mots. A travers les figures familiales, les soit-dits hauts faits de guerre, l'auteur retrouve *la substance émotionnelle de ce temps pointé par des morts successives* : celle du père d'abord, « scène primitive » de l'écriture rouaudienne, de la « petite tante », du grand-père maternel, pour pousser, juste à la fin des *Champs d'honneur*, un profond soupir de douleur : «- oh, arrêtez tout » (Rouaud, 1997, 178)

Il y a aussi un autre aspect qui tient également à la structure et à la thématique de l'image de la famille rouaudienne, réelle et poétique à la fois. Les romans sur lesquels nous pointons notre attention – notamment *Les champs d'honneur*, *Les hommes illustres* et *Le monde à peu près* – examinent sous divers aspects les mêmes nœuds thématiques qui font joindre le réel au lyrique et qui ont pour ultime cible l'explication de la mort, du « réel du réel » (Castaing, dans Rouaud, 1997, 187). Les reprises des mêmes motifs, thèmes, voire des mêmes scènes dans les trois romans, suggèrent leur caractère obsessionnel de même que la hantise de la mort du narrateur. Les champs d'honneur développe, d'après une logique non pas chronologique, mais analogique avec *Les hommes illustres*, la restauration de l'ordre du passé. Le passé n'y est pas envisagé linéairement, mais dans un perpétuel zigzag, suivant une histoire qui divague, qui « s'écarte du fil rouge » (interview avec Jean Rouaud, *Nuit Blanche*, www.jean-rouaud.com) pour partager davantage «le plus intime, le plus fort » (Idem), le plus désespérant. D'ailleurs, rappelons-nous les 12 Evangiles lues le Jeudi de la Semaine Sainte. En vérité, il ne s'agit pas de douze Evangiles – et nous savons bien qu'il n'y en a eu que quatre – mais d'une quintessence de ce qu'il y a de plus significatif dans la symbolique de la Résurrection. Ces douze Évangiles reprennent à la fois les mêmes événements, les mêmes scènes d'avant la crucifixion de Jésus-Christ. Nous osons observer que dans les deux cas il s'agit de reprises à partir de différents angles, de différents points de vue, l'un plus complet que l'autre, pour en donner une vision plus claire et vraisemblable, plus complète et convaincante, dans un perpétuel essai de comprendre le mystère trop émouvant de la mort.

3. Compréhension de la mémoire

« Je suis distrait, je n'ai de mémoire que dans le cœur »
Charles de Secondat Montesquieu - *Mes pensées*

Schématiquement, l'histoire proposée par Jean Rouaud dans son œuvre nous apparaît comme un système à deux points extrêmes : le point « *enfant* », représenté par Jean, le caractère du narrateur qui donne vie et voix aux disparus afin de vaincre leur deuil, à la manière d'un Évangéliste. Pour reprendre le parallélisme ci-dessus, Jean semble être le seul disparu de cette série funèbre. Plus précisément, étant donné le fait que nous avons affaire à un roman autobiographique, c'est son « je » auctorial qui disparaît complètement au

moins dans les deux premiers romans. De l'autre côté, égal, mais de signe contraire, il y a le point « *le monde extérieur* » - l'Histoire, le chaos qu'elle provoque, son temps extérieur, les gens qui n'appartiennent pas à la famille, les objets, leur relation accablante, voire chaotique avec le père, le « monde clos du collège, le monde ouvert de la faculté » (Interview avec Jean Rouaud, Nuit Blanche, apud www.jean-rouaud.com). À partir de ces petits éléments, extérieurs ou appartenant à sa famille, Jean Rouaud analyse méticuleusement les merveilles ou les horreurs de la vie ordinaire - respectivement de la vie Historique - pour nous rassurer que: « C'est à partir de tels petits faits obtus que l'enfance bascule, morceau par morceau, dans la lente décomposition du vivant » (Rouaud, 1997, 13)

Au milieu, c'est le point d'attraction. Le nœud où s'entrecroisent mémoires, douleurs, amour, vie et mort. C'est le point qui entraîne les autres à tourner et à graviter autour de lui, tout comme un atome entraîne les électrons à tourner autour. C'est la *condition humaine* : force d'attraction essentielle qui touche au mystère du monde; système ouvert, dynamique et infini. C'est le point d'appui pour une autre dimension, *le lecteur*. Lecteur qui, à la lecture des romans de Jean Rouaud, est frappé et attiré notamment par cette base fondamentale, par cette relation imposée par l'énoncé entre les prémisses données par la famille et l'inconnue qui fait celle-ci disparaître. Ce lien entre la condition humaine et le lecteur donne à ce dernier le sentiment d'être un partenaire, un compagnon intime et familier de l'auteur pendant ses émergences narratives.

