Dialogue

and Argumentation in the Public Space

DIALOGUE AND ARGUMENTATION
IN THE PUBLIC SPACE

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FOREWORD

Communication in the Agora

In post-communist Romania, the interest in the phenomenon of communication has increased dramatically, not only in the social-political space but also in the cultural and civic one. Thus, schools in communication sciences have acquired a self-standing professional status, which has brought about the elimination of improvisation and of the dilettantism of those who believe that communicating is neither more nor less than speaking or saying something. Furthermore, another important phenomenon has occurred: the huge importance that the public space – which has its origins in the Greek agora – has acquired.

Dialogue and Argumentation in the Public Space is a meritorious epistemological study facing a largely hostile attitude towards professionalism in communication. Moreover, it confronts an uneven media space haunted by communication ailments among which, at the forefront, there is the pathological vacillation between *learned professionalism* and *versatile pragmatism*, i.e. between those who are willing and sometimes manage to do their job *by the book*, and those who behave chameleonically in their profession, work on order on media barons' plantations, are mercenaries or automata, as the media itself has named them.

Since this is all about the media – which is not the fourth power in the state government but rather a superpower with devastating effects on the members of a community - we will argue that many of its structures consist of imported forms, or forms that lack substance. In these constructs, we find that *the informative discourse* – that Aniela Corlăteanu's attempt manifests an interest in - is often distorted by two other types of discourse that have taken over and dominated public space: *the discourse of advertising* and *the entertainment* as professionals in the field call the latter.

Including four substantial sections, which are convincing through the topics discussed in their subsections as well as through the variety of bibliographic sources to which they refer - some of which in languages other than Romanian - the author's approach brings forth an essential connection for the proper functioning of our present society: *dialogue*, on the one hand, and *argumentation*, on the other hand. These make up the two arms of a balance weighing up how much and how efficiently the members of a community really communicate based on mutual understanding and the justification of problems which become the bone-structure of dialogue.

Logically structured and developing from the complex to the simple rather than the other way round, yet ordering the rationale from the general to the concrete aspects of communication, Aniela Corlăteanu's discourse is mainly, as it has already been suggested here, the domain of the philosophy of communication. However, the research – which includes theses and hypotheses, solid conclusions and critical reservations alike - is the result of a cross-disciplinary epistemological effort amassing information provided by communication sciences, the critique of the media system, discourse analysis, linguistics, anthropology and pragmatics.

It is not by chance that pragmatics, or *how we do things with words*, has been mentioned last since I would like to point out a fundamental aspect: while pragmatics holds the background position in demonstrations throughout the thesis, it also has a main role in several distinct investigations.

The explanation is simple: pragmatics, under the form of a philosophy of language, is that discipline of our spirit that works in the service of argumentation in a dialogue carried out not only in the public space but also outside it. This is an assertion that becomes a central principle for the public communication mechanism, which Aniela Corlăteanu formulates from the outset acknowledging the title of John Austin's work:

> Regardless of its aim to discover the truth as part of a thesis or to come in support of some already formulated rules, of its persuasive attempts as part of an attitudinal or doctrinal support, of its scope to legitimize power by means of political discourse, or simply of its cognitive gain in a heuristic dispute, *argumentation* turns out, along with its structure and strategies of using the language, to be the ultimate means of answering the question: 'how to change the world with words'.

In the first part of the volume, necessary conceptual delimitations are made on communication on the one hand, and on the discourse, on the other hand, as the author is interested in determining aspects related to the osmotic functioning of the binomial communication-discourse. The analysis develops from acknowledging the importance of a language in recognizing the identity of a social space and continues with a synthetic description of what the philosophy of language calls *speech acts*. Comments on the latter, in fact, on J. Austin's contribution, are made by using the original text of the American philosopher's book, a work translated into Romanian with a somewhat inappropriate title: *Cum să faci lucruri cu vorbe* (lit. How to do things with words) whereas a correct translation would have been *Cum să schimbi lumea prin cuvinte* (lit. How to change the world by words).

Furthermore, in the beginning chapter, the author establishes the well-rounded profile of the character who constructs and deconstructs any authentic dialogue, namely: *the dialogical being*. It is another definition, I would say, of the man, one that accompanies and enhances the meaning – i.e. the proper meaning - that Aristotle attributed to man in ancient times: a being who is aware of grammar. Or rather *honesty and grammar* if we recall Caragiale's prerequisites of a journalist.

A description of what the discourse is as well as a taxonomy of the types of discourse come to complete the analyses in this segment of the work, but not before Aniela Corlăteanu clarifies the dimensions of two other conceptual nuclei, namely: mass communication and communication media, with a cognitive approach to how information is used and the causal nexus of interactions between the participants in an act of communication.

At this point, the author offers the reader the projection of a conclusion that the subsequent study is about to consolidate: as it stands today, the phenomenon of communication, through its connection with the media, has transformed the world into a media show, one that risks leaving the real public space and create its own *avatar* in the virtual public space (to make a joke, as they used to do in Junimea's meetings, one might argue that a play entitled *The Media Avatars* would compete quite successfully with Eminescu's *The Avatars of Pharaoh Tla*).

In the second chapter, Aniela Corlăteanu deals with the phenomenology of public space, an apple of discord particularly in the case of the participants in the dialogue and argumentation in the sphere of politics; then, the author analyzes the structure of the dialogue, focusing especially on the hypostases and the mechanisms in media dialogue.

Philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas has played a special role in determining the principles behind the tectonics of the public space. This thinker's options for some tools and means of communication in social life are put to work, a practice in which he has provoked a real turning point in the understanding of the social that we cannot separate from politics and on which Habermas projects the organic conjunction between meaning and action / interaction. It is in the meaning of the action that one discovers the substance that gives consistency to a *communicative model* in which Habermas inserts an *ethics of the discourse*.

Another aspect is that Habermas seems to be referring to what is happening at present in the Romanian public discourse, namely about how information is circulated, particularly unidirectional and ready-made information, to be more exact.

Turning to Aniela Corlăteanu's analysis of the dialogue, we find that she uncovers a complex network of codes, or rather of strategies of argumentation and persuasion whereby the public space is mediatized, especially by means of the television discourse. The consequences of this process for the media consumer are dramatic: the TV discourse in particular generates an *attitude* towards one's peers or the community. Furthermore, it outlines *a perspective on the world* on which - with the help of the media - the receiver builds and rebuilds reality.

The last part of *Dialogue and Argumentation in the Public Space* puts to work, by means of a specific dialectics, the network of previously operationalized concepts. The demonstration centers on the political dialogue, rhetorical figures and the argumentation strategies used by those who communicate in the agora. Finally, *the liberal political discourse* is analyzed diachronically, as it has unfolded in the Romanian socio-political space of the past years.

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INTRODUCTION

In our contemporary society – completely different from others along history in terms of time and space perception, as well as of the level of culture and civilization – the media, which appears to be the main source of information, is characterized by a particular type of communication: the media discourse. The media consumer, also referred to as "The Cathodic Man", is influenced by this media discourse since it is the press – both written and audio-visual – that forms opinions and convictions and which causes the receiver of information to reshape the reality in which he lives and which he faces on a daily basis. The televisual discourse seems to have the strongest impact in this respect. The conjunction of sound, image and text has turned television into a media superpower. Undoubtedly, the amount of time spent by people within the televisual space as well as within the virtual space of social networks has increased over the past years and the communication process – not only the interpersonal one, but also the one occurring within public space – has become more and more complex and difficult to master in terms of its rationality.

The present paper aims to analyze, by means of a philosophical approach, the nature of those relationships established by *dialogue within public space* as well as by *the strategies of argumentation* within the persuasion process. Both past and present centuries have born the mark of discursiveness, of epistemic research, and of the influence of human communication on the construction and reconstruction of reality. Concepts such as discursive excellence and performance, intentionality, terms of agreement between interlocutors, or argumentative rhetoric have been repeatedly brought into discussion and approached from new perspectives, although some of the issues go back to antiquity. The awareness of the importance of communication in (de)constructing reality and in influencing *the other* has been the starting point in the development of studies of argumentative structures as a result of a permanent

concern with the improvement of an instrument by means of which personal and collective actions, society and even the entire world could be better mastered.

Regardless of its aim to discover the truth as part of a thesis or to come in support of some already formulated rules, of its persuasive attempts as part of an attitudinal or doctrinal support, of its scope to legitimize power by means of political discourse, or simply of its cognitive gain in a heuristic dispute, *argumentation*, along with its structure and strategies of using the language, turns out to be the ultimate means of answering the question: "how to change the world with words," to echo the title given by J.L. Austin to one of his writings in language philosophy.

To echo perhaps the most important philosopher over the past century, the origins of man's concern with argumentative structures lie under the aegis of political struggle as a form of *communicative action* (Habermas, *Cunoaştere şi comunicare* 154-155). Through their mind-set, Greeks were among the first nations to lay the foundations of public debates and to deliver famous speeches in their *agoras* by resorting to rhetorical and sophistic arguments, thus proving they were "both a politically minded and a litigious race, and the arts of speech were as useful a passport to influence with them as they are in a modern democracy" (Ross 259).

Taken over from the agora by the *televisual discourse* and transferred from a direct democracy to an indirect one, the public debate – primarily perceived as a way of legitimizing power – has undergone profound changes over time in its attempt to adapt not only its form, but also its content. Its contextual dimension has become more complex up to the point of including more elements that need considering, thus causing the sphere of the notion of discourse to become much larger as well. Nevertheless, the logical argumentative structures that evidence derives from and discourses are built on have not undergone fundamental changes in terms of their constituting elements, except for those changes pertaining to criteria of selection or of integration into larger, rather holistic discursive strategies.

The present paper attempts to achieve a multidisciplinary approach to the two-fold structure *dialogue-argumentation within public space*, demonstrating – within the conceptual limits specific to the philosophy of communication – that the world has turned into a media show which risks leaving the real public space and, implicitly, creating its own avatar in the virtual public space. Accordingly, the approach of the present research is twofold: there is a theoretical dimension, analyzing communication, discourse, public space, dialogue and argumentation by reference to the theory of speech acts in particular, and to recent

developments in the philosophy of communication; and, as highlighted in the thesis itself, there is a deep practical concern with identifying discursive and argumentative structures in various, concrete situations of communication. Among many other things, the author's aim is to demonstrate on the one hand that dialogue and argumentation within public space are related to the well-functioning of a social system, with all its implications, and on the other hand, that they can result in a memorable, refined, masterminded performance which dramatizes the mundane and which is ultimately necessary for understanding the complex mechanism of human communication within public space.

The analyses carried out in the present paper are based on ideas, explanations, associations or dissociations which essentially make reference to the philosophy of language or of communication, particularly in those situations in which the concepts of communication, discourse, public space or argumentation have been employed. The accumulated findings resulting from this attempt will be subsequently used in order to search for discursive or argumentative sequences which exploit these concepts' potential of meaning within political discourses and debates within the Romanian public space. It is important to mention that the meanings of the concepts of 'dialogue' and 'argumentation' will be dealt with by means of an approach which fully takes into account the methodological rigours of a philosophical argumentation such as:

a) taking over ideas from the studied material without producing any alterations (by means of decontextualisation, abusive takeover, etc);
b) the commentator's sufficient background knowledge of the issue;
c) the clear delineation between perspectives;
d) the clear distinction between problems and solutions;
e) the clear distinction between solutions and arguments;
f) getting organized with the purpose of defending ideas" (Marga, *Introducere…* 12-13).

Considering that the methods employed in conducting the scientific research must "belong to or be adequate for the subject in case" (Enăchescu 322), and that the paper makes reference to concepts pertaining to logics and philosophy, it is natural for the author to resort to the philosophical method of knowledge-acquisition within which interpretative, analytical and comprehensive approaches will be adopted. Thus, the paper will strive to go beyond mere observations so as to reflect on the relationship between dialogue and argumentation as study fields of the philosophy of communication, on the one hand, and on the interpretations, commentaries, criticisms, definitions and re-definitions made or brought within these study fields as an act of acquiring knowledge about them, on the other hand.

By applying the comprehensive approach, the paper will look not only into the conceptual framework of the philosophy of communication, but also into its exegesis – the *nature* of the concepts of dialogue and argumentation as well as those concepts which have caused their transformations. The author of the present paper also finds it important to use the hermeneutic approach, by means of which to transform what is 'incomplete' in classical definitions into clear-cut aspects which should further help make the necessary distinction between types of dialogue and argumentative structures. Thus, the present paper attempts to meet the requirements of the philosophical approach used here, namely:

    a) a critical attitude operating at the level of clear consciousness;
    b) an effort of intellectual speculation, with the purpose of gaining some profound, intimate and unbiased knowledge of reality;
    c) an attempt to gain intellectual insight with the aim of delineating spiritual realities and achieve ideal values (Le Roy 719).

The investigation takes the form of unbiased critical judgments in the sense that it is an objective and rigorous assessment of the concepts of communication, discourse, public space, dialogue and argumentation by means of internalizing meanings and implications which are specific to the philosophy of language and communication. The present argumentative approach begins by bringing into discussion the subject matter; it employs the argumentative criticism expressed, from different perspectives, by various researchers in the field of the philosophy of communication; it resorts to the logical approach as well as to the explanation and the interpretation of phenomena with a view to highlighting their significance; it is conceived in such a way as to support the expressed viewpoint as pertinently as possible.

In order to highlight the discursive and argumentative structures within the political discourse and to reveal the impact of public space upon political careers, the last part of the paper focuses on some representative political discourses, events which have occurred in the Romanian public space.

The present study resorts to representative texts in liberal political discourse for a number of reasons: they are relatively new in the interwar period and ever since they have raised a particular interest, have strongly supported an idea/doctrine, have triggered reactions and, finally, influenced the receptors; then the paper deconstructs liberal political discourses that have occurred in the public space since 2000, the main criterion in their selection being the importance of the time when they were delivered (presidential election campaigns) as they

prove that, at such moments, leading politicians tend to diverge easily from the rules of valid argumentation and choose instead to express themselves more frequently and virulently than they normally do. The author could not ignore the criterion of mediatisation of such discourses and has chosen to consider it in terms of the importance that politicians give to composing a discourse as persuasively as possible and capable of 'stirring', as Caragiale would put it, the largest possible number of supporters. Another criterion in making this choice and equally significant for the present analysis is the importance of the actors involved in public debates (leading political figures in national political life), the selection including those leaders expressing a firm political opinion and polemicizing with other actors beyond the censorship imposed by the party they represent.

1. COMMUNICATION AND DISCOURSE

1.1. The language – a means of identity- and social re-cognition

The entire existence of mankind has been characterized by a constant strive to achieve objectives related to language education. Language as a manifestation of dialogue is a feature unique to mankind as it conveys information on the cognitive, affective, intellectual and aesthetic attributes of the interlocutor. The quality of one's speech and writing confirms – at least at a perceptual level - that: "The man is not the only animal that thinks, but it is the only one who thinks he's not an animal" (Lestienne 5).

For Horatius, the poet, the word inscribed on a sheet of paper can stand in the way of oblivion, and writing becomes a pledge of the survival of glory. "Exegi monumentum aere perennius" (I have completed a monument more durable than brass) (qtd. in Cornea 11).

Plato, however, in ancient Greece, seems to reject writing as the main antidote to oblivion, as a valuable support to an unreliable memory constantly tempted by other yearnings. The proof is the myth of Theuth in *Phaedrus* and the answer of the king of Egypt Thamus given to Theuth, the inventor of writing, god and patron of scribes:

> […] For this will provide forgetfulness in the souls of those who have learned it, through neglect of memory, seeing that, through trust in writing, they recollect from outside with alien markings, not reminding themselves from inside, by themselves. You have therefore found a drug not for memory, but for reminding (Plato, Phaedrus 274 e-275a, 85).

Ernst Robert Curtius concludes that, in essence, the Greek philosopher "underestimates writing and literature" (Curtius 349), but the reason behind it remains unknown. The source of this misjudgment may arise from a metaphysical reservation in what concerns writing or can be interpreted as a refusal of easily-earned eternal glory.

More recently, Marshall McLuhan argues that the *Gutenberg Galaxy* begins with Greek civilization, more precisely with the introduction of phonetic orthography by the Greeks, which makes a clear distinction between consonants and vowels, thereby providing an accurate visual image of a sound sequence. It is also the reason why, for a long time, the Greeks have preserved their archaic oral tradition described as 'aurality' - which means that "texts are produced by means of writing, but published via speech in public reading" (Cornea 15). Over several centuries, Greece was not only a space dominated by orality but also a space of epic, lyrical and dramatic creations, in a word: poetry. Its reliance on the alphabet invented in early antiquity allowed the development of its philosophical and scientific culture, which

reflects in prose. Eric Alfred Havelock described Greece's oral, poetic culture as the product of aristocracy whereas the alphabetical, 'prosaic' culture owed its existence to merchants and craftsmen.

Nevertheless, the Greek society is born and develops over politics, which is based on people's ability to convince one another. Politics manifests itself, naturally and spontaneously, whenever a community, however small, engages in an action after a deliberation. Writing seems to lose importance and, as Aristotle points out, persuasion becomes truly effective only through the direct, live contact of people with their kin. This does not mean, however, that writing cannot be used to prepare the persuasive process, but performance lies in orality. Thus, "the *political* society is a world of the uttered word whereas the *administrative* society - of the written one. But in both, the word is 'a force,' as it is invested with power and is granted a great capacity to act" (Cornea 74).

In Greek mentality there is a more intimate connection between word and thought. The term "logos," which in Greek is used to mean "word", "speech", "an articulated sound sequence" is often used to refer to "thought," "mental process" or even reasoning.

> All this - name, verb, negation, affirmation, enunciation - are the elements of putting into the mouth, of speech. Saying is the essence and in it is the object of logic [...] all that we are saying is the symbol for the states of consciousness , as opposed to glamor, are the same to all people, [...] the utterances are not mere speeches of man, but rather reflect the reflections of the discourse (Aristotel, *Despre Interpretare,*43-44).

If we look at speech from a humanistic perspective, we may define it as "an instinct, a planned genetic instinct," since there is no such thing as "a people without speech". In contrast, there is nothing genetic about languages. They are the product of the evolution of a culture and a landmark of "identity and social recognition" (Lestienne 6-7).

Analysed from another perspective, speech is a special gift that humanity has received since the dawn of its existence on earth and may be perceived as a miracle. Children learn to talk without a teacher. At the age of three, the toddler, who barely used to babble, becomes a genuine dialogue partner, it tells and even invents stories, performs songs and poems, and is "a little genius of grammar long before being taught to read or having swotted conjugations [...]. It is now known that this miracle is possible because at birth, and even before it, the neural circuits of the infant are set for/ configured for speech learning" (Ibid. 10).

On the other hand, language may be considered man's most effective weapon of man both in times of peace and war. "Speech, which man can reinvent in all circumstances, is his

main possession and the essence of his identity" (Ibid. 12).It is an asset that he passes on from generation to generation, as words do not fossilize, but the baby who is to be born starts learning it while still in the womb, when every sound spoken by the mother resonates in his developing mind.

In Christian philosophy, language acquires other meanings, becoming the very essence of man:

> In the culture of written language, man is made after the image of God, because he has the ability to say, to name, that is to make things happen. This is the stake: man can create by means of language by verbalizing it. It's extraordinary! One example only: in paleoanthropology, the discovery of the fossil and naming it has opened the door to posterity" (Ibid. 15-16).

In evolutionary thinking, a man is a speaking animal, unique in the world. Nevertheless, speech is not the ultimate boundary for him to cross, as Picq argues, but it is rather the first border towards leaving the animal world." Animals communicate with each other through gestures, posts, mimics, smells, and an extraordinary collection of sound signals. [...] All these signals allow the interaction between two or more congeners. However, stricto sensu, this is not speech we are dealing with" (Ibid. 17).

In 1997, a group of American researchers discovered that in the chimpanzee's left cortex, there was a significant development of the planum temporale area, which in humans is used in speech production. Thus, a hypothesis emerged:

> Speech may also be regarded as an exaltation [...] because our larynx is not exclusively involved in the production of sounds, but serves, first of all, to regulate the respiratory flow; language is indispensable in articulation but it also serves in chewing and tasting. In our brain, the famous speech production areas are not the only ones that come into action when we have a conversation and are particularly involved in other cognitive processes such as facial movement recognition (Ibid. 29).

Moreover, some argue that man began to talk "to make politics, to convey his culture, to make a conquest, to tell stories, to argue and convince one's tribe that they must do one or another" (Ibid. 30).

Semiotics has attempted to demonstrate that there were one or several stages of the protolanguage, that man gradually went through: "from logical thinking to speech and from the latter to the object" (Haranguș 10). It is in this context that extensive research has been

carried out on pidgin languages[1], which has shown that "this protolanguage developed due to fire, about 500,000 years ago. People had known fire long before - traces of fire 1, 4 million years old have been found - but proper fireplaces were built only half a million years ago. Fire opened the world of the night" (Lestienne 64).

The force of speech lies its functions. One of them, an essential function of language, both socially and politically, is its ability to argue. Linguists Morten Christiansen and Simon Kirby point out with great pertinence that "human beings can live and communicate without using sentences. Speech has developed these endless capacities of narration less for survival reasons than because they allow us to do intelligent things in our social life" (Idem).

In their communication, animals are unable to overcome the concrete, while in humans, communication by means of speech evokes the abstract, the past, the future, the unknown, establishes a contact, maintains a relationship, as the referential function of the language consists in conveying information, evoking or "talking about God or about Planck's constant - which does not exist a priori in other ways of communication" (Ibid. 45-46).

Other functions of human language include: the conative, the poetic, the metalinguistic, the narrative and the argumentative functions.

The conative function is used when an individual is superior to his or her partner, which "allows him to act upon the other" (Ibid. 46-47). The poetic or metaphoric function emphasizes the importance of the neighbour to the individual, while the metalinguistic function facilitates communication and focuses attention to content. The narrative, story-telling function has been present in universal literature since the dawn of history, with the Epic of Ghilgamesh, the world's oldest literary work, crucially depending on it. The argumentative function anchors human speech in other means of communication.

> The argument is the rule of justice which requires identical treatment of beings or situations that are part of the same category. The rationality of this rule and its recognized validity are linked to the principle of inertia, from which the importance given to the precedent stems (Perelman et al. 268).

The earliest writings show the existence at the beginning of history of different languages specific to existing peoples such as Sumerian-Sanskrit, Egyptian-Hamita, Akkadiana-Semi, Chinese, but more and more voices supported by the findings of the

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[1] Pidgins are not quite like languages, but rather codes of communication that adults in different communities invent when they are in a position to cohabit. A pidgin has a limited vocabulary and minimal phrases with no syntax: "You Tarzan, I Jane", "I, hungry!", "Tomorrow, we sleep" (Lestienne 64).

ongoing research, suggests the hypothesis that originally there was only one mother tongue that then branched into other subtle languages, conquering the planet, meaning diversification and diversity of language, which led to a rich harvest of languages.

Human speech as we know it is estimated to have occurred between 100,000 and 200,000 years ago, if we were to credit most anthropologists and geneticists. "In Africa or perhaps in the Near East, languages and genes share, at least in part, the same history, namely the expansion of humans on Earth" (Lestienne 76).

Except for the Bible, which shows a genuine divine involvement in the initial and universal speech "[…] the whole world had one language and a common speech [...] Come, let us go down and confuse their language there, so they will not understand each other" (Old Testament, Genesis, XI, 1, 7-9), it becomes obvious that language is embedded in culture: one speaks the language of the cultural and social environment in which they work. Consequently, the philosophy of speech reveals issues whose importance is directly proportional to their difficulty. The importance of speech for human life is unquestionable:

> All human societies are language using, as are all their more or less normal members. Language acquisition is one of the few cognitive skills that is, near enough, both common and peculiar to humans. This skill gives the human species an enormous advantage over others: language is a quick and painless way of passing on the discoveries of one generation to the next (Devitt and Sterelny 25).

Speech is a faculty anchored in the biology of the human species: all human groups speak but the development of a language has always depended on their level of culture and civilization. What did not depend on this level was the religious ethos/fervour we can identify "at culture and civilization level as a constituent element of the human being" (Eliade VIII).

Linguists classify languages by branches and families. The branch of the present-day Romance languages, namely French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian, Romansh and a few others, belongs to the Indo-European family, whose origins can be traced back 9000 years ago. This family also includes - alongside Romance languages - Albanian, Germanic, Slavic, Celtic, Greek, Baltic and Indo-Iranian languages. Linguists did not agree on the number of language families. An average estimate stops at 107, not including creoles. The cradle of ancient Indo-European is considered to be the South of Anatolia (Small Asia), "in a peasant language in southern Anatolia, where wheat was first cultivated 11,000 or 12,000 years ago. The first language that stemmed from the common trunk is the Hittite, a language in Anatolia" (Lestienne 89).

It is here that the Indo-European expansion began in two directions: the Aryan tribes and the Indians migrated to the east, and the Thracian-Greek and Celtic-Germanic tribes to the west. In Europe, the expansion of Indo-European has eliminated older languages such as Etruscan and Iberian of which traces have been preserved but which have completely disappeared except in the western Pyrenees where, due to the relief which offered some protection, the ancestor of the Basque language has survived. Nowadays, the Summer Institute of Linguistics, an American missionary organization, suggests that there are 6912 live languages, whereas UNESCO acknowledges 6,000 languages (Ibid. 107).

With these data in mind and using the theory of cycles, one must not exclude the fact that "in the distant future, all mankind will speak one language, but for a few centuries the prospect seems quite improbable" (Devitt and Sterelny 183). The answer to the problem of a decreasing number of spoken languages lies in demography: the decrease in the number of children born in an ethnic group leads to a decrease in the number of speakers of the language. Nowadays, at least 65 languages have a large young population. The proof lies in the number of languages in which Harry Potter has been translated.

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At the beginning of the 20th century, in the English language, language makes the object of reflection of analytical philosophy. The logical analysis of language is not in search of the ultimate truth, but of the meaning of language expressions. Ludwig Wittgenstein provides the most straightforward perspective on the issue in which philosophy identifies with logical clarification: "Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts" (29), which is why "Without philosophy thoughts are, as it were, cloudy and indistinct: its task is to make them clear and to give them sharp boundaries" (30).

The forerunners of analytical philosophy, Bertrand Russell and George Edward Moore - whose works: *The Principles of Mathematics* and *The Principles of Ethics* respectively were both published in 1903 - lay the foundations of two distinct directions in analytical philosophy: *formal* and *nonformal analysis*. In the former part of his activity, which reflects in his *Tractatus*, L. Wittgenstein – B. Russell's student and disciple in Cambridge - contributes to the development of formal analysis whereas his contribution to the emergence and development of nonformal analysis reflects in his *Philosophical Research*.

The empirical nature of knowledge is a common element in all analytical theories on knowledge alongside the logical analysis of language. Thus, formal analysis uses modern mathematical logic to reveal certain flaws in natural language by analyzing it within the framework of artificially-constructed language systems. Hence, philosophical problems are the result of inconsistencies between the verbal form of expressions and their logical form, i.e. the result of the fact that external verbal forms conceal the real logical form of expressions. As a result, the avoidance or elimination of philosophical problems may be achieved only by transforming the expressions so that their grammatical form explicitly reflects their true form. B. Russel points out that "The study of grammar is capable […] of throwing far more light on philosophical questions than is commonly supposed by philosophers," (*The Problems of Philosophy* 42) and L. Wittgenstein notes that

> Language disguises thought (...) Most of the propositions and questions of philosophers arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language (...) It was Russel who performed the service to showing that the apparent logical form of a proposition need not be its real one" (Wittgenstein 22-23).

The main thesis of logical atomism developed by B. Russell and L. Wittgenstain in the Cambridge analytical school is that language and reality have the same logical structure, namely the structure of mathematical logic presented by B. Russell and A.N. Whitehead in *Principia Mathematica*. As a result, there is an extensional logic that distinguishes between simple or elementary statements, which matter only from the perspective of whether they can be classified as true or false without considering their content, and some complex entities made up of the former by means of certain propositional connectors, which are always true regardless of the truth value of their constituents. This way, logic becomes a calculation, a formal way of determining the truth value of complex statements starting from the truth value of simple components, a way of identifying those complex statements that are always true, regardless of the truth value of its components.

This extensional principle of logic is extended to speech, where the existence of simple sentences - called atomic propositions - and of complex or molecular propositions - made up of the truth of its constitutive atomic propositions – is accepted. Wittgenstein identifies two extreme cases of molecular propositions: "tautologies - molecular prophecies that are always true regardless of the truth values of their components, and contradictions – phrases that are always false regardless of the truth values of their components. Propositions of these two types tell us nothing about the world; they are not representations of reality"

(Ciulei 298). Wittgenstein argues that we can learn something about reality only by means of atomic propositions, which are logically independent of each other and which combine according to the extensional logic of truth functions. But reality can also be known through molecular propositions, which are neither tautologies nor contradictions. The truth of these propositions is demonstrated by their correspondence with facts: atomic propositions correspond to simple facts and the molecular ones to complex facts. Thus the world consists of an indefinitely large number of atomic facts, which are independent of each other, each of them corresponding to an atomic proposition, and of molecular facts, corresponding to molecular propositions.

As a result, if language consists exclusively of atomic propositions, all that can be said about the world is a record of atomic facts in atomic propositions. The concept of *fact* actually tends to position itself at the heart of logical atomism:

> The world is all that is the case.
> The world is the totality of facts, not of things.
> The world is determined by the facts, and by their being *all* the facts.
> For the totality of facts determines what is the case, and whatever is not the case.
> The facts in logical space are the world.
> The world divides into facts (Wittgenstein 5).

The world is logically made up of its simplest elements, namely logical atoms, i.e. individual objects, properties and relations. Since the world is composed of facts, a complete description of the world cannot be reduced to an enumeration of objects:

> In a logically perfect language, there will be one word and no more for every simple object, and everything that is not simple will be expressed by a combination derived, of course, from the words for the simple things that enter in, one word for each simple component. A language of that sort will be completely analytic, and will show at a glance the logical structure of the facts asserted or denied (Russel, *The Philosophy of Atomism…* 176).

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Non-formal analysis is characterized by the attention given to ordinary language both in terms of the object of the analysis and as a language in which the results of the analysis are formulated, by extending the object of the research to the language of ethics, aesthetics, jurisprudence and religion. Other features include the unsystematic character of the analysis and the lack of some firm principles generally accepted by the concept of meaning based on

the use of expressions. Non-formal analysis assumes that each sentence has its own logic. Philosophical problems seem to be nothing more than linguistic misunderstandings that occur due to the inadequate use of expressions or to their use in contexts other than those for which they have a normal use.

Language is no longer used to refer to an external reality, but to human activity. It becomes an instrument for achieving various aims of human activity. In order to describe the various uses of language, L. Wittgenstein uses the phrase *language-games*:

> We can also think of the whole process of using words […] as one of those games by means of which children learn their native language. I will call these games" language games" and will sometimes speak about a primitive language as a language-game.
> And the processes of naming the stones and of repeating words after someone might also be called language games. Think of much of the use of words in games like ring-a-ring-a-roses.
> I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the "language-game" (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* 5).

Among the language-games there are:

> Giving orders, and obeying them-
> Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements […]
> Reporting an event –
> Speculating about an event – […]
> Forming and testing a hypothesis –
> Presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams –
> Making up a story and reading it –
> Play-acting –
> Solving a problem in practical arithmetic –
> Translating from one language into another –
> Asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* 11-12).

