

# The Anthropology of Poiesis



Mihai Popa

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*To my wife, Adriana*

M ◯ M



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## OPENING REMARKS

*Poiesis* comprises a range of matters exceeding the concern of science as a product of summative intelligence and aims to give answers that can be indirectly obtained through metaphysics. In its largely acknowledged meaning, experience, applied to established facts, does not account for the immediate objective of *poiesis*, but rather for transcending empiricism, except experience seen as an already experienced fact or as an experience of thought. However, this transcending cannot occur by criticizing knowledge or the faculties of knowledge, but by correlating the results of experienced life with more general reflections, which aim for the absolute. Therefore, experience, as a given, analytical intelligence and poietic intuition can never be considered the same thing. The classical approach of *theoria*, understood as mirroring and contemplation of a reality that lays beyond experience and exceeds the possibilities of the intellect, reason and classical logic can bring the notion closer in its intention to metaphysics. Still, *poiesis* is not metaphysics in the Aristotelian way, as prime philosophy, nor in a present-day way, as knowledge that surpasses the boundaries of experience because science can never be separated from experience.

Several works of mine dedicated to this theme have been published over time in Romanian magazines like ‘Revista de filosofie’, ‘Studii de istorie a filosofiei românești’, ‘Studii de istorie a filosofiei universale’, ‘Studii de teoria categoriilor’. Other works have been the subject of national symposiums or presented at conferences. Guided by creation and the creative synthesis of different domains of the spirit, the author tried to make his theme available to the philosophy of culture or the philosophy of art, along with a series of concepts that can be edifying in its development, sometimes put in opposition: abstract/concrete, universal/particular, immanence/transcendence, creation/imitation, form/content, etc. If we succeeded putting forth the unity of all the studies gathered between the covers of this volume, is not due to the analysis of concepts, but to our historical approach.

*The author*



# CHAPTER I

## THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF *POIESIS*

### In between the immanent and the transcendent

In one of my previous papers<sup>1</sup> I made the distinction between *poiesis* and *noesis*, having as a starting point the cultural style, meaning forms or categories perceived just as Lucian Blaga did, in his *Horizon and Style*. The *noesis* paradigm opens up a very particular horizon, the causative order, while *poiesis* deals with an abstract spiritual order, and a more inclusive ontological model than the causative-determinist one, precisely, a paradigm in which the cause is not unilateral. Each particular way of being, which actively and knowingly immerses us in reality, corresponds to a different level of abstraction.

Throughout history, man achieved fulfilment from his deeds and through his deeds; he unfolded himself. But if his actions do not reflect into things – artworks of the spirit – nothing he does, lasts, his work does not come to be. It lays in our strength to be equal to ourselves, as long as we do not compare ourselves with others and consider them our opposites, but rather our equals. Our actions always define us. But these actions have nothing to do with things that simply turn into objects; they need to be works that come from our soul. The notion of *poiesis* proves the soul to be the core of oneself and the energy that works through us into the world, the spirit that opens up the world. We are always equal to our actions. Only the Divine can show us the Path. Words that lose sight of the Path can no longer be considered speech or Logos, but deceit and disappointment.

***Symbolic and creative abstract.*** Spiritualizing abstract, inherent to the poetic way of being and knowing – recognizable in art and culture in general – sets itself against analytical abstraction. The first one is a type of abstraction that builds inside the idea. Using this concept, we try to account for a more profound order, that surpasses the abstract and the

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<sup>1</sup> Mihai Popa, *Antropologie stilistică (An Anthropology on Stylistics)*, (Bucharest: Publishing House of The Romanian Academy, 2017).

symbolic, a concept specific to artistic endeavors and other cultural domains. Abstract refers here to a certain tendency towards an ideal, one that has not been ejected from reality, but an ideal whose purity permeates and transforms (transfigures) the world's reality through its intrinsic traits.

