

## HUMOR AND PUBLICITY IN LITERARY COMMUNICATION BY MEANS OF THE AUTHOR'S IMAGE

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### Abstract

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Establishing the relation of access: the suggestive induction in a target person's mind, considered to be as receptor, can be achieved through "hypnotic suggestion", by means of visually conveyed "psycho" energies; exemplification with an administration's advertising and images of Romanian writers.

Modern success in advertising goes back a long time, as proven by an inscription, in a central square in Seville, Spain, reading like this: "Society works like this: *The poor* drudges; *The reach* exploits him; *The military* defends both; *The tax-payer* pays for all three; *The Tramp* takes a rest for all four; *The drunkard* drinks for all five; *The banker* swindles all six; *The lawyer* cheats on all seven; *The doctor* kills all eight; *The undertaker* buries all nine; *The politician* lives from all ten...(s.n.)"

The terminology of this text refers to sociology, remaining within the rough part of the social, intermediary between language and message, thus being linked to the configuration of what can be described as specific to the uttering of figures, and that is what the relationship cuts down to: *works, exploits, defends, drinks, rests, swindles, pays, cheats, buries, lives*. The existence of that issue and the serial terminology set themselves on a common, general communication plane, branching into several parts of the existential art, where only the politician lives, the others work, even if they drink, a fact which would be conceived as a general stylistics of mass communication.

At a *Faculty of Communication Sciences* one educates those who want to become *Politicians*, i.e. those who first make peace with themselves and then with others, in an ever-changing society, now in a greater hurry than in the past, so that *the poor, the rich, the military, the tax-payer,*

*the tramp, the drunkard, the banker, the lawyer, the doctor, the undertaker, the politician* are symbols of several intercommunicating social categories. Nowadays there is a different type of communication taking place: the message from the Spanish square has shown up on the *Internet* from someone in the US and has been translated into Romanian and you read it in English. This is a modern communication situation showing that a barrier between languages, spaces and individuals has disappeared, that new social systems have appeared (although they secretly remained the same under other names), that the somehow a closed space and the composition time is compensated by the universal system of the existential stages.

This text shows that the Spanish inhabitants had a sense of humor and could read, while confabulating in the central square; it also shows that people perceive from their existential communications, by means of their mind mirror, which has a universal competence, to a social practice with multiple codes and sub codes of a symbolic (ascendant semantic) and dramatic type (through reflective equation)<sup>1</sup>.

The anonymous author, accepted by the Spanish administration of Seville, tries on one hand to scatter realism, and on the other he insists on the succession of reactions between the representatives of the society. Spontaneous thinking cannot be easily brought near the farce system, but this process indicates that going outside time from the text fragments represents moments of intentional gapping.

The relationship and its quality with space change either in the image of the castle built by the scholar B.P. Hasdeu in the memory of his deceased daughter, or in the story of a small talk with a "voice beyond" *Sic cogito*. The

architectural space represents a double suggestion of the power of love, beyond the 'materiality' of financial power and the exact construction of a spirit in search for precision.

The linguistic expression of historical concepts, as well as the communication representation techniques contain elements and procedures specific to the scientific discourse (*documents references*), through the structuring of the national issues integrated in the universal system. The facts are presented as a confident story about an unusual event, provide a basis of thinking and offer the perspective of analysis by means of a dramatic tale, beginning with an exclamatory romantic rising of the curtain for an episode and a corpus of texts. This represents however a collective construction with participants (*friends/enemies, critics and commentators*), having varied parts and relationships, with connections which depend on the messages' content<sup>2</sup>, asserting critically the cosmologic system of a population (with a political propagandistic intention contemporary to the writing), through the evaluation of the relation *religion/space; tactics/ in space and time*, with formative and designative aspects of appreciation. The image of the scholar B.P. Hasdeu (1838-1907) appears specific to his epoch, one hand supporting his head and his beard of a careful researcher.