It is difficult, even impossible, to find even one common feature of these language games. As a result, language research is a diverse reflexive research on real language experiences, which can be adapted every time depending on the type of language under scrutiny. Traditional philosophical problems are no longer seen as the result of the complexity of ordinary language, but of the deviations from its ordinary use. Solving a philosophical problem comes as a result of the fact that there has been a deviation from the standard use of the language. The purpose of such an analysis is to avoid language traps by identifying both the contexts in which words have meaning and the standard use of words or of paradigmatic cases.

Convinced of the power of ordinary language to render numerous nuances of meaning and its ability to remedy its own deficiencies, the representatives of non-formal analysis reject the use of artificial language systems for philosophical purposes. These artificial language systems are used to emphasize the logical relationships between elements which are built specifically to meet predetermined syntactic-semantic demands. However, they are incapable of rendering the full range of logical relationships and meanings existing in natural languages where the context plays a fundamental role. Moreover, artificial systems cannot do away with natural language since, on the one hand, they presuppose the interpretation in this language of special expressions that represent the constructed concepts of the system and, on the other hand, they are required to show precisely to what extent constructed concepts and the relationships between them constrain the concepts and relations between them in ordinary language or deviate from them, but establishing the logical power of the original concepts is the very essence of informal analysis and is the most important part, often the only necessary one, of analysis work (Devitt et al. 253).

The expressions that designate mental conduct and voluntary behaviors are the favourite object of analysis of non-formal analysts. L. Wittgenstein looks into what it means to carry out an activity intentionally and how it differs from the same process analysed in terms of physiological causality.

> Let us not forget this: when 'I raise my arm', my arm goes up. And the problem arises: what is left over if I subtract the fact that my arm goes up from the fact that I raise my arm?
> ((Are the kinaesthetic sensations my willing?))
>
> When I raise my arm I do not usually *try* to raise it (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* 161).

He also insists on the meaning of expressions that designate the basic behavior of social rules or conventions, as opposed to behaviors that are imposed on man by internal and external factors, unrelated to these rules. Similarly, Gilbert Ryle has extensively discussed the meaning of terms of mental conduct such as 'to think', 'to know', 'to imagine', 'to observe', 'to infer', as well as terms like 'reason', 'responsibility', thereby rejecting the Cartesian perspective on spirit and body as two separate substances that are, according to him, the result of a series of *category mistakes*, namely the misuse of the terms of spiritual conduct. Ryle argues that people who think the mind is an object added to the body do not understand that the body and its activities include the mind:

> Ryle's point of view is that when we say that Hillary has an inquisitive mind, we are not saying that there is something associated with Hillary's body, namely, her mind which is inquisitive and causes to make her inquisitive remarks. Instead, we mean that Hillary behaves in inquisitive ways (Law and Baggini n.pag).

Jerry Fodor, an American philosopher, has developed a controversial theory of the mind, arguing in favour of the existence of an inborn language, which he calls *Mentalese*, whose existence is justified in order to explain the nature of thinking and one's ability to learn natural languages. Perceptions, memories and intentions include elements from propositions in Mentalese. Thoughts can be about objects, and they can be either true or false, as propositions are a type of statements that can refer to objects and can be true or false. Propositions in Mentalese are the same as propositions in any natural language, in the sense that they have a grammatical structure, but unlike the latter, they are not used for communication but for thinking. Thus, Mentalese emerges before any natural language does (Ibid. n.pag.). According to J. Fodor, learning a natural language, for example English, involves an already existing ability to think in Mentalese. When we learn the meaning of a word, we learn to associate it with a Mentalese word. This language is innate, although the ability to use a term in Mentalese may be triggered by certain experiences. J. Fodor also associates both conscious mental activities and unconscious activities with computer operations and considers that perception, thinking and all other processes participate in information processing by means of propositions in Mentalese.

1.2. Speech acts

The social universe is a discursive or rhetorical one. Thus, pragmatics or the study of language use aims at the systematic investigation of this universe, of speech acts performed in context, and of discourse strategies. Hence, the study of speech will assess the relationships between the signs and their users, the evolution of these relationships, as well as the norms to be observed for the correct use of this "intentional behavior governed by conventional rules" which is speech (Rovența-Frumușani 25).

Pragmatically, any speech act includes a locutionary dimension (i.e. the formation of phrases according to grammar rules), an illocutionary dimension, which expresses the *force* or value of the act: demand, order, request, promise, advice, warning, and perlocutionary dimension, i.e. the influence exerted on the audience.

The study of speech and speech acts can lead to the development of certain instruments of analysis for communication acts and, implicitly, for discourse and contents analysis. In what follows, I will examine some aspects of the theory of speech acts as discussed by J.L. Austin. More specifically, I will focus on the relationship between illocutionary acts and performative utterances, then attempt a critical approach to it from the point of view of J. Searle, one of the authorities in the field who has contributed to the development of the theory of speech acts.

John Langshaw Austin addresses the issue of speech acts in several of his works and articles, including *How to Do Things with Words*, *Performative Utterances*, and *Performative-Constative*. Of these, *How to Do Things with Words* - a collection of lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955 - best describes the concept of *illocutionary acts*.

In these lectures, J.L. Austin introduces a topic he had tackled in Oxford under the title *Words and Deeds*. The theme of these lectures was the relationship between the propositions, on the one hand, and the actions undertaken according to these propositions, on the other hand, which triggered the study of propositions and of actions.

Austin's goal is to analyze certain acts of behavior in relation to certain propositions or even any propositions in general. His approach, however, is not a logic-related one, for Austin distances himself from the logical philosophy of language, by B. Russell and L. Wittgenstein, who have developed, a formal symbolic language based on mathematical principles.

The interest in these *acts* has been aroused with the study of the truth value, an interest which was by no means new in the philosophical thinking of the time. In the old semantic tradition, the main challenge was to explain the meaning of the linguistic signs in terms of their truth value. For example, Frege's *Bedeutung* (reference) proposition is a truth value (i.e. the circumstance that it is true or the circumstance that it is false). In his early works, Wittgenstein argues that understanding a proposition means knowing if it is true (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* 25). If we were to generalize, in this tradition, the meaning of all propositions lies in the conditions that ensure their truth.

Austin warns that it is not in all cases that the meaning of propositions can reflect in their truth value, simply because not all sentences can be judged in terms of true or false. The first examples that Austin gives, right from the beginning of *How to Do Things with Words*, are:

I give and bequeath my watch to my brother.
I bet you six pence it will rain tomorrow (Austin 5).

He describes these in contrast with propositions that have a truth value, although he does not give clear examples of true or false propositions, perhaps because he intended to raise questions on the antinomy between true and false.

To point out the difference between propositions that have truth value and those that cannot be said to be true or false, Austin coins the so-called *constatives* and *performatives*. The former ascertain a state of things, inform about it, and thus owe their truth-value to their reference to reality. The last are propositions whose reference is realized by means of expressing them. These propositions do not depend on their truth-value as in the case of constatives; they are neither true nor false, but *felicitous* or *infelicitous*, depending on the observance of some *sine qua non* rules. For example, the propositions of 'a madman says "I crown you king"' and of the irony "Excuse me!" are infelicitous: the former because of its infelicitous character, the latter because its infelicitous character is intentional. In other words, the irony is realized by means of the *infelicity* of actually uttering the proposition itself.

The rules of felicity state that:

(A.1.)   There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,
(A.2.)   the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.
(B.1.)   The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and
(B.2.)   completely.
(Γ.1.)   Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts of feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further
(Γ.2.)   must actually so conduct themselves subsequently (Austin 14-15).

Failure to comply with these conditions leads to misfires - *infelicitous* situations according to Austin.

How to Do Things with Words is organized according to this distinction between the constative performative character of propositions and the locutionary/ illocutionary/ perlocutionary character of speech acts.

By developing the theory of speech acts, the open perspective on understanding the possibility of the above-mentioned performatives extends to constatives as well. These are no longer truth-value judgments, but also acquire illocutionary force and perlocutionary effects: when we state something, we do not only do it for cognitive purposes, but also to convey the

respective piece of knowledge to others, requiring in exchange that it is validated – i.e. we try, to a certain extent, to convince others - and we trigger some reactions on the part of the audience.

As it has already been mentioned above, we distinguish among:

- Locutionary content – the meaning of the informational content that has been conveyed

- Illocutionary force (*in locutio = in speech*) – which refers to the pragmatic act, i.e. the actual act of uttering

- Perlocutionary effect – which refers to the effect of the speech act on the audience (boredom, irritation, persuasion, etc.) (Austin 100-101).

In order to highlight the contrast between the housing and the ilocutionary acts, Austin gives the following example:

> Locution: He said to me 'Shoot her!' meaning by 'shoot'shoot and referring by 'her' to *her*.
> Illocution: He urged (or advised, ordered, etc.) me to shoot her.
> Perlocution: He persuaded me to shoot her.
> Perlocution: He got me to (or made me, etc.) to shoot her.
>
> Locution: He said to me, 'You can't do that'.
> Illocution: He protested against my doing it.
> Perlocution: He pulled me up, checked me.
> Perlocution: He stopped me, he brought me to my senses, etc. He annoyed me (Ibidem 101-102).

At the same time, his research demonstrates that, in certain circumstances, performatives can be described either as true or false, while certain constatives may be characterized as *felicitous* or *infelicitous* (eg, the proposition "John's children have fallen asleep" may be infelicitous if John does not have any children.), an achievement that will be recognized by John Searle in his critical approach to the subject matter.

Locutionary acts are divided by John L. Austin into three categories:

- phonetic acts - the production of certain noises;

- phatic acts – the production of certain vocables or words;

- rhetic acts – the use of these vocables with a more or less definite sense and reference (Austin 95);

We recall this distinction from the many discussions, classifications, and analyses that Austin has included in his lectures in *How to Do Things with Words*; it is also one of the

sensitive points of Speech Acts Theory which John Searle refers to in his critical approach to Austin's theory.

<center>***</center>

John R. Searle is one of those who deepened, criticized and developed significantly Austin's theory of illocutionary acts. Works of interest in this respect are: *Speech Acts*, *Expression and Meaning*, *Austin on Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts*.

From the outset, Searle places himself on a critical position with respect to his professor's theory of speech acts, more precisely as regards the locutionary - illocutionary dichotomy, and the classification of locutionary acts into phonetic, phatic and rhetic acts. Instead, Searle proposes a distinction between propositional and illocutionary acts, which is, in his opinion, a necessary and profound one, involving philosophical issues such as the nature of statements, the way in which truth and falsehood are in accordance with statements and the way in which the meaning of the propositions refers to the speaker's intention when he utters a sentence:

> I think this difference is more than a matter of taxonomical preference and involves important philosophical issues—issues such as the nature of statements, the way truth and falsehood relate to statements, and the way what sentences mean relates to what speakers mean when they utter sentences (*Austin on Locutionary...* 405).

By discussing Austin's early theories on the distinction between constative and performative sentences, between utterances which are descriptions and the ones which are acts or, as the author says, "utterances which are sayings and utterances which are doings " (Ibidem), Searle puts forward his first objection to Austin's theory:

> […] making a statement or giving a description is just as much performing an act as making a promise or giving a warning. What was originally supposed to be a special case of utterances (performatives) swallows the general case (constatives), which now turn out to be only certain kinds of speech acts among others. Statements, descriptions, and so forth are only other classes of illocutionary acts on all fours, as illocutionary acts, with promises, commands, apologies, bets, and warnings (*Austin on Locutionary...* 406).

The concept of utterance with a particular meaning (ie, a locutionary act) is different from an utterance with a certain force (an illocutionary act), but they are not mutually exclusive. There are sentences that have a certain force expressed by their literal meaning.

Thus, the distinction between locutinary and illocutionary acts is not generally acceptable, even if it is well-founded and possible in speech acts: "So our first tentative conclusion - we shall have to revise it later - is that the locutionary-illocutionary distinction is not completely general, because some locutionary acts are illocutionary acts" (Searl, *Austin on Locutionary...* 408).

This critical observation is not the ultimate goal of Searle's demonstration, but rather an argumentative stage in overthrowing Austin's taxonomy of speech acts. In his argument in favour of a new taxonomy of speech acts, Searle points out another *inconsistency* in Austin's discourse, which is evident in the use of direct and indirect speech in order to exemplify the various types of locutionary acts (phonetic, phatic and rhetic) acoustic and the distinction between locutionary and illocutionary acts.

> Locution: He said to me 'Shoot her!' meaning by 'shoot'shoot and referring by 'her' to *her*.
> Illocution: He urged (or advised, ordered, etc.) me to shoot her.
> Perlocution: He persuaded me to shoot her. […]
>
> He said "I shall be there" (phatic). He said he would be there (rhetic).
> He said "Get out" (phatic). He told me to get out (rhetic).
> He said "Is it in Oxford or Cambridge?" (phatic). He asked whether it was in Oxford or Cambridge (rhetic)" (Austin qtd. in Searle, *Austin on Locutionary… 410-411).*

The inconsistency that Searle uses in his approach is the use of indirect speech (*oratio obliqua*) to illustrate both illocutionary and locutionary-rhetic acts, while the distinction between locutionary and illocutionary acts is based on the use of direct speech (*oratio recta*), in the case of locutionary acts, and of indirect speech, in the case of illocutionary acts. This approach would be acceptable if the meaning of the sentences were *force neutral*, but since no sentence is completely neutral in terms of force, there is no distinction between locutionary – rhetic acts and illocutionary acts.

Returning to Austin's distinction between locutionary and illocutionary acts, even though Searle criticizes its consistency, he preserves two distinctions here: that of the meaning of an utterance and its force, on the one hand, and the distinction between *trying* and *succeeding* in performing an illocutionary act, on the other hand.

These two aspects are important because Searle's taxonomy will not be restricted to the one presented above, precisely because it is not relevant to the distinction between locutionary meaning and illocutionary force from the point of view of the speaker's intention in reference to the literal meaning of a sentence.

At this point, Searle formulates three linguistic principles designed to serve him in determining the limits of Austin's theory on the relationship between the speaker's intention and the meaning of the sentence:

> 1.Whatever can be meant can be said. I call this the Principle of Expressibility.
> 2.The meaning of a sentence is determined by the meanings of all its meaningful components.
> 3.The illocutionary forces of utterances may be more or less specific; and there are several different principles of distinction for distinguishing different types of illocutionary acts (Searle, *Austin on Locutionary...* 415).

It was the omission of the third "law" that led Austin to the error of not noticing that some locutionary sentences ('say something', 'tell someone to do something') are as illocutionary as 'to say that', 'to order someone to'.

The overrating of the distinction between meaning and illocutionary force is a consequence of omitting the principle of expressibility (point 1).

On the other hand, the study of sentence meaning and the study of illocutionary acts "are not two different studies, but one and the same study from two different points of view" (Searle, *Austin on Locutionary…* 418). In addition, Searle concludes that:

> So there could not, according to my analysis, be a general and mutually exclusive distinction between the meaning and the force of literal utterances, both because the force which the speaker intends can in principle always be given an exact expression in a sentence with a particular meaning, and because the meaning of every sentence already contains some determiners of illocutionary force (Idem).

The second of Searle's principles has a correspondent in the very description of rhetic acts, in terms of enunciating a sentence with a certain meaning and reference. The philosopher notes that Austin's possible error at this point might also be due to the use of a terminology that comes from Frege.

All of these analyzes come as a supportive statement of earlier statements, but they also serve as a passage to the latest change in speech taxonomy. In the argumentation economy, there is a distinction between the type and content of the ilocutionary act, which results in the distinction between the ilocutionary act and the propositional act (a neutral phrase as the ilocutionary force).

In such a tendency of Searle's criticism, his observations appear, starting from the value of the truth of the propositions and referring to the word statement (affirmation, statement, exposure). From the affirmation-object and statement-act only the first can be considered true or false. Only the sentences, and not the acts, can be valued as such. Moreover, act-statements

are misleading acts of affirmation, while object statements are propositions that can be considered true or false. The confusion between them led Austin to divide the acts of phonetics into phonetics, phatetics and rhetes, in contrast to ilocutionary acts. Correctly, from Searle's point of view, it would be a taxonomy that would present the allegations as propositional acts and include the assertions-act in the category of ilocutionary acts. It's all that Searle saves from the original concept of rhetic act.

These would become: phonetic acts, phatic acts, propositional acts and illocutionary acts.

As I have already pointed out, Searle's theory of speech acts was a continuation of Austin's performance analysis. In the process of systematizing the theory of speech acts, he will also make his contribution by:

- reformulate the conditions of "happiness": the condition of the propositional content, the preparatory conditions (specify the circumstances that must exist before a speech act), the condition of sincerity (discusses the psychological state of the lover, the relevance for speech act), the essential condition states that the sentence counts as the intention of the tenant);

- classification of types of speech acts: directives, commissive, expressive, declarative, etc.

- the distinction between direct and indirect speech acts.

JL Austin, however, remains the initiator of research into both the philosophy of language and linguistics. Even though his theories do not have an absolute, undeniable value, the merit of introducing the theory of speech acts and contributing thereby to psycholinguistics can not be challenged. J. Searle's merit is to undertake the broadest critique, and also the most pertinent development of Australian theory. However, none of them has exhausted research in the field. There is still a lot to be investigated and spoken about speech acts, if we were to invoke either of the two question marks that Austin left behind in the scheme of misfortunes resulting from the violation of the six conditions of happiness.

The unhappiness of the sincerity, however, stopped Searle in some of his works, without exhausting the subject. Even the analysis of Searle's promise-type speech acts, one of the most complex analyzes of the author, and one of the major complements brought to him by Australian theory, is not uncritical. Then the perlocutional aspect of the speech acts was little discussed by the exegetes of the Austin opera, most of them focusing on the ilocutionary acts. And the ilocution and perlocution, done through non-verbal and para-verbal language, also offer a wide range of research.

1.3. Man as a Dialogue-Dependent Being

Whether we talk about dialogue in literature or in philosophy, we need to refer back to Plato's dialogues. Despite the fact that some of the characters remain partly mysterious figures in a fictional world, there is still no moral ambiguity in them. If from Socrates' point of view there is a personal life in which all forms of feeling and thoughts combine, Plato distinguishes between desires and reasoning, which is a major difference in perspective.

Plato uses the characterization of his personae to introduce a doctrinal point of view, according to which righteousness unites humanity with divinity. Moreover, Plato's philosophy wants to be more than universal, rather necessary to present general truths. Often, Plato characterizes Socrates as a transparent outburst with his interlocutors, and his irony is so profoundness that sometimes confuses humor (Nehamas 33-38).

Far from supporting the subjectivism of the sophists and combining knowledge with ethical passion, Socrates introduces a philosophy of language and of the concept which is not contaminated by other aspects. His aim is to identify an absolute universal truth, to impose itself on any mind and whose measure should not be the individual consciousness. He trusts in the ability of science to connect it to the moral world. The physical world appears insignificant to science, and that is because it consists in discoveries and not in permanent ontologies:

> But we cannot even say that there is any knowledge, if all things are changing and nothing remains fixed; […] but if the very essence of knowledge changes at the moment of change to another essence of knowledge, there would be no knowledge, and if it is always changing, there will always be no knowledge, and by this reasoning there will be neither anyone to know nor anything to be known (Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol.12, *Cratylus* 440 a-b).

Virtue is knowledge for Socrates and, by analogy, knowing the truth and training the mind force the individual into not committing or wanting to commit any errors (Warner 55). Socrates is reserved about the relativism that the Sophists manifest, considering that truth precedes the (gnoseological) relation between subject and object. "Know yourself" is the first step towards knowledge, from which man can set out to discover and define preexisting knowledge, giving birth to rather than producing the truth. The physical, palpable world is composed exclusively of individual objects, and the particular cannot make the subject of science. Since in nature, the universal does not exist, this demonstrates that the universal is the domain of our reason.

> […] And it reasons best, presumably, whenever none of these things bother it, neither hearing nor sight nor pain, nor any other pleasure either, but whenever it comes to be alone by itself as

far as possible, disregarding the body, and, whenever, having the least possible communion and contact with it, it strives for that which is (Plato, *Phaedo* 65c).

Viewed from this perspective, universality belongs in our thinking rather than in outer reality, and, consequently, the world of thought is more authentic than the objective reality.

With Plato, the act of knowledge itself becomes equally important with the definition of the nature of reality. However, for Socrates, the ubiquitous character in Plato's Dialogues, definitions are of utmost importance in founding knowledge. To know something, one needs not only to name it, but also to define it in exact terms, and, moreover, to use that meaning constantly in discussions. "[…] the names belong to things by nature and that not everyone is an artisan of names but only he who keeps in view the name which belongs by nature to each particular thing an is able to embody its form in the letters and syllables" (Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol.12, *Cratylus* 390d-e). Plato approached the fundamental question of knowledge, starting from the idea of the existence of general principles, namely forms that exist outside our subjective experience. The development of human knowledge would be based on universal ideas on the main characteristics of each category of things that human beings can think of. The Platonic anamnesis presupposes, as we know, that in its infinite journey the soul has known these ideas in their pure form, the knowledge of particular things being a reminder of their ideal forms.

Regardless of the method used to find the definition of an object, its meaning has to be used permanently. This is a problem that points to collective conventions on rules that link concepts to their meanings and is of utmost importance for Plato. The Greek philosopher proposes, alongside with Socrates, the method of debate in a public space called agora, as he also tries to introduce the systematic discourse, in order to reach, among other things, a definition of the concept. After all the aspects and attributes of the idea are dissected, an agreement on meaning is reached. The need for this agreement arises when there are contradictory ideas on reality and thus the agreement becomes a way of conciliation, a reference point on the axis linking truth to uncertainty. Moving the agreement to the slippery, unsafe side of the axis leads to convention.

Knowing the world we live in does not depend only on what we personally perceive through the senses in relation to the outside world, but also on what we have agreed with the others to be meaning. Plato's perception of the role of conventions in the structure of meaning is depicted in the *Myth of the Cave*, a structure that highlights the relationship between appearance and essence and the constraint imposed by the social framework on finding out

the truth. Plato presents the condition of people who have always lived in a cave only with a small opening for the light to come in and a long corridor to the end of the cave; in front of them there is a huge screen on which the shadows created by a fire behind the curtain are projected. These people will imagine that the shadows created by the fire from behind the curtain are the reality. They will give names to the shadows, classify and order them so as to create a sufficient system of meanings, which will be far from truth. If one of these prisoners were released and could see the wall and the fire, that is if he were able to separate the objective from the subjective reality, he would realize that what he had seen before was just an illusion turned into convention.

Euthyphro, which is a paradigmatic dialogue of Plato's, reflects Socrates' views on the issue of the definition of piety and justice. Even the title is a subtle joke, in strong contrast with the structure of the conversation. In Greek, *Euthyphro* means *right-minded*, and the work is structured in a cyclical manner, offering definitions of piety and justice, definitions that are then reduced to the original. Plato's contempt for *Euthyphro* is obvious. "[Euthyphro] is as good as told that his failure to make his confident claim to know exactly… what piety is means not just he is intellectually hard up, but that he is morally corrupt" (Vlastos qtd. in Nehamas 38). The elevation of Plato's dialogue is characterized by tricked imposture, praise and pretense to be different, as well as a desire to find out what people ignore, and a deliberate hypocrisy that has no foundation in reality (Versenyi qtd. in Nehamas 38). At the same time, according to literary convention, Euthyphro is a character, not a real person, therefore not responsible for his stupidity. But this stupidity exists only because Plato has decided to create a character that embodies such traits. Plato tries to caricature the passivity of traditional religion in Athens, although *Euthyphro* is not directly linked to the traditional religion of Athens.

Charmides, unlike *Euthyphro*, ends on a positive note by accepting Critias's advice to stay with Socrates. Charmide could also have been one of the leaders of Athens after the Peloponnesian War was completed. *Laches* ends on a warm note as natural virtues continue to be investigated and turns everything to Socrates.

Studying Plato's dialogues is, in fact, a logical exercise. Dialogues answer questions regarding the harmony of life. Socratic irony always has as a victim an innocent person who can only ignore everything as their punishment. The art of Socratic living takes various forms, one of which is the rational treatment of virtue as a way of living. Socrates connects irony with boastfulness.

Plato's work has two major effects. On the one hand, it brings about typical Socratic silence and, on the other hand, it creates a character that remains mysterious even for its author. Hegel considers Socrates "the founder of moral philosophy" (Nehamas 70). It is worth mentioning here that the reality of this philosophy is currently challenged among Orthodox theologians.

Social reality is made up of facts, their properties and the relations among them, as well as of the performers "enrolled in various organizational systems" (Mihai 261) and their attributes. This reality needs to be well argued for.

Since dialogue is typically defined as a conversation between two or more people, we can argue that dialogue is necessary from an early age. It is by means of dialogue that individuals increase the number of contacts with people around them, thereby enriching their life experience and developing their ability to express thoughts and feelings. Furthermore, by using verbal communication, psychic activity becomes more dynamic and orderly.

Alongside intelligence and thinking levels, cognitive skills include creativity and methods of initiating interpersonal relationships. Dialogue is considered a cognitive activity, as thinking usually takes place through dialogue, and much of the intelligence and creative activity is expressed by means of language. Basically, dialogue is "a psychic activity of communication between people by means of language" (Zlate 188). At the same time, it is a way of achieving inter-human interaction. Dialogue is also a prerequisite in delivering an act of education and a must in learner-centered education.

Formally, one can identify several functions of the dialogue:
- the heuristic, formative function
- the function of clarification, synthesis and increasing previously acquired knowledge
- the function of consolidating knowledge, skills and attitudes, of systematization of knowledge and values;
-the function of "learning performance evaluation" (Cerghit 138).

In the educational-educational process, the fundamental requirement of the dialogue is that it aims at learning and at facilitating learning. Among the dialogue types in education there are: "the heuristic conversation, the debate, the discussion, the focus group, and the academic controversy" (Ibidem 111). The common feature of these methods is the question-answer game. In order for the dialogue to be successful, it is necessary for the interlocutor to ensure that the receiver has a cognitive-attitude field which can be worked upon by means of reorganization and creation.

At the same time, he / she is expected to be aware of its the content and identify the essential points in it, to determine a logical sequence of the main points in order to reach a conclusion, to master the technique of formulating various types of questions depending on the context, to know and to apply questioning techniques, and to correlate them with the given response so as not to impede communication. Thus, active listening, constructive feed-back, and motivation on the part of the interlocutor are achieved. Coherence in communication is another feature that is achieved. This ascertains the level of one's intellectual ability, it ensures the development of memory and the ability of reproducing literary expressions and various grammatical phrases as well as the development of phonematic hearing which is crucial in acquiring writing skills.

Dialogue is realized by means of a series of questions that can be defined from several perspectives. Firstly, they are interrogative forms; secondly, they are a type of transition from one thought to another, and thirdly, they are invitations to action. At the same time, the questions are incomplete judgments or structures with insufficient data, which, according to Constantin Noica, sheds light on things, in the sense that they open a horizon where things may appear clear or not.

The way one projects a beam of light by simply asking questions reflects the way in which they cope with things; the richness of the ways of interrogation lies in both the subtlety of the mind that asks the question, and the subtlety of the aspect about which the question is asked.

The problem must be well formulated, for, as it is said, a well-asked question is half answered. The interrogative proposition escapes the truth / false distinction. It can be described as correct, meaningful, or incorrect, meaningless. The interrogative sentence is correct if the following principles are met:

- the fact about which the question is asked is not absurd;

- the interviewee can answer it.

Moreover, from a heuristic perspective, the questions can be: reproductive, mnemotechnical (What is?), reproductive-cognitive (What is? What? Who? When?), productive-cognitive (Why, How?), relational (How, In what respect?), hypothetical (If ... then...? When... what...?), or discovery questions (Why?, What for?, In what way?), convergent questions (analyses, comparisons, syntheses, data integration, associations of ideas, explanations, new generalizations), divergent questions (proposing solutions,

innovating, offering alternatives) evaluation questions (value judgments, anticipation, predictions) (Cerghit 142-143).

Questions can be classified according to the sociological criterion - limited or closed questions, broad or open questions, stimulative questions – on the one hand, and by their intended purpose - reproductive or cognitive questions, hypothetical questions, convergent or divergent questions, as well as evaluative questions – on the other hand.

During the dialogue, there may occur a number of disruptive factors causing blockages in communication, which are sometimes called 'communication killers'. The most common obstacles in an effective dialogue are:

- personal, because each individual has a unique personality, shaped by genetic-, environment-, and experience-related factors that influence the way they communicate;

- physical, that is related to the characteristics of the individual, his physical state, and the environment in which communication takes place;

- social, i.e. related to customs, traditions, social model (rural or urban), religion, social status (e.g. the message of a senior manager is considered real, correct, even if sometimes it is incomplete or false);

- cultural, which refers to the education level as well as the use of language and vocabulary;

- semantic because of general misunderstandings generated by using different words in the same way, or by using neologisms, jargon, and technical phrases;

- cognitive, pertaining to internal conflicts generated by information that is incompatible with the individual's value system and their previous decisions;

- psychological, i.e. referring to peculiarities of human behavior: emotivity, shyness, aggressiveness, and affectivity. Every individual's perception is considered the most important barrier to the interpretation of the received message as people use their own preconceptions in judging others;

- contextual, i.e. depending on the context in which communication takes place;

- managerial, when the obstacles are generated both by managers and by the groups they coordinate. Problems of communication between them are caused by: insufficient ability to convey information and to listen, being shy in expressing opinions, lack of practice in communication, inconsistency between the communication requirements and the communicative abilities of the interlocutors, frequent changes in the communication system;

- organizational, when it causes deficiencies in a certain hierarchy (Băban 90-91).

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In terms of dialogue as a form of public communication, it is commonly referred to as public discourse, since it is delivered in front of an audience. Prior to engaging in a speech, an audience analysis is necessary, which consists in determining the demographic features (age, gender, race, ethnicity, organizational membership), as well as the situational aspects (interest, knowledge of the audience, the occasion on which the speech will be delivered).

1.4. Discourse and discourse structures

1.4.1. The structure and art of discourse

The beginnings of the art of discourse or rhetoric can be traced back to Aristotle's and Cicero's testimonies. It is through these that the Antiquity has left us data on the beginnings of rhetoric, but, since they lived in different places and at different moments in history, the information is slightly contradictory. Some records of historical events that took place in Sicily, describe Corax and his student, Tisias, as forefathers of rhetoric, whereas others, provided by Aristotle in his youth dialogue called *Sophistis*, introduce Empedocles.

Corax and Tisias are backed by the events in Sicily that caused the fall of Trasibul, the tyrant, in 465, which, being an exceptional, long-awaited event, gave rise to a wave of lawsuits claiming the private properties that the former leaders of the Sicilian polis had appropriated. As Aristotle points out, the art of discourse had always existed before Corax and Tisias, but not in a well-established form. They are given credit for synthesizing the experience of their predecessors, and have made the necessary changes for the discourse to serve the parties involved in the dispute. These adjustments were necessary because "no rule or method was observed before them, but they spoke carefully, and most of them used to read their speeches" (Florescu 27). Based on these legal entitlements, the discourse turns into authentic rhetoric. Hence the art of discourse will pass into mainland Greece, where "the political disputes brought about by the abolition of the aristocratic regimes have contributed to its development" (Idem).