Ideality manifests itself, it has a visible side, but also an invisible one. We can ponder upon the unperceivable side, but our thought cannot entirely grasp it because this side of reality is more complex; we can feel it as part of this world, but our senses cannot fully render it. That is why *poiesis* and the abstraction of creative activities are closer to intuition and to the experiment of thought, but their field of interest does not stop here. Constructive and creative abstraction (the poietic type) belongs to man, but it comes from beyond reality. Man's artistic achievements still preserve the stigma of distance and contain, each in their own unique way, the light that transpires in all the junctures that reveal them as works that do not belong to man entirely. Only poietic products are defined by a specific movement and have an inner dynamic, a dialectics of the spirit that holds them together and transforms us when we get in touch with them. They lead us into thinking and feeling them as always belonging to us – therefore this is an ascending revelatory dynamic, taking place on multiple levels, but restricted by order.

***Dialectics of the artistic act.*** This dynamic provides a personal trait to art endeavors (and not only to them). It always remains relevant and has been captured in all its complexity (pentadic, related to a pentad) in the art of tragedy by Alexandru Surdu in his *Pentamorfoza artei (The Pentamorphosis of Art)*<sup>2</sup>. After reading this book, which deals with art from a pentadic point of view and reveals to us its remarkable junctures, visible especially in classical works, we should keep in mind that art is the development and achievement of different elements in constant interaction. Every piece of art speaks to our being as a whole, through the totality of our senses. It has the power to transform us (*catharsis*), to unravel for us the will of the Divine, which does not alter man's path, not even when it derails or prevents him from achieving a purpose.

The poietic can also be identified in poetry, as a reminiscence of the primary act, but we can detect it outside art as well, in theoretical works, in science, and philosophy.

The product of art is a result of a personal effort. It is possible to accomplish a piece of art only through total cooperation between all the capacities of our self, those in charge of affectivity, and the ones

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<sup>2</sup> Alexandru Surdu, *Pentamorfoza artei (The Pentamorphosis of Art)*, (Bucharest: Publishing House of The Romanian Academy, 1993).

responsible with knowledge. Every art piece is unique and whole, complete.

**Creation is personal.** Wholeness is considered here from an anthropological point of view. Every piece thought and produced by man bears the traits of his personality. Therefore, when considering each field of creation – scientific, philosophical, or religious – we must do so from the perspective of the *person*, and not reduce it to just one of its qualities. Every attempt made to reconsider man from a cultural perspective, as a creative force and not merely as a simple recipient and consumer of ready-made products – attempt recurring in history – has underlined one or more of his characteristics. In retrospect, some qualities of man have been highlighted, and some have been put in second place since the early modern period. Only throughout the Renaissance, there has been an attempt to integrate and *reconsider man as a person*. That was possible only because they caught a glimpse of how *poiesis* could act as a ferment for the human being's essential development. Man became the *unification of his genuine qualities with the ideal ones*, and the totality of his artistic work became important due to his conscious and free personality. By omitting even one trait of the human character, we set *poiesis* in between brackets and lead to disregarding man as a person. That is a good example of analytical abstraction, abstracting some conditions seen as essential for the human being and casting a shadow over others. This type of abstraction is specific to particular sciences, especially those which have evaluated their means and the result of knowledge through positivity. On account of that, all sorts of abnormalities and abridged anthropological (from the perspective of 'positive' science) standards arose, complete with profiles of man, more like caricatures, that leave out man's *poiesis* and neglect seeing him as a person. Ignoring one trait of the human character, either the real or the ideal one, which integrates all the others, made all the exaggerations possible and it made it easy to believe that man can be understood by starting with repositioning him – ontological, epistemological, ethical, or aesthetical. One side of his being got emphasized – historical, political, social – while we lost sight of the fact that, in the actual life, as much as in the metaphysical existence, the human being must always come first. Man is not objective by himself, nor is he (only) subjective, *he just is*.

**Man and nature. Man and 'polis'.** Man gets closer to nature, and more importantly, he distinguishes himself from it through his poietic side – understood as occurrence or as able to generate. As poietic beings (gr.