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MEMORIA ÎN ROMANELE ROUAUDIENE

(Rezumat)

O saga modernă, opera lui Jean Rouaud reflectă o tendință importantă a literaturii contemporane, și anume romanul modern al autobiografiei. Premiul Goncourt

obținut în 1990 pentru primul său roman, *Les champs d'honneur*, îl certifică pe Jean Rouaud, vânzătorul de ziare, drept un autor important al literaturii franceze contemporane. În cronică familia pe care o propune Rouaud, autorul condensează, din punct de vedere tematic locuri ale memoriei, istoria, familia sa, precum și imaginea Franței secolului trecut – experiențe cotidiene ale familiei sale, cele două războaie mondiale, modernizarea Franței după 1945, revolta studenților francezi din anii '70 – într-o încercare perpetuă de exorcizare prin scriitură a sentimentului de pustiu provocat de pierderea celor dragi.

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THE PORTRAIT OF ISABEL ARCHER: CHARACTERIZATION AND NARRATIVE

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Abstract. The article discusses characterization in Henry James' first great novel, *The Portrait of a Lady*, analyzing its role in building what might be termed a typical Jamesian narrative, albeit in its yet developing stage, without the shift towards quasi-complete dramatization. The focus falls on the main character, Isabel Archer, who embodies one of James' preferred themes, that of the innocent confronting the world.

Keywords: Henry James; *The Portrait of a Lady*; narratology; characterization; dramatization.

1. Introduction

With *The Portrait of a Lady*, Henry James starts his series of great novels. Born in New York, the writer spent part of his childhood and most of his adult life in Europe, eventually becoming a British subject and coming to be primarily associated with British literature. James is acknowledged as having made an important contribution to the modern novel through his explorations of point of view and unreliable narrators. A prolific writer, James is also usually perceived as a difficult one, but the above-mentioned novel remains one of his most popular works.

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2. Inspiration for the Character of Isabel Archer

As the author himself states in his *Notebooks*, *The Portrait of a Lady* is a novel built around a character. "The idea of the whole thing," wrote James in while at work on the novel, "is that the poor girl, who has dreamed of freedom and nobleness, who has done, as she believes, a generous, natural, clear-sighted thing, finds herself in reality ground in the very mill of the conventional" (James, 1981, 15). While James quite frequently found the inspiration for his novels and stories in the situations he encountered or had been told about (some often referenced examples are included not only in his *Notebooks*, but in his prefaces as well, such as the germ for *The Ambassadors*, consisting in a conversation – or rather the advice – recounted by a friend, which became in the novel Strether's urging to little Bilham in Book Fifth to "Live all you can; it's a mistake not to. It doesn't so much matter what you do in particular so long as you have your life"), in this case he confesses that,

Trying to recover here, for recognition, the germ of my idea, I see that it must have consisted not at all in any conceit of a "plot," nefarious name, in any flash, upon the fancy, of a set of relations, or in any one of those situations that, by a logic of their own, immediately fall, for the fabulist, into movement, into a march or a rush, a pattern of quick steps; but altogether in the sense of a single character, the character and aspect of a particular engaging young woman, to which all the usual elements of a "subject," certainly of a setting, were to need to be super added. (James, 1974, xiv-xv)

Perhaps the critics who point at Minnie Temple, James' cousin who died at the age of twenty-four, as an inspiration have identified the true explanation, though it is of course impossible to tell; at best it may be stated that the novelist "almost certainly" (Allen, 1967, 265) went back to memories of his beloved cousin in order to sketch the portrait of Isabel Archer.

If we consider this a fact, then we may agree with Walter Allen as he states that the figure of Minnie Temple was a most potent symbol in James' life, the symbol of youth and of all that was fine and candid, and, above all, it was perhaps the symbol of something essentially American. (Ibid.) A prevalent figure, she inspired yet another of James' characters, Milly Theale in *The Wings of the Dove*. The manifest similarity of names is in itself telling (Spiller, 1955, 180).

3. Jamesian Craft in *The Portrait of a Lady*

The preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* sheds further light both on the author's intentions, as on the focus of the novel, which will trace the subsequent

evolution of the heroine:

On one thing I was determined; that, though I should clearly have to pile brick upon brick for the creation of an interest, I would leave no pretext for saying that anything is out of line, scale or perspective. I would build large—in fine embossed vaults and painted arches, as who should say, and yet never let it appear that the chequered pavement, the ground under the reader's feet, fails to stretch at every point to the base of the walls.

[...]