On the other hand, in his *Sophistis*, Aristotle acknowledges Empedocles as the founder of rhetorical discourse, a theory which places the emergence of discursive rhetoric even earlier in history. It has been argued, however, that "it is undeniable that Gorgias - who

contributed greatly to the development of pre-Aristotelian rhetoric - was Empedocle's student. But Empedocles' master was Pythagoras, for as Augusto Rostagni has pointed out, the fragments quoted by Iamblichus as "*The Speeches of Pythagoras*" (Ibidem 28), as well as Antisthenes theory on the diversity of the audience undoubtedly reflect both Pythagoras' concepts and the achivements of the ancient iathropic literature. This becomes evident in the incantational force of words that must be used in such a manner that each category of listeners be influenced by it. Children, women, ephebes and archons are all addressed in different ways. Hence, the term *polytropos* which refers to one's need to adapt their speech to different categories of listeners the same way medical treatment needs to be adapted to different categories of individuals suffering from the same illness.

Armando Plebe, the author of the outstanding *Breve storia della retorica antica*, describes Corax's orientation as 'scientific and demonstrative' - despite the fact that its object is the plausible, a gnoseological category whose incompatibility with demonstration was observed by Greek thinkers - whereas Pythagoras' orientation is considered 'irrational', although the production of incantations requires a series of rigorous and complicated rules based on incontestable scientific observations (Ibid.).

The prominent representatives of patristics, most of whom were highly cultivated men, regarded rhetoric and dialectics as creations of the Sophists. But a long tradition told them that the first Sophist was Hermes, who conveyed information as a protector of the letters but also as the patron of thieves.

But since early Christians identified gods with the devil, rhetoric and dialectics became creations of Satan, "the first and greatest Sophist," as Saint Basil calls him in the *22nd Homily*.

In *Cratylos*, Plato discusses the ethymology of *Hades* that is referred to as the realm of shadows, which, in Christian tradition becomes the Hell. As in Judaism, the fall of mankind into sin is regarded by early Christians as the result of the devil's skillful use of rhetoric and dialectics. The latter does not triumph by brute force but by cunning use of honeyed words; while presenting himself as a serpent, he first corrupts Eve who, in her turn, lures Adam into tasting the forbidden fruit.

Herein lies the key to the medieval allegory presenting dialectics - often confused with rhetoric - as the body of a woman with a snake for a strap. When all liberal arts, including rhetoric, are adopted by Christians, they will be presented as creations of God.

In a famous opuscule called *Hortus deliciarum*, Herrada de Landsberg writes: "Spiritus sanctus inventator est septem artium liberalium", rejecting both the theses of the forefathers of the Church and the more widespread and authoritarian one of Martianus Capella according to whom "liberal arts have been the felicitous outcome of Mercury's marriage to Philology" (Ibidem 26).

The origin of this explanation lies in the dispute between the Greeks and the Alexandrian Jews about the beginnings of culture. Philo the Jew and Flavius Josephus argued that the Jewish heritage went further back in history. Later, Clement of Alexandria and others supported the same theory to confer upon Christianity the patina of time.

Undoubtedly, it can be argued that "the emergence of rhetoric as a rigorous discipline coincides with the period marked by the structural change of the polis brought about by the collapse of gentilic aristocracy. This radical transformation has given rise to new perspectives on the world, man and education, which were supported by the Sophists" (Ibid. 25-29).

A feature of Aristotle's theory, however, is that "rhetoric becomes an art of discovery of the persuasive element in each individual case as well as of the sources from which nothing emerges except for the art of persuasion itself" (Ibid. 49).

The sources of the persuasive element can be grouped into three specific categories:

a) the first category is formed by the audience addressed, to which the discourse is adapted to make it persuasive;

b) the second category consists of the character of the orator who must capture the attention of the audience and convince them of his persuasive skills in the subject matter;

c) The third category includes the type of chosen arguments and the harmony of their use.

Hence the main features of the discourse, which matter to Aristotle, are ethical, psychological and dialectic in nature. Mood and eloquence follow as secondary concerns. Furthermore, literary features prevail in the oratorical discourse whereas other types of discourse are more philosophical in nature. Thus, Aristotle becomes

> […] the thinker who turned an entire set of empirical rules into a rigorous *techne* since, for him, rhetoric is the opposite of dialectics, which is meant to extend the domination of the logos to the opinable - values, beliefs, appearances, the plausible - that did not display a proper *techne*, and thus escaped the jurisdiction of the logos (Ibidem).

Since it is an oratorical act, the discourse must inspire confidence, for without it speech worthless. Authors of scientific reports and memoirs often consider it sufficient to

describe certain experiences, to mention certain facts, to introduce a number of truths in order to raise the interest of potential listeners or readers. This attitude results from the illusion, which is very widespread in certain rationalist environments, that the facts speak for themselves and leave an indelible imprint on any human spirit that they influence.

Knowing one's target audience is a prerequisite of any argumentation since the presumed audition is always a more or less systematic construction for the speaker. What matters for the one who aims at persuading real-life individuals, is the idea that "the construction of the audience is not at all inadequate to experience" (Perelman et al. 32).

It often happens that the orator persuades a mixed audience that brings together different people both socially and in terms of their personality, determined by their relationships or the group to which they belong. To argue correctly, he has to use multiple arguments to win the audience. In order to act properly, *captatio benevolentiae* can be used, such as music, lights, the use of extras, landscape, theatrical direction, methods that have always been known and used. For example, in ancient Egyptian and Greek art, a choir provided the musical background to create a predisposition in the reception of the theatrical performance.

It is a type of conditioning that precedes the conditioning of the discourse itself and ensures its flow towards the audience, which transforms it so that it is no longer the same at the end of the discourse as at the beginning. This proves that a great orator, who dominates all others, seems animated by the very spirit of his audience. He is not a passionate man who only cares about his own feelings.

This also suggests that the audience has a crucial role in determining the quality of the orator's argumentation and behavior, and that there is only one rule called the adaptation of one's speech to the audience whoever they may be: the content and form of arguments in certain circumstances may seem ridiculous in others.

Furthermore, the size of the audience also determines - to a certain extent - the argumentative process independently of the considerations regarding the conventions that we rely on and that differ according to the audience.

Therefore, the rhetorical discourse is psychologically-conditioned as is the dialogue that is unique in terms of its continuity, unilateralism, enthymematic character and autotropism. Whether oral or written, the rhetorical discourse is either persuasive, seductive, or inciting. But, regardless of its form, "its elaboration and presentation are not error-free in

judgment, appreciation, and presentation; they are errors committed either deliberately, or out of haste, ignorance, or superficiality" (Mihai 279).

Aristotle argues that, because we have no knowledge of all things, we do not have the knowledge of all sophist rejections which are countless. But as far as they have been catalogued, they have revealed that they make use either of the resources of logical models or those of language or both, while speculating on the audience's availability in addressing them.

This separation of logic, language, and soul may be useful in didactic approaches, but it is irrelevant in the practice of the rhetorical discourse: from here to here, from there to the other, etc. It is difficult, even completely inefficient, to draw borderlines among them, since their judgment will also have to be three-fold.

> In line with tradition, let us consider that one's mother tongue is easy in two respects: in using vagueness and syntactic ambiguity. A common feature of these is the multitude of meanings that they bear, whereas a distinction between them is that the first refers to words (phrases), while the second to clauses (sentences). Before going any further, we need to make it clear that both vaguess and syntactic ambiguity are justified as rhetorical devices. The aim of the rhetorical device is to please, to instruct and convince alike; it is a figure of speech that helps achieve aesthetic expressiveness, whereas persuasion is only an accidental condition (Ibidem 300).

The discourse consists of:

- *the body of the discourse*, which establishes the best way of introducing the facts for a clear, concise presentation;

- *the introduction*, i.e. the preparation of the public for presentation;

- *the presentation of the ideas* or the actual content of the lecture;

- *the conclusion*, which must occur logically and include a spectacular statement.

Furthermore, there are two types of discourse. The *informative discourse* that aims to provide the audience with new information on the subject matter, on the one hand; and the *persuasive discourse*, which presupposes the persuasion of the audience, on the other hand.

A discourse can be delivered by reading, presenting using notes, reciting, by means of improvised presentation or non-verbal communication. In support of the ideas, helpful materials such as photos, plans, slides, charts, or multimedia presentations can be used. The argumentation must be based on evidence or logical deductions. The discourse as a form of communication is expercted to be clear, explicit and rational. To cut a long story short, the discourse can be defined as *the art of speaking in public logically*.

With Aristotle, logic distinguishes itself from the ontological discourse and positions itself separately in relation to it, taking the form of the *organon* or the method. We say 'the organon' and 'the method' rather than 'an organon' or 'a method' because logic is the method used by Aristotle in all his theoretical studies, from physics to poetics.

Nowadays, however, analytical philosophy and the philosophy of language are believed to represent the only valid philosophy and consequently, as far as it is concerned, the only ontology or, at least, the philosophy of the only valid ontological problem. "The same is true of phenomenology, category-focused ontology, or science-based ontology, especially that based on state-of-the-art scientific knowledge" (Hărăguş 23-29). In the history of discourse, three phases, stages or historical types of themes can be identified, namely: "the metaphysical-ontological, the epistemological-transcendental and the logic-linguistic one" (Ibidem 21).

The interest that the discourse arouses nowadays is quite difficult to explain. In the old debate on the relationship between language and society, interpretations tend to reassess language in relation to reality, so that language tends to turn from a tool that serves to dominate the world into one used to dominate the crowd. The fascination of today's political and advertising discourse, two types of public communication invested with authority are just some of the examples that reflect this transformation.

1.4.2. Philosophy as discourse

The dawn of European philosophical thinking can be traced back to the 6th century BC. The first philosopher was Thales of Miletus (624-548 BC). Aristotle argues that Thales's teachings stemmed from his life experiences, while other interpreters, on the contrary, say that they were inspired by other cultures. What is important, however, is not so much the elements that have triggered his philosophical thinking, but rather its nature and structure, on the one hand, and the fact that this way of thinking has contributed to the distinctive nature of European culture among the great cultures of the world, on the other hand. Thales's aim, along with other philosophers', was to answer the question: how do we explain the unity and harmony of all things in a world that appears to be a disconcerting collection of various individual objects?

For Thales, as well as for the entire Greek philosophy, the world was a cosmos, i.e. an order with a rationality of its own, considered in opposition to chaos. These beliefs have triggered the ontological or metaphysical investigation in philosophy that appears in the form

of cosmology. Philosophy started with Thales's statement, namely: "The principle of the world (arché) is composed of water", which gave rise to the ontological and philosophical discourse, if we investigate its meaning and go beyond its simple linguistic form. The interpretation of Thales's statement - "water is the origin of all things" - allows us to understand his philosophical perspective which is different from other philosophic perspectives on mind in relation to the world. With Thales of Miletus, philosophical thinking begins to acquire a methodical character in the sense that he sets the object of his intellectual exercise and suggests the way a man can follow when he wants to understand the world and himself.

The discourse is subject to metamorphoses, through which various correspondences between the being and its existence are verified. The issue of philosophy as a type of discourse lessens the importance of the primordial principle of philosophy, which is the domain of knowledge or pure thinking that rests on material support exclusively out of necessity or when opportunity presents itself to disclose an idea. Aurel Codoban notes that

> [...] in the present-day perspective on philosophy as discourse, which emerges along with the new theme of language, communication and signification, there is something more. The discourse is now the philosophical figure mirrored in its own thematization. And the current deepening of the image of philosophy as discourse is to deepen it as a significant practice" (Cordoban 85).

The main types of descriptive ontological discourse are logical description, categorial description, phenomenological description and material description. As far as the logical description is concerned, in ontology, the themes under scrutiny vary as follows: the theme of existence, of quantification, of the existence of possible worlds.

> Each of these types or forms of the ontological description is more or less present in a real descriptive ontological discourse, mingling in their historical-philosophical reality. All these types of description present themselves as apt to take over and deal with the entire descriptive and explanatory ontological problem, thus introducing themselves as exclusive ontologies" (Hărăguş 44-62).

Categorial description is the traditional or classical formula as well as a pragmatic analytical one, whereas phenomenological description refers to the analysis of experiencing subjectivity (Ibidem 107-120).

The logical ontological description refers to applying logic to an ontological description, which is basically categorial and essentialist in nature. Aristotle's ontological description encompasses all types of ontological description, including the material one, based

on observation and common knowledge, and even a trace of the phenomenological description, linked to his idea that time cannot exist without a soul. The material description can thus be regarded as a type of "ontological realism of actualistic modality" (Ibid. 120-146).

Early in the history of discourse, i.e. during its metaphysical-ontological stage, philosophy focused on object as a fundamental reference point, and the philosophical discourse was the field of interest of pre-Socratic philosophers. During the epistemological-transcendental stage, the focus of the philosophical discourse shifted on the subject, a reflexive approach introduced by Imanuel Kant. The logical-linguistic stage featuring a philosophical discourse on language began with Frege and Russell and continued with Carnap and Quine.

Logical description is based on the logical thematization of the ontological which is used to argue about the logical validity of certain statements on 'being' or on individuals (Ibidem 21). With Hegel, logical description is essential since the formal takes precedence over categorization, which is universal. Therefore, its ontology or logic begins with the formal or logical description of the being and of nothingness:

> *Nothing, pure nothingness*; it is simple equality with itself, complete emptiness, complete absence of determination and content; [...] Nothing is therefore the same determination or rather absence of determination, and thus altogether the same as what pure *being* is (Hegel 59).

With Aristotle, logic resides from its direct connection with the ontological discourse and distinguishes itself from it "by taking the form of the organon or method, logic being the method used by him in all his theoretical pursuits, from physics to poetics" (Hărăguş 29).

Logical ontological description emerges from applying logic to an ontological description that is basically categorial and essentialist. In Aristotle, we encounter all types of ontological description, including the material one, based on observation and common knowledge, and even a trace of phenomenological description: the idea that time without a soul does not exist, therefore nothingness cannot exist, since it cannot be identified with - or assigned - a content. As it has already been pointed out earlier, Hegel uses logical description because in a description form is obligatory, but Aristotle's ontology or logic begins with the formal or logical description of the being and of nothingness. The 'nothing' he really believes in is "pure nothingness", mere "equality with itself", the void itself, which is "complete absence of determination and content" (Hegel 59). 'Nothing' is more than "the same

determination," it is rather "absence of determination," it is what is called the "pure *being*" and therefore 'nothing' may be considered to be the same.

In philosophy, logical description is based on the logical thematization of the ontological, which is used to argue about the logical validity of statements on 'being' itself, on the absence of it or on individuals. Ever since antiquity, each of these types of description has been presented as pertinent in order to "retrieve and scrutinize the entire descriptive and explanatory ontological problem, introducing themselves as exclusive ontologies" (Hărăguş 23).

Moreover, over the past years, analytical philosophy and the philosophy of language have claimed to be the only relevant philosophy as they embody the only ontology. Philosophy, as a type of discourse, prides itself on being "the only valid ontological issue" (Ibidem), along with phenomenology, categorial ontology, and science-based ontology, the last being described as a type of discourse whereby 'the particle of God' has been identified.

1.4.3. The heuristic discourse

The heuristic discourse is not an ordinary, everyday dialogue but rather an oratorical act. In such an act, the orator is expected to inspire confidence without which his discourse does not worth acknowledgment (Perelman et al. 389). In the heuristic discourse, the interlocutor is the embodiment of the universal audience. The orator's aim should be to convince the interlocutor, even to dominate him, as if he were an opponent. During an ordinary dialogue, the interlocutors are most often seeking to persuade their dialogue partners to trigger a current or future action on their part, whereas during a heuristic discourse, things change as the orator must detect the determining elements and identify the ones who dominate (Ibidem 55).

The heuristic discourse has its origins in ancient Greece when the *poleis* were founded: Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos, Olympia and Athens. At the time, eloquence contests were also organized as part of the games dedicated to Zeus (the Olympic Games) and to Pallas Athena (the Panathenaic Games). A verse in the Iliad uses allusion – which, with Aristotle, takes the form of a metaphor - to point to the eloquence contests that were organized at that time:

> Not more in councils famed for solid sense,
> Than winning words and heavenly eloquence (Homer, XV, 452).

Furthermore, Homer points to a heuristic discourse on the battlefield in front of Troy that Nestor and Ulysses would have composed in their moments of respite. Plato, an opponent of psychological and literary rhetoric, evokes this episode with irony. This attitude originates in his experiences with the representatives of the Athenian democracy of his time, who used the 'sly orator' strategy to persuade the masses. Thus, it is only natural for Plato to blame them for attempting to "flatter the masses that they should govern" (Perelman et al. 37).

Therefore, Homer does not speak of an accidental act, but of a consecrated fact, as demonstrated by Xenophon, who describes Socrates' eloquence as being of "Ulysses type". Later on, Aphthonius, Hermogenes, Telephus and other authors of late antiquity "issued studies of Homeric rhetoric seeking to prove that Homer was not an empiric theorist of this discipline, but a technician" (Florescu 23).

It is no less true that, as a rule, discourses tend to have a trace of flattery, deriving from specific arguments adapted to the audience from which their need of dominating resides. It is the audience that determines a more or less systematized construction and the type of argumentation. What matters for the one who aims to effectively persuade concrete individuals is the idea of constructing an audience that is not inadequate for the experience. After all, "knowing the ones that we aim to persuade is a prerequisite for any argumentation" (Perelman et al. 32).

When the audience is composite, uniting people of different backgrounds both in terms of education level and of the social relationships they have in society, the orator will use a range of arguments to win it over. He will choose the ones that can easily act on the audience and can condition it more easily such as: music, lights, use of extras, landscape, theatrical direction, which are means peculiar to the art of discourse. Along with this type of conditioning, there is yet another, which resides in structure of the discourse itself, that must be formulated and delivered in such a manner that "at the end of the discourse, the audience is no longer the same as in the beginning by the orator's constant adaptation to the audience" (Ibidem 36).

An orator who dominates the audience is inspired by the audience itself only if this domination does not distort his state by cultivating his pride; for a man only passionate about what he himself feels will use the audience only to feed and support his pride.

It is therefore the audience that crucially influences the quality of the content, especially the quality of the argumentation and the behavior of the orator. The size of the audience determines to a certain extent the methods the speaker uses for argumentative

purposes "[…] irrespective of the considerations regarding the agreements on which we rely, and which differ according to the audience," but respecting one rule: "the adaptation of the discourse to the audience, whoever they may be: the content and form of arguments that are appropriate in some circumstances may seem ridiculous in others" (Ibid. 39).

1.4.4. The epideictic discourse

The epideictic discourse is an oratorical discourse in which the speaker reads a script in front of an audience or, in the absence of an audience, he may choose to elaborate and then circulate it in the form of a written dissertation. In the latter case the advantage is that no one can oppose it, and that the topics, which can hardly be tackled in a discussion, are easily communicated and have a finality. This type of discourse is part of the oratorical genre that "is more the domain of literature than of argumentation" (Ibidem 69-70) and that, in order to determine an interaction with the audience, can make use of all literary methods. It's the only genre that makes one think of a libretto right away.

Since it does not entail a confrontation proper, the epideictic discourse is mostly used by those who defend the traditional values of a society, especially in what concerns education. Therefore, the epideictic discourse is not used in conveying 'conflictual' values, which involve polemics, controversy and the use of retorts. Thus, the epideictic discourse does not aim at changing beliefs but rather it seeks to increase adherence to what is already accepted and well-establish, to the common values of the audience and the orator. The epideictic discourse plays an important role as "the common values it supports rely on deliberative and judicial rhetoric" (Ibid. 71)

As a result, any society that preserves its values favours the emergence of opportunities that allow the regular use of the epidemiological discourse. Among these, there are: commemorative ceremonies of a country's independence, such as: a country's national day, days commemorating the heroes of a nation, or any other events that involve ceremonies.

1.4.5. The ethical discourse

Ethical discourses are often encountered in certain social contexts and are "subject to the limitations of time and space. Their participants are […] real human beings" (Habermas qtd. in Steinhoff 130); they presuppose the statements are *rational*, and that the speakers meet the necessary conditions to achieve the intended purpose. The ethical discourse aims to develop a

certain scenario of the instance of communication or rational discourse, a foundation that, according to Habermas and Apel, the orator uses to achieve rational communication, since "an action, whether a speech act or any other kind of act, is rational when there are good reasons for it" (Steinhoff 18). Habermas coined the concept of communicative action, considering that "fundamental […] is […] the performative attitude of the participants in interaction, who coordinate their plans for action by coming to an understanding about something in the world" (Habermas 296). As one of the most authoritative philosophers in public communication, Habermas has long analysed the relationship between *knowledge* and *communication* from the perspective of the communication skills of the participants who take part in it.

The communicative action has the advantage of taking into consideration not only the active participants in the act of communication but also those who are present but do not participate; their perspective is not implicitly ignored in the communication since it is not only significant, but also constitutive in the communicative exchange. Whatever the context, the orator must cooperate with the audience, his attitude must be humanitarian, his audience must be respected and considered a dialogue partner, a friend and not a rival.

The basic rules of discourse include that any individual who is competent can talk, engage in dialogue, and be admitted in the dialogue, on the one hand, and that anyone should have the right to ask questions about any topic in discussion, on the other hand:

> (3.1.) Every subject with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in a discourse.
> (3.2.)   a. Everyone is allowed to question any assertion whatever.
> b. Everyone is allowed to introduce any assertion whatever into the discourse.
> c. Everyone is allowed to express his attitudes, desires, and needs.
> (3.3.) No speaker may be prevented, by internal or external coercion [i.e. coercion inside or outside of the discourse], from exercising his rights as laid down in (3.1.) and (3.2.) (Habermas qtd. in Steinhoff 129).

1.4.6. The scientific discourse

The scientific discourse focuses on an object conventionally realized as a representation of the real, working to reduce it to one or more analytical dimensions, allowing the development of a formal demonstration based on rational, precise and univariate criteria, what its marks are. The scientific discourse intention aims to close the circle of understanding, interpretation and problem-solving, seeking an equivalence between sense and meaning, even if, by its nature, scientific cognitive approach is argumentative, signification-oriented. "Signification implies

the emergence of a possibility of describing, examining, and discussing which, by vocation, attributes to the interlocutor an anonymous and impersonal position", which "corresponds to a new problem, to a logic of the new situation" (Stengers 45-46).

There are great expectations as far as the contents of the scientific discourse is concerned. It may focus on experiments and their results, on the latest discoveries or on the outcome of certain extraordinary facts. It may appear in the form of rather consistent contributions, of scientific memos, of reports that set forth a number of truths to raise the interest of the listeners or readers. However, it also has certain drawbacks in the sense that "the attitude resulting from the illusion, which is very widespread in certain rationalist and scientist environments, that the facts speak for themselves and imprint an indelible mark on any human spirit whose adhesion they model" (Perelman 30).

Ernst Cassirer, a reputed neo-kantian philosopher of the early twentieth century, points out that in the process of knowledge, the interaction is not between a pre-established spirit and a reality do not interact, it is fully constituted, but there is an osmotic subject-object exchange that generates growth epistemic subject, the development of perceptual strategies, inductive and deductive capacity, complementary heuristic tools, and the restructuring of the meaning of the subject under the pressure of experience (117)

In the scientific discourse, the definition, description, explanation should be used to reach a conclusion which is ontological and ideological in nature on the one hand, and logical-linguistic and material, on the other hand. Thus, the full understanding of a scientific discourse is not accessible to everyone since it requires a more or less profound knowledge of several areas of study, because "science refers not only to the objects and phenomena which are the domain of the real and their relationship with human subjectivity, but also a certain cultural development and the optimization of intersubjective communication by means of language language, as well as the fertile interaction between the philosophy of science, theoretical linguistics, and the philosophy of language" (Frumuşani 9, 102, 191).

1.4.7. The educational discourse

Unlike the oratorical and the heuristic discourse, the educational discourse does not seek to put forward the orator, but to "create a certain predisposition to act in the audience" (Perelman 73), rather than a decision to act, as in deliberative and judicial discourses. It may be related to the ontological discourse and, implicitly, to philosophical thinking.

Human civilization is today in one of its most dynamic stages, characterized by profound structural changes in all areas of life. The range of areas of individual development expands and includes aspects of utmost importance in contemporary society such as communication, cooperation, tolerance, participation, change and development. The value-based content of education expands and becomes dynamic and complex, which requires an interdisciplinary approach.

Post-modern didactics focuses on interdisciplinary teaching, a strategy in agreement with integrated teaching at the heart of which lies the idea of unity of human knowledge. The idea of integrating science teaching has emerged from the converging principles that the universe presents an intrinsic unity on the one hand, and that the science of explicating the natural world offers - by means of its objectives, content and approaches - "a unity that transcends the divergences of language or form of the various sciences" (Cucoş 260). Thus, new didactics turns the student into the teacher's partner, both the object and the subject of their own training as "the student experiences the learning process and is no longer merely a receiver of information" (Boja 17).

Since it is receptive to the progress of human communication, the educational system has integrated its various verbal and nonverbal forms and means into its processes. Communication has always been a key component of education, an indispensable support to education. In a knowledge- and communication-based society, the act of communication has a strong impact on all areas of life and social-human activity, being supported by information technology and various means of communication. Over the past few decades, the limitations of the traditional educational system centered on the transmission of knowledge, have given rise to a new communication system that relies heavily on the information system.

Traditional scholastic education used catechetical conversation, based on the mere reproduction by the students of previously assimilated knowledge, whereas modern education "has introduces heuristic conversation as a qualitatively superior form of the conversation method" (Bocoş 225).

Heuristic conversation is based on a series of questions and answers addressed either by the teacher to the students or by the students to the teacher or to other students, which give rise to a plurilateral dialogue. This dialogue occurring in the educational process as well as the content and strategies used in verbal and nonverbal communication reduce the affective and cognitive distance between teacher and students on the one hand, and between students and content, on the other hand. In the educational process, a question is "a communication tool, a

teaching, learning and evaluation instrument, with a rich pedagogical potential both for the student and the teacher who are willing to take part in a meaningful learning and teaching process" (Ibidem). Communication, in the broad sense of the word, means notification, news, report, deliberate transmission of data, information, and, in a narrow sense, communication means connection, bond.

The teaching-instructional process of teaching is thus "the teacher's act of transmitting knowledge by means of unidirectional methods, in accord with certain methodological requirements which trigger learning in general and learning in students in particular" (Cristea 367). Furthermore, communication in education has multiple meanings, goals, methods of expression and manifestations. There is a constant challenge in the field of communication with respect to aspects such as social psychology, the satisfaction of personal needs, and the connection between those who live in the community by virtue of what they have in common. Their communication lies in the way they share these things. Communication pertaining to the field of education gives rise to similar emotional and intellectual dispositions as well as similar ways of responding to expectations and demands.

Viewed as a whole, communication within the educational discourse is realized on three distinct levels: *logical*, *paraverbal* and *nonverbal*. Of these, the logical level, expressed by means of words makes up only 7% of the total act of communication; 38% occurs at paraverbal level (tone, volume, speech rate) and 55% at nonverbal level (facial expression, body position, movement, clothing). If these levels are not contradictory, communication may be effective, otherwise, the message will not have the expected effect.

Of the two types of communication - *intrapersonal* communication, which relates to communication within and to oneself, on the one hand, and *interpersonal* communication that occurs between people, on the other hand - the modern educational system favours interpersonal communication, which fosters interactivity in school practice, by developing relations between students, teachers and knowledge. Moreover, as communication can also be categorized into group communication, i.e. among group members, and mass communication, i.e. communication received or used by a large number of people, one may argue that modern didactics will rely on

> […] an act of communication oriented in multiple directions and serving multiple purposes instead of a mere one-way transmission serving one purpose only. This will turn the educational process into a sequence of different types of communicative situations that are more conducive to the chaining of further communication situations, which, in their turn, are more favorable to combining students' representations with other students' representations,

students' representations with their teachers', and of students' representations with those provided by other sources of modern communication (Cergit 62).

In the educational discourse, the purpose of the communication is more diverse, it can be to warn, inform, explain, entertain, describe or convince. The educational process involves both engaging students in global and meaningful communication activities consistent with his concerns, and in chaining these activities with reflexive sequences that allow them to understand how language and dialogue work. The creation of a communicative model within the framework of modern didactics also presupposes a new methodological orientation, which fully exploits the student's status and attitudes: voluntary, permanently active and interested in his own education, which turns him a kind of "hero of a didactic scenario that leads to autonomy and responsibility" (Pamfil 28).

Education relies heavily on communication at all levels. Thus, the instructive relationship is a communicative one, an exchange of meanings that "gives rise to a specific type of didactic or pedagogical discourse" (Cerghit 65). Communication ensures the continuity of learning a discipline over time thereby avoiding the danger of break offs - which were so obvious in older curricula - on the one hand, and the agreement among all school disciplines, on the other hand. The educational system is not about *learning in order to communicate* but rather about *communicating in order to learn* and presupposes the assimilation of knowledge as well as the integration of complex strategies of reflection and interpretation. Communication activities have a well-structured role: it is through them that skills become functional and that knowledge and abilities are updated. Furthermore, communication activities enable the development of certain complex cognitive strategies by means of which creativity manifests, thus constituting one of the key ingredients in the proper development of the educational process.

1.5. Mass Communication: Information and Interaction

The concept of media discourse has been defined depending on perspective. For Mikhail Bakhtine, for example, genres are relatively stable forms of utterance, subject to thematic, compositional, and stylistic norms, which occur both in the act of production and in the act of reception / interpretation; for Jean-Michel Adam, genres are historical, practical-empirical and prototypical categories; for Dominique Maingueneau and Patrick Charaudeau, genres are socially and linguistically associated, and for François Rastier, the genre of discourse is defined from a linguistic and semiotic perspective as a balance between the signifier and the

signified at the level of the text, which intervenes decisively in textual semiosis. Almost invariably, the genre acts as a mediator between text and discourse, on the one hand, and between the text and context, on the other.

> The task of developing a set of criteria that underlies the definition of genres of discourse lies with general poetics. By integrating poetics into its field of investigation, linguistics will be able to overcome its restrictive condition and become more open to discourse analysis (Florea coord. 28).

Following these analyzes, specific *typologies*, *criteria* and *features* can be identified within the media discourse.

There are several types of media discourse: a) the type of stage device and the discursive mode of building and staging the reader; b) aim, pragmatic function and macrostructural organization of the discourse; c) the degree of involvement of the reader; d) the compositional structure of the text; e) microstructural organization.

These functional typologies define the ways in which language is used, starting from the functions established by the schools in the field. Depending on whether the study belongs to the Prague or English school of thought, there may be four types of discourse (narrative, procedural, expository and exhortative), three (descriptive, narrative and argumentative), or only two (narrative and argumentative).

Therefore, any literary, scientific or media text displays a variable number of functions: "The problem with functions typologies lies in the fact that they define classes that are too broad, grouping heterogeneous texts: the class of argumentative texts brings together the philosopher's thesis, the advocate's pleadings and the columnist's commentary" (Ibidem 24).

Specific criteria in defining media discourse are:

a) a certain type of scenic device and a discursive way of building and putting the referent on stage;

b) the finality, the pragmatic function of the discourse that determines the macrostructural organization, the presence / frequency of some speech acts and strategies;

c) the degree of involvement of the enunciating court, which may vary on a scale between the poles: distance, lack of words of enunciation / subjective involvement, the presence of modifiers and evaluation-affective marks;

d) the compositional structure in the sense that the global structure associated with a conventional or specific textual text plan, in which the sequential structure obtained by the

alternation or inclusion of the narrative, descriptive, explanatory, argumentative, monologic or dialogue type sequences is registered;

e) the microstructural organization structure associated with certain syntactic and stylistic features.