Literary communication makes appeal to an aesthetic orientation, with thematic and typological implications, with an aspiration to inspiring real existence, be it an individual, as a species, as the centre of a whole generation, with the presentation of some real circumstances as documents, or as an anti-romantic reaction or as a reaction of sensitivity, discontent and hostility.

Let's focus now a little bit on the *Smiley* images, since they represent the most common image on the *Internet*, either in emails or at the end of instant messages on *messenger*. For the last thirty years they've represented a specific way of thinking regarding psychological systems, realized by means of some facial symbols: *joy, wonder, seriousness, crying, timidity, beauty, laughter, weirdness, perplexity* etc., completed by additional objects: *eye glasses, flower, hat, make-up* etc.

At the same time, we must also remember the importance of words and images accompanying a presentation, since the personality of the writer or of the commoner depend on their relations with the natural or anthropogenic space, developed in time by varied causalities.

The presentation of a folk literature edition implies references to pages of the printed original (*Alexandria* is a famous Romanian folk novel from the XVII-th, XVIII-th centuries, narrating the life and extraordinary travels of the emperor Alexandru Macedon, a translation from Serbian of the folk novel *Historia Alexandri Magni regis Macedoniae*, written in Greek in the third century b.c.), and it is often that the manual displays printed images taken from manuscripts, as is that from *Varlaam și Ioasaf*.

If one discusses a religious personality, there are some painted and symbolic images, obvious in the posture of the hands and in the cult objects, or in clothes characteristic to the cult and epoch the image was painted, as is the case of Dosoftei, on his layname, Dumitru Barila (1624-1693).

The elements of an author's appearance are associated with a special fashion system. For example, Nicolaus Olahus' image, humanist and scholar (1493-1568), can be considered to be close to the function of Primate of the Church, while that of Ienăchiță Văcărescu (1740-1797) reminds us of the portrait containing the famous testament: " To my Văcărești successors!/ I leave this legacy to you: / To enrich the Romanian language and to honour your country."

The female poets prefer beauty, like Magda Isanos (1916-1944). Or, Elena Văcărescu's picture (1864-1947) demonstrates the difference from the imaginary as reflected by the romantic presentation and the modern one, belonging to Nora Iuga (n.1931) whose hands are resting on herself, showing a mature self confidence, a symbolization of her complete relationship with the inner poet.

On the other hand, the poets' images of the 80s were group images, on the railway engine, presenting them as exponents of a unified system of creative thinking, or they can assume the oneiric stance, like our contemporary Mircea Cărtărescu (n. 1956), while Matei Vișniec's image (n. 1956) changes the playwright as a thinker

with one finger at his forehead, into a playful lucid way.

To be more exact, the symbol of the concrete organizational system, from a relaxation advertising, functions simultaneously through:

- its material and semantic relation with other particular signs (there are also other images);
- its material and semantic relation with other series and groups (the persons reading and comparing the images).

The writers' images, reproduced by drawings, pictures, descriptions, represent a first students' contact with the interpretation system of the work.

A secondary school manual presents several images of the poet Mihai Eminescu (1850-1889), yet the students prefer the well-known romantic figure and refuse the other images of the poet, wearing a moustache or a beard, as the non-complying image is accepted quite late and a great importance is attributed to the system of perceiving a personality, compliant to an ordered social ideal.

The interwar writers accept their photographic image, the novelty included being either the actor's personality, Emil Botta (1911-1977), or a personality reflected by a painter, as a reference to the activity determined by the literary stream – the case of Tristan Tzara (portrait by Lajos Tihanyi, 1927).

Tristan Tzara (1896-1963) appears in a fragmented image with a strange chromatic, suggesting the idea of his pseudonym, *sad in the country*, through:

- his relation with whole symbolic systems (for example, different "languages" within the historical language);
- his unmediated (material) relation with the extra linguistic universe (depending on the direct reproduction and representation, i.e. an "iconic" or "imitative" function, in the broadest sense of these terms: *they're all subjects to death and politics*);
- his relation with unmediated experience, linguistic and non-linguistic ("contexts" and "situations" constituting themselves into a much more complex group of

'framings" than it is usually implied in other *searches*);

- his relation with other "advertising inscriptions", for example the importance of objects become fetishes, since, just like physical appearance, they belonged to certain authors ( this is how one explains the idea of some profane cult spaces, named memorial houses, or one can often comment this system of objects that have become, like the tomb, a reference system; like this inkwell that once belonged to Constantin Negruzzi (1808-1868) ;
- his relation with an empirical knowledge of the world and with different forms of interpreting the world ("culture").