It was naturally of the essence that the young woman should be herself complex; that was rudimentary—or was at any rate the light in which Isabel Archer had originally dawned. It went, however, but a certain way, and other lights, contending, conflicting lights, and of as many different colours, if possible, as the rockets, the Roman candles and Catherine-wheels of a "pyrotechnic display," would be employable to attest that she was. (James, 1974, p. xxiv)

Graham Greene provides an interesting comment on James' apparent intention to reveal as much as possible about the art of his writing, an attitude most pronounced in the "Preface" to *The Portrait of a Lady*, where the author offers his public many revelations and memories:

He is always something of a conjurer in these prefaces: he seems ready to disclose everything – the source of his story: the technique of his writing: even the room in which he settles down to work and the noises. Sometimes he blinds the reader with a bold sleight of hand, calling, for example, *The Turn of the Screw* 'a fairy-tale pure and simple'. We must always remain on our guard while reading these prefaces, for at a certain level no writer has really disclosed less. (Greene, 1974, v)

It is perhaps not far-fetched to say that James, constant as he was in his work and his style, exploring certain ideas, and striving to produce a better novel or short-story, consciously or not applied the same manner or being less than direct in his prefaces as well.

The Portrait of a Lady also explores the Jamesian theme par excellence, the American's quest in Europe. In this version of what the novelist called "the international theme," the American protagonist is Isabel Archer, a handsome and intelligent girl who arrives in Europe as the ward of a rich aunt. An English suitor, Lord Warburton, proposes to her, but his advantages – name, appearance, kindness, a superb country house – are not enough; she refuses him in the belief that something hard to be defined, but far, far better, awaits her. Thinking that she has found her perfect person in Osmond, a cultivated man of American origins, she marries him, only to learn by painful stages that he is a vicious and heartless snob who has taken her for her money. The only fine gesture possible is to accept her fate with dignity, which she does. (Cunliffe, 1971, 232)

As Allen further points out, *The Portrait of a Lady*, similar to other early novels such as *Roderick Hudson*, *The Bostonians*, *The Princess Casamassima*, is a traditional novel, albeit one only James could have written. It is only with *What Masie Knew*, the turning point in the evolution of his prose, that James's fiction becomes "all his own." (Allen, 1967, 273)

Traditional elements in the novel include the presence of an omniscient and omnipresent narrator, moving from one character to another, as it is made obvious from the very beginning of the novel:

... Those [people] that I have in mind in beginning to unfold this simple history offered an admirable setting to an innocent pastime. The implements of the little feast had been disposed upon the lawn of an old English country-house, in what I should call the perfect middle of a splendid summer afternoon (James, 1974, 1).

As it may be observed, the fragment displays yet another characteristic of "traditional" narrative, namely direct address by the narrator. Nevertheless, James also used the character of Henrietta Stackpole as a "ficelle," the Jamesian term designating a character whose main function is to throw light on the meaning or significance of the situations and events narrated (Prince, 1989, 30):

Maria Gostrey and Miss Stackpole then are cases, each, of the light ficelle, not of the true agent; they may run beside the coach "for all they are worth," they may cling to it till they are out of breath (as poor Miss Stackpole all so visibly does), but neither, all the while, so much as gets her foot on the step, neither ceases for a moment to tread the dusty road (James, 1974, p. xxvi).

4. Characterization in *The Portrait of a Lady*

The manner in which characterization is achieved in the novel is significant for James's craft at the time – the novel was published first serially in *Macmillan's Magazine* from October 1880 to November 1881 and in *The Atlantic Monthly* from November 1880 to December 1881, being issued in book form in 1881 in London and 1882 in New York and subsequently revised for the New York Edition and republished in 1908 – which belongs, according to the critics' consensus, to his second period of creation. The narrator in *The Portrait of a Lady* defines some of the heroine's prominent traits in a quite direct manner, such as in the beginning of the sixth chapter: "Isabel Archer was a young person of many theories; her imagination was remarkably active. ... Her thoughts were a tangle of vague outlines..." (James, 1974, 51-52). Such naming of a character's qualities counts as direct characterization only if it is spoken by the most authoritative voice in the text, as is the case here. Otherwise, if the words had been uttered by the people of Albany, for instance,

they would have probably carried less weight, serving reflexively to characterize them as much as, if not more than Isabel. When the traits are attributed to the character by the authoritative narrator, the reader is implicitly called upon to accept the definitions. (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, 60)

One particular element employed by James for the purpose of characterization is the textual label. In works of fiction, it is quite evidently not compulsory to mention a character trait explicitly; when this happens, however, there appear two possibilities: the textual label may confirm the conclusion already reached by the reader during his process of generalization, or it may also be at variance with it, as is the case in *The Portrait of a Lady*. One such label, constantly mentioned in connection with Isabel, is “independence,” yet it gradually becomes apparent to the reader that this independent lady’s career is in effect made up of a series of unwitting dependences: she depends on Mrs. Touchett to bring her to England, on Ralph’s money to establish the kind of life she thinks she wants, and on Mme. Merle and Osmond to become the latter’s wife. The clash between the textual label and reader’s conclusions adds to the poignancy and irony of the character’s fate, and the overall effect that is thus obtained contributes to the tension of the novel (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, 38).