The journalistic discourse has the following characteristics:

a) the genre of media discourse, the daily press of general information, the discourse way of the commented event; b) persuasive finals; c) the assumption of the statement by the tenant does not necessarily translate into marks of linguistic subjectivity, the point of view expressed by an internal court and the responsibility of the editorial team; d) global structure based on ad hoc planning including descriptive expositive sequences and argumentative sequences; e) syntactic and stylistic peculiarities, namely recurrent syntactic schemes, isotopes and paraphrastic reformulations; modifiers and other marks of the author's subjectivity, the media conditionality, the previously expressed future.

The differences between mass communication and interpersonal and group communication lie in the very essence of communication. In mass communication, the source is a communication organization, a radio station, a newspaper or a television channel. Unlike in interpersonal communication, mass communication is characterized by its focus on the output rather than the input as mass communicators are prolific message producers.

Mass communication institutions are designed and organized in order to be able to decode and encode a huge number of signals and to produce and disseminate messages on a large scale. Their recipients form vast audiences, each media type aiming at an as broad an audience as possible. Communication is unidirectional and mediated since, in the media discourse, communicators and receivers are separated from each other by means of a set of equipment and technical procedures. The feedback from recipients to the communicator is very rare or nonexistent.

Mass communication differs from other types of communication in that it addresses a large proportion of the population, and that it presupposes the existence of certain technical means. Communication may have different facets, from a confidential discussion or a debate at work to a Eurovision program for millions of viewers. A letter, a newspaper, a radio program, a brochure, a note are all forms communication in their own way, in the sense that they transmit information. Differences occur when we take into consideration the way in which information is transmitted and the number of participants in the communication process. Mass communication addresses a relatively large, heterogeneous and anonymous

audience, the messages are transmitted publicly in order to reach out to the target audience simultaneously.

The term *mass* has a negative connotation in various languages: "mass - the majority of a population who are incapable of thinking on their own which makes them easy to manipulate; or a group acting - incidentally or constantly -, annulling or distorting the personality of its members" (Van Cuilenburg et al. 39).

The similarities between mass production and industrial activities define mass communication as an organized social process. The differences between mass media and ordinary industries lie in the high costs of the products in the communication industry, which have multiple effects on the public. Furthermore, the complex and organized production and distribution system in modern environments lessens the role of the journalist while high costs limit individual creation.

The concept of interaction is essential to understanding the difference between *face-to-face* communication and media communication. Face-to-face interaction is carried out in a space-time coexistence context and has the features of a dialogue. Mediated interaction includes letter exchanges, the use of the telephone or other technical devices. The mediated quasi-interaction is achieved via means of mass communication.

Means of mass communication participate in the formation and manipulation of public opinion, but they are also sensitive to public opinion. Each communicator is

> […] interested in knowing the public opinion about himself and his means of communication. He is interested in the public opinion from the point of view of public attitudes towards different social problems presented. Public opinion emerges spontaneously depending on existing economic and social conditions, on traditions, customs and moods, and under the influence of ideologies promoted by the establishment, political parties, social classes as well as under the influence of family, school and media actions (Lecomte 96).

In public opinion, phenomena or actions of political, economic and social life intertwine as they awaken general interests and attract people's attention by reflecting their common will and feelings. Communication is unidirectional: it emits, dominates and even monopolizes the act of transmitting messages. The whole experience of mass communication targets the public as a general mass, with everyone having access to the messages transmitted by the media. It's fast, messages flow from media to receivers but not the other way round. The information conveyed by the media system is "distributed as consumer goods" (Coman 45); they are created and distributed by a set of individuals, each of whom performs specific

tasks. Messages created by the media are broadcast using a set of technologies controlled by many related specialized institutions.

The implications of this phenomenon reflect at the level of the message as communication sources have emerged as powerful industrial structures or organizations because in mediated communication, the communicator addresses a large number of receptors that he does not know, that he knows very little about and who cannot answer directly: the flow of unidirectional communication does not allow the public to provide the communicator with immediate and complete feedback. Hence, it is clear that these powerful organizations have been set up in order to control the flow of communication.

The messages that are transmitted and broadcast address the contemporaries and have a certain influence on the receiver as they convey a cultural content. McLuhan drew attention on both the "influence of the media in creating the message transmitted and the changes in our mentality to perceive, to perceive others, and to perceive the world, the changes due to new communication technologies" (54).

McLuhan believes that the medium is the message (58), i.e. the middle, the environment is the message. The medium deeply influences the reception of the message, a verified statement since each piece of information conveyed simultaneously through mass media remains the same. It is built differently because each language requires a specific code, means and activities, and a specific structure. Every medium constructs the event according to its specific language, and the information conveyed may be different, being a reorganization of knowledge rather than its extension.

Never can a piece of information be reduced to a mere transmission of a message, because the newspaper, the magazine, the radio, the television are very different images of reality, each medium having its own specific organization, means and activities. "The media not only accompany a message," McLuhan considers, "but it also structures, each builds his own event according to his own technique." 135 In turn, the means used also exerts, although on another level , a formative influence on the receiving subject by changing perceptual skills and spiritual structure, regardless of the content communicated. Mediatization is the act whereby certain messages are transformed, under the influence of the media system, during the mass-production and broadcasting process. The channel on which messages are fixed, which are actually words and images, is often more important to the quality of communication than the words or images. The transmission channel primarily addresses the senses through which he and the message reach the individual's consciousness.

Within mass communication we have to distinguish between message and information. The amount of information is based on the significance of the message. The unpredictable message brings a greater amount of information to the receiver, this being an original message in relation to its experience. Information is a specific spiritual product that responds to a certain extent to the needs of the individual and the collectivity. Under the unidirectional course of messages, the value of information is seriously prejudiced by the distortion phenomenon, the consequences of which are incalculable.

Information is the expression of the coherent interpretation of complex reality in a certain unity of time and place, as all information is the one that concentrates a world view. It can be said that to a certain extent the value of information is closely related to its dissemination, the media supplying the greatest amount of information per unit of time, and it contributes decisively to forming the views of a target audience.

Media is today the power with the greatest influence, and "no government ignores this sovereign power of the press" 136 and the dream of all politicians is to have subordinate media tools. The naivety of the recipients of the statements received on these paths is fantastic, for "any promising ad finds an audience to believe in it." 137 The more it is through advertising. Advertising, in the form of advertisements, is one of the means of collective persuasion in the modern age. The assertion and repetition are the main factors in generating this conviction. One of the constant rules of advertising is that a product, no matter how old and known it is, is threatened by a drop in sale once it stops advertising in its favor. The cause is undoubtedly insufficient memory affective. "A great role in advertising has its own illustration. The method of comparative imagery is even better. "138 Knowing these truths about the influence of the media in forming opinions and political beliefs," the superior state man knows how to generate or direct the currents of opinions that are necessary. The mediocre state man is bound to follow them. The great statesmen have always been very careful about forming or diverting currents of opinions. Among the factors generating such currents we have to mention especially newspapers, brochures, speeches, conferences, congresses. "

The role of creative and leading opinion movements in all matters that concern the foreign life of a country belongs to state people. The media also determines the thinking of an age, through the dynamics of opinion-forming it supports. Opinions and beliefs are the most important moral elements that will, for a long time, remain the strongest factors capable of directing nations. This is why education is needed for a proper understanding of the

audiovisual message. The essentials of this education start from the questions of who they are serving these messages, who disseminates them and for what purpose they disseminate them. The information responds to the human curiosity, the desire to know, to be aware of the human being.

This human curiosity is manifested especially in terms of events and personalities, and less in terms of ideas. The information society is by definition not a better informed society. A great deal of information does not mean everything, and public overcrowding can lead to saturation. Practically, the offer increases by multiplying the same information and not always by adding new information. "Making new information is more difficult than implementing advanced information technology" .140 Information consumption is subject to the same conditions, and availability is unlimited. The audience gets so intensely bombarded with information that they lose their freedom of choice. Any communication involves a transfer of information, and any information reduces environmental uncertainty and increases the ability to control it. The transfer of information can not take place if the transmitter merely sums up to the receiver what he already knows, because in this way the communication degrades, becoming an apparent communication that retains its physical parameters such as duration, image, sound, and informational ones.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

The informational characteristics of mass communication can be synthesized in three branches: mass communication involves processes of processing elaboration, broadcasting of messages; mass communication performs an informational transfer via mass broadcast channels; mass communication influences the receiver.141 Reception has no sense of acceptance but has an active sense of "response to". Reception involves deciphering, interpreting, integrating and responding through decision and action. The task of mass communication can be better understood through concepts such as information and event. Information is data and knowledge provided through a communication process. The purpose of the broadcasters is to transmit to their potential recipients the information they hold and which they consider useful for them. The goal of the receptors is to receive the information they are missing.

Messages transmitted through the mass communication system from the point of view of their structure can be: spatial messages with a two or three-dimensional structure such as architecture, drawing; time messages, having three dimensions - speech, music; space-time

messages: cinema, cartoon. Messages transmitted through mass communication in terms of content may be: scientific and technological messages corresponding to scientific communication; informative messages, news, advertising used for informative communication; economic and social messages relevant to socio-economic communication; educational messages relevant to pedagogical communication; political messages corresponding to political communication.142

Mass communication, using sound and verbal messages, mainly broadcasts multiple messages. These can be defined as simple messages, but used simultaneously in an artistic synthesis that assumes consistency of meaning and structural stability. In order to be persuasive, the message must attract attention, be presented in a favorable, generating form. Handled images must be simple and accurate. They must be repeated at a certain pace and for a limited duration. It should not be a plea, but a mere assertion and reaffirmation. The messages are received by the receiver from the transmitter via the communication channels that are the physical supports of the communication.

Parallel to the growing social role of media communication, there is an increase in the theories about the media - their significance, place and function in society. The media make perceptible distant worlds where direct access is not always possible, allowing millions of people to take in synchronous information about their social universe. Those who devote themselves professionally to media communication, to those who are constantly so close to the sources of the news, the media give them a kind of aura or authority. The media participate in building and maintaining democracy. "The media - because of their role of informing, commenting and criticizing, as well as acting as instruments of cultural emancipation - are an aspect of democratization, they are the vital center of public life without which our society can not function according to ideals and its rules ".143

The media is characterized by dynamism and always develops new possibilities in communication, new types of intimacy. The most non-reciprocal is the remote one, made in the non-dialogical, unlocated, yet generous, open space, in which the symbolic forms mediated can be expressed and received by a plurality of other non-present individuals. We gather patterns from different communities, sometimes random, after events or global phenomena coming from sources. The media mixes discursively communities and makes, through its means of communication, almost any subject, a valid subject of interest and concern for every audience member who is caught eye-catching on the glass. Mediums tend to invade private space. The individual can no longer be isolated, the more he lives in a family

where he has two or three possible behavioral behaviors: to be unwittingly watching with his partner / partner to isolate himself in another room with eyes on another source or TV program, create a state of conflict due to remote control. You often see when you come into a house one of the family members walking with the remote in your hand as a big boss. This explains why some of the formerly private and isolated behaviors were brought into a large and unitary arena.

1.6 Media Communication: Scenario and Forms of Interaction

Computerization has penetrated so deeply in all social fields and in the process of knowledge. The extension concerns information channels and information support, but it is also dictated by the continuous size of the public sphere, by the multiplication of categories of consumers of information. On the other hand, the options of what we call media consumers have changed. As the monitoring reports show, many of the in-depth policy analysis, news and talk shows have gradually disappeared from the commercial channels' grids. They have been replaced with cheap comedies and poor quality programs. In the beginning, commercial channels have resorted to this kind of programs as a subtle way to avoid criticism of politicians and influential businessmen. "143 Commercial televisions justify their strategy and the low level of editorial standards through eternal appeal to the audience, as the only universal criterion in the television industry.

The strategy of the stations assesses that, given the poverty of resources allocated to news programs, journalistic analyzes or investigations, this type of broadcasts have little chance of recovery in the native media landscape. However, the interest in the political phenomenon has not disappeared. We could say that the avalanche of expected events, and especially unexpected events in this area, keep the interest of the audience awake and unheard of. The Romanian was born a poet, and today it is also possible to add that, existentially, in our nation there are elements of political, economic and entertainment knowledge or sport.

The target audience of news channels and political broadcasts is mostly composed of men over 35, urban, medium and high status. Women, with the same age characteristics, middle-class education, come in second place, looking at movies, serials, and especially on soap operas. The target audience of this type of show is not made up of young people and adolescents who like music, film and entertainment. They are not yet informed, but they answer accurately to questions about current political events, they have well-formed personal political choices, linked, of course, to the environments in which they come from and live,

which shows that they are watching the programs of short duration. It also adds home and home, job or school information as a volunteer or not, political issues are discussed everywhere. The power of television is, for a long time, enormous, even though its discourse often lacks consistency. Nobody no longer doubts today that television is the primary and primary source of information for a large media consumer.

But, beyond the eternal accusations, often real, that behind the media agenda are political and economic interests rather than those of the public, the trivialization and tabloidization of news programs and analysis shows nothing but to lower the level of knowledge, in any field, of the viewing public. Under these conditions, the robot portrait of the Romanian viewer, made up by the genre and content of the programs he looks at, presents us with a low intelligence coefficient, attracted to violence, obscenity and easy winnings. A psychiatrist would consider that this character is at high risk of social danger and would recommend immediate treatment in a specialized clinic.

The situation is not, however, so black, neither with regard to the media consumer nor with regard to the press itself. The population generally has a good opinion about the press, especially about television and radio, acknowledges and confirms its important role in a real democracy. The independence and objectivity of written and television journalists are recognized, even when those concerned are at the service of media trusts that support power and opposition. Appeals do not affect the overall positive appreciation of the press. Even the phrase that part of the press finds its justification in the view of the Romanian viewer. It is natural, in his opinion, that beyond the rigid, absolute objectivity, which finds its place only in theory, the press reflects and shares the opinions of the target audience.

Curiously, the political reality, as it is reflected in the media, does not change in the interval that ranges from one election session to another. What is constantly changing is the insignificant part of the political actors, and the ruling class is still confused with the political class, with too few differentiations that are also visible between post-December governments. The political class is characterized by corruption, inefficiency and incompetence. Higher power is perceived as weak and divided by scandals between the palaces. The population is acutely deprived of the lack of professional politicians and moral values within the Romanian political class. He thinks that politics often maculates and that he must be a villain, bad to succeed in politics, but also that the involvement of young people in the country's leadership would increase the quality of the country. New, unborn, young, professional, trained, with another mentality are wanted, yet the mistrust in the new political actors on the public stage is

great. A bitter consumer of reality shows, television shows and political talk shows, a fan of television stars, as well as some politicians with public appearances, the viewer wants, at least in the declarative way, to learn something while relaxing in front of the little screen.

Immediately after the end of the Second World War, G. Orwell made a rather harsh observation: "Political language (...) has the mission to make the lie true, crime is a respectable act, to give it the transition the appearance of stability. "145 But Orwell is not the first to declare skepticism about political language. Analyzing the way the prince can retain his power, Machiavelli recommends an appearance of compassion, sincerity and religiosity. "No word that does not correspond to these virtues must not come to the prince in the mouth." 147 Language, semantic and political strategy are interdependent, serving not only the transmission of information but also the persuasion.

2. THE PUBLIC SPACE

2.1. A conceptual framework: public sphere and public space

From a literary point of view, 'sphere' is defined as a space extending between points which are equidistant from another point referred to as the centre. However, in specialized literature, it is often perceived as the equivalent of the notion of *publicité* or *publicity*. Its English version appeared in 1989, with the meaning of public sphere. The origin of the word goes back to ancient Greek culture which distinguishes between the sphere of the polis or *koine*, accessible and common to free citizens, and the individual sphere or *oikos*, *idia*. *Bios politicos* was also used by ancient Greeks to refer to the public life occurring in the *agora*.

The public sphere is a crucial structure in the society-state binomial. The conditions in which and the extent to which state politics results in the freely expressed consent of those citizens who discuss and deal with their problems publicly prompted the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas to conduct extensive research in the field of history, sociology, philosophy, law and literature. Habermas interpreted the modern meaning of *public sphere*, which refers to a "principle of establishing political order" (in Marga 111). "General discussion free of domination" is not only provide the key to solving problems, but also the context for establishing the rationality of one's knowledge and actions, and it presupposes one's involvement in social life as well as the functioning of a sphere within which, "reunited as members of the public, citizens express themselves without any constraints, with the guaranteed right of gathering and uniting, of expressing and making public their own opinion about issues of general interest in a free manner" (in Marga 111). In this case, the sphere mentioned is the 'public sphere' or the 'opinion sphere' (*öffentlichkeit*).

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas analyzed the concept of public sphere based on the principle of interdisciplinarity, the necessity of crossing disciplinary boundaries being obvious as no single discipline and no multidisciplinary approach can tackle its complexity.

> Not just ordinary language (especially as it bears the imprint of bureaucratic and mass media jargon) but also the sciences – particularly jurisprudence, political science, and sociology – do not seem capable of replacing traditional categories like "public" and "private", "public sphere" and "public opinion" with more precise terms (Habermas, *The Structural Transformation…*1).

At a time when sociological functionalism exerted a significant influence on the theoretical field, Habermas pointed out that conducting research on the public sphere also presupposes adopting the principle of combining the functional approach with the historical one. Moreover, to illustrate the term, Habermas resorts to "the liberal model of publicity" (Marga 112), analyzing the evolution of the public sphere from liberalism to late modernity and setting the reality of the public sphere against the normative basis the latter claims.

> Still, publicity continues to be an organizational principle of our political order. It is apparently more and other than a mere scrap of liberal ideology that a social democracy could discard without harm. If we are successful in gaining a historical understanding of the structures of this complex that today, confusedly enough, we subsume under the heading "public sphere", we can hope to attain thereby not only sociological clarification of the concept, but a systematic comprehension of our own society from the perspective of one of its central categories (Habermas, *The Structural Transformation…* 4-5).

The public sphere can be interpreted as a form of communication whose most basic way of manifestation is the discussion. The media in which this it can take place are communication media like the press, the radio, and the television. Habermas perceives the public sphere as a field of our social life in which the public opinion can be formed and that, in principle, all citizens have access to.

In terms of the object of communication, the public sphere can be classified into: the literary sphere and the political sphere. Habermas focuses his research upon the public sphere whose object is the state power and which mediates between the state and society.

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Nevertheless, both the sphere and the space *consist of matter* and can hardly be understood without considering the idea of matter; and because they contain matter, the sphere and the space alike are *tridimensional* and express the coexistence of real world objects, their position, distance, size, form and colour, in other words, they imply the idea of finite, which is measured against time, hence the organic relationship between space and time. Cornel Haranguş points out that "space defines the external relationships among things, their coverage and volume, and time represents the succession, duration, simultaneity, coexistence and rhythm of the processes and changes these things undergo"; that a space exists within a time interval and, in its turn, time must be understood as "spatialized time". This spatialization of time is represented as "a line along which one can project the movement

from the past towards the future or the other way round, like in a simple, animated geometry", in which time appears both as an infinite flat surface as well as one in motion; "the elapsing time is the one conceived or imagined as an infinite diversity, be it in motion or motionless" (Haranguş 154-168).

This reveals that, at a conceptual level, both Space and Time can be presented from the perspective offered by the existent types of description: logical, categorial, phenomenological, material. The logical description of time occurs early in history, manifesting in the Parmenidian being's space, as a finite, spherical, nongeometrical space, characterized by the unique feature of existing, in other words, of *being*. In this description, there is a purely logical, ideal space at the core of which lies the concept of identity. Tudor Vianu points out that "the tense used as a representation in the usage of a certain verb is not a mere line, but rather a perspective. No one experiences actions in the past or future from the present, or in a future perceived from the past, or in a past oriented towards an even more distant past. The empirical structure of time is determined by perspectives" (Vianu qtd. in Haranguş 161).

The categorial description of space is typical of the conceptual framework of Democrites, Euclid, and Newton. Space is objective, independent of the movement of objects, and has the same geometrical features everywhere. The phenomenological description of space is present in the works of I. Kant, Husserl and Heidegger (Haranguş 168). According to the latter, space is not within the subject and the subject is not considered as if it were situated in space. It is the ontological subject, the Being, that is the space.

The material description of space is mainly found in cosmology, in socio-humanistic sciences, in history and geography. Space is limited by time and depends on it, it presupposes movement, it is an objectivization of time and, when perceived as quadric-dimensional, time appears as a dimension of space (Ibidem 168-169).

The representation of movement as spatialized time is achieved through the contraposition of the present against the two other dimensions: past and future. If the present is extended in the other two directions ad infinitum, time becomes eternity. Mihai Eminescu refers to it as "the dead time's body is lying down to become eternity" (Eminescu, *Scrisoarea I*).

An analysis carried out by Eugen Coşeriu based on the delineation of the functions of language in Plato's *Sophist* between *naming* and *saying* reveals that the time that is *named* is linear, chronological or absolute, whereas the time that is *said* is a "complex, perspective-

determined time, as verbal tenses do not refer to the chronological or absolute time, or the time defined by means of a calendar, but rather the relative time, viewed from the speaker's perspective and, therefore, from the moment-of-speaking perspective" (Haranguş 161).

In classical mechanics, this spatialized time is referred to as cause. In its case, the problem of temporal irreversibility, time's arrow, is not yet clearly envisaged. The space belongs to ontic-ontological structures of the Being which, from a structural point of view, includes time as well. Time is no longer defined in Kantian terms just as "a condition of the possibility of getting to know phenomena, but also the condition of the possibility of the existence of phenomena" (Ibidem 168).

The material description of time and space can be identified in

> [...] the empirical concept of time and space, in other words in the notions of these concepts formed on the basis of the realistically interpreted experience. And, since the common or science-related experience cannot be defined in terms of pure time and pure space, but rather in terms of a series of objects in movement, the notions of space and time that are specific to this type of ontology are closely correlated with the objects and their movement. Thus, time and space appear to define the relations which determine the movement of objects. Overall, the material description of time corresponds to relationist conceptions on time (Haranguş 162).

Such conceptions of space have occurred in the philosophies of the great civilizations since the dawn of history. From the oldest preserved piece of writing, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the reader learns that the space of the real world, influenced by the movement of matter, is limited and, beyond this limit, there is the space of eternity, accessible only to gods and those men whom gods have placed among themselves, like Utnapishtim, the survivor of the great ancestral diluvium. It is in this space – separated by *the Waters of Death* from the vital, natural, human space – that the partly human, partly godlike king of the city-state of Uruk enters, yet not to remain inside it, but rather to look here for the elixir of life and take it back to his own space (world). He comes from within a space limited by distance and time, willing to return to it with the solution of turning it into an everlasting space, of uniting it with the eternity. For him and his world, desire remains unfulfilled, the specific nature of spaces being determined by gods. What Gilgamesh attempted to do at the dawn of history, man also tries to achieve today by means of a virtual space which corresponds to the space within which the epic hero was in search of the elixir of life, with the notable difference that, nowadays, anyone in the proximity of an electronic video system can access, without much effort, the virtual space created by television. Another difference is that barriers have been overcome and, nowadays, the television and the radio broadcast across the Universe without any limitations.

Ever since Gilgamesh's time, millennia have elapsed and civilizations have disappeared or taken shape. It is the level of civilization that determines man's perception of space. In an attempt to achieve a better insight into space-related concepts, the present paper follows the course of time and attempts to highlight the metamorphoses of these concepts. Great characters, who are genuine reference points in universal history, like some philosophers of antiquity – Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle and many others – were particularly interested in such concepts. Pythagoras' scientific and religious perspectives on time were inseparable (Mallinger 27). His points of view are somewhat intermingled. Thus, he believed in the transmigration of a soul through various life forms (human, animal, vegetal) as a condition for the soul to reach immortality or to avoid the limitations of time and space. This idea rooted in his erudition ultimately eliminates the limitations of space.

Plato develops a spiritual, pantheistic concept of space, according to which space is an extension of the divine that can be reached by mediating pure ideas, by means of mathematical systems (Plato, *Republica* 282). Aristotle understands space as something that is physically determined and not belonging to the metaphysical dimension. He considers metaphysics to be the science of spiritual life or the superior state of abstract perception. Moreover, he perceives metaphysics not only as a basic form of philosophy, but also as some theological knowledge or science. As for space, Aristotle views it as something which comprises substance and essence (*ousia*). In his work *The Metaphysics*, he concludes that a particular substance is a combination of matter and form and subsequently distinguishes between matter as a substance or substrate and matter as a form or a finite thing which, in its turn, comprises something (Aristotle, *Metafizica* 218). For instance, a house may consist of different substances like stone, wood, or various composite materials; and as for the form of the substance of the house itself, the house is what our visual perception can sense as a finite construction or a finite thing. In this case, any building which has a certain form that expresses the idea of house may be referred to as house. In fact, it is the detailed evaluation of matter and form that ultimately transmits the idea of house. In relativistic physics, space is described in terms of physical knowledge, and therefore as something material, its features pertaining to relativity and zonality being comparable to those of time" (Haranguş 168).

Some western scientists and even theologists preferred to be burnt at the stake and become martyrs rather than retract their views on space. Nicolaus Copernicus takes over the ancient Greek Aristarchus of Samos's heliocentric theory and summarizes it by identifying its basic conceptual criteria as follows: there is no central point around which heavenly spheres

or bodies move; the centre of the Earth is not the centre of the universe or space, but rather the centre of atmospheric gravity and lunar attraction; all bodies gravitate towards the sun, which explains why the sun is the centre of the universe; the distance ray from the sun to the highest point in the sky is higher than the one from the earth to the sun, and the celestial vault as perceived from down on earth is situated at a higher point than the distance from the earth to the sun; whatever state manifests up in the sky is not rooted in it but rather in the states of the earth. The earth together with the elements within its circumference completes a rotation around the fixed poles over a calendar day with the Heaven remaining unchanged throughout this period. What is perceived by us as a sun-induced state is not in fact a state of the sun but rather a state of the earth and of our sphere (Barabas 57-64).

Galileo Galilei ushered us into a new scientific era. The great Albert Einstein refers to him as the father of modern science, and professor Stephen Hawking, with reference to Galileo's accomplishments, also argues that, more than anyone else, he was the father of modern science. His findings include technological breakthroughs such as the telescope. He is the champion of heliocentricism. He discovered Jupiter's fourth satellite which now bears his name. His strong support of Copernicus's theory of heliocentricism (Galileo Galilei 153) caused controversy between him and his contemporary world which was still dependent on geocentricism at the time.

Modern philosophers show a deep interest in the theory of space. Their attempt to distinguish between substantialist and relationist theories on time and space appears to be inefficient in terms of classification as it only achieves a categorial and material description of these concepts. The logical and phenomenological descriptions of time and space are either omitted or tackled only superficially. That explains why Democritus and Newton's conceptions are treated as similar to those of Kant and Bergson, despite the great differences between them. Obviously, Democritus and Newton' approaches correspond to Kant's categorial – "phenomenological" – description, whereas Bergson's to the "phenomenological and material description" (Haranguş 161). Kant's purpose was to combine reason with experience and to raise the former above traditional and metaphysical philosophy (from idea to body). He hoped to put an end to an era of speculations according to which everything outside experience was perceived as supporting theories and, therefore, opposing Hume's Skepticism (Loewer "Kant's Synthetic A Priori", n.pag.). As he concludes, there is always a conflict between philosophy and universal human reason, and the existence of the things which are exterior to us should be assumed alongside our belief in the existence of God and,

should anyone doubt this, they should support their views with clear evidence. Kant highlights a recurrent idea throughout history, namely that all cognitions conform to the concrete, and he takes metaphysics a step further by claiming that it is the concrete that must conform to cognition. In simple terms, Kant argues that our experiences are structured into necessary configurations for our mind. The shadows of the mind and the experience of such structures become united at an abstract level. All human experiences share a number of essential structures. The concepts of cause and effect – which pertain to the more largely encompassing concepts of space and time – ultimately become integrated into the human experience. What Kant refers to as the empirical concepts of time and space, in other words the notions of these concepts based on the realistically interpreted experience, might in fact be part of a material description of time and space. The notions of time and space are understood in terms of their relation to things and the latter's dynamics. The quantification of pure time and space is hardly possible and the experience resulting from scientific research "appears as a relation characteristic of the movement of objects" (Haranguş 162).

Albert Michelson and Edward Morley found evidence that there is no absolute space whilst attempting, as part of an experiment, to determine the speed of light in relation to the ethereal / absolute space. Thus, they "concluded that absolute space is nonexistent, and that the representation of absolute space has the same ontological condition with absolute time" (Idem 154).

The inner contradiction of Newton's physics is that between the categorial, descriptive character of his concepts of space and absolute time on the one hand and, on the other hand, the explanatory character of his analyses which essentially lies in his "usage of the idea of force. This contradiction occurs in the basal ontology of Newton's physics" (Idem 164).

In classical physics,

> [...] the relativistic concepts of space and time developed by A. Einstein are not significantly different from the Newtonian ones. Though they were initially considered revolutionary, nowadays relativistic physics is considered a generalization of Newtonian physics. Space and time become relative in relation to the observer as well as to the real movement of objects. A first instance of relativization consists in giving up the idea of simultaneity which could no longer be considered absolute in relation to various observers, as a result of the limited speed of a light signal. Space and time become local, zonal, and dependent on the reference point that is the subject / observer. But one needs mentioning that relativistic physics is, in this way, far away from turning space and time into something subjective and, thus, from transferring them in the phenomenological plane of subjective experience (Haranguş 164).

A second instance of relativization relates time as well as space to the idea of movement through the idea of causality. We do not experience things directly or have a nominal world and whatever experience we acquire occurs in our convenient phenomenological world bearing the meanings of our existence. This assertion has turned out to be prophetic and, nowadays, it is easier to understand it in the context of interactive communication achieved by means of television whose space is so enlarged that it penetrates our homes, causing us to participate actively within its space. This space is in fact ours and, at the same time, its own virtual space by virtue of the phenomenology which we are absorbed in and empathize with so much.

2.2. Public space and discourse

Nowadays, modern technologies offer a multitude of options for creating various types of public spaces: the open public space, the non-localized public space, the non-dialogic public space, in which mediatized symbolic forms can be expressed and received by a large number of individuals.

The open public space was shaped by great civilizations such as the Greek and the Roman ones. The Greeks referred to this concept by using the term *agora* which firstly denotes *a large place* in the centre of the town, where several streets meet or cross one another, a place in the neighbourhood of the main administrative institutions and reserved for public meetings; secondly, the term *agora* also denoted *the people's gathering* that normally took place in a place called 'the square'. These specific forms and meanings have been preserved, to a great extent, up to the present. The open public space is the same *square* in a town where cultural, artistic, social and political events generally take place; yet, it is worth mentioning that nowadays, due to the media, there is *an enlarged public space*[1]. The same applies to the concept of public gathering which is now understood as a phenomenon related to the public audience and which is much larger due to the involvement of the mass media. The main changes occurring in the public space are generated by and reflect the great influence of television.

Hannah Arendt, one of the most prestigious authors in the field of political philosophy, advocates, in her writings, the idea of return to some lost meanings with regard to the public

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[1] The most widely-known modern day manifestations include "the town's anniversary", concerts supported by political parties, cultural and political manifestations, "European capital", other celebrations.

space and communication and supports cultural values against the futility and the precariousness of the human condition. As people in modern society spend more time in the private space than they used to in the past, they are afraid of admitting their fears and attempt to forget that they may suffer. That is why it would be natural for them to return to the old meanings of the agora, where the ancient Greeks used to gather several times a year in order to experience together, openly and intensely, with exaltation and lucidly, the deepest sufferings and the most terrible of their fears. In the agora, they took part in plenary meetings both as individuals and as representatives of their society, bringing in their dreams, accomplishments and failures, communicating joyfully and actually living the act of communication with pathos, often even with passion.