Group images demonstrate the importance given to visual structuring as a starting point for mental knowledge, as in the distinguished portrait of the "Junimists" in the medallion with Vasile Alecsandri (1821-1890) in the centre of the group portrait. A group picture of the students and writers, published in a famous volume from "Letters", in 1981 – "Air with Diamonds" – looks totally different: Ion Stratan, Florin Iaru, Traian T. Coșovei, Mircea Cărtărescu.

The fashion game represents a way of coming to know the world, manifesting itself through the relation between imaginary and game, in the double surface supported by the imaginary level, in relation with myth and history. The playful element, gratuitous, governs *paideia* and *ludus*. The end of playing a game is *pleasure*. Man plays not only in childhood, but also when he has reached maturity. The man who plays, *homo ludens*, creates pleasure for himself, *loisir*, by arranging the words, so that in practical communication the game becomes exciting, since it offers rhythm and harmony. The game generates: tension, balance, oscillation, alternation, contrast, variation, linking and detachment, closure, *in-lusio*<sup>3</sup>.

Imaginary combines with external reality and confronts it; it finds support in it, or, on the contrary, a hostile environment which may be embraced or rejected. It acts on the world and the world acts on it. However, in its essence, the imaginary is a separate reality, with its own

dynamic and structure. During the National-Communism period (*the late ceausism*), political myths were arranged in a relation of continuity with what it was considered the real history of the country: the Daco-Roman origins (*with accent on Dacism*), the unity myth, the besieged city myth, Romanians' victimization etc., but there was also a try at standardizing social relations by concealing certain facts. Reflexes of the communist ideology in Romanian literature are felt by the appearance of certain ordering myths: the myth of the endangered country (*the besieged city*), protochronist myths, the myth of the savior, the myth of the noble past and that of the past's ennobling function (*a people is great when it has a great, luminous past*). Clothing from the writers' images around 1848 suggests, together with their appearance, the bases of a special Romanticism.

Personality can be interpreted through image and this is how heroes' and ancestors' sacred portraits came into being, this is how physiologies appeared. Further on, physiology, which is a branch of biology, studying the functions of the living organism (animal or vegetal), became a system of psychological communication, a literary species referring to signifying situations (< fr. *physiologie*). Let's take a look, for example, at the first physiologies' author, Constantin Negruzzi<sup>4</sup>, whose portrait, chosen by the literary critics and historians, is that with a four-in-hand tie, a broad tie, folded in the shape of a ribbon, with hanging short ends (< fr. *lavallière*), and not the portrait in a fur coat, or the romantic portrait, in which the hand is supporting the chin. I would like to mention that most Romanian writers' portraits contain this detail of social fashion. This fashion system refers to an image crisis, specific to the transition from the Phanariot period to the modern, European one – the crisis itself being a product, something that satisfies somebody's need or wish<sup>5</sup> – although, apparently, it seems a calamity.

The view point may refer to three fundamental problems, resulting from Constantin Negruzzi's portrait:

- a brief retrospective of the fashion motive in literary criticism about Constantin Negruzzi

- a relation between the old Romanian writing and Constantin Negruzzi's modern work
- a focus on the analysis on the relation between the small fragment, related to the fashion motive and the mimetic/symbolic construction type in Constantin Negruzzi's work

High officials' clothes symbolized their rank, informed briefly about leaders' special positions in the state, about the boyar's trade and profession.

At the same time, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the oriental clothing is replaced by the occidental one, the equipment and the garbs suffering a radical change. As a matter of fact, one's attire symbolized an appearance and a cover for the civilian person in relation to one's port, the wardrobe comprising special garments with different characteristics, related to the state's ruler and the epoch.