*poietikos*, *poiesis* < *poiein*, to do), we have access to all those created and, indirectly, to all those eternal, uncreated; we share a part of the joy brought upon by Creation. In this last sense, poetry is not the only art (primordial in a way, even in Plato; the supreme art that connects us with the Divine) through which we can take part in the primal act. The poet subordinates his will of knowledge to a higher degree of understanding, which is no less human either. He wishes to become integrated into the cosmos with his whole being. The poietic state or the proclivity towards pure, integral, personal living transforms the human. This intense living, this full engagement that brings about change, is also provided by other 'arts'; it is traceable in all of man's artistic achievements from different fields. In everything he does, man rather emulates Plato's Demiurge from *Timaios*, who regularly creates and destroys the world. For ancient Greeks, the Demiurge (or the gods) possesses this attribute (*poiein*), which Plato considers to be inherent to ideas (ideas as eternal forms). 'Through his will, the Demiurge can destroy them, not only the physical, but also the divine ones, those made (born), which up until then are partly eternal, respectively temporary, except ideas.'<sup>3</sup> Therefore, from the ancient point of view, the Demiurge's actions and the permanent creation of eternal ideas represent *poieien*.

However, *poiesis* has yet another meaning: occurrence that reveals something hidden up to that point (by the Divine or one of its attributes). We must also mention that the notion carries within a part of its extended meaning – by the agency of *poiein*, as a generating source and occurrence, man (starting with the ancient Greek, which conceptualized this reality), firstly integrates himself into nature (existence), then he understands and fears it, and finally takes part in the Divine Creation through art (*catharsis*), becoming shaken by the Absolute, the Infinite, Everything, all of which he cannot understand, but indirectly takes an active part in, just like the one who can represent himself through himself and his ideas in unique pieces of art (*poiein*). *The uniqueness of the work of art is man's aspiration towards the long-lasting, as a signification of the original poiesis*, aspiration which is opposite to the integration in diversity. In this sense, the work of art is inspired. While inspired, man feels like part of something greater than him and has the feeling that, with his gesture, he gives meaning to his existence, limited in time. He is now able to suspend the signification of his existence inside the spirit. By using our faculty of reason, we can represent existence and its categories, and strive towards

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<sup>3</sup> Alexandru Surdu, *Filosofia pentadică II, Teoria Subsistenței* (The Philosophy of Pentad II, Theory of Subsistence), (Bucharest – Târgu Mureș: Publishing House of The Romanian Academy and Ardealul, 2012), p. 72.

general meanings or universal entities. However, through poiesis, we can set forth or against our existence that which is inherent to our self, we expose ourselves and live as a person. From a poietic point of view, under the constraint of the ephemerality and relativity of every action that becomes history, just because it is being stupidly repeated (or through blind becoming, or a becoming that lacks in spirit), man represents himself, not only through his daily, tedious activities, needed in order to survive, but also as part of a different reality which we generally call culture.

Not everything that man does has a meaning or a purpose, and not everything owns the attributes of his being. Through his daily repetitive activity, man integrates himself into becoming for becoming, necessary for biological sustenance, but not into becoming within being, something which is specific to man as a person, as a spiritual being, just as Constantin Noica argued. Looking back at what represents us, towards those things that last and remembering the deeds of the spirit, we notice that some of man's creations have lost their significance; they fell into the wrong becoming and have been forgotten, classified in history's weak memory, just as everything that becomes. All those deeds that repeat themselves, the historical events, they all have an evanescent sparkle and they were not able to awaken the spirit of the man that brought them into reality, nor have they been rendered to a different spirit. But those works that last (not so much in their material form or concrete existence), no matter the time and the place, they gave meaning to the entire history of humankind. Finding significations of being in the world is easy, but significations of becoming within being are remarkable, exceptional works of art. Those are an exclusive privilege of truly elevated spirits, meant to interfuse historical reality with the reality of the spiritual and to represent the right path for the next generations to follow.