As she brings into discussion the idea of *public sphere*, Hannah Arendt points out that the term *public* refers to everything that pertains to visibility, to life itself, to the world itself, to whatever is common to everyone and is entirely different from the individualized / personalized space we have in this world:

> Since our feeling for reality depends utterly upon appearance and therefore upon the existence of a public realm into which things can appear out of the darkness of sheltered existence, even the twilight which illuminates our private and intimate lives is ultimately derived from the much harsher light of the public realm (Arendt 47).

Hence, what really differentiates a public space from a private one is *visibility*. It is through visibility that space becomes the place where the idea of *sharing* and, implicitly, of publicity, competition, and appearance really matters and where the concepts of greatness, ethics, politics, heroism and prominence are revealed, displayed, and shared by others.

In the public space, every individual strives to achieve communion with one or more individuals, thus leading to the formation of a community, a structure which highlights in fact a feature of mankind, namely the social. Nevertheless, it is the exacerbation of this *social* feature that has allegedly weakened the bond between public space/ public domain and private space in the modern and postmodern world. The newly emerged type of social is imputed its aspect of pseudo-space of interaction, a causal nexus within which the individual no longer takes any action, but merely behaves as an economic producer, a consumer, and a city dweller[1].

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[1] The difference is that, in larger cities, the open public space has widened via electronic publicity pannels, which broadcast/ present the events going on in the city square as well as adverts.

Before December 1989, in our country, social life was characterized by a type of equality based on conformity and non-reflexive consensus that turned communication into an alienated one in which mentalities of avoidance, uniformity and, implicitly, of neglect of *the other*'s uniqueness were practised. Moreover, at the time, the main goal appeared to be the destruction of the other's uniqueness, all the way down to every individual having the same daily menu, a situation reflected in the use of 'ration cards' or the only type of 'salami' on offer at the grocer's.

The interference of the public sphere in the private one was encouraged by the exacerbated optimism concerning the progress of the communist society which, at the time, was perceived as leading to *universal well-being*. In fact, this mechanism uprooted the individual self. The individual was also expected to aim for conformity as part of the traditional festival *Cântarea României*. This explains why, after December 1989, the entire scaffolding used to support the aforementioned social element collapsed - alongside the economic system it supported - quite quickly and with resentment. Only a few insignificant traces of it have been preserved to the present day.

As Seyla Benhabib remarks, it is important to build an articulate critical approach to this theory about the necessity to recuperate durability within public space whilst considering a current social reality which is far too complex to simply let society lag behind, stuck at the borderline between the public and private spheres (Benhabib 97-98). Another analyst, Ronald Arnett, criticizes those who have suggested that postmodernism could be a solution to the destructive power of the social but, at the same time, he highlights that it must be the duty of the postmodern world to claim back the communicative difference between the public and private spheres.

In his turn, Jürgen Habermas argues that society needs efficient critical methods for the adequate assessment of modern social pathologies. In other words, he advances the theory of social action within the public space in accordance with some universally valid norms and criteria. At a time when it has become fashionable to attack or ridicule others as part of media dialogues, Habermas encourages a culture of public tolerance towards differences among individuals and the freedom to choose from various forms of communicative interaction.

According to Habermas and his exegetes, the ideal coordinates in the philosophy of communication should be the following:

- approaching communication not as an empirical phenomenon, but rather from the perspective of the necessary conditions for reaching the immanent goal of any act of communication, namely general consensus;

- resorting to universal, formal pragmatics that analyses mechanisms of manipulation and, thus, facilitates the explanation of an act of communication that is systematically distorted: this means that the validity of social norms is based on the intersubjectivity of understanding various behavioural intentions as well as on the general admittance of obligations;

- offering a connecting bridge between the two types of approaches which have been considered separately so far: one pertaining to communication and the other to the structure and function of social roles;

- regarding the public space as an organizational principle for the structures invested with power by the government;

- acknowledging public opinion as a form of consciousness of the public sphere;

- considering the public sphere as a link between politics and morals inasmuch as it manifests itself as an intelligible unity of individual goals, thus ensuring the bond between legitimacy and morality (Finlayson 48-50).

In the evolution of modern society, Habermas identifies a progression from a public that supports the rational participation in problems of public interest to a consumerist public, hence the frequently encountered reference to our society as *a consumerist society*.

In the context of this newly emerged type of society, the public space is no longer the central square intended as a public debate area where issues of general interest can be discussed and opinions can be formed. Public opinion no longer consists only of rational, open discussions, but also includes manipulation and control. In the case of a budget rectification, decision-makers no longer await public debate requirements to be met, but rather take action through a government ordinance on the pretext of the imminent visit of a financial body and the necessity to establish a new financial support agreement. On the other hand, the current mass media is, in its turn, to blame for abounding with undemanding products, and not in the sense of failing to offer occurring events the necessary *visibility* by simply being co-present, but rather for its manipulative publicity[1] (Calhoun 149-162).

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[1] Authors like Thomas McCarthy, Nicholas Garnham, Moishe Postone consider that the Habermas's conceptual framework bears the mark of the exclusivist and ideological character of the liberal bourgeois public sphere and that his theory is hardly applicable in the case of a pluralist society. According to them, there is no such unique model of public opinion, since different societies develop a variety of models with specific procedural and institutional characteristics. They also consider that Jürgen Habermas is too attached to a certain tradition

2.3. Virtual communities and the reconstruction of media space

The broadcasting format of TV shows has almost always aimed at a below average target audience, with an indefinite status corresponding to the image of the loyal tabloid buyer. This phenomenon of tabloidization bears a particular significance. It goes back to the newly emerged western-European models right after the 1989 Romanian revolution and has undoubtedly gained momentum. The phenomenon as such is not a negative one as it is rooted in modern man's lack of time, who appears to be caught up in the whirl of a life in which the present is always equivalent to the immediate future. Scandal news and breaking news stories are of utmost importance to the detriment of events with a real impact on the social and political life of a community, events which simply do not *fit in* the tabloid format.

The absence of meaning in these forms abounding with sensationalism and seemingly emerging in response to a limited, perverted and immoral horizon of expectations, ultimately results in a reversal of the fundamental scale of values. Issues of interest in public and personal agendas are superficially changed, and discontent is forgotten or dissimulated. The audience rating and the amount of publicity increase, and everybody is content for the time being. Then there follow discussions regarding the young generation who choose role models from among film characters, soap opera actors, footballers, even bandits and criminals, and name their offspring after them. According to regulation no. 40 / 2004 issued by the National Audiovisual Council, radio and television stations must ensure a certain impartiality and balance in their broadcasts and thus create the adequate context for the audience to form its own opinions freely, by presenting the main opposing viewpoints whenever issues are publicly debated.

In the 2005 Open Society Institute Monitoring Report, *Television across Europe: Regulation, Policy, Independence*, it is mentioned that "reality shows and television contests also draw large audiences while news programmes concentrate on gory images, crimes and pilfering" (187). The programme-related strategy of commercial television stations is based

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and, ultimately, they criticise him for the ideal-normative and radical procedural character of his model. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that Habermas himself viewed tradition as a distorted form of communication founded upon violence- and dominance-related tacit presuppositions. Habermas replied in due time to the other instances of criticism, arguing that, as far as the validity of the norms is concerned, there are likely to be as many kinds of audiences as controversial debates.

on the audience's taste and preferences confirmed by the high audience rating at a national level. Accordingly, there is a wide range of film and serial productions, newscasts, sitcoms, television contests, soap operas, and the never-missing talk shows.

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Since 2002, the number of television stations and entertainment shows has increased. Some examples include: *Big Brother*, *Trădaţi din dragoste (Betrayed Out of Love)* (Prima TV); *Din Dragoste (Out of Love), Ciao!*, *Test de fidelitate (Faithfulness Test)* (Antena 1); *Dansez pentru tine (Dancing for you)* (Pro TV); *(Surprize, surprize!) Surprise, surprise!* (TVR); *Nora pentru mama mea!* (*A daughter-in-law for my mother*) (Kanal D) – all of which are productions on the top list of audience rating grids. Nevertheless, there are also television programmes which aim higher than this type of entertainment, such as *Genialii (Briliant Men)* (Antena 1), or *Zece pentru România (Ten for Romania)* (Realitatea TV and TVR). The emergence of news channels (Realitatea TV, Antena 3, N 24) seemed to stop the tabloidization of the news media, allotting the necessary media space to serious social and political analyses and leaving facile entertainment to general stream channels as well as those aimed at women, children, and adolescents, such as Acasa TV, Euforia, Romantica. Millions of people choose to watch one breaking news channel or another learn about the latest events in the world:

> Romanians are important consumers of television, in contrast with most western countries which have been experiencing a severe drop in the audience rating as online resources and the social media – blogs, social interaction networks – have become increasingly important (Drăgan 158).

This is also true in the case of breaking news channels that - with the exception of social and political events, which are broadcast live 24 hours a day - abound with investigations of breaking news scandals, and newscasts always begin with shocking crimes that have occurred in Romania or in other parts of the world. The number of niche television stations has been increasing, taking away the audience of the main television stations; yet, despite the large number of television stations, they are relatively reduced in terms of profile and, on the market, there has been a certain mimetic behavior on the part of the newly emerged television stations (Drăgan 68). Firstly, the niche stations take over programmes, presenters and editorial formats from the general stream television networks that they are affiliated with. A major consequence of this phenomenon is the audience's migration within

the same media trust; in other words, this may be considered a kind of internal cannibalism, with no audience being genuinely drawn from other competitors.

Quality- and quantity-related research in the field highlights these similarities on the television market and, occasionally, reveal the poor editorial offer available to a certain segment of the audience, usually the active and educated public, with an average social status or higher. Sociological research has identified some of the consumption patterns of the Romanian television viewer. According to this research, active people watch television programmes particularly in the evening; moreover, though they rarely read the TV program, they are familiar with the broadcasting times of the shows; they frequently choose to watch a particular show by zapping or based on an ad-hoc decision; they tend to watch a wide range of news shows "to find out the truth in-between". As part of the relationship between mass media and audiences, "the hypodermic needle" effect may become evident, as described in a theory which advances the idea of a mass media "[…] 'injecting' values, ideas and information directly into each individual in a passive and atomized audience, thereby producing a direct and unmediated effect" (O'Sullivan et al. 137). This model – rooted in the concern and pessimism that came to be associated with the rapid expansion of electronic mass media – represents in fact a popular extension of the stimulus-response model that earlier research in the field of audiences and mass media effects was based on. As far as the process of mass communication is concerned, the reduction of this effect to a process of mere inoculation, in which mass media messages are inculcated into the minds of the individuals forming the mass audience, has always been a challenging research issue. There are fears that such a mass media model could have negative effects on the audience. These fears are justified by the fact that this model might exert a huge amount of power, even omnipotence on audiences, an idea which is still very much present in numerous debates such as those referring to mass media and violence in society (O'Sullivan et al. 137).

2.4. The mediatization of the public space

Television consumers with an average and high social status keep complaining about the numerous similitudes between TV programmes and the repetitiveness of the breaking news. All TV channels broadcast the same news and contain a similar amount of violence, of sensationalism, of 'violent language', in a word, they promote the same tabloidization (IMAS et al. n.pag).

Furthermore, the tabloid format of TV shows targeting the younger generations is also perceived negatively; however, it is generally accepted due to the awareness of the differences between generations as well as of the publicity-related and economic constraints affecting commercial television stations. The impartiality of television stations – public and commercial alike – as well as of the political and economic mindset they promote is often called into question. Tabloidization is essentially a means of avoiding serious issues. The rush of commercial television stations for audience and publicity along with the media consumers' unadmitted appetence for sensational news and facile entertainment - as it reflects in the unusually high audience rating achieved by this type of shows - (Drăgan and Cismaru 160-161) creates a vicious circle in which serious information, profound analyses, and cultural programmes seem to have no place.

Nevertheless, people's expectations cannot be limited to what they watch on TV. Media consumers also wish to have access to information and analyses which can help them broaden their social and cultural knowledge. They expect to find and believe they can attain a certain level of political culture and achieve political consciousness by watching the analysts in talk-shows that television grids abound in. They attempt to see whether their opinions about various members of the political class are confirmed or not by the way things are envisaged by specialists in the field.

There is an acute need for a new generation of political and civic leaders educated in the spirit of democratic and European values. Undoubtedly, this would lead to the consolidation of the parties and, implicitly, to a change in the image of the current political class.

All these expectations from the mass media can find an answer in its educational role, through the gradual introduction into its grids of formats which – without scaring away the audience with issues that are difficult to comprehend or approached by means of scientific or elitist language – could offer an alternative to facile entertainment. With very few exceptions, the talk-show is a prime-time show. Regardless of being public or commercial, general stream or thematic, television stations broadcasting talk-shows normally schedule them in the television grid within a specific time interval (7-10 p.m.).

Since the above-mentioned format is one which generates reactions and prompts individuals to take attitude (Charaudeau et al. 110-112) and where talk-show conversations are seemingly informal and uninhibited, classical scheduling strategies recommend it as a serial TV show that is typically broadcast over the week or as a weekly show preferably

broadcast on a midweek day. If the identity of a TV channel is outlined in terms of its prime-time breaking news profile, then the barometer of its media temperament might be considered the talk-show, which is normally scheduled within the same time interval, from Mondays to Thursdays.

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

In any sociological study of communication, it is crucial to define basic concepts such as mass communication, medium, mass media, media, channel, to outline the main features of media communication and to describe the main scientific approaches to media communication in the field of communication sociology or communication sciences. The concepts of mass communication, medium, and mass media overlap only to some extent, each of them bearing specific meanings and having particular features.

The first distinction that needs to be drawn is between direct communication and media communication, the latter including all the forms of communication in which communicational exchanges occur with some technical support. In this case, one can distinguish between mediated communication, in which the technical support (such as the telephone, the letter, or the e-mail) facilitates the communicational exchange between two individuals, on the one hand, and media communication, which can range from traditional mass media (press, radio, television) to the latest means of communication, on the other hand.

As James Lull points out, the original meaning of the term *mass media* implies "a source capable of producing mass messages, a massive transmission channel involving a mass communication process, a mass audience, and which results in the creation of a degraded mass culture" (Lull 53). He also defines communication as a conceptual meeting ground where interpersonal relationships and technological innovations, co-economic stimuli and socio-cultural ambitions, facile entertainment and serious information intersect one another.

Mass communication has specific features, structural elements, and functions: the source transforms the information into a message; the sender turns the message into signals, electrical impulses; the channel ensures that the information is conveyed by means of signals in the air, waves, cable, or wire; the receiver – the radio or the television – turns the information into a message; the recipient takes over the message and decodes it. Elements of distortion may appear throughout this process. At present, there are confusions and even conceptual ambiguities in analyzing this field of mass communication, since the notions of

mass communication, mass media, mass communication tools, and communication media are used as synonyms. Mass communication is not a definable concept, but rather a common-sense category that is used to gather a number of different phenomena under the same conceptual umbrella:

> Mass communication is the practice and product of providing leisure entertainment and information to an unknown audience by means of corporately financed, industrially produced, state-regulated high technology, privately consumed commodities in the modern print, screen, audio and broadcast media (O'Sullivan et al. 173).

The notion of mass media refers not only to the technical support and means of transmitting messages, but also and particularly to the characteristic of broadcast messages of being massive, whereas the concept of mass communication refers to the entire communication process.

The term *broadcast*[1] is very much used in the field of audiovisual media and refers to the transmission of a message by means of television or radio, without having the possibility to exert any control over the receiver of the message. On the other hand, the term *narrowcastin*g refers to the situation in which the broadcast only covers a limited area and is in fact a programme grid strategy targeting a narrow niche of audience rather than a wide-ranging one (Ionică 107). The channel of communication – the phone cable – refers to the technical means of transmitting the signals; it limits the transmitted content as well as the employed codes, which means that every media produces a discourse that has its own specific textual grammar. In a much broader sense, the term also designates an organization operating in the audiovisual field.

The notion of 'means of mass communication' results from the English-Romanian translation of the term 'mass media' which can designate either the whole range of methods of communication, or a media institution.

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[1] The term *broadcast* has two basic meanings: firstly, that of emitting a radio or television programme by means of a terrestrial emitter, via cable or satellite (the emission process also includes the transmission of programmes from one person to another, or the idea of retransmission consent with the purpose of retransmitting a certain content to the public, yet without including here the communication service providers which give information or send other messages based on an individual request, their services ranging from telecopying to creating electronic databases and other similar services – a meaning which is defined by the Audiovisual Media Services Law number 504/2002, Article 1, point a) in accordance with the European norms in the field; and secondly, that of *spreading* or of including a show into the programme of a television station.

John Fiske identifies three main categories of means of communication: firstly, the voice, the face, and the body which help to achieve interpersonal communication; secondly, the representational means of communication such as the book, the painting, the photograph, and the architecture; and thirdly, the technological means of communication such as the telephone, radio, television, and the Internet (Fiske 78-81).

However, the extent to which the aforementioned categories of means of communication overlap should not be neglected and attention should be paid to the similarities as well as the differences among them. The concept of 'channel' generally denotes a means used for transmitting the signal, regardless of speaking here about sound waves, Hertzian waves, light waves, phone cable or optical fiber. However, one may strictly consider the basic connotation of 'medium', that is a physical or technical support used for converting the message into a signal which can be transmitted via a channel. From the perspective of the medium of communication, what is really important is not the meaning of the message, but rather the way in which this message is constructed. Each newly emerged medium has resulted in differentiations from, adaptations to, and a re-grouping of the functions performed by the previous media. The spread of television has led to progressive changes in the radio and printed press' style of communication, causing them to adapt to the exigencies of competition. Such actions of differentiating among media functions, recuperating them, and re-grouping them are part of three adaptive mechanisms by means of which the media respond to the challenges posed by the emergence of a new medium.

3. DIALOGUE

3.1. Dialogue and mediatized debate

Let us begin with an unquestionable conclusion: "The real, persuasive and glowing entry of the debate into the public scene in Europe occurred around 1960, when the intention to promote this genre on television came alongside the rigour of having a subject or issue to discuss as well as the use of this issue's persistent topicality and of statistics" (Brusini and James 22).

Metaphorically called a 'round table', in accordance with the French terminology of the school of print media, then addressed as a televised debate, the talk show has recently become a general concept employed in the field of television that refers to the filmed, in-studio interaction between a moderator and one or several guests. The shift from one use of the term to another reflects not only the various ages of the audiovisual discourse in their chronological order and in terms of the technological development, but also a gradual evolution of the editorial vision and structure.

Nowadays, in an attempt to describe this phenomenon in more adequate terms, such a form of media dialogue is perceived as creating a deliberative space where a journalist acting as a moderator alongside a variable number of guests and/or media actors, approach an issue of public interest in a conversational and convivial register. Moreover, what this form of dialogue has gained by shifting from the concept of televised debate to that of talk show - thereby merging the idea of show with that of mere talking - resides in the constant use of dramatization and sensationalism, in the exploitation of feelings, in other words, in the decentralization of a structure which threatened to become rigid due to an excess of formality had it remained at the level proposed to the audience by the televisual discourse in the 1950s-1960s. This was a time when television was intended to be perceived as 'cultural' and used the monopoly in order to impose on the audience certain products, which allegedly had a certain cultural value (documentaries, adaptations of classical work, debates) and which significantly impacted the taste of the audience.

In the 1990s, the televisual discourse attempted to explore and flatter such tastes in order to gain control over an audience as large as possible by offering the media consumer raw products which essentially reflected the talk show paradigm: bits and pieces of life,

uninhibited and ostentatious presentations of life experiences, very often extreme ones, all of them capable of satisfying a certain need for voyeurism and exhibitionism (Bourdieu 54-55).

In an attempt to bring together, within the same definition, the tradition of this genre and its latest updates, Noël Nel offers the most nuanced and perhaps the largest-encompassing characterization of this form of dialogue. He perceives it as

> […] an apotheosis of the media, the electronic transposition of the Greek tragedy contained by it and, through the collective catharsis it makes possible, an indispensable complement to democracy, the talk show ultimately represents a structure within which two forms of social representation resonate and contaminate each other: the state-show, alongside its political heroes, and the state-television together with the instantaneous socialization proposed by it during the great ideological debates (9).

During the 1990s, the same French theoretician carried out an extensive analysis of the televisual discourse, insisting on the idea that every pertinent study conducted with respect to this analysis will have to consider the communication behavior of every participant in the televised confrontation, its interactional dynamics, the scenic layout of the performance space, and the filming techniques chosen by the producer, as well as the show in terms of the its organizational and event-related context.

A very frequent and legitimate question that arises is whether the televised debate has disappeared or not, being replaced by the talk show – alongside the Americanization of televisual communication models – only at the level of the audiovisual genre list, or the two structures coexist covering distinct areas of interest and popularity. Most of mass media theoreticians acknowledge the existence of both these "dramatic and deliberative structures" (Vion 114), but they differentiate between them in terms of the media tool they use.

The term *media tool* was introduced in the field of critical assessments of the televised debate by Noël Nel, who conceived an interpretive framework that is equally applicable to both the televised debate and the talk show.

Starting from the idea that the performance dimension of audiovisual communication is generated by the media tool employed by television stations, the analyst defines this tool based on the following specific coordinates: firstly, *heterogeneity*, since in both cases (that of the televised debate and of the talk show), televised communication involves the usage of some technological as well as symbolical means such as scenography, media actors, interaction environment, enunciation behaviours; then, the *network*, since the media tool operates in fact as a network of institutional parameters in the sense that the production of a televised show is strictly conditioned by a series of specific normative circumstances, for

instance the moderator appearing in the television studio – a space which is specifically equipped for broadcasting – is coordinated, with the aid of an intercommunication system, by the producer and the broadcast director, while the latter is directly involved in ensuring the optimum coordination of cameras, thus creating the specific visibility and performance-related conditions; finally, the *strategy*, as the media tool includes a network of heterogeneous elements performing a strategic role and transposes, into the televisual flux, the communication project that characterizes not just the show and broadcast team, but also the entire vision of the media channel itself (Nel 23).

Thus, as a system of representations participating in the creation of cognitive functions, the postmodern televisual discourse involves two levels of analysis: a *figurative* one, pertaining to the configurations made during the filming and broadcasting process; and an *operational* one, applicable to the transformations occurring at the level of signifying practices as well as of an entire set of epistemological and instrumental characteristics. An adequate critical interpretation both of the televised debate and of the talk show must take into consideration the specific dynamics of each of these two programs, using the latest concepts in the field of the theory of representation, notions pertaining to the epistemology of communication, semiology, and the analysis of the discourse effects.

There is a series of fundamental operators lying at the foundation of the elements of representation theory in Noël Nel's study: to see and understand - at the level of perception; to think – on a cognitive dimension; and to believe - at the level of affection and credibility.

Depending on the route chosen by these fundamental operators, two distinct levels can be identified in the transmission of the audiovisual message: the *figuration* level (resulting from a series of specific codes which induce a reality effect and generate a straight space-time line as a faithful copy of reality); the level of *representation* (the creation of a televisual universe by means of codes and functions which lead figuration towards a possible fiction) (Nel 13).

In other words, by having a wide range of technical and conceptual means at its disposal, the current televisual discourse proposes to the media receiver – through the tool used for mediatizing the debate and, in particular, the talk show – a specific perceptive model combining three different elements: *seeing*, *understanding*, and *participating*.

Despite the continuous and irreversible, imagistic and ideational flow he is exposed to, the media consumer keeps for himself a series of reference points or elements of minimum stability which sets the real into a symbolical order (Nel 10), certain principles of

repetitiveness producing series effects, specific ways of operation which create one's own time dimension, and a staging of reality that is specific to every program.

According to G. Lochard, the mediatizing tool allows the informed observer to notice principles of internal organization which correspond not only to the televised debate and the talk show, but also to the televisual communication in general, as every televised program is the outcome of an institutional logic transposed into a communication project (116-118). Thus, a televised dialogue is, predetermined to various degrees by its position on the media market, by the identity and resources of the media channel that produces it and broadcasts it; there may also be a significant percentage of unpredictability, a risk margin, which can hardly be estimated in the case of the media tool, particularly as regards the situation of live broadcasts, which may lead one to the conclusion that, in general, such a media product represents an open framework of interaction.

Within this framework of interaction, media actors use the mediatizing tools in accordance with their own vision and interests of representations, yet without being able to change the "partially determining, partially emergent" (Lochard 46) character of filmed interaction.

From the point of view of media practices, the televised debate and the talk show initiate and develop specific communication projects. Although these communication projects are different varying from one broadcast to another, they involve, at the level of invariants, three unifying dimensions: the finality – both formats install a dynamic network of relationships among the participating media actors, the latter receiving a status and functional communication roles only for the duration of the filmed interaction in case; the assessment perspectives – both the televised debate and the talk show promote a distinct perspective over the social, economic, political and cultural context in which they are carried out, as well as a particular way of relating to the present events; an interaction framework – each of the two formats projects the interactions among the media actors, moderator and the audience differently (Nel 34).

Thus, by identifying the distinct combination of the scenic and symbolic components of each format, the communication projects and the basic elements of the mediatizing tools, one can notice the differences between the televised debate and the talk show in the postmodern televisual discourse.

3.2. The dialogue as a network of codes

How does a talk show begin? At first, a person is invited by a moderator or by someone in the broadcast team to take part in a live talk show. Few things are usually communicated to him/her at this stage, for instance: the date and time; the location, television studio, or any other setting; the television channel, the moderator, the broadcast format, and the issue to be discussed. In what concerns the topic to be discussed, even though it is fixed some time in advance, it is most often subject to changes due to the fact that, once a live talk show begins, this triggers an genuine media adventure which is equally experienced by the moderator and his interlocutor(s). As soon as such an interlocutor has accepted an invitation to a talk show and is present in a television studio, this person becomes – consciously or not – an aspirant to the celebrity status and is unexpectedly subject to all the emergencies that such a status presupposes.

In contrast to the televised debate, where the participant is required to be credible, competent, combative, and persuasive, in the case of the talk show the participant is forced to remain, at least for a while, partly captive in its network, a network which might be perceived – in Lucien Sfez's terms – as "a technology of the spirit", a kind of meta-concept that is capable of substituting, in this postmodern era, the formerly obsessive terms of 'system' and 'structure'. Regarded as "an essential feature of the contemporary imaginary" (16), the term 'network' simultaneously combines, in the case of the talk show, elements of discursiveness and strategy, dominance and exchange, interiority an exhibition, in a word, the in-sight mediation of the compressed, represented social element.

With no intention of becoming metaphoric, the virtual distance between the debate and the talk show or, in other words, between the televised interview and the talk show, is that between credibility and seductiveness, competence and charisma, polemics and combativeness on the one hand, and sociability and availability on the other hand. The talk show ultimately attempts to accredit as viable and functional those features which the other audiovisual genres normally perceive as being part of a less important, rather performance-related register.

3.2.1. The media device

The entire situation of communication initiated by the talk show is – to a larger extent than in the case of other audiovisual genres – subject to the global rule of telegeny, according to which participants, moderators and guests interact with the main purpose of being seen and

the mere appreciation 'it looks good on TV' is, in the case of a talk show, is the same as being invested with legitimacy in the eyes of the audience.

It is by means of how he presents his ideas as well as his personal ability to perform in front of the television camera, that the talk show participant arrogates to himself the right to benefit the complicity of his audience – particularly of his television viewer – in relation to which he becomes a sort of "authorized enunciator" (Nel 41) of the norm and of the natural conversation that are temporarily offered to the medium. While referring to "a performance-related and, at the same time, speculative dimension" in the televised debate (11), E. Landowski also pays attention to the way in which this genre aims to involve the active television viewer as a kind of co-author of a common piece of work.

In a theatre performance, the social and spatial distance between the stage and the spectator is maintained within the same limits, whereas in the case of the talk show, thanks to the televisual device, the face of the media actor is isolated in the foreground and separated from its initial context in order to be set in a new relation of proximity with other participants in the studio as well as face-to-face with the viewer occupying in his own space. Noël Nel argues that just like the televised debate, the talk show also resorts to symbolic amplification mechanisms typical of the dramaturgical infrastructure. He seems to be ready to admit the superiority of the televised debate over the talk show, the latter appearing to him rather as a concession *à l'américaine*, made by television to "the supremacy of the audience and to the index of satisfaction," or merely as "a kind, salon discussion lacking asperity and depth, not involving any heuristics, and evoking the imaginary scenes of the stadium or of the arena" (23).

According to the French theoretician, the televised debate – viewed as a "multiple network of codes" – represents the development, within a scenic space, of "a narrative and argumentative program of the protagonists" who are exposed to the televisual device, and the question asked is "whether the talk show, [perceived] as the filmed version of a relaxed conversation, maintains its role of producing a role-model, of representing and exerting power, influence, domination or persuasion" (Ibidem 101).

The systematic analyses of the journalist discourse having this talk show structure and of the audiences typical of this genre have revealed a new, distinct form of arbitrated performance of the media actors and, at the same time, a new way of orchestrating feelings that are capable of producing changes in the personal and cognitive repertoire of the media consumer. However, if perceived superficially, this genre could be mistaken for a form of

degeneration or a facile variety of a sum of situational, conversational and discursive norms of the debate.

These awkward mutations produced in the seemingly stable harmony existent among the audiovisual genres turn this type of discourse into a real champion of the rating grids, being both contested and loved at the same time. Whilst arguing against "the truly false or falsely true debates" currently present in television, Pierre Bourdieu advances the idea of the talk show as a constraint model according to which the participant is not "a studio professional" and is unfamiliar with the rules of the game (38).

Among the reasons based on which he considers the talk show as an undesirable televised broadcast for the elite, the sociologist mentions – apparently at a phenomenological level – the false formal equality among the dialogue partners in the studio, the baffling catch-type model promoted by the specific logic of word games, the questionable preeminence of the media tool, the preparatory discussions with the guests prior to the broadcast, under the form of some quasi-repetitions, and the failure to give assistance to the discourse itself. Here the theoretician denounces the Socratic mission of the moderator, who must aid the disadvantaged to support their opinions on television, arguing that "there is a world of the good clients, who are in their element, like the fish in the water, and there are the others, the fish out of the water, who, when they are not minimally prepared, are in the situation of having to answer unasked questions" (Ibidem 39). As to what happens in front of the television cameras, Bourdieu's commentaries reveal the acknowledgement that the talk show, similarly to the other contemporary audiovisual genres, establishes a paradigm in the field.

The development of interactive television is associated with the idea of teledemocracy, the talk show itself being the emblematic expression of this feature of 'new television'. The emergence of new interactive television genres appears to "come in response to this dream of a global society transformed into an electronic agora" (Charaudeau et al. 162). There are mainly two arguments brought in favour of the idea that, in western societies, teledemocracy is about to become a reality in the context of the confrontation between the logic of power, whose temptation is to reduce "the critical force of civic opposition" by channeling passions towards an anesthesia of critical thinking; and the logic of cathodic media whose tendency is to express publicly the plurality of citizen voices. The optimists perceive the interactive television as a way of turning the myth of direct democracy into a performance, which myth is originated in the Athenian agora and would compensate for the deficiencies of representative democracy: "this televisual agora, the European talk show – structured by bringing into

debate a societal issue and citizens with arguments in favour or against it, by presenting an image of society (the audience), or by having a television moderator who acts as an *animator* and brings forward social facts and options – essentially wants itself to break away from being perceived as a mere way of making a show out of the direct democracy myth" (Ibidem 130).