James makes use of the indirect manner of characterization as well, illustrating Isabel’s character not only through her actions, but through her non-actions as well:

She knew that this silent, motionless portal opened into the street; if the sidelights had not been filled with green paper she might have looked out upon the little brown stoop and the well-worn brick pavement. But she had no wish to look out, for this would have interfered with her theory that there was a strange, unseen place on the other side—a place which became to the child’s imagination, according to its different moods, a region of delight or of terror. ... She had never opened the bolted door nor removed the green paper (renewed by other hands) from its sidelights; she had never assured herself that the vulgar street lay beyond. (James, 1974, 23)

In this instance, the act of omission – not wishing to look out, not opening the door – takes on a further meaning, contributing to the revelation of Isabel’s character. Its symbolic significance refers to her preference for illusion over reality, a characteristic which will later play an important part in her tragic career (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, 63)

To return to the narrator, Rimmon-Kenan, following Chatman, gives a list of the signs of overttness of the narrator, which she calls “degree of perceptibility.” In order, the actions on the part of the overt narrator identifying him or her as such are description of setting, the most innocuous; identification of characters, which presupposed a prior knowledge with regard to them; temporal summary; definition of character, as discussed above; reports of what

the characters did not think or say; and commentary, in the form of interpretation, judgements or generalizations.

Judgements, possibly the most revealing of the narrator's moral stand – and it is widely acknowledged that “his [James'] fiction is as ethical in its intentions as it is aesthetic. These two aspects of his art cannot be separated.” (Allen, 1967, 263) –, are present in *The Portrait of a Lady* in instances such as,

It may be affirmed without delay that Isabel was probably very liable to the sin of self-esteem; she often surveyed with complacency the field of her own nature; she was in the habit of taking for granted, on scanty evidence, that she was right; she treated herself to occasions of homage. (James, 1974, 52)

What is more, in the revision Henry James made to *The Portrait of a Lady*, the author aimed to make Osmond's moral degeneracy clearer, so that “the mystification is only Isabel's, the ambiguity is all in what Osmond concealed, not in any doubts that James entertained about him.” (Matthiessen, 1944, 167) The series of changes are to be found at the stylistic level, as James rewrote his sentences to better reflect the perspective of the characters as opposed to the narrator, as for instance in Chapter XXIX, when Touchett reflects on Isabel:

He thought Miss Archer sometimes of too precipitate a readiness. It was pity she had that fault, because if she had not had it she would really have had none; she would have been as smooth to his general need of her as handled ivory to the palm. (James, 1974, 329)

It is the final part that James rewrote, namely the comparison to carved ivory, which replaced the original “as bright and soft as an April cloud” (Matthiessen, 1944, 167). Such quotes, as Walter Allen concludes, show particularly well the special part that style plays in James's writing: it concretizes, it individualizes and it serves to make everything more actual and more vivid – in other words, it dramatizes. Allen argues that the style is the expression of the intensity with which the characters live and feel (Allen, 1967, 280), but the road may be said to lead both ways: the style not only reflects the characters' intensity, but it also imbues them with it.

Dramatizing, in the sense of opting for “showing” as opposed to “telling,” is what James himself urges in his *Prefaces* and he takes his own advice to the limit in the later novel *The Awkward Age* (1899), which is characterized by an almost-all-dialogue presentation. The deliberate choice of this technique is steadfastly respected throughout the novel, resulting in a challenging piece of writing over which critics have disagreed. Nevertheless, the importance of dramatization remains vital, especially when connecting it with the key aspect of renouncing the omniscient narrator and its authoritative

intervention in the text, and thus contributing to the emergence of the modern novel.

5. Conclusion

Despite the stylistic edits introduced in the 1908 New York edition, *The Portrait of a Lady* maintains a clear sense of being the work of Henry James. In the novel, the multiple techniques of characterization that are made use of for the main character, Isabel Archer, help build a work of fiction that includes both “telling” and “showing”, without employing dramatization exclusively, as in *The Awkward Age*. Overall, *The Portrait of a Lady* represents a typical Jamesian narrative not only through its choice of themes and its style, but also through the gradual building of the characters, the delicate irony and the innovative narrative.

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PORTRETUL LUI ISABEL ARCHER: CARACTERIZARE ȘI NARAȚIUNE

(Rezumat)

Articolul discută caracterizarea în *Portretul unei doamne*, primul mare roman al lui Henry James, analizând rolul ei în crearea unei așa-numite narațiuni tipic jamesiane, deși încă într-un stadiu de dezvoltare, neapărând încă dramatizarea aproape completă a istorisirii. Accentul cade pe personajul principal, Isabel Archer, care întruchipează una din temele preferate ale lui James, cea a persoanei inocente confruntând lumea.

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