The poietic transpires in everything man accomplishes using his mind, but not everything contains it. In similar terms, not every artistic creation represents something original. Out of all the artworks a man can produce, him being extremely gifted, only some can reach that high degree of talent and, furthermore, only a fraction of those few, even though created with talent and devotion, can achieve the realm of the poietic. However, culture is the sum of so many meaningful artistic works which also contain an idea imparted further along with other ones, that culture itself takes on their nature and quality. That is how we come to recognize and appreciate it. Particularly in traditional cultures, but especially in developed cultures, those set auspiciously under the authentic poietic spirit, the nature of this spirit has a great impact upon all the other works of art and all of them are

bestowed, one way or another, by the poietic spirit. The Greeks have best defined this spirit using the forever vivid harmony of the spoken word beauty (*λόγω καλως*). In order to be remembered (by society and by people), man's actions are absolute aspirations that change his life, similar to sacrificing in battle for the spirit of your people. We owe them our gratitude, but not just anyhow.

The word beautiful makes people's deeds worthy of being remembered, just like Plato argues in numerous dialogues. For instance, in *Menexenos*, Socrates quotes Aspasia's words about those killed in wars:

There is a tribute of deeds and of words. The departed have already had the first, when going forth on their destined journey they were attended on their way by the state and by their friends; the tribute of words remains to be given to them, as is met and by law ordained. For noble words are a memorial and a crown of noble actions, which are given to the doers of them by the hearers.<sup>4</sup>

People can become part of the collective memory only if they are part of the *polis*.

**Poiesis and beauty. Catharsis.** 'Beautiful words become true if they reference beautiful deeds' is the essence of this discourse and also the core of Greek thinking, which connects *poiein* to *logos*, with *kalos* in between, a connection not without contradiction, which always manifests on the speaking level. It is, in fact, the harmony of speaking (or uttering) about actions, things, and people. It occurs in a different time, aiming for a different order, inspired by gods. The connection is inherent to man and his deeds transfigure reality, shifting it towards something else, a higher one, difficult to grasp by man. This elevated reality does not belong to man, unless his deeds, words, their order, and the reality he targets are in no way a simple indication, but a presence. Thus, the becoming of oppositions, the word (spoken), the targeted higher reality, can reveal to us the essence of man's actions, meant to purify him, to create the possibility of being or transposing himself into a certain state (*catharsis*), to be shaken, frightened and in awe: this is the purpose of myth, poetry, and ancient tragedy. This last art is not just about the discourse, but an intertwining of several arts, a combination elaborated in thought (*logos*), so that it purifies man.

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<sup>4</sup> *The Dialogues of Plato. Menexenus*, translated by Benjamin Jowett (London: Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford, 1871), p. 11.

Combining dance, music, stage movements, and choreography with the atmosphere specific to Greek theatre results in purifying, not only the performers and the producers of the show, but also those who watch it; everyone becomes part of the poietic state, they enter a different reality, their divine will is being unraveled. A rhythmic narrative, harmoniously presented, does not carry one away in the myth's logos, solely through rhythm and evocation. The entire tragic performance gives us this possibility to enter the poietic state because it is a performance of the arts coexisting in dialog, a divine show. 'Destiny, gods' will to let come into being what was predicted, usually inauspicious to man, this is what awakens fear. As a matter of fact, this is *the essential feeling* of the ancient tragedy, undertaken also by the passages from the myth.<sup>5</sup> This is the reference here, the myth, or in other words, myth is the pretext of the tragedy. The narrative is presented as taking place *in a certain time*, a mythical one, therefore a simple evocation cannot transport man *in that time*, unless it does so in a very particular way. This way (or manner) is acquired through the whole performance.

Even if the poet and the spectator truly believe the myth (necessary condition, but not sufficient), they will still not get frightened and they will not get conquered by fear just from a simple narration of a myth. Moreover, not even reading the text could awaken their fear.<sup>6</sup>

Alexandru Surdu sees the ancient tragedy as a dialectical becoming, made out of five moments or, more precisely, the tragic play is the revelation of the essence of actions that unroll following a pentadic order. We can attain this order gradually, by taking part in the combined movement of the performers and the spectators. Going through these stages, we reach the feeling of tragic and attain purification through *catharsis*.