3.2.2. The for-and-against televisual discourse

The main characteristic of this type of televisual discourse is that the topic in discussion has no definite answer. The moderator usually chooses both guests who are in favour and guests who are against this issue and arbitrates the difference of ideas throughout the debate. The broadcast normally begins with a short introduction into the topic, which may be read aloud - by including other voices, in the form of a 'package' - by someone other than the moderator. If the topic is extremely controversial, a third guest - that is the specialist - may be invited to participate in the debate.

The moderator must ensure that all the guests speak for the same amount of time. The discussion may lighten up and even degenerate into insults or spontaneous offences, thus altering the debate and forcing the moderator to intervene into the discussion.

When choosing the guests, the moderator must consider speakers who are able to support their ideas logically, as the main aim is to have these speakers present a point of view with respect to the issue under scrutiny and not to let them bring in a biased discourse consisting only of party slogans and reflecting just the party ideology. The interlocutors' interventions must be brief and relate to the discussed issue. The more phone call interventions into the broadcast, the more dynamic the broadcast. From the very beginning of their intervention, television viewers will be required to be concise. At the end, the broadcast does not have to come up with a conclusion; it should rather let the media consumers reach their own conclusions. The moderator may bring the discussion to an end either by reiterating the question asked at the beginning of the debate or by providing an answer to the question posed by the last television viewer.

In fact, the purpose of this kind of televisual discourse is two-fold: on the one hand, to explain the issue in case to the audience and, on the other hand, to offer an image of the participant as realistically as possible. The moderator must not aim to somehow defeat or eliminate the participants; they should rather act in accordance with the expectations of the audience, without being brutal when addressing one guest or magnanimous when addressing the other.

If the moderator cannot refrain his/her sympathy or antipathy towards one of the guests, this may work against him/her when answering the phone calls made by various media receivers.

This *homo televisus* (Charaudeau et al. 40) grants television the role of an influential social actor that can turn, at any time, depending on the situation, into a social worker, or into an official who gathers the offerings brought to an ephemeral cult, or into a humanitarian association, a psychoanalyst's office, a private detectives agency and, sometimes, even into one of Socrates' opponents.

Following the French television's model, Romanian television, as an important representative of media power, plays a major social role which must become reality: to establish and keep re-establishing communication amongst Romanians; to discover their private problems and solve them effectively; and to promote models of behavior - preferably positive ones. The dominant moral in the French media space is unquestionable:

Thus, the televisual institution intervenes in establishing social relations, as part of a new delineation of distinct areas of authority and power limits in relation to the state. The television intervenes where the state turns out to be incompetent or fails to take action. Starting from the premise that the political discourse and public action have their own limitations, television resorts to reproducible procedures for responding to the requests or sufferings which neither the experts, nor the elected officials, or even the market manages to regulate (Idem 45).

The topic-related constraints imposed by the media communication contract require the for-and-against televisual discourse to tackle what happens in public space. This informing activity impacts on public space, dividing it into what is commonly referred to as political life, civic life, and private life, which has now become public (Ibidem 84). The political world entails whatever is related to *city* life, by means of its institutions and representatives, and the role of mass media is not only to explain what happens in this environment, in other words to select the discourses whose topical content refers to political life, but also to transpose these discourses into specific enunciative forms, for reasons related to the social role the word plays in the imagination of a society.

A for-and-against type of controversy discourse – which normally brings together conflicting points of view with respect to the issue under discussion – must be constructed in such a way so as to allow those watching the confrontation to construct their own 'truth' through an act of deliberation. This type of discourse which justifies the imaginary of democracy presupposes two types of staging: on the one hand, bringing face-to-face two political leaders who defend antagonistic ideas and programs (the 'stage' becoming the place where each of them measures himself against the other verbally and attempts to gain an advantage over his interlocutor); on

the other hand, in the second type of 'staging,' several points of view related to the same issue or attitudes which are not necessarily antagonistic are brought into discussion. The confrontation scene is presented, depending on the context, as an agora (a disciplined form of organization) or as a forum (a non-disciplined form of organization) (Ibidem 86) where everyone intervenes in the discussion, expressing their opinion about the issue in case, choosing to support or reject other opinions, siding with some of the interlocutors or opposing others, thus establishing alliances or building oppositions together with other guests.

3.2.3. Media dialogue and self-awareness

In the televisual discourse, when the dialogue is directed towards the guest's own person, the outcome is the so-called 'personality talk show'. The dialogue involving one guest only focuses on what might be referred to as self-awareness. The idea of this type of show is to help create the contour of a personality; therefore, the moderator leads the discussion so as to cover different aspects, sometimes contradicting his/her guest with the sole purpose of making the show a guaranteed success. The interlocutor takes part in the show whilst attempting to create an optimal self-image or perhaps to reestablish some ideas which could help him/her rebuild his/her own image in the media consumer's mind.

The moderator is the person orchestrating the show and who decides what questions must be insisted upon, although it very often happens that the moderator ends up being manipulated by the guest through the latter's insistence or refusal to reply to the moderator's questions. The show also resorts to some live phone call interventions from persons who know the guest and who can address him/her a pertinent question so that the guest's personality could be better highlighted.

As this type of dialogue resides in a sort of sincerity-based introspection, it ultimately represents a sum of the guest's public entire activity up to that moment. The moderator must be well familiar with the guest's biography, previous statements, and gestures of revolt so as to be able to remind the guest of certain gestures or types of behavior they displayed in the past. This kind of talk show resembles an extended interview, with the only difference that an interview mainly aims to unravel the strengths, or highlight an individual's qualities (Stavre 264), whereas in the talk show, the questions are intentionally provocative.

This type of broadcast emphasizes a person's intelligence, finesse, spontaneity, order of ideas and sincerity. In contrast, the interview is more restrictive, more explicative, and more inclined to highlight erudition. In the case of the talk show, everything is permitted,

except for slander and defamation, as it is a form of debate where the moderator often gets the guest in difficulty, whilst the latter is rather willing to conserve or amplify a personal image. Yet, in its turn, this kind of broadcast also ends up undecidedly, letting the television viewers draw their own conclusions.

This form of dialogue which sets off from a celebrity's self-knowledge process may bring the civic world into the studio. Civic life may be analyzed through the comments made by individuals who, without being responsible for the organization of community life, take in part in it, bear its constraints or not, apply its rules or reject them. The world of private life does not escape close examination either, which should mean that whatever exists in this world belongs to the individual only and must not become visible outside the small circle of family members or friends. The role played by the media in relation to this world of private life is that of "an organized rape, devoid of any physical brutality. One may speak here of an act of rape inasmuch as *homo intimatus* is forced into doing something, his secrets are revealed, his intimacy – in other words, his psychological and moral integrity – is violated" (Charaudeau et al. 91). A whole range of multimedia strategies are set at work (interviews, debates, broadcasts, talk shows) in order to reduce private space as much as possible. This action is accompanied by a legitimizing discourse which attempts to justify it, simultaneously hiring individuals appearing on the media 'stage' to resort to this 'act of rape' and revealing themselves in the eyes of society as a sort of humanitarian assistance court which pursues the individuals' welfare.

3.2.4. Media dialogue and responsibility

This type of dialogue occurs when there is an issue advanced by a Socratic moderator and a civic exercise is pursued. The media consumer's opinion with respect to this issue is normally asked – whether a decision is good or not.

In the case of an open discussion, the dialogue may take different forms with desperate people brought in begging for help or ready to confess and implicitly accepting to expose their obsessions in front of the others. The moderator must carefully align with the interlocutor, attempting to listen to and understand the latter, yet maintaining a certain spirit of contradiction in the discussion: for instance, when presented with a somewhat romantic story, the moderator may make a joke or marvel at the event in case; when facing the interlocutor's verbal brutality, the moderator's joke may appease the rising tensions; or, in case the media

dialogue continues past midnight, the moderator might not intervene when facing instances of violent language on the interlocutor's part.

The media dialogue exclusively with – to put it in sociological terms – the 'Cathodic man' can also be used as a way of giving new significance to the television station's own programmes. In this respect, the 'Cathodic man' is expected to make suggestions and express pertinent opinions. The main condition for this kind of dialogue to occur is that the moderator should not feel disturbed by the potentially harsh observations. Under such circumstances, the moderator is likely to be appreciated provided they keep calm and the media consumer is offered the chance to get to know a person who acknowledges their mistakes and limitations.

The placement of the talk show in the programme grid depends significantly on the media consumer's readiness to watch a programme which takes longer and requires more attention than usual. This explains why such broadcasts are not normally placed in the television grid at morning or midday times since, in the morning, there is a certain appeal for briefly and joyfully presented news and, in the case of the shows scheduled to start being broadcast at midday, the media consumer gets the chance to watch only the second part of or perhaps only the end of the show due to his/her delayed return from work. Similarly, there is an avoidance of broadcasting talk shows at the end of the week – except for those relating to sports – due to the fact that media consumers often leave their homes at weekends.

As regards the broadcasting time interval, the best time for scheduling the talk show is 6 p.m. If the talk show is intended to be a political one, then it is better for it to start before 9 p.m., whereas a talk show focusing on a topic which is easier to digest by the audience is typically scheduled after 10 p.m. Media dialogues may be organized on a daily basis, depending on their topic, but with different moderators. However, there may be a daily media dialogue with one moderator only and starting roughly at the same time. It is important to mention that what really matters is who runs that talk show, to what extent s/he is ready to make daily or weekly efforts in this respect, what team supports him in the preparation of the talk show, and "what motivation lies behind his/her commitment to such a journalist approach" (Lazăr 91-201).

3.2.5 The moderator's image and Socratic role

In a talk show, it is very important for the moderator and his/her interlocutor to sit either side by side or face-to-face, in a non-confrontational relation, sharing equal positions, without any declared intention to polemicize with each other, and making progressive usage not only of discursive strategies, but also of paralinguistic, kinesthetic, and proxemic ones, in "an

influence-related transactional act" (Muchielli 109). Thus, in the determined space of the television studio – which is not just a scenic, but also a negotiating space – the two interlocutors share a common world, generated by them exclusively during their interaction. Practicing authentic journalism does not necessarily involve being a man of culture or speaking about culture, but rather being a cultivated man and having initiatives related to the idea of cultivation, having an enlightened vision of reality and paying respect to a reality which is perceived both as a subject and as a receiver.

From the perspective of the basic concepts of the constructivist communication model, the two interlocutors involved in the dialogue initiate a communication contract which is then followed, at the moment of their appearance in front of the studio cameras, by a communication project whose intentions and stakes become detectable only within the flux, due to the linearity which characterizes not only the verbal message, but also the other paralinguistic types of messages, like facial expressiveness, gestures, the direction in which one looks, the last of which might be considered a real representational clue both for the moderator and the guest. Television viewers should not be misled by the false intimacy created among the studio protagonists by means of the scenographic elements manipulated in the studio or thanks to the representational efforts of the television production team. The public, televised character of this type of media dialogue represents an unsurmountable element of intrusion into the media actors' overflowing intimacy. Just like interpreters, they play their role casually and seem to forget about the existence of the media tool when, in fact, it is in the latter's presence that they are permanently involved in an exchange of roles.

Unlike the journalist carrying out an interview or the one leading a debate, the talk show moderator assumes an entire role and not just an enunciative behavior. The moderator becomes a character in a scenic illusion, in a coherent performance-related universe in which the civilian present in the studio is the very image of - but never the same person with - the title character. The journalist in blue jeans may make emphatic public statements like: "I regret to inform you about the death of the talk show where the participants were two guests, a moderator and a table. A new talk show was born and continues to live, one which does not strive to make a living out of sensationalism and around whose table there are ideas, principles, people, not celebrities" (Ghiu 156). In contrast, the televised show moderator invariably wears a shirt – complete with a pair of striking braces – and seems to let himself protected by the offensive-looking 1950s symbol of a microphone.

The person leading the media dialogue does not look directly into the lens of the camera, but he knows how to compensate, in an unmistakable manner, for this handicap of lacking visual contact with the television viewer. His paradoxical and unpredictable behaviour may range from ironical attitude or aggressive interpellation to the clumsiness and candour with which he can offer a bouquet of white roses in a live show. Television has changed the world, has altered our perception of reality and has brought into our lives the phantasmagoric likelihood of fabricating reality by means of mirroring.

Nowadays, we are witnessing a degradation of the manner in which television is being done. The so-called 'middle ground' has replaced almost entirely the cinematic tricks which television had fascinated us with until very recently. Television cameras have been regressing to the status of omnipresent surveillance cameras. Sometimes, talk show journalism itself is nothing more than a mere 'Big Brother'-like broadcast whose protagonists are the journalists acting as analysts, summoned on a training camp for an endless meeting, on the one hand, and the reporters mobilized to various locations or facets of a place, "all of them awaiting the occurrence of events and thinking loudly about various phantasmagoric scenarios" (Ghiu 9), on the other hand.

Almost two decades ago, Patrick Charaudeau pointed out that media dialogue focuses particularly on those arguments and communication conducts which are based on the daily experience of the guest as well as of the moderator, "whereas the origins of this audiovisual genre should be looked for in debates about society-related facts" (Charaudeau 37). Nowadays, the mundane and diurnal character of this genre has completely transformed into what theoreticians in the field name 'the performance text' of the talk show. What they refer to is a very elaborate score which – to put it into Baudrillard's terms – transposes the natural world into its simulated version which, in order to seduce, juggles with "equivocal maneuvers of truthfulness, feints, shared illusions, intentional ambiguities" (59).

The main reason why the present paper argues that the talk show is not just a mere act of syncretic communication – as Noël Nel asserts when referring to the debate – but rather a situation of communication perceived in its entirety is that the ultimate purpose of its project is to captivate the interlocutor while apparently informing, flattering or even amusing him/her. After 9/11/2001, the number of breaking news television stations worldwide has increased almost uncontrollably. These television stations are on the watch around the clock, waiting in closed rooms, their cameras ready for action, for an event to occur and, thus, becoming a form of torturing our reality, a deprivation of sleep, a kind of sleep with one's eyes closed, an

implicit instigation to hallucinating. It is worthless accusing them of imagistic manipulation by resorting to cinema procedures and Hollywood scenarios since such an action increasingly tends to become a mere act of execution and journalists themselves turn into some guardians of the real. The image no longer forms on the small screen, but directly on the viewer's retina, in his mind and soul, as the audiovisual dimension is becoming invisible. Similar to the idea of democracy it embodies, television has also generated transparency, rendering journalists and television viewers reciprocally transparent. The televisual discourse seems to be dissolving within the societal dimension of our human beings. In fact, a sophistic, salon-type manipulation is taking place through endless discussions, our vital reaction to reality being replaced with a passive discussion about reality. We become more and more knowledgeable, but less and less able to do certain things:

> […] a dissociation between *savoir* and *pouvoir*. We do journalism ceaselessly, and journalism itself, they say, has become more democratic ("power to the people!"), we all take part in the universal production of news as well as in the debates about it, we produce images and information, we become sources of the Great Unravelling, but through this very illusion of informational almightiness we are rendered passive, our eyes, ears and mouth become open, yet our hands and legs are tied up; we are kept away from the real fabrication of reality in exchange for the illusory panoptic power of seeing it, of keeping an eye on it and of analyzing it (Ghiu 10).

We do journalism in order not to do politics, we keep pondering over reality in live shows just to remain its spectators, watching others fabricating reality and how they do it to us. The current media journalism separates people from their own power.

In the media discourse known as talk show, the person who initiates and keeps up the dialogue performs several roles: coordinating the preparation of the show; leading the discussion; communicating permanently with the broadcasting team; always watching the clock so as to know when to broadcast the commercials or to avoid overrunning the allotted time for the show; establishing a schedule of events.

Beyond spontaneity, there are long hours of hard work and any improvisation is welcome provided it is well prepared in advance. Smart questions are figured out as part of teamwork and the pace of the dialogue is set by rules or requirements which must be primarily met by the moderator. To ensure a high rate of audience and, implicitly, the success of the show, there are several prerequisites of a moderator: to master the native language very well and understand the meaning of the words s/he uses; to be a fluent speaker, avoid pauses, repetitions, hesitations, and ask clear questions; to have conducted tens or perhaps hundreds of interviews prior to becoming a moderator; to be curious and avoid letting a discussion topic

unexhausted; to keep insisting until s/he manages to squeeze out an answer from the guest(s); to know how to listen actively but, at the same time, not to let the guests exceed the two-minute time limit; to know how to intervene promptly, which does not mean to interrupt but rather to take profit of the moment when the guest has a slight hesitation or perhaps is taking his/her breath for a while; to be extremely familiar with the topic under discussion; to control his/her own reactions and avoid getting annoyed; to refrain from expressing personal opinions, but be ready to have queries; to avoid being a depressing person; to show the guests the necessary respect, but to avoid being overwhelmed by them or praising them; to manifest a certain gallantry towards television viewers; to bear in mind that the attention of a broadcast audience is captured only when this broadcast is spoken of from mouth to mouth, which means that a program must present to its audience things that can be told and talked about.

Moderators may be journalists who have activated in the printed press, who are popular for their radicalism or their ability to use words in communicating to others. Nevertheless, to be able to maintain such an image in front of the television cameras, they need a producer to reveal to them the backstage secrets of a broadcast. The coordinator of such a media dialogue should hold a certain social position within the community where the television station broadcasts its show. This coordinator must not be mistaken for a local authority representative solving land litigations or distributing living places, but rather a common person showing a real interest in how things are going, who does not give verdicts but has queries, who does not make judgments but asks for clarifications, who does not teach moral lessons but cultivates a common sense morality, by promoting a plurality of opinions, by refusing vulgarities and injuries, by accepting differences of mentality, or by means of his/her own education and political options.

It is quite difficult to accomplish a broadcast such as the talk show. "It is more useful to buy yourself a big popcorn bag and stay in front of the TV screen to watch the talk show made by someone else than make it yourself, with no detailed and adequate documentation. This is because one can learn something from their opponents' strategies by watching a talk show or a well-organized debate" (Zeca-Buzura, *Jurnalismul de televiziune* 176), whereas becoming personally involved in such an experience, without the safety of having full information about and of careful reflecting over the subject, is similar to driving the latest limousine model and not knowing where the brake and gas pedals are.

In the case of such a media discourse, the protagonist journalist must give the impression of being knowledgeable and able to approach a wide range of topics. A television show producer

does not choose his/her relevant information from dozens of sources, but rather s/he attempts to work effectively, much like in the field of business: s/he compares offers, selects only credible providers and even checks them out when the situation requires it; s/he purchases one product only, always the best one, and does not hesitate to spend money when the quality issue and the idea of staying competitive come into question; s/he never underestimates the audience and knows very well that, among television viewers, there are also some persons who are as professional in this field as s/he is; s/he knows how to maintain the necessary authority without frowning, becoming uneasy, or raising his/her voice; s/he is well dressed, yet s/he does not give the audience the impression of broadcasting his/her own wedding ceremony; sometimes, it is advisable for him/her to smile even if s/he is in the moderator's seat.

The talk show moderator summons his/her dialogue interlocutors a little earlier than the scheduled time of the show and, even though the representation intended to take place in front of the television cameras is definitely a genuine one, s/he must induce to the guests the feeling that they are in a familiar place and that they are welcome there. At the same time, the moderator soothes timorous guests and induces a certain feeling of safety to those present in the studio by anticipating, to a certain extent, the moments or elements to come throughout the show: the topic, the questions, the conclusions, the foreground camera allotted to each of them. Furthermore, the moderator must set an example to the guests in terms of displaying naturalness in his/her actions and does not consult his/her notes at the last minute, in front of the interlocutors. At the arrival of the guests, the moderator must have already put on the make-up, be smiling, amiable and, above all, ready to notice reactions or details which s/he could use, later on during the live show, in identifying relevant arguments or in establishing everyone's speaking pace and the appropriate moments for calmness or for listening to the others.

The moderator addresses the rest of the studio team politely, uses clear instructions, and ensures this team meets his/her requests entirely, since a perfect collaboration inspires confidence to the show guests and, at the same time, imposes respect on them. "Last but not least, for a short period of time, the relation among those in the television studio must be similar to the one between a doctor and his/her patients, it must be characterized by trust and honesty" (Bălăşescu 167).

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Mass media is part of the non-formal category of communication and, implicitly, of the knowledge system. This involves a careful organization of the television grid according to distinct periods as well as a detailed planning of the media dialogue topics far in advance. Nevertheless, it is true that, depending on the importance of the events occurring in a nation's life or worldwide, unscheduled discussion topics may be approached. Even so, the topic of a dialogue is normally known one or two days in advance and the person that is supposed to conduct the dialogue will cover the most relevant mass media information so as to get informed about the positions which various well-known personalities in the field of politics, business and journalism have towards the issue in case and, implicitly, think in advance about the possible ways of approaching any future discussion. In this way, additional information and clarifications are obtained and, if novel information related to this topic keeps coming in during the show, then a field reporter, who is on the site, will have a live intervention at the beginning of the show so as to present the latest facts related to the subject. If new facts appear throughout the show, the reporter will immediately ask for and have a direct intervention into the show. The information will be taken over by the moderator who will transform it into questions addressed to the guests.

When the approached issue is not a topical one and the show focuses instead on a personality, this option becomes viable after the subject has been presented in detail as part of breaking news broadcasts throughout the week. In every talk show, the moderator must know precisely, from the very beginning, what s/he intends to achieve by running that show and by approaching that particular topic. To succeed in doing so, it is important to select the topic and approach it in accordance with the pre-established terms and any attempt to approach and exhaust several topics during the same one-evening show is likely to result in a failure due to the fact that questions will overlap and the guest will be asked for his/her opinion in almost all possible domains, in which case the outcome might be an unsuccessful talk show.

The media dialogue appears – to someone who is not a professional in the field – to be an endless improvisation, but there is a schedule of events which anticipates the progress of the show at very minute. This explains why it is necessary to achieve an effective documentation in order to be able to produce a successful show: from among articles related to the topic, the most relevant ones are selected and sequenced according to the order proposed for the show; questions are conceived so as to cover a large segment of audience which is unfamiliar with the topic, yet interested in many of its aspects, as well as a more restrained segment of

audience which is more familiar with the topic and whose expectations will be met. This procedure must be a reference point in approaching the show.

Once the media dialogue has begun, there may be a short introduction on which occasion there is presented the topic, the events, the statements made in mass media, and the interlocutors to take part in the dialogue. The moderator explains the reasons for choosing that particular topic and the criteria based on which the guests have been invited to participate in the discussion. In their turn, prior to the show, the guests are presented with the topic alongside its adjacent aspects and the role they will play in the talk show; however this preliminary discussion strictly includes those aspects pertaining to their invitation in the studio, so they are not presented with the questions which are to be asked during the show (Zeca-Buzura, *Jurnalismul de televiziune* 183). In addition, they are informed about the duration of the talk show, the time when they have to present at the television station, and why they have been selected to take part in the show. The talk show normally begins with the most relevant question for the chosen topic. This is an opportunity to check the existent options regarding the topic in case. Throughout the talk show, the moderator has to repeat the names of the guests several times so as to allow television viewers to identify them easily. The 'Why?' question is by far the most important one in a talk show. New nuances may appear during the show. As the moderator is expected to be extremely familiar with the topic, s/he will be able to ask questions which have not been raised prior to the show. It is recommended for the moderator not to read such questions aloud, but rather make them sound spontaneous, as if they were the outcome of the ongoing discussion and, through them, the guests were invited to bring further details into the discussion or to express their opinions.

The participants in such a dialogue must be interviewed firmly and rigorously. Those who prepare and run talk shows must be familiar with the various contesting trends to an idea or to a policy. Such affiliations must be clearly expressed in advance by those attending the dialogue. It is useful for the public to know that a politician or a celebrity in a city is confronted with all perspectives (Zelier 176).

When a guest attempts to speak much, yet without saying anything relevant, the moderator's role is to repeat the questions and even draw the guest's attention to his/her digressions. The dialogue may turn into a show even in the case of a very polite guest, if the moderator plays the role of a novice and keeps asking simple, basic questions. If the moderator adopts the method of tacitly approving of the guest's statements, boredom will tend to dominate the discussion. However, if the moderator intervenes more frequently with smart questions, the

guest may reply smartly as well, which will make the show a success. To ensure there is a coherent specialist conversation, an expert or authority in the field must be invited to take part in the show, if not directly, by being present in the studio, at least by means of a brief phone call intervention. The expert's role is to explain or motivate the event objectively in case and even to make a prognosis in this respect. S/he is the person who speaks so that everyone can understand and who can even correct some of the statements made by the guests. S/he must be a charming, charismatic person and not use an academic and emphatic discourse.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

The media dialogue known as 'talk show' also involves a series of sideslips. This is what critics have referred to as *teledemocracy*, a performance-like, theatrical representation, the mirror of a "minimal and egalitarian" show: there are occasional, temporary oppositions; the dominant figure is the "authorized" and "authoritarian" person who proposes topics and options to the guests, the latter only apparently having access to the "the free expression power"; "nevertheless, as these guests play by the rules of the show, they are transformed into citizens' social prototypes, free and equal in rights" (Charaudeau et al. 130). In reality, although they call themselves or are being referred to as 'talk shows,' many of these Romanian television broadcasts rather belong to the genre of the debate, despite the fact that they contain some elements of the true talk show to be and which was already established in western televisions during the 1970s – 1980s. These shows approach a political, economic, religious, scientific, or moral topic – the kind of issue used for problematizing and understanding society – and stage a discourse as well as an illustrative and explanatory strategy with the ultimate aim of rendering problems and backed theories more intelligible; they promote a discursive exchange that is organized – by opposing different points of view and competences – so as to unravel the truth of these discussed problems. The debate might be said to correspond to the act of staging the word (speech) in a manner which is intended to help us deal with this unraveling of the truth in a relatively rational way (Ibidem 78-81). In contrast, talk shows no longer address a specific political or economic issue, but rather a societal fact, a topic which is meant to highlight manifestations of social disorder as well as of social and human drama. Moreover, they are characterized by an emotional approach to subjects, being a form of expression for the two main types of social and human disorder, on the one hand, the conflicts arising among individuals or between individuals and the state

institutions, on the other hand, a person's most intimate drama. When referring to society-related acts discussed from the perspective of anonymous people's experience, what is put to value at a discursive level is either the polemic or the introspective word. P. Charaudeau and R. Ghiglione define the talk show synthetically, as a performance whose main protagonist is the word and in which the guests – persons of various statuses summoned by a host – are all introduced as having a word to say, thus being able to transcend their status of common persons and acquire the status of a character instead.

The talk show is also intended to be a more or less serious and comfortable space for debates related to societal issues which are likely to raise the interest of the largest audience possible; it is desired to offer the opportunity of a confrontational act in which *the experience behind what is said* is worth as much as the rational answer and in which the common citizen's word is worth as just much as the expert's word (Drăgan, *Comunicarea – paradigme şi teorii*, 545).

The talk show is also highly unpredictable as if, in this act of communication, moderators represented nothing more than an alter-ego of television viewers; by a theatricalization of the scenery and of the discussions among the participants; by a tendency to embrace the style of entertainment shows; by a shift from rationally seeking the truth and viable solutions for issues of great interest for public opinion to the pure show; by an increased emphasis on polemical, even aggressive attitudes; by a tendency to relativize the importance of the expressed points of view or to integrate television viewers into the broadcast setting (Todoran 85).

While classical debates, characteristic of paleo-television, were anchored in a Habermasian perspective over public space – at the core of which being a social consensus reached by means of rational discussions – the media dialogue involved in the talk show and specific to neo-television occurs in a conflictual and affective public space where compromise is difficult to negotiate. The *catharsis* function of the show is performed either through conflictual discussions, or by means of a confession-type of discourse. In this type of show, there is an intermingling of topics, of private and public space, of serious and facile genres, and the actors act as supports of anonymous identification and cannot be heroes by definition. "In fact, this is a show pertaining to the monologue-focused theatre, whose scenario is to repeat ceaselessly: '*I am what you are (and viceversa)*' and nothing can be changed in this respect" (Drăgan, *Comunicarea – paradigme şi teorii*, 547).

4. POLITICAL DISCOURSE AND ARGUMENTATION
IN THE PUBLIC SPACE

4.1. Doxastic logic – the foundation of persuasion

The mechanism of persuasion is referred to by Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca as "an action which always tends to modify a preexisting state of affairs" (Perelman et al.74). Furthermore, what might be considered an argumentative problem "is to be solved in a dialogical or rhetorical manner, in other words, through dispute" (Mihai 236).

Despite the various shifts in perspective as well as aspects of daily life or of interpersonal communication, the solution to conflicting opinions can only be found by starting from the logical analysis of language. Although there is a shift in focus from the content of argumentation to the necessity to adapt to the features of the public – who becomes a participant in the act of communication and, therefore, needs being convinced – the abovementioned authors go beyond the Kantian perspective, according to which it is the mechanisms of reason that ultimately lie at the foundation of persuasion, and return to the Aristotelian idea of persuasion based on opinion (doxastic logic), i.e. the opinion of an interlocutor or of a large scale receiver; or, more precisely, on the idea of generating personal convictions at such a level.

The two authors take the Aristotelian works as a starting point in advancing and laying the foundation of a new type of rhetoric. The novelty of their approach lies in the higher consideration to the person who needs persuading. One may consider that Aristotle himself, even though not explicitly, foresaw the necessity of having, in the early stage of an argumentation, an agreement between the interlocutors which may include or refer to facts, truths, presuppositions, values, or hierarchies. This agreement between interlocutors represents, at least in principle, the fundamental basis for the construction of any argumentation, regardless of its being dialectic or dialogic in nature. Even the idea of discursive performance reflects in the Aristotelian rhetoric. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle adapts the dialectics adopted in *The Organon* and deals with it alongside the orator's features and the audience's passions.

Nevertheless, what intervenes at present in generating a common opinion is the impressive dimension that the audience of a certain discourse may acquire due to the mutations that have occurred in the field of information and communication technologies and, implicitly, the extremely diverse characteristics that individuals ultimately possess and display

even when they are simultaneously exposed to the same message. This is the aspect that requires a shift of perspective on the extent to which the audience is granted importance in a certain context. Should things be perceived from the perspective of the type of conviction generated by someone's speech, they are not significantly different from what they used to be two millennia ago. On the other hand, the varying positions taken by theoreticians in the Antiquity and modern times with respect to the nature of the discourse perceived as a persuasive tool are in fact rooted in the different types of discourse they actually use. Aristotle appears to be a philosopher concerned with creating conceptual frameworks which he then applies to an environment where primary importance is given to the dissemination of ideas and the meta-discourse, with the ultimate purpose of testing and perfecting his theory. Unlike him, modern theoreticians, benefitting the pre-existing fundamental conceptual frameworks, are rather concerned with their teleological exploitation. By identifying this high degree of usefulness of dialectics in determining power relations, one may notice that the supreme symbolical expression of these power relations is the political discourse as a means of legitimizing power. The greater the gained power, the more significant the efforts made to consolidate it. Under these circumstances, the most efficient way of acquiring power appears to be the act of communication, particularly its discursive component, regardless of its being unidirectional or dialogic in nature.

The argumentation is virtually present in all our verbal communication, its history going back to Greeks and Romans in Antiquity, as it has already been mentioned above. The revival of rhetoric in the age of information has been extremely successful. The newly emerged communication technologies characterized by rapidity, transparency, and immediacy have directed the public space towards "interactive solitudes" (Wolton 131) and a post-modern agora in the landscape of which argumentation and persuasion have become a dominant phenomenon. Although the masses which once used to demonstrate in squares and streets throughout the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century now tend to be no longer physically present, they can still represent and act as a ubiquitous revolutionary force by means of television. Like in the ancient agora, the purpose of public deliberation nowadays is to help attain the truth and have divergent interests reach common grounds.