In his portraits, Constantin Negruzzi appears dressed according to the fashion of the time, i.e. wearing a frock, a coat shorter to the front and longer in the back, with two rows of buttons and a thick golden chain attached to the watch on the waistcoat, with a split collar shirt and some sort of a four-in-hand tie, as in Vienna portrait<sup>6</sup>.

Scientists, magicians and diviners offer indications going toward the beginning and the end of life's pilgrimage, through the vehicle of Your Self, having the meaning of a journey that is a translation from body to soul and vice versa, from the external to the internal, a symbolic and mythic pilgrimage, magically transforming two or more beings into one, gathering the past, the present and the future in the subtle centre of oneness. Even if along the road drops are lost from the secret cup of some personalities' adventure, the stories make each one of us ask the questions:

Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we heading to?<sup>7</sup>

*Negotiation of an Image* (2008), Iulian Costache's title of an outstanding analysis referring to Mihai Eminescu, demonstrates that the visual image represents a doubling or even a tripling of the real personality and that

visualization represents just one possible path to knowledge.

### References

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1. Kotler, Philip (2002) *Marketing Management*, București, Teora Publishing House.
2. Negruzzi, Constantin (1974) *Works*, vol. I, *Youth Sins*, critical edition, with introductory study, comments and variants, by Liviu Leonte, Minerva Publishing House, București.
3. Rovența-Frumușani, Daniela (1995) *Semiotics of the Scientific Discourse*, Scientific Publishing House, București.
4. Rovența-Frumușani, Daniela (2005) *Discourse Analysis. Hypotheses and Hypostases*, Tritonic Publishing House, București.

### Endnotes

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- 1 Cf. Daniela Rovența-Frumușani, *Semiotics of the Scientific Discourse*, Scientific Publishing House, București, 1995. p. 14.
- 2 Cf. Daniela Rovența-Frumușani, *Discourse Analysis. Hypotheses and Hypostases*, Tritonic Publishing House, București, 2005. p.8
- 3 See: Jean, Chevalier, Alain Gheerbrant, *Dictionary of Symbols, Myths, Dreams, Traditions, Gestures, Forms, Figures, Colors, Numbers*, translation by a team coordinated by Micaela Slăvescu and Laurențiu Zoicaș and composed of Daniel Nicolescu, Doina Uricariu, Olga Zaicik, Irina Bojin, Victor-Dinu

Vlădulescu, Ileana Catuniari, Liana Repeșteanu, Agnes Davidovici and Sanda Oprescu, vol II, Artemis Publishing House, București, 1995.

- 4 See: Constantin Negruzzi, *Works*, vol. I, *Youth Sins*, critical edition, with introductory study, comments and variants by Liviu Leonte, Minerva Publishing House, 1974, in vol I, where are comprised Liviu Leonte's *Introduction* and *Youth Sins with Youth Memories, Historical Fragments, Cockle and Thistle, Black on White*.
- 5 Philip Kotler, *Marketing Management*, București, Teora Publishing House, 2002, p. 36.
- 6 Constantin Negruzzi, *Works*, vol. I, *Youth Sins*, critical edition, with introductory study, comments and variants by Liviu Leonte, Minerva Publishing House, 1974, p. III.
- 7 Starting from I.P. Culianu's replaced shoes, one can construct an idea of the premonitory magic. "Ioan Petru Culianu writes in the *Preface* of his novel, *The Emerald Game*, that, in the year of his fleeing Romania (1972), his only suitcase was lost on the airport in Rome. He got it back after a week, but, surprise, instead of his shoes he found an old, leather-bound volume, written in a tangled Latin and full of abbreviations. I would understand this episode first as a metaphor of leaving one's country, and then as a metaphor of one's ascension in the imaginary Florence, Republic of the Spirit. Because the initiation one receives into another world, one receives it barefoot. Or partially barefoot." <http://marceltolcea.blogspot.com/2008/05/schi-pentru-o-istorie-universal.html>