It is all about that moment of maximum tension, carefully prepared, continuously anticipated and insinuated (something that modern play writers cannot understand, so they rely on the element of surprise), when the fatal moment comes; that terrible second, brought to life by the choir, music, and dance (sometimes even *deus ex machina*), more vivid than any reality, when the divine and the human becomes one, when the dreadful decision that will bring death, pain and dismay is taken. The wailing of the choir, the strident screeches of the flutes, the wild dance and the thunder-

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<sup>5</sup> Alexandru Surdu, *Pentamorfoza artei* (The Pentamorphosis of Art), 1993, p. 91.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

like voice of the God, manifesting in the middle of the ancient theatre, in the middle of Hellas and the terrified Greeks are all elements of the performance that the preserved texts cannot offer us, but we can still imagine them as inducing fear.<sup>7</sup>

Tragedies of Hellenic theatre were meant to recreate that authentic primary state, the poieticity in which the entire ancient community could take part.

## **The Pentamorphosis of Art, an original view of the artistic phenomenon, in Alexandru Surdu**

Philosophy of art emerged as an extension of special systematic compartments of philosophy – for example in Kant or Hegel – different from aesthetics, a field of study in philosophy, differentiated ever since Aristotle.<sup>8</sup> As a matter of fact, with every important restructuring of philosophy also came a theory or a philosophy of art, as an integrated part of philosophy, just like systematic approaches emerged in history or in any other sciences. We are interested in Alexandru Surdu's approach, related to category and structured around the notion of pentad. He states that philosophy of art has been frequently discussed in works specially dedicated to this field of philosophy – just like the one already cited – or in studies concerning disciplinary issues, others than aesthetics, or related to art theory.

*Art and dialectics.* The Pentamorphosis of Art brings us into the issue through pentadic dialectics. Art is a particular domain of reality, but at the same time, it is part of reality, influenced by all the other domains. There is a permanent dialogue between reality and art, based on the talent and experience of the artist (creator of art), incentive in both directions. Similarly, there is also a dialogue between art and the other domains of knowledge or of culture in general, but it is impossible to state if this interaction, which also has a dialectic component, leads to a scrupulous or at least coherent interpretation of the mechanism of creation. Dialectics (in both its objective sense, as a way of being and becoming of the world, and also the subjective, as method and mechanism of knowledge) can be applied entirely to reality and every one of its domains. Thus, both meanings of dialectics direct us towards movement (the course of actions)

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

and its contradictory aspects, whether they bear an antithetic signification or a contradictory one (*contradicere*).

Being one of the most complex domains of reality, art, with its works of art (at least some of them) seen as a standard for perfection and relatable to any generation, it cannot function and it cannot be understood, according to Alexandru Surdu, without subjecting it to a dialectic system (and method) designed using the notion of pentad, although we can also apply dialectic methods of binary (dyadic), triadic or even tetradic type. We can find an overview of all these dialectic types and how they include one another (according to their explanatory and functional complexity, where the most complex ones undertake the least complex, relying on them) in the first four chapters of the already mentioned book, especially in II. *Semnificatia metodologica a dialecticii (The Methodological Signification of Dialectics)* and III. *De la dialectica binară la dialectica pentadică (From binary dialectics to pentadic dialectics)*. The study is remarkable because, apart from the introductory studies in the history of dialectics, the author applies his method – pentadic dialectics – to many domains and original creations (works) in a fashion that proves, the ground functionality of the method, and it also opens up new perspectives in interpreting and understanding the artistic phenomenon. We definitely believe that, in terms of aesthetics and the anthropology seen from a stylistic point of view, the *poiesis* way of being and knowing can also be one of those perspectives. The pentadic ‘mechanism’ is first ‘verified’ in chapter IV, one of the introductory chapters, that we can consider to be an exercise in applying the method to physiology, the domain of the human organism. The entire chapter is dedicated to professor doctor Daniel Danielopolu and his works, describing and explaining the physiological processes specific to the human organism. They appear and manifest antagonistically, creating a series of inter-stimulating mechanisms (‘inter-stimulating antagonism’) that permanently self-regulates, turning the organism into a whole, a system that coordinates its functions and develops. D. Danielopolu also highlights a series of laws that regulate the functioning of systems and organs, the most important for us being ‘the law of the circular mechanism’, which is of pentadic type (meaning a pentadic dialectics of objective opposition, antithetic). This law balances the power of the antagonistic parts (systems, mechanisms, organs, etc. that function in an antithetical manner, producing substances or generating reactions that have an excitative-inhibitor role) in five steps, described as follows: 1. active force, 2. reactive force, 3. interaction between them while one prevails, 4. training reactivity from the counterpart, 5. balancing

forces.<sup>9</sup> Showing how the pentadic, antithetic ‘mechanism’ works, based on the organism’s laws and means to self-regulate emphasized by D. Danielopolu, it sets the ground for the next chapter, *Perfecțiunea artistică și pentamorfoza artei* (*Artistic perfection and the pentamorphosis of art*), chapter V.