Richard Rorty's *deflationary* or minimalist theory about the truth may also be considered here. According to the American philosopher, there is no difference between truth and justification, a perception that is essentially pragmatic in nature. Neither is truth the rational acceptability obtained at the end of some research as it is claimed by C.S. Peirce, H.

Putnam, and C. Wright (Engel & Rorty 53), nor the ideal convergence within a communicational community as it is argued by J. Habermas. Thus, the term *true* is nothing but a tool used to refer to our propositions and to approve them, and not a term designating an objective world which supposedly transcends the approvals received by audiences as well as by our communities in general. Therefore, the truth does not have an intrinsic value, but rather an instrumental one, which is a return to Rorty's ideas: "We do not possess any means of establishing the truth of a particular belief or the right nature of a certain action other than using justifying elements as points of reference […] especially when we attempt to go beyond the others' objections to our beliefs and actions" (Engel & Rorty 71).

The construction of justifications occurs within the contemporary public sphere, by means of television, of the televised discourse which facilitates the forceful emergence of the people acting as a judge. The audience, as the main evaluator of public discourses, has acquired a significant importance. Nowadays, the truthfulness of television is the outcome of an ongoing process of negotiation between audiences and the televisual offer, within the limits established by television as an instrument, on the one hand, and by people's general knowledge, on the other hand. There must be a high degree of acceptance with respect to the terms of the disagreement as well as the means of regulating this disagreement to have a genuine televised debate that is likely to lead to a true public agreement or disagreement. In order to allow the universal to progress, the necessary conditions for achieving production must be protected and, at the same time, the terms of having access to the universal must become general, so that "an increasing number of people could meet the requirements for gaining access to the universal" (Bourdieu 63). The audimat is the sanction imposed by the market, by the economy, and by an external legal entity whose nature is purely commercial; moreover, the very idea of submission to the exigencies of this marketing instrument is "the exact equivalent, in cultural terms, of the demagogy of seeking guidance in surveys, in political terms" (Ibidem 111).

A number of authors in the field of the philosophy of communication argue that the public sphere contains too much show and the media in particular favours a spectacular type of presentation. Appearance is more important than substance while the representation and the appearance weigh far more than rational debate (Kellner 55). Politicians have become stronger than ever by using facile methods of publicity (Habermas, *The Structural Transformation…* 59-60) and audiences are encouraged to adopt passive roles like that of mere spectators. The logical and rational debate appears to have been lost. Those politicians

perorating in favour of a political proposition in a dense, factual, and argumentative manner have been replaced by others who are now trained by stylists.

If public debates continue to take more spectacular forms of communication – visual, emotional, personal – rather than more rational ones, essentially logical and restrictive, then there is a significant risk of regressing towards domination. The exploitation of the emotional to the detriment of the logic in public debates opens windows of opportunity for propagandists and demagogues, and Adolph Hitler's discourses can serve as a classical example in this respect (Copi et al. 169). If they are not controlled by logic, emotional arguments can generate a world of inequalities, oppression and dominance (Hartley 128-137).

4.2. Ideology, power discourse and authority

With three-fold connotations such as *Caesarean-perilous*, *Marxist*, or *sociological*, the term 'ideology' essentially means biased thinking. This way of thinking may be collective or dissimulated; it may be the expression of rational thinking or a type of thinking serving a political majority.

Ideology is the dominant feature underlying every political discourse, even though not every ideological discourse is necessarily political; however, a discursive structure may produce changes within the receiver's personality and, similarly, it may influence an audience through its well-articulated logic, through the foundations it lays in support of the advanced thesis.

This dimension of logical order contained by the political discourse originates in the concern with the performative analysis of the political discourse and relates to the investigation of the performative mechanisms: logical order and rhetorical order.

The specificity of the political discourse is in line with the natural or typical framework which is normally employed in confrontations. The dimensions of this specificity are ideological in nature and pertain to the arguments of power and its related sophisms, to rhetorical figures, political interrogation, irony, shock formulas, and the closing technique.

In certain discursive contexts, it is the way in which the discourse is constructed that considerably influences the audience. The analysis of the expressive-stylistic instruments by means of which discursive performance can be achieved is the object of investigation of poetic rhetoric (Sălăvăstru, *Discursul puterii…* 15). Nevertheless, what differentiates this type of discourse from others is a certain intentional ambiguity, the dissimulated character of its message, an imperative tonality, and an explicit polemic essence: moving from telling to

doing. Such features confer this type of discourse a particular freedom of movement, since – it has been argued – it is allowed to have what no other form of discursiveness is allowed to: the possibility to manipulate (Ibidem 22), despite the fact that such a discourse is assumed to manifest itself within some doctrinal limitations: the credibility of the discourse. The aim is to cause the receivers to take favourable action and to facilitate the access of the group – represented by the orator – to power. Therefore, this requirement must be met.

As far as constraints are concerned, they also manifest in terms of the main interests which a political discourse aims to propagate and put into practice. It is through political discourse that power relations are exerted, hence its common association with the discourse of power. From this perspective, the political discourse is radically different from the philosophical discourse as it is dominated by a practical functionality and characterized by an undisguised pragmatism. The discourse of power is one of the instruments by means of which the power group attempting to set this discourse into action ultimately aims to seize power.

The discourse of power benefits the opportunity of taking advantage of some of the most diverse procedures and mechanisms in order to get the promoted ideas through to the audience. No other type of discourse is allowed to do what the political discourse is, from the perspective of speech typologies differentiated in terms of performativity and rationality: argumentation, explanation, description, narration; from the point of view of the various discursive procedures that have been employed: slogans, shocking words, rhetoric procedures; from the perspective of the logical-rational approaches: deductive, inductive, abductive; or from the point of view of the channels of transmission: the oral discourse delivered in front of the masses, the televised discourse, the written discourse, publicity. Such things are not allowed to scientific, philosophical, or judicial discourses which require some adequate training in the field.

The foundation of the legitimacy of power essentially relates to discursiveness. The legitimacy of power is not granted by the quantitative calculation of the existent options as this calculation only represents the final outcome of a more largely-encompassing action which the power group engages in and where discursiveness plays a fundamental role. 'Legitimacy' is used to refer to an attempt to provide the electorate with an explanation, a dialogical-polemical dispute with the counter-candidate, a well-documented reply to an interpellation, or a profitable negotiation with social partners (McKee 61). This major requirement of obtaining power legitimacy by means of discursiveness originates in the fact that every power relation is exerted within the perimeter of the individuals and groups'

interests and impacts the extent to which these interests are satisfied depending on the structure of the already established power relations. This explains the ideological nature of political discourse, a type of discourse which essentially promotes the interests, aspirations, and options of the power groups that put it into circulation and represent larger or smaller segments of society (Perelman et al. 60).

* * *

Power relations are irreflexive – the power holder is always an entity which is distinct from the addressee of power. Moreover, they are asymmetrical in that the relation between the power holder and the addressee of power is unidirectional, from the former towards the latter, a rule which applies to the standard manifestation of power relations in terms of symmetry. Furthermore, it can be noticed that power relations are also transitive; in other words, the power holder's representative in relation to a given addressee is in fact a power holder in relation to that addressee. Last but not least, power relations are nonconvex, which means they are selective as regards both the power holder and the addressee of power (Sălăvăstru, *Discursul puterii…* 25-26).

The relations established by means of the link between power and authority may fall into the following categories: "power with authority", "power without authority" and "neither power, nor authority" (Sălăvăstru, *Discursul puterii…* 248). Of these, only power-with-authority and neither-power-nor-authority relations come under the umbrella of normality, the other possibly remaining type being a mere source of conflicts and dysfunctionality in the manifestation of relations within society. There are several necessary steps in acquiring power and authority. Firstly, understanding power is a prerequisite of - but not the only condition for - legitimizing authority. The second step is the conviction that power deserves legitimacy. Taking action is the third step in the legitimization of power. It is essential to understand these steps, by means of conviction. Power holds authority by virtue of law:

> […] the argument of the authority invoking the law pertains in particular to judicial discourse, but it also appears in political discourse quite often. With respect to law, one should answer the question: on what grounds does law become an element of authority? The first aspect that needs emphasizing is the dynamics of society which is determined by the action of law. The second aspect refers to the fact that the existence of the social organism is closely related to the dominance of law (Ibidem 248-249).

Power has authority by means of the person representing it. It is sometimes enough to mention the name of a person in a situation in order to favour the one who invokes this person's authority. However, power holds authority by means of its value, because every field

of human knowledge is based on values. Some of these values are direct constituents of such a field and play a major role in its configuration whereas others are mere general ones.

The rule which normally applies in the case of ending a political discourse presupposes that

> […] no party can use arguments other than those which are logically valid or likely to be valid though the explanation of one or more premises. If a point of view has not been defended in a convincing manner, then the one who has advanced it must withdraw it; but if a point of view has been defended in a convincing manner, the person emitting the opinion must not doubt it (Ibidem 287-288).

The ignorance of such a prerequisite may cause a political discourse to end up in a series of sophisms. The parties involved in the discourse should avoid making use of less than clear formulas or resorting to a type of obscurity that is likely to cause confusion; on the contrary, they must interpret the interlocutor's expressions as adequately and pertinently as possible.

4.3. Rhetorical figures

Generally, rhetoric imposes certain rules onto the orator in terms of discourse building. There are some extremely important logical-psychological moments as well as must-have stages in the creation of a discourse: *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, *pronuntio*.

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* dedicates a special section to the analysis of rhetorical figures. In his *Institutio oratoria,* Quintilian also grants them a particular importance and role. In Quintilian's case, the difference between tropes and figures of speech is determined by the 'content' of what is different in relation to natural usage: in the case of tropes, it is the meaning that changes, whereas in the case of figures of speech, what changes is the order of expressions. As for rhetoricians like César Chesneau Du Marsais in his book *Les tropes* and Pierre Fontanier in his *Figures du discours*, who reduce rhetoric to mere tropology, an aspect which has often been frown upon is a limitation of rhetoric's field of action, even in comparison with the classical perspectives of Aristotle or Cicero (Genette 158-171).

Irony is a word, a phrase, an expression, or a statement which, to a small extent, mocks at someone or something, its significance opposing the meaning with which it is normally associated. This mechanism is often employed in the political discourse. What is the difference between saying something straightforwardly and saying it indirectly, through mockery? Sometimes, the difference is enormous as the receiver is invited to find the mystery behind the primary meaning of the statement, which not everyone can find easily after all.

This explains why the impact of an ironic remark may differ depending on the speaker's audience. Irony is used in almost every instance of relation with alterity (public relations, political debates, education, literature); it is often perceived as a kind of 'social treatment' against those who refuse to behave for the sake of convenience and who cannot be corrected in any other way. There are ample discussions about irony and most often they go beyond the stylistic manner of analysis, highlighting the metaphysical substance of such ways of viewing the relation with alterity. Vladimir Jankelevitch highlights the fact that

> […] there is a basic form of irony which coincides with the act of knowledge and which, like arts, derives from passion. Irony, for certain, is too moral to be genuinely artistic, just as it is too cruel to be genuinely comic. Nevertheless, there is a feature which brings them together: arts, the comic and irony become possible where vital emergency situations become less tense (Jankelevitch 9).

Formulas with a great impact on the audience are in fact slogans which play an important role in the making up of a discourse considering that they are relatively short expressions which the audience can recall easily and which encapsulate various rhetoric forms pertaining to rhythm, rhyme, and melody. The slogan as a rhetoric device initially appeared and subsequently circulated as a 'call to arms,' as a way of encouraging soldiers during the most difficult moments of war and thus ensure their fully committed actions. Nowadays, it is well-known that rhythm is one of the essential features of slogan statements. These rhetoric figures are instruments of discursive performance which impact the receiver directly, causing the latter to take action. In fact, slogans are to be found in all forms of discourse. For instance, in the philosophical discourse one may use the slogan 'back to Aristotle!'; in the scientific discourse, 'nothing without experience'; in the theological discourse, 'nothing without God'; in the educational discourse, 'learner-centred education'; in the economic discourse, 'the results of our work'; in the political discourse, 'new times, new people'. Such constructions are absolutely necessary since obtaining a particular result whilst making a discursive intervention is not a mere act of caprice, but rather depends on their usage, due to the fact that they "represent a prerequisite for the spirit which, by exploiting beauty, intends to obtain practical results" (Sălăvăstru, *Mic tratat de oratorie* 364). Normally, the slogan is chosen after the coordinates of the field targeted by the discourse have crystalized as this peculiarity solves the problem of how the discourse content is perceived by the masses. The slogan is an act of dissimulated speech, as it separates the direct reference made by the discourse from "its

intentions regarding the way in which this reference is perceived" (Sălăvăstru, *Discursul puterii...* 292).

4.4. Argumentation strategies

4.4.1 Discursive mechanisms

Here are the most often used types of arguments in the field of political discourse: arguments based on facts, arguments based on examples, arguments based on authority, arguments based on analogy, and sophistic arguments.

Arguments based on facts are employed as a means of legitimizing an already existent power. There are a great many possibilities that political discourse can resort to and offer the audience with the purpose of determining the latter to legitimize the power group it represents; one such possibility is the usage of facts. Facts, not words! - In one of his campaign messages while running for presidency in November 2014, Klaus Johannis stated: "I am a man of facts, not one of empty words." This message appears to have helped him win the elections. - What is claimed to have been accomplished previously is in fact intended to offer renewed legitimacy to the existent power. However, the opposition, in its turn, may call the audience's attention to those facts which can grant them the necessary legitimacy for replacing the current power group. Furthermore, facts must be adjusted to the targeted type of audience, be cumulated and corroborated, be relevant and, ultimately, they must leave the impression of complete authenticity (Sălăvăstru, *Discursul puterii...* 230-231).

As for the arguments relying on examples (Sălăvăstru, *Mic tratat de oratorie* 176), they are invoked because the mere presence of an example cannot be contested in any way as an argument in various types of discursive interventions, particularly in political discourse. A well-chosen example constitutes the foundation of any credible generalization as well as a reference point in any convincing illustration. Examples must be interwoven with other types of arguments and employed in various argumentative procedures (Sălăvăstru, *Discursul puterii...*232-234).

Authority-based arguments are considered sustainable so that someone's position towards a particular, supposedly familiar issue is enough for justifying that person's support with respect to that issue (Ibidem 239).

Analogy-based arguments are generally used in support of primary arguments which have already been presented. As revealed since their initial usage, they are mechanisms

employed for influencing other people's opinions and which essentially aim at persuading the audience. Among the various instances of analogy-based arguments, it is worth mentioning structural correspondences, analogies between people, and analogies between situations (Ibidem 250-253).

Sophistic arguments are part of a long series of arguments to be found in political discourse. The sophism is a syllogism or a reasoning which is used correctly from a formal point of view, but which is essentially wrong in terms of its content, as it is based on ambiguity and on making use of phenomena-related aspects which are ultimately unessential (Perelman et al. 249).

According to Aristotle, there are two categories of sophisms: some of them are rooted in language, others come from outside language. "When referring to sophisms, certain modern logic treatises focus on exactly what Aristotle ignores, namely the breaking of reasoning rules" (Sălăvăstru, *Discursul puterii…* 265).

In the political discourse, rules may be established and then easily given up throughout the discourse. Certain viewpoints which were initially put forward by the speaker are abandoned halfway the discussion in favour of some digressions to his/her own advantage, an oratorical strategy that is commonly known as *ignoratio elenchi* (Sălăvăstru, *Mic tratat de oratorie 94-95*).   In other cases, sophisms emerge by ascribing fictitious points of view to the interlocutor who – without having asserted anything in particular – is attributed such perceptions simply because the interlocutor is thus much easier to refute (Sălăvăstru, *Discursul puterii…* 276).

Sophisms also occur when the speaker attempts to discredit the interlocutor by distorting the perspectives adopted by the latter; by exaggerating perspectives which are to the latter's disadvantage; by diminishing or eluding as much as possible "those aspects which favour the interlocutor and by enhancing his/her own viewpoints, thus allowing him/her to gain political advantage; and, of course, by reducing the impact of unfavourable ideas" (Sălăvăstru, *Discursul puterii…* 277).

There are various possible types of argumentation used in a dialogue, the most common ones being: the argument of comparison, the argument of transitivity, the argument of direction, over-argumentation, and the pragmatic argument. Any argumentation becomes possible only when the *sine qua non* condition of a dialogue is met, in other words when a true communion of spirits is achieved. This state is not inherent to the dialogue but it must be created and, when such an intellectual state is eventually reached, the dialogue can take place

or, to put it differently, the parties involved in the dialogue may debate on a certain issue (Perelman et al. 26).

The argumentation based on comparison – including the use of superlatives – "is achieved by considering a common object either superior to all the elements of its class, or incomparable and, thus, unique for its kind. Any judgement in such terms requires a preexistent attempt of drawing a comparison and the acknowledgement of a failure in this respect" (Ibidem 302). The most frequently used argument relies on the sacrifice one is ready to make in order to obtain a particular result.

Transitivity is a formal feature of certain relations which allows someone, based on the assumption that "there is the same relation both between the terms **a** and **b** and the terms **c** and **d**, to conclude that the same relation also exists between the terms **a** and **c**: the relations of equality, superiority, inclusion, and ascendancy are transitive relations" (Ibidem 278).

The argument of reciprocity attempts to apply the same treatment to two situations that form a symmetrical pair, one being the pendant of the other: the identification of the situations that makes the rule of law applicable is indirect in this case, in other words it claims the intervention of the notion of symmetry (Ibidem 271-278).

The argument of direction consists in

> […] putting someone on their guard against the usage of the stage method: if they give up this time, they will have to cede less next time and God knows where they will stop. This argument intervenes, quite regularly, in the negotiations between states, between employers and workers, when someone is not willing to give the impression they are giving up when facing force, threat, or blackmail (Ibidem 325-326).

Over-argumentation reflects in the conclusion that "it is impossible for someone to go in a certain direction ad infinitum, because finality is either absolute or incompatible in nature. Reaching a perfect, absolute end is admitting that progress must be abandoned" (Ibidem 354).

Value transfers among the elements of a cause-effect chain are possible in both directions – either from cause to effect, or from effect to cause – by means of the pragmatic argument: "the pragmatic argument makes possible the appreciation of an action or of an event depending on its favourable or unfavourable consequences" (Ibidem 326).

The one who criticizes an argument will tend to pretend that whatever they face pertains to logic. The accusation of having made a logical mistake itself is often regarded as quasi-logical argumentation. Regardless of the type of dialogue and of the kind of discourse

this dialogue is based on – be it rhetoric, ethical, educational, judicial, or political – the argumentation is possible due to the usage of specific techniques: the peculiarity of these techniques lies in the fact that it is under the control of a subject which is both cognitively and affectively engaged in defending or rejecting aspects referring to a problem, towards the solution of which he may hold personal or supposedly personal views (Mihai 238-247).

The technique of argumentation takes into account whether or not the answer to a question is adequate. Any inadequacy in this respect is an indicator of a lack of logic and implicitly a weakness. Adequacy also means matching the nature of the answer – which is perceived as a solution – to the nature of the question. Accordingly, the argument has a triple function: to point out facts, norms, values, principles; to express the user's cognaffective attitudes; to determine the user to assume the change of the psycho-logical state of the audience.

In our era of mass communication, it is obvious that, in case there is an intention of persuading a large segment of audience, one needs more than a mere presentation of a series of logical, rational arguments. One must also resort to some persuasive skills which are commonly referred to as rhetoric. There are five persuasion-related principles in the field of rhetoric. Firstly, there is *the invention*, by which is understood the identification of the main question and the choice of the most persuasive argument in response whilst making usage of hard evidence and artistic mechanisms which are based on ethos or character, logos or thinking, pathos or passion (Thompson qtd. in McKee 124). The second principle refers to *the arrangement*, in other words, the way in which the argumentation is structured. The third principle relates to *the style* which essentially means the selection of the most persuasive and the most evocative language in building up the case. The fourth principle refers to *memory*, and the fifth one to *the transmission*, in other words, the adaptation of voice and body language to the message. It matters not only what you say and how you say it, but also how we express ourselves non-verbally (McKee 125).

It is in this context of coexistence between theatrical performance and rationality that the management of argumentation and rhetoric by the media must be carried out. According to Doug Walton, the basis of argumentative analysis is dialogue (Walton 83-87). In the general scheme of practical reasoning advanced by Stephen E. Toulmin, elements and relations are modified according to social conventions (113), whereas Walton describes various dialogues in terms of the participants' social roles. As part of the much larger framework of the argumentative structure, the social context restrains the set of choices

because the rules which determine the forms of argumentation are inherent to rather than caused by social situations. According to Toulmin, social rules are less important if the basic structure of argumentation is satisfactory; on the other hand, in Walton's opinion, argumentation is ultimately conditioned by social rules. The same author differentiates among several types of dialogue: the disagreement, the debate, the critical discussion, the request, and the negotiation for various purposes. It is in accordance with these types of dialogues that certain conventional obligations – legitimate means of achieving these aims – are placed onto participants. Thus, the debate presupposes an audience consisting of judges who give a verdict; a set of procedures which establish who can speak, for how long and in what order; and the clear delineation of the two parties or sides discussing the issue. The purpose of one's taking part in a debate is to impress the judges with their relatively superior arguments compared to those of the opponents within the procedural constraints agreed upon by both parties. In a genuine argumentation, the participants must follow certain rules: they must fulfill their obligations, accept the burden of having to prove their assertions, use mutually accepted inferring procedures, make relevant contributions to the discussion, ask and answer questions in an adequate manner, and offer definitions of the terms if necessary (Ibidem 117). The assessment of the quality of one's argumentation depends on how the type of program promoting this dialogue is perceived as well as on the audience's perception of the social context of the argumentation. The spectators can compare the discussions with the formal procedures used for bringing arguments in a debate or they can simply perceive the argumentation in place as informal conversation. Various forms of argumentation presuppose different criteria for establishing their validity. It is important to bear in mind the increasing tendency to adopt a public manner of reasoning as well as the fact that, in our contemporary *agora*, the debate takes the form of a commodity, thus making way for the revival of rhetoric (McKee 198-199).

Rhetorical interrogation is one of the most commonly used discursive devices in political discourse. The interrogation has been present in the political discourse since the Antiquity and plays the role of determining someone to admit something they already know or at least of informing them about it. The purpose of certain questions in a political debate is to remove any doubt about an issue and to offer the person achieving this interrogation the much-needed certainty in this respect. Thus, the interrogating person waits for a reply which is meant to remove the doubt; however, rhetorical interrogation may result in no effect unless

it is made with perseverance or if it appears in the construction of the discourse as an unnatural, too much looked-for formula (Ibidem 316).

4.4.2 The political man in the *agora*

Discourse or discursiveness has become an increasingly visible social phenomenon recently, although this process appears difficult to explain. As part of various theses and debates, the interpretations that have been advanced with respect to the relation between language and society tend to add some new significance to language and implicitly to reassess its status in relation to the facts which make up reality. Particularly in the field of politics, language seems to turn more and more from a tool which is intended to help man understand the world into one which is employed to dominate their kin, the others, particularly the masses. The political discourse exerts fascination on the audience, although this type of public communication is invested with an authority of its own which outweighs its instrumental value. This fascination with political discourse is a curious mixture of admiration for and revolt against its power to master the consciousness of the masses.

At the end of this research, I have opted for conducting an analysis of the liberal political discourse and have chosen to start with the interwar liberal discourse. As a survivor of the First World War, the National Liberal Party occupies a privileged position on the interwar political discursive scene. The political discourses of some of the most important party members – Ion I. C. Brătianu, Vintilă I. Brătianu, and Gheorghe Tătărescu – are extremely representative in this respect. According to the politicians of the other main parties at the time (the National Peasants' Party, the Legionnaire Movement) the National Liberal Party's activity epitomizes the idea of party *tyranny* or party *dictatorship*, whereas the liberal representatives consider that it rather coincides with the emergence of Modern Romania.

In an address in the Romanian Senate in 1913, Ion I. C. Brătianu[1] – deeply convinced and at the same time willing to convince others that, in politics, "the results are the only eloquent expression of facts" (Brătianu, I.C. 16) – argues, in an unsophisticated manner, that "the essential and ever-lasting requirements of any good policy: a precise purpose, knowing exactly your context so as to find out the best way of achieving this purpose, and taking action determinedly in order to reach this aim" (Ibidem). In fact, Ion I. C. Brătianu unravels the

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[1] Ion I. C. Bratianu, also known as Ionel Bratianu, is the eldest son of the liberal leader Ion C. Bratianu. He held the position of Prime Minister of Romania 5 times, between 1909 and 1927; the position of Minister of Defence twice; the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs 3 times; and the position of Minister of Internal Affairs 3 times.

secret of one's initiation in the meanders of politics, synthesizing the compulsory stages of any model of political strategy. He appears to be teaching us the compulsory steps which the political man should take in order to achieve the Aristotelian purpose of politics, which is the common welfare and the wellbeing of the community. According to Brătianu, the first step in any political strategy is to establish the purpose which must be precise, have a real dimension, and ultimately be achievable. The usage of the term 'precise' is not a random one, since the established purpose must not be a political chimera. Brătianu insists that "empty ideals in politics and in peoples' life have no value" (Ibidem, vol.3 459).

In order to distinguish between trivial ideals in internal politics and in the Romanians' lives, on the one hand, and important ideals on the other hand, a politician who is willing to become a genuinely political man and a man of state should take into account Brătianu's piece of advice: "you, who will lead this nation one day, don't mind success, be it personal or momentary, but take the pulse of the nation, pay attention to its consciousness and keep in touch with it permanently in order to be honest representatives of a conscious nation" (Ibidem vol.1 57). Nowadays, one might say – perhaps scornfully – that these are just big, empty words. Nevertheless, in Brătianu's case, his deep concern with the national interest was "an indispensable duty of patriotism":

> We do not understand that one can achieve nationalism through the mere usage of bombastic phrases and empty words which anybody can utter. Out patriotism consists of foreseeing; because we foresee our daily needs for tomorrow and request the reforms today. Our patriotism consists of work. Because we believe a nation cannot grow without work, which explains why we have organized the Romanian nation's work (Ibidem vol.4 147).

In an internal party meeting with a number of liberal leaders, in October 1911, Ion I. C. Brătianu argued in his colleagues' presence that, in order to be able to make the distinction between important and insignificant political goals, their party needed *a polar star* in its evolution which should guide the Liberals' actions and see them through to their destination. In this respect, he mentioned that "the difference between us and our opponents is that they do not know where to look for the polar star and that they have rather taken for guidance stars which have died out or moved away" (Ibidem vol.3 470). Ten years later, in another meeting with liberal party members in Timisoara, Ion I. C. Brătianu reasserted his belief that:

> […] man must link his actions to superior goals. Fights may be lost. Whatever an individual's real abilities, one cannot help getting lost on this far-stretching and turmoiled Sea of social and international fights, unless he is led by a polar star whose location does not change as the night

passes and which can give him unmistaken directions and see him through to his much-desired end (Brătianu Ion I.C. vol.3 498).

The most important members of the National Liberal Party in the interwar period, the two brothers Ion I. C. Brătianu and Vintilă I. Brătianu, were the promoters of a selective type of nationalism and relied heavily on the role-models provided by the national elite of the past. According to them, not all national stereotypes associated with the idea of *Romanian Nation* are useful in identifying the quintessential Romanian spirit. In Ion I. C. Bratianu's opinion,

> […] nations, like individuals, conceive the purpose of their lives and leave traces worldwide through the spirit with which they manifest their attributes. The men who have represented, awakened, and led their national spirit throughout ages deserve our profound gratitude. By cherishing their memory, we not only fulfill a pious duty, but also shed light on and, implicitly, increase the value of the traditions which lie at the core of a nation's richest source of future power (Ibidem 502).

One can hardly ignore the contribution of "the great voivodes, like the Basarabs and the Huniades," who acted as "a shield for Christianity," or the importance of Stephen the Great or Michael the Brave who iconize the independence and the integrity of our nation. According to the Romanian politician, what followed subsequently, after Michael the Brave and until the events in Griviţa and Mărăşeşti – are merely "times of numbness" during which only "Horia, Tudor and Iancu awakened the long-cherished virtues of our ancestors" (Ibidem 503). As Ion I. C. Brătianu pointed out, there are times of our national history which are not worth mentioning. However, this is not a singular opinion; it rather represents a feature of the liberal discourse. Whilst referring to the same aspect, Vintilă I. Brătianu argues that:

> […] this tormented past considerably distorted or weakened every man's third must-have attribute, namely will power alongside its manifestations. Undergoing a variety of forms of oppression for over two centuries had made us forget who we were. We had forgotten that we had once been a self-determined nation capable of generating its own culture, so, at the beginning of the 19th century, we needed the bold courage of Tudor Vladimirescu and of the young generation of 1848 to raise the awareness of our rights and, later on, the events of Griviţa and Smârdan to remember the courage of Mircea the Elder, Stephen the Great, and Michael the Brave's soldiers (Brătianu Vintilă I. *Scrieri şi cuvântări…* vol. 3 354).

The reason for revisiting, in this paper, the Romanian national stereotypes appearing in the liberal discourse is that not all of them were considered appropriate for "the new tendencies of the epoch." The selective type of traditionalism characteristic of the liberal discourse is, once again, reflected in Vintilă I. Brătianu's words: "Therefore, in our attempt to meet these prerequisites, we must investigate the natural traits of the Romanian people, foster

and use the positive ones, and correct the weaknesses generated by the hardships of the times" (Ibidem 351). It is one's willingness to overcome their condition, as reflected in their "ambition to rise and [their] thirst for knowledge," that essentially represents the ambivalent characteristic of the Romanian nation. Initially, these traits constituted the premises for accomplishing the necessary social structure of Modern Romania to the extent to which, "had the masses of our nation lacked this ambition, we couldn't – with only a small class of boyars – have been properly equipped for the particularly intense and complex life of the modern state over the past 70 years" (Brătianu Vintilă I., Cum pregătim Românul Nou… 11). The Liberals' attitude towards those forms which lack substance is quite obvious since, as Brătianu remarks, "while striving for better, our nation takes over from others not only what's good, but also what's bad. You will often see, in Bucharest's streets, the latest fashion trends in Paris, although the comfortable and healthy life in our families' homes did not follow suit" (Ibidem 12). Should they have been accepted, the new forms ought to have been weighed according to their usefulness: "This ambition to achieve better will have to be channeled in terms of its usefulness because, considering our position in-between two worlds as well as our delayed development, we should mostly take into account what is useful for us and should know how to get rid of those things which could harm us. We should avoid acting like a butterfly burning in the firelight" (Ibidem).

Just like the Romanian nation's intellectual endowment must be channeled in order to help it achieve the right goals, its spiritual formula must also be optimized. Joyfulness, kindness, moderation, and common sense "were once necessary to help us go through the hard times we were experiencing, but today, when we are free, we must select from among these traits only what is suitable to the present conditions" (Ibidem 13). Since kindness and patience may be mistaken for naivety, inertness, or impassivity, they must now be transformed from some ambiguous traits into values characteristic of what might be referred to as *animated nations*: "they are the manifestations of a brave nation, bravery which must come in support of great actions during peace times" (Ibidem).