**Perfection in art.** Artistic perfection is an ideal. At times, we say that some works of art are almost perfect. Their perfection is not static, but dynamic. Unlike scientific precision (here we stumble upon relativity, in both technical and theoretical aspects), in art, the author (the creator of art) cannot identically replicate the artistic act, nor the circumstances (material) of his creation through his artistic action. The result of this act is the *occurrence* and the actual coming into existence of the art piece. But since he cannot replicate it, he tends to identify himself with perfection and the aesthetic never easy to attain. It is impossible to state with certainty if this ideal is obtained in a pentadic manner, but the dialectic pentadic unity, especially in all domains of the traditional classical art and other fields of culture and science, is not accidental. There are basic works of art we use as reference in ‘this uncontainable realm of the aesthetic’, but those which are even remotely close to the ideal we relate to, that of beauty, of aesthetic harmony, starting with the works of ancient Greeks for example, or the architectural and plastic accomplishments of ancient Egyptians, they all have in their structure pentadic mechanisms. Alexandru Surdu points out these mechanisms in many domains or works of art. The Pentamorphosis of art – always dynamic, but well-balanced – has been made obvious (other times, once discovered, it got hidden, similar to a huge secret) ever since ancient times.

The pentadic role (that of the relation between two and three,  $2/3$  and  $3/2$ ) in music, architecture, and painting, the pentagon, the golden cut or the divine proportion, the non-symmetrical proportion – dynamic symmetry – they are all discoveries that have never been revealed and passed on to Pythagoreans (for example), but only to the initiated ones.

Thoroughly organized, methodologically and historically (concerning the genesis of the fundamental domains of art), the book discusses the most important genres of art, all under the perspective of interior dialectics, the pentamorphosis. Following the already stated historical introduction, the next chapters are dedicated to music, architecture, and plastic art, with focus on the monuments from Târgu Jiu belonging to C. Brâncuși, the ancient tragedy, Shakespeare’s passion dramas, *The Plague*

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

by A. Camus, the legend of *Master Builder Manole*, M. Eminescu's *Luceafărul* (variously rendered as 'The Morning Star', 'The Evening Star', 'The Vesper', 'The Daystar', or 'Lucifer'), all in this very order. The book ends with two more conclusive chapters written from the perspective of the pentadic philosophy of art: (XV) *Pentamorfoza artei și implicațiile ei dialectice* (*The Pentamorphosis of Art and its dialectic implications*) and (XVI) *Ansamblul pentadic al artei*. (*The pentadic assembly of art*). *The Bibliography* offers the reader general and special literary references cited throughout the book. Our interest fell mainly on those two substantial chapters about ancient Greek tragedy and the passion dramas of Shakespeare, in terms of philosophy and aesthetics, innovative in their theoretical approach and suitable for an exquisite way to give a tangible form to our theme. In order to fit the amount of space dedicated to this study, we will discuss only part of the characteristics attributed from a pentadic point of view (the pantamorphosis of art) to ancient Greek tragedy.

*Aesthetic, appearance, essence. Pentamorfoza artei* (*The Pentamorphosis of Art*) by Alexandru Surdu unravels the *somehow*, the way a work of art exists, or, to quote the author, the state in which a work of art 'reveals itself in a particular manner, or its ability to picture itself in a certain way'.<sup>10</sup> We would argue that his book opens up an original perspective on how innate *poiesis* manifests as a way of being and as a way of inserting yourself into reality. This reality always displays itself differently, according to each domain of the human creation, but in essence stays the same, even if it manifests in opposition. The aesthetic always unfolds distinctly. It is apparent, but this *appearance* instantly sends us to essence; it is a way of being. Pentamorphosis lights up this path as well, to clarify and understand the way of being of the work of art because it is not just repetition, it is about generating and becoming, or as Constantin Noica said, becoming within being. On a different note, the book also allows us to understand what lays beyond appearance and grasp the essence and the totality of a work of art, unique in its way or the idea that renders its existence in being. Ancient tragedy had a pentadic structure. This structure allows a complex development and becoming within diversity while having the same finality: *catharsis*. Reaching *catharsis* (pure state) essentially requires five elements: fear, compassion, love for your fellow human, wonder, and pleasure.<sup>11</sup> Some structural elements of tragedy are also included. The whole performance leads us towards reaching and surpassing all those

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 92.



stages with its organic motions because each component targets a dynamic whole, calling into play all of its elements: the actors wearing masks, the human voices, the stage effects (the orchestra = round area designated for dance with an altar for the gods in the middle), the setting, the theatre and of course, the surrounding nature.

Tragedy should not be reduced to the written text; we cannot set aside all the other elements, but unfortunately, we gradually begin to lose sight of this fact, ever since ancient times, according to Alexandru Surdu. He mentioned that just a few centuries after the last great tragedy writers passed away, Aristotle stopped paying the same attention to the genre; he only had access to the written text, just like we have today, therefore he also lost sight of the pentadic structure of the tragedy. Nonetheless, if Aristotle had not given tragedy its rightful attention in *Poetics*, we would have been deprived of essential information regarding the importance of tragedy among ancient arts. Greek theatre gets us pondering on the importance and grandeur of dramatics, as well as the fact that through this art, the Greeks were able to keep a connection with transcendence, one of a particular nature, but not an entirely special one, that they could reestablish through ritual within the bounds of the temple.

Ancient tragedy was a complex event, dramatic in its essence, but very different from what we make of it today, in modern times. Tragedy included five different arts: poetry, actor's theatrical performance, vocal music of the choir, instrumental music of the flute, and dance.

However, all five of them have the myth at their core. The modern writing, including Shakespeare and even those *retour du tragique* of Sartre and Camus, could not recreate, neither through the narrative, nor the poetry of the dramatic text, the ancient myth of the Greeks because this myth was the spirit of that culture, the base of their religious, ethical and philosophical conscience. According to Alexandru Surdu, tragedy can no longer be experienced nor understood in the same way Greeks did. Aristotle discusses the performance of tragedy from the perspective of the feelings that lead towards it and attain purification (*catharsis*), feelings of fear and compassion (*Poetics*, 6, 1449, b, 24-27). In some exegeses, he adds pleasure or hedonism (*hedone*), love for the human fellow or philanthropy (*philanthropon*), exhilaration or mimesis (*thaumaston*).<sup>12</sup> Modern authors have persistently tried to revive the spirit of tragedy, but could not do so because they left out its dynamic complexity, the pentadic character and its purpose, the particular structure of the ancient Greek spectacle, also pentadic, all of which brought the five arts together, as a

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

whole and were able to revive the five feelings that led to purification (*catharsis*), a rebirth in the spirit of the ancient myth.

The ancient man was able to experience *catharsis* and to be part of this poetic act of creating and generating the cosmos, the divine *poiesis*. It is impossible nowadays to experience the tragic - the poetic way of being of ancient Greeks (which does not come down to just one art, but to all five arts, which together represent the divine way of purification). The state of tragedy will never be revived, no matter how many attempts will there be. The revival of ancient drama, attempted by Romans and by Christianity in a spiritual way, together with the revival of the ancient spirit by the Italian *quattrocento* are all achieved differently and represent a distinct poetic way of being from the ancient one.