The Liberal National Party governed the country for six years, throughout which period it initiated important reforms supported by Vintilă I. Brătianu: the agrarian reform, a new constitution, the election law, and other reforms in the field of foreign affairs or intended to modernize Romania. The liberal slogan – '*By ourselves!*' – was intended to exploit the idea of nationalism in the context in which the liberal nationalism at the time was significantly economy-oriented. Although they encouraged and strongly supported the domestic capital, the

Liberals put the interests of the Romanian state above it: "In case we need foreign capital and foreign expertise, they must come in the form of cooperation, with the following prerequisites: firstly, whilst making a treaty, we must keep our heads up because we are not the only ones willing to satisfy our interests, they also have their own needs to meet. Secondly, [we must] keep those of general interest under the control of the state, as far as both domestic capital and foreign capital are concerned. Even if a Romanian company were to come and ask for the right to exploit the national railways, I don't see why we should grant them this right, because it is in our much greater interest, particularly that of our national defense, to keep this under the direct control of the state" (Buzatu vol. 2 327). Economic regulations were formulated according to the general interest of the Romanian state, and the Liberals did not agree with the idea of collaborating with foreign companies which simply distrusted our nation: "whoever distrusts us should not come [to our country]" (Ibidem 328); Romania's economic consolidation was perceived as a prerequisite for the political stability of the entire continent.

For the Liberal National Party, the most effective strategy of legitimizing its own discourse during the interwar period was to resort to the discursive community which supported the perspective advanced by its own party. Since Vintilă I. Brătianu foresaw that it is not the real social classes, but rather those appearing 'on paper' that essentially constitute the object of political discourse, he blurred the formerly existent borders between social classes and diminished the election resources of the opponent parties (the Peasants' Party and the Romanian National Party), thus increasing the potential of election adhesion to his own party:

> In the new social and economic context, the structure of social classes has changed, acquiring a new facet. The bourgeoisie, as we used to know it, has also changed. […] Nowadays, the bourgeoisie, just like the intellectual class, is structured into layers which are fundamentally connected by equality. The village primary school teacher – who, through his participation in social life, is a peasant by all means – is also an intellectual, just like Mr. Iorga, a university professor. The merchant running a small business in the countryside is also a bourgeois, similarly to Mr. Luca Niculescu, one of the biggest traders and manufacturers in the country; although they are not actually members of the same social class (Ibidem 330).

Thus, the youngest of the Brătianu brothers reconfigures Romania's social structure to the benefit of the Liberal National Party: "And the fact that the Liberal National Party is caring for all fields of activity – political, social and economic – both in the city and in the country proves that it is on the right track" (Ibidem).

A particular feature of the liberal discourse appears to be the political irrelevance of social classes. Thus, the discourse in case is apparently concerned with proving the party's constant support to Romania's development throughout history rather than with reflecting, in terms of social classes, those social characteristics which lie in fact at its very core. Should they have positioned themselves as representatives of the bourgeoisie, they would have lost a massive segment of the peasants' electorate. Under such circumstances, Vintilă Brătianu turns out to be extremely ingenious when using his appeal for an avoidance of any "class struggle" as a strategy of breaking up the peasants' electorate:

> We should avoid setting the peasants' minds on the fact that they need to become part of a separate and privileged class, as it was once the case with our boyars. We need neither a peasants' dictatorship, nor a red or a white one as we used to have in the past. […] So, Mr. Iorga stated very well, [that what we need is] not a peasants' state, but rather a Romanian state (Ibidem 331).

Dictatorship is a frequently occurring topic in the interwar liberal discourse. Both parties – the Liberals and their main political opponents, the Peasants Party – accuse each other, even if not very seriously, of dictatorial tendencies. For the Liberals, the Peasants National Party members are promoters of the leftist type of dictatorship and, vice versa, the latter consider the Liberals to represent the 'club'-type of dictatorship. The issue of dictatorship is addressed more seriously starting with the reign of Carol II, when Gheorghe Tătărescu takes a firm stand against all forms of dictatorship and authoritarianism. The Liberal representative notices the emergence of a series of harsh criticisms against his party as well as the usage of new addressing formulas such as: "dictatorial regime", "personal government", or "concentration regime." Tătărescu also highlights "the violence of political struggle" and "the insufficient number of the politically affiliated staff."

> [Political] campaigns dominated by hatred and violence, personal insults and attacks which haven't spared at least the private lives of political men, the savage press struggle and the pugilistic discussions in the parliament have resulted in the discrediting atmosphere which is nowadays putting pressure upon our parties. The public opinion – particularly that of the peasant masses – has remained painfully impressed by this avalanche of insults and accusations which haven't spared anyone, not even those people whose names are directly connected to the union of our nation (Buzatu 341).

This period of violence in our country's political history coincides with the moment when the masses' respect for the leading class and, implicitly, for the political parties decreased

dramatically: the savageness of political struggle at the time undermined the authority and the prestige of political parties.

The incapacity of the Romanian parliamentarism to meet the traditional, authoritarian expectations of the more sizeable social class of peasants discredited political parties and, ultimately, the very idea of democracy in the Romanian public opinion. What really constitutes a problem is not the politicians' lack of respect for the masses, but rather their lack of authority and prestige in the eyes of these masses. For the masses of peasants, politics is an indecent performance which completely ignores the most cherished idea at the time – the consolidation of the national state – and compromises the traditional type of authority.

> The public opinion – the enlightened public opinion – looked in amazement at the modest teachers living in the lands of the kingdom, at the humble 'doctors' working in peace courts in Transylvanian valleys, and at the shy clerks working for Bessarabian zemstvos [local government institutions], torn away from a patriarchal life and forced, under certain regimes, to step forward into the turmoil of public life. […] The fall in the parliamentary standards as well as in the prestige of ministerial authority has been the fatal consequence of an insufficiency in the number of politically affiliated staff. Sometimes, parliamentary debates have fallen much below the level of those occurring on the occasion of popular gatherings and, more than once, the configuration of the cabinet made the public opinion smile mercifully (Ibidem 342).

For the liberal politician, 'public opinion' bears two distinct meanings. Firstly, it connotes something peasant-related, indistinct, massified. Secondly, it may suggest an attitude of enlightenment and condescension. It is not so much the case of an insufficient number of politically affiliated staff, but rather a sign of political insufficiency which apparently goes back to this staff's humble social origin: *modest* primary school teachers, *humble* doctors or *shy* clerks.

As Tătărescu points out, an issue of serious concern for the stability of Romanian political life at the time was *the politicking*. "I admit that the politicking, particularly the savage politicking, as practiced by certain regimes, has always been a great plague of our public life" (Ibidem 344). However, in order to give the impression that the politicking should be perceived as an acceptable form of excess in party life, Tătărescu describes politicking as '*savage*,' thus placing only the idea of savageness in the sphere of the unacceptable.

In conclusion, at the core of the interwar liberal discourse lies the idea of nationalism. The incontestable modernist orientation of the party is completed by a certain form of selective traditionalism which only includes into their discourse those stereotypes, examples, and personalities that are compatible with the Liberals' goals. Not all traditional

characteristics of the Romanian nation are worth singling out as valid features or attitudes in the new social context. According to the Liberals in the interwar period, there have also been "times of numbness" throughout the history of the Romanian nation and "this tortured past has weakened the nation's willingness and manifestations." Most often, the Liberals criticize the standard type of ethnic personality which they consider to be dominated by passivity and mimetism. The Liberals' discourse is characterized by a exigent and intellectualist nationalism. The liberal type of nationalism merely pertains to economic aspects rather than to ethnic ones, thus proving the incontestable orientation towards modernization. The interwar liberal discourse reflects the pragmatic type of discourse in many ways. Although democratic in nature, the liberal discourse shows distrust in the capacity of the masses to express their political will. Moreover, it manifests certain autarchic tendencies which are easily noticeable in the party motto – "*By ourselves!*" – which reveals that the Liberals rely especially on the economic and political elite, without giving the impression they might owe anything in particular to the masses, which they permanently encourage to achieve perfection.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Over the past five years, the liberal discourse in the Romanian political space has been directly influenced by a series of imperative needs: "I'm running for the Romanian presidential election because it is a must!"; "Our wellbeing should be a right, not a lottery!"; "The crisis is forcing us to cut down on taxes immediately!"[1].

The attitudinal vectors of this well-known political figure, Crin Antonescu, are reflected by a series of statements made by him in a relaxed, free-speech discourse which failed yet to convince the floating electorate. His verve seemed to be mobilizing and his speech abounded with ideas; nevertheless, as a leader, he lacked real involvement. His discourse relied heavily on the usage of negative formulas and irony, pointing his finger at whatever went wrong on the political opponents' side of the barricade and presenting, sometimes in an apocalyptic manner, the state of the nation:

> There are many questions which, not me, but journalists and Romanians expect you to answer. I personally no longer expect that. I'm not asking you a question, I'm assuring you: you have no implication in the disappearance of the fleet, you haven't bought a house in Mihăileanu

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[1] Transcript of ,*The Great Debate* show which was broadcast by the *Realitatea TV* Romanian television station on November 20, 2009. This televised debate was held prior to the first election tour of the 2009 presidential election and, among its participants, there were: Crin Antonescu, President of the Liberal National Party; Mircea Geoană, President of the Social Democratic Party; andTraian Băsescu, President of Romania at the time.

Street, your family are all living well […]You have nothing to navigate with, we don't have a fleet anymore! (Ibidem).

The Liberal Party leader came to meet his potential voters with a simple discourse, leaving figures to his opponents and attempting to bring the electorate on his side by posing as a candidate of the people, coming from amongst the people, a candidate whose principles are guided by truth:

> I'm not an ambitious man. I've built my political career, if I can say so, by following principles and adhering to values. I don't care to reach the peak of my career at Cotroceni Palace. I'm a normal person who has chosen to do politics and, on behalf of all normal people, I must justify today those twenty years I've spent in politics, the position I have and the chance I stand by running and fighting for president of Romania. (…) For twenty years, we've been hearing and probably tonight will hear again about numbers and commitments. We'll find out again that the crisis we've been through is or will be over. It's high time we left numbers aside and told the truth. There have always been given numbers and plans, but the truth has never been told (Ibidem).

Most of the discursive strategies that Romanian politicians resort to in order to legitimize their access to power rely on messages which diagnose Romanians' needs in accordance with the candidate's agenda (although it should have been the other way round). Such a mechanism has allowed the liberal politician to stand out as the person who is bringing the best solutions to solving a series of problems. In this kind of practice, personal goals are ahead of the rules presupposed by any real communication with the represented nation, hence the derailing of all strategic manoeuvres from the normal paths of a debate.

During the final debate for the presidential elections at the time, Crin Antonescu resorted to a type of discourse which relied on personally attacking the opponent rather than on rejecting the latter's opinions. Despite the fact that he himself seemed to be a very strong opponent throughout the election debates, his discourse lacked the validity of a genuine argumentation and instead abounded in sophisms of the *argumentum ad hominem* or *ignoration elenchi* types as well as with tendentious interpretations of his opponent's stand. He also frequently employed *argumentum ad verecundiam* and *ad populum*, just like in a series of speeches he had previously delivered in the Parliament. Rarely did he resort to speaking on behalf of the nation – which he claimed he represented – in order to legitimize his statements, thus seeking to obtain public support by claiming the individual's right to be represented in the Parliament and by posing as a defender of the nation from those affected by corruption, by the political Mafia, and by local barons regardless of their political orientation.

His description of Romania's worsening situation, which he mostly blames on the Government, has apocalyptic dimensions:

> But Romania doesn't fit this scale. As long as Romania still has a Parliament, it is still worth speaking, as much as we can, on behalf of it. There are not two Romanias, Mr. Prime Minister! There is a Romania whose existence I hope you are aware of. A Romania in which people are on a strike or take to the streets, some of them to protest, others because they lost their jobs. There is a Romania with people in their offices doing nothing else but talking about who is staying, who is leaving, who has a higher salary, or why someone has a lower salary. There is a country where the magistrates have ceased judging, for reasons which – I don't know – are maybe right or completely wrong. There is a country where the arms discharged by the gangs of interlopers resonate louder than those used by the law enforcement forces. There is a country where policemen have run out of gasoline and there is a country where, although you strictly obey the president's orders, there is no longer order in the streets, in institutions, or in people's minds.[1]

Antonescu's entire discourse is based on a dichotomy between the evil ones, holding the power and portrayed pejoratively as "gangs of criminals", "the Mobs", or "local barons", and the representatives of the party led by himself and to whom he refers in positive terms as "liberal initiators" with respect for the Parliament and "speaking on behalf of Romanians" (Idem).

An analysis of the current Romanian political discourse points out a radicalization of the arguments employed against the political class, the appearance of a series of increasingly virulent attacks, and a profound lack of interest in consulting the public and finding out the citizens' real needs. It may be argued that there is no prominent party or political figure in Romania capable of giving up this type of conduct in their fight for power, thus proving that the Romanian political class has not reached its maturity and has never ceased using every possible means of communication in order to achieve its ultimate goal, namely obtaining the power. As a President of the Liberal National Party, the liberal leader hesitantly promised to promote a different way of doing politics and of ruling the country:

> There is a hyper-diplomacy in which many words are said. Our diplomacy needs all relations to become normal. The President of Romania does not have to be the only voice heard in the field of diplomacy, but rather a unifier [of voices]. I will not take any major decision without consulting the opposition and without informing the media, the public opinion (Ibidem).

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[1] This discourse was delivered by Crin Antonescu, on Septembrie 24, 2009, in the Romanian Parliament, prior to the vote for suspending the Romanian President from office. Source: http://pnlcampiaturzii.blogspot.ro/2009/09/discurs-crinantonescu.html, retrieved on 30.05.2012

Antonescu's discourse did not convince and did not manage to motivate the Romanian electorate. Therefore, following the second tour of presidential elections in 2009, he was forced to disappear into the anonymous mass of common citizens whilst choosing another candidate, not out of his convictions, but rather out of the necessity to eliminate the other candidate.

* * *

Five years later, Klaus Iohannis, the current liberal leader, is also in the position of promoting the defining traits of the liberal discourse, maybe in fewer words and with hardly anything unnatural or pretentious in it, preserving the self-defining motto: "By ourselves!".

The political man – subsequently elected President of Romania by his nation – does not resort to a discourse characterized by subtleties. His message is presented clearly and he is seen taking over the role of a figure with a historical consciousness. Although his discourse does not leave the political comfort zone, his discourse remains useful to the electorate. What the communication strategists involved in his campaign relied on was the fact that the discourse is the most visible media element. This explains why they opted for a repetition of messages and ideas so that the receivers could easily associate the message with the candidate.

Nevertheless, Klaus Iohannis' discourse is different not only from the one of his opponents representing other distinct political parties, but also from the discourse of his Liberal National Party predecessors. Despite his teaching profession and his implicit familiarity with the art of conversation and dialogue, Klaus Iohannis chose to convince his electorate with a scientific type of discourse, focusing on the accuracy and clarity of his message and, at the same time, giving his audience time to process the information provided by him.

From the very beginning, the liberal leader's discourse appears to be dominated by the idea of national identity:

> Dear Romanians, […] I'm telling you, with all my conviction, that this is possible in Romania! I've decided to run for president with one thought only: to turn Romania into a country which knows what it wants and can achieve whatever it wants. A Romania of things done well! We are here together, several thousand members and supporters of the Liberal National Party and

of the Liberal Democrat Party, of the Christian Liberal Alliance. However, behind us, there are 2.200.000 Romanians supporting my candidacy.[1]

Klaus Johannis skillfully exploited the power of his slogan – "Romania of things done well!" – using it as a rhyme to imprint a certain rhythm onto his discourse. He understood very well the meaning of slogans which are in fact maxims conceived in support of particular actions, some kind of tools, which – as it has been frequently stated – must impose themselves through their rhythm, through their concise and easy-to-remember form, but which are adapted to the circumstances, they must constantly be renewed and do not benefit yet from the large, traditional recognition received by the proverb (Perelman et al. 208).

The liberal leader's main slogan was also backed up by *shock formulas* that were intended to highlight its meaning and strengthen its message, formulas which served, at the same time, the purpose of determining the audience to see his opponent in an unfavourable light. "My force is your force!", "My vision is your vision!", "My victory will be your victory!", in other words, whatever is "mine" represents the wellbeing of the community, it is whatever you do not possess yet, but which you can have by giving your vote to whoever identifies himself with you. The same formulas let us understand that one's own failure to achieve a goal becomes the failure of the entire Romanian nation.

By using the slogan "It's time for facts!", Johannis' intention was not to tell the Romanian people that there had come the time for a change, but rather that, up to that moment, those who had been in the position of making the right decisions had failed to do anything at all: "I am a man of facts, not of empty words!".

In contrast with the interwar liberal discourse, Iohannis no longer brings to life important figures of Romania's historical past, but rather places his stake on his own personal narrative, leaving *the argument of authority* aside, at least apparently, as it remains to be seen subsequently. The President to be considers himself a Romanian with a common personal history but forced by circumstances to face an exceptional situation. It seems to be the classical story of the Romanian fairy tale hero: the simple man who is confronted with an extraordinary situation and who successfully comes out of it due to his personal qualities.

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[1] The speeech was delivered on 27.09.2014, by the President of the Liberal National Party, Klaus Johannis, on the occasion of the rally organized by the Christian Liberal Alliance in support of his candidaccy for President. The speech was accessed on 28 09.2014 on his candidacy webpage available at the time: http://www.iohannispresedinte.ro/ro/noutati/discursuri-si-interviuri/discursul-sustinut-in-cadrulmitingului-acl-pentru-lansarea-candidaturii-la-presedintia-romaniei.

> This is a very special moment for me. I didn't think I would get here 30 years ago, when I began to teach, or 14 years ago, when I became a mayor. I've never thought that I, a high school teacher with a German name and originating in a town in the centre of the country, will stand today in front of thousands of enthusiastic people and speak on behalf of millions of supporters, all sharing the same vision of Romania. Democracy and freedom have made this possible. But it's especially you, the citizens of this country, with your generosity and your openness, that have made this possible (Ibidem).

Klaus Iohannis employs *the argument of authority* in his discourse not only with an obvious positive connotation, emphasizing his own qualities ("I've been in the public service for my community since 2000."), but also ironically, whilst addressing his election opponent ("If you adhere to no values and believe in nothing during your stay at the Victoria Palace, you will also adhere to no values and believe in nothing whilst residing in the Cotroceni Palace.")

One can also notice in his discourse the presence of *the argument based on facts* whilst continuing to refer to the non-achievements of his opponent, whom he considers to lack any solid evidence that could propel him into the position of leader of this country ("Everything I've built so far, and people know it very well, is my business card. However, here I'm not talking about Sibiu, but rather about something essential, fundamental.").

The Liberals' current vision presupposes an as large addressability of the discourse as possible due to the fact that the target audience consists not only of the liberal electorate, but of common citizens as well, regardless of their political conviction: "A country which invests in its own people, in their education, which manages to keep home its specialists in the fields of economy, research, and health, by cherishing their training and labour. A country where people don't die in unexpected circumstances because their healthcare system is sick" (Ibidem).

One can also find in this liberal discourse *the rhetoric interrogation*, a frequently occurring discursive pattern in the political discourse. It seems to be a kind of tactical procedure in which the opponent is not directly incriminated and which the dialogue partners may call into question, at the same time offering them the chance to reply with a question of their own:

> As a matter of fact, what are the November elections about? It's very simple. Do we want another five years of scandal? Or do we want a president who establishes a clear direction for his nation, who brings forward a vision and convinces people to sit at the dialogue table? Do we want democracy or wish to let the entire power in the hands of one party only which has not managed yet to get rid of its old bad habits? Do we want our Romania to be led by a man

who has disappointed, who has promised everything, but has done nothing to keep his promises? Or do we rather wish to promote another kind of politics? Do we want a Romania of the citizens or of the local barons? Do we want a strong president or one manipulated from the shadow? Do we wish a Romania governed by the rule of law or rather by the self-will of a group of persons? Do we want things well-done in our Romania or do we rather want our politicians to leave everything to chance? (Ibidem).

There is no economy of words in Klaus Johannis' discourse; nevertheless, a certain economy of feelings can be noticed. He does not attempt to appeal to his supporters emotionally, but rather to obtain, almost mathematically, the maximum rational election support.

Although most of the liberal leader's public discourses are intended to raise sympathy and obtain support, at their core lies the idea of a fight between the pure (generally represented by common people, but also by the political opposition, those who are not in power at that moment) and the bad (those who actually are in power and are usually the initiators of changes or reforms), between the honest and the corrupted. In this respect, every political leader claims he or she represents the people, speaks on behalf of them and expresses what they like or dislike or what they expect from their leaders, the problems and hardships they are facing and, ultimately, defends their rights and liberties. Klaus Iohannis' discourse clearly reflects this type of argumentation. One can easily notice how he built up his discourse based on an opposition between himself (a man of facts, a model of correctness, a man of promises kept, someone defined by honesty) and his political opponent (a man of empty words, of scandal and show, suffocating people with pointless taxes).

The personal attack of the opponent (*argumentum ad hominem*) is very subtly revealed by the president elect's self-positioning on the clean balance pan: "I believe in democracy and freedom, in the politics done seriously and with respect for the people". He positions himself as the man who will ultimately replace the existent cabinet residing in the Victoria Palace and which has proven to be lacking results and insensitive about it: "They caused disappointment. We've come to this point due to the lack of vision of those leading us nowadays. […] I've met people profoundly disappointed with the young prime-minister in whom they had put their hopes."

As regards the use technology in the liberal discourse, when he delivered his speech announcing he was running for president, Klaus Iohannis employed a teleprompter, which was the first event of this kind in Romania.

At the same time, the Internet, through social networks, has become an extremely useful tool, especially for the young generation, that segment of population for whom the

virtual public space has represented the genuine agora of political discourses. The dialogue and the argumentation in public space have demonstrated their crucial role, purpose and power, influencing lives, options, and political orientations. The new arena of these two elements bears the mark of virtual public space which is able to mobilize the masses not only to simply get them out in the agora, but also to persuade them and determine them to take action. Klaus Iohannis' victory is a victory of the debate, dialogue and argumentation operating in virtual public space, there where, by creating their own avatar, millions of supporters stood as a possible right-winged candidate for the presidency of Romania, in a unique attempt to obtain the votes of the majority.

Conclusions

The present study confirms that, irrespective of the perspectives from which it has been analyzed over the time, communication has always been an object of interest almost as important as existence itself. Thinkers have understood that man manifests socially by means of language, and that the social universe is a discursive universe, consisting of language acts performed in various contexts; people have realized that, through language, one has access to reason, to the concepts of good and evil, and finally one can manifest as a social being; at the same time, they have learned that it is also via language that one can negotiate their status and role in the community as well as create a new social reality.

The first chapter of this study, *Communication and Discourse*, addresses the notions of language and speech as markers of identity and social re-cognition on the one hand, and analyzes the structure and types of discourse that, we believe, define the man as a dialogic being, on the other hand. The cognitive game typical of the human being has created tools that allow him to take possession of the world and that he has constantly sought to refine and adapt to circumstantial needs. This is how *maieutics* - the Socratic method of determining the truth by means of spontaneous dialogue, and *dialectics* - the art of reaching the truth through dialogue, have emerged. It is also thus that different types of discourse and the various argumentative structures, which attempt to negotiate and solve opinion conflicts, formed both in the real and virtual public space as well as the public media (especially television). While the sophists were given credit for having induced the necessary mood and spiritual effervescence proper to creative activities, Socrates and Plato were the ones who raised maieutics and dialectics respectively, to the rank of an adequate method to search for truth. Moreover, due to his theory of argumentation, Aristotle remains the creator of a set of instruments that are useful to reason and are adapted to epistemic and practical needs.

At the beginning of the 20th century, analytical philosophy turns language into the object of its study, and the logical analysis of language will study the meaning of linguistic expressions. Perhaps the clearest form of this perspective - in which philosophy identifies with the analytical reflection of clarification - was developed by Ludwig Wittgenstein who argues that: "Without philosophy thoughts are, as it were, cloudy and indistinct: its task is to make them clear and to give them sharp boundaries" (Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus 30).

Seen from the perspective of the relationship between interlocutors inside a community, the social universe is a discursive or rhetorical one. This has led to a systematic study of the use of language in this universe, of the speech acts performed in context, of the

discursive strategies used to decipher the relationships between signs and their users, of the evolution of these relationships, as well as of the rules to be observed for a correct and effective use of the language. Language and speech acts analysis can lead to the development of certain methods of analysis for communication acts and, implicitly, for discourse analysis and content analysis. In this respect, various dimensions of J.L. Austin's speech acts have been analyzed followed by a critical perspective on these new beginnings of the philosophy by J. Searle, one of the authorities in the field who have long dealt with criticism and the development of the acts of speech theory.

When discussing the concept of dialogue, one must refer to Plato's dialogues. Although the participants in them are characters that remain partly mysterious in a world that may be considered real and fictional at the same time, there is still no moral ambiguity in them. With Socrates, there is a life in which all forms of feeling and thinking mingle whereas with Plato, there is a major difference between desire and reason. Plato uses the characterization of his characters to present a doctrinal point of view, according to which righteousness is what unites humanity with deity.

Moreover, unlike literature, Plato's philosophy "wants to be more than universal: it wants necessity as well: truth for all the worlds that are possible" (Arthur Danto qtd. in Nehamas 33). In what concerns the Greek philosopher's perception of the role of conventions in the structure of meaning, this reflects in the myth of the cave, a structure that highlights the relationship between appearance and reality as well as the constraint that the social framework can exercise in the pursuit of truth.

As we know, rhetoric emerged as a rigorous discipline at a time marked by the structural change of the poleis caused by the collapse of the gentile aristocracy. This was a radical transformation that generated new perspectives on the world, man, and education, whose authors were, among others, the Sophists, among which Aristotle had the most important contribution. For the latter, rhetoric was "the art of discovering the persuasive element in each given case, as well as the sources from which it does not spring, rather than an art of persuasion proper" (Florescu 49).

Hence, the discourse as an oratorical act must inspire confidence. Certain authors of scientific studies often consider it enough to report certain experiences, to mention certain facts, to refer to a number of truths in order to raise the interest of potential listeners or readers. Such an attitude results from the illusion – which is quite common in some rationalist environments - that facts speak for themselves and leave an indelible imprint on any human

spirit which they shape regardless of its inclination (Perelman et al. 27). Knowing the ones whose attention we aim to gain, i.e. the audience, is a prerequisite of any argumentation, since, in the view of the one who argues, the presumed audience is always a more or less systematic construction.

Discourse is subject to metamorphoses by means of which various correspondences between being, on the one hand, and existence, on the other hand, are validated. Philosophy as a genre of discourse diminishes the importance of philosophy regarded as the origin of knowledge or pure thinking, which rests on material support only out of necessity or opportunity of disclosing an idea. Aurel Codoban argues that "in the contemporary occurrence of philosophy as a discourse, which emerges with the new theme of language, communication and signification, there is one more aspect to be considered. Discourse as a philosophical figure reflects its own thematization. Hence, studying the current image of philosophy as discourse is studying it from the perspective of a signifying practice" (Codoban 85).

The second chapter of the paper, *The Public Space*, includes a conceptual delimitation of the notions of 'public sphere' and 'public space' and focuses on the emergence of a new type of *agora* - the public television space and the virtual public space. The means of mass communication take part in the formation and manipulation of public opinion, but - in their turn - are also sensitive to shifts in public opinion. The latter is a structure that emerges spontaneously based on economic and social conditions, on traditions, customs and states of mind, and under the influence of ideologies promoted by the government, political parties, social classes, family actions, schools and the mass media. Nowadays, the media is the power with the greatest influence, and "no government can ignore this sovereign authority of the press" (Le Bon 147) since the dream of all politicians is to subordinate media tools.

The public sphere is an essential aspect in the relationship between society, on the one hand, and the government, on the other. Habermas, the German philosopher, outlined the modern meaning of the term, which designates "a principle whereby a certain political order is established" (qtd. in Marga, *Filosofia lui Habermas,* 111). In her writings, Hannah Arendt opts for a return to the lost meanings of both 'public space' and 'communication' in order to protect cultural values against the futility and precarious nature of human condition. In modern society, people who spend more time in their private space, are reluctant to admit their fears and tend to forget that they may also suffer. Thus, a return to the original ways of the agora - where the ancient Greeks would gather several times a year to experience together

the deepest of all sufferings, the most terrible of fears with exaltation and lucidity - is only natural.

In the public space, each individual seeks communion with one or more individuals, thus creating a community, which is a structure based on a key human feature, namely its social character. However, in modern and postmodern society, there has been a weakening of the connection between the public space/domain and the private space triggered by the exacerbation of the social attributes. What is arguably a drawback in this new type of social character is the pseudo space in which interaction takes place, a causal nexus in which the individual no longer acts but only behaves as an economic producer, consumer and inhabitant of the cities.

In the third chapter, *Dialogue*, the focus is on the types of dialogue and on the characterization of media actors in public television. Unlike in classical debates, typical of past television shows, which were anchored in Habermas's perspective on the public space and centered on the social consensus achieved through rational, critical discussion, the present-day talk show places itself in a rather conflictual public space in which compromise is difficult to reach.

According to the constructivist model, the two interlocutors initiate a communication contract which is followed by a communication project whose purpose becomes evident only during the communication process due to the linear character of the verbal message as well as of the other paralinguistic messages - mimics, gestures, sightings, with the latter becoming real indices of representation - both for the person initiating and conducting the dialogue and for the dialogue partners.

In the final chapter of the paper, *Political Discourse and Argumentation in the Public Space*, the research focused on a conceptual ensemble of argumentation strategies used in the political discourse which are the domain of pragmatic meaning and efficiency. Furthermore, I have tried to demonstrate the use of these argumentative structures by means of a practical analysis of the Romanian political discourse while emphasizing their importance in the Romanian virtual public space.

According to Chaïm Perelman and Lucie OlbrechtsTyteca, the mechanism of argumentation is an "action which always tends to modify a pre-existing state of affairs" (64) and what can be called an argumentative problem "is settled through dialogue or rhetoric, i.e. through dispute" (Mihai 236) which, from the perspective of the philosophy of communication, as some authors claim, transforms the public sphere into a structure that

contains too much drama, while the media, by excellence, participates in and favors dramatic (re)presentation. Appearance is more important than substance as representation and appearance weigh heavier than rational debate. Politicians become stronger than ever by using advertising methods which involve little effort on their part while audiences are encouraged to become passive, i.e. to turn receptors into mere spectators.

The political discourse benefits the opportunity of capitalizing on a range of different procedures and mechanisms, so that the ideas they circulate reach the audience as easily as possible. What is permitted in the political discourse must not be allowed in any other kind of discourse, for, in this case, language seems to turn from a tool that helps dominate the world into one used to dominate one's peers, i.e. the others, especially the masses. The political discourse exerts a unique fascination, although it is a type of public communication which is invested with an authority that far exceeds its instrumental value. It is a type of fascination in which admiration for and rebellion against its power of dominion over the consciousness interweave.

Finally, I have undertaken a case study of the liberal discourse to identify and demonstrate the usefulness and role of argumentative structures. Therefore, the author of the political discourse seeks either to attract the support of others for a doctrine, or simply to aim for victory in a heuristic dispute so as to legitimize its power. Hence the usefulness of studying these argumentative structures, both in terms of acquiring user abilities and developing the critical skill necessary to identify and protect against propaganda and manipulation.

In conclusion, dialogue and argumentation in the public space proves its role and purpose in key moments of history, influencing destinies and political options and guidelines. The new arena - in which the two elements meet - seems to become the virtual public space that is able to mobilize masses, not just to push them into the street, i.e. in the agora, but to persuade them and to make them act. Thus, the victory, or perhaps the success, of a character such as the President elected by Romanians in 2014 is one obtained following debate, dialogue and argumentation in the real public space and - perhaps even much more than that - in the virtual public space.

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