**Symetros and dynamis in classical works.** The notion of revival is very familiar to all ancient cultures. It exists in every domain of the spirit, in art, religion, and metaphysical constructs. Restoration, refinement, every specific feeling – including those considered by Aristotle in *Poetics* – will be preserved one way or another in every great creation. According to Mircea Florian, a prolific Romanian philosopher, the manifestations of regeneration and reform have their origin in the ‘mysteries’ of the Greek-Latin paganism, therefore deeply rooted in the ancient atmosphere, but the notions acquire a deeper meaning in the Christian era. This idea of revival, of ‘a new man’, is also the point of focus in Paul’s letters: ‘the ancient man’ dies and ‘a new man’ is born. Furthermore, in John the Evangelist, the man is reborn out of spirit and water. The hope for revival and pagan mysteries is continuously nurtured in Christianity by the occult rites of the sacraments (liturgies), like baptism, communion (the Eucharist), and of course, penitence. Baptism is *sacramentum regenerationis* and penitence is *sacramentum resurgentium*.<sup>13</sup> We grant this idea an important place, alongside other notions like permanence, the becoming of contraries and pentadic dialectics because it always circles back into the discussion, reinforced in every chapter, domain or work of art analyzed in *Pentamorfoza artei (The Pentamorphosis of Art)*. It is the fundamental concept of the anthropology of *poiesis*. Similar to the ideas of revival, permanence, balance, and perfection, we have genesis as the core principle of ancient cultures – without referencing only Greek culture. All of them have managed to pass through eras and cultures, becoming universal ideas,

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<sup>13</sup> Mircea Florian, *Filosofia Renașterii* (Philosophy of Renaissance), edited by Adrian Michiduță and Vasile Gogea, foreword by Adrian Michiduță, afterword by Vasile Muscă (Cluj-Napoca: Grinta Publishing House, 2003), p. 55.

symbols, manufactured images of human spirituality, kept alive in myths and artistic creations (of all sorts), in religions, beliefs, rites, and rituals of every historical community. Alongside other symbols, these ideas (construct-images) have been encoded, sometimes becoming well-kept mysteries, into poetic works or representations of art. Perfection, dynamic balance, the creation and the becoming of contraries, asymmetric becoming, these particular symbol-figures of ancient geometry (the Pythagorean pentagon and pentagram) that set the ground for sacred and civil architecture, the sacred ratio or the golden cut (the divine proportion), *symmetros* and *dynamis* in other words, they will obtain a long-standing tradition in art, science and philosophy. These concepts and rules also had an impact on traditional classical arts, whereas dynamic symmetry (*dynamic symmetry* – Hambridge), the analogy, and the perspective (dynamic as well) have been perpetuated since ancient times, through the Renaissance, in modern arts and architecture inspired by the classical. The golden rule or the divine proportion of either a building in blueprint or the design of architectural projects is asymmetrical (dynamic, generating), dialectical. Alexandru Surdu's opinion is that structural asymmetry is what guarantees the divided segment, using the golden cut, traits like *dynamism*, *formative power*, *productiveness*, *ability to generate* symmetrical shapes in relation to the segment, but *potentially different*, while the symmetry of the square is not productive, but *repetitive*. The symmetric square cannot generate something other than a symmetric shape symmetric to itself, therefore another square.<sup>14</sup> The common aspect of classical traditional arts is that they all gravitate towards the ideal of beauty. The ancient mindset understands beauty as balance (harmony) between opposites, calm, perfection, and peace. By setting these traits in the forefront (seen as specific to all the arts), we forget that beauty is dynamic. If it is limited by the characteristics just mentioned, beauty will be an empty category, lacking in spirit.

The pentamorphosis of art brings forward precisely this dynamic and pentadic content, without turning into a rigid layout. Pentadic dialectics allows a perspective on arts that uncovers the harmonious and dynamic content (based on asymmetrical development and energizing formal/technical elements) in perfect balance with elements that can explain the autonomy and hierarchy of arts, using precision and perfect interactions (relative to an aesthetical ideal). Al. Surdu argues that, from this perspective, we can talk about a hierarchy of arts, justifiable through the relation between precision and perfection, which also implicitly contains

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<sup>14</sup> Al. Surdu, *Pentamorfoza artei*, 1993, p. 68.

references to the components and the relations between them inside dialectic structures of a pentadic type. On the first level, we find perfection based on numerical precision; on the second level, perfection based on geometrical precision; on the third, we find the one starting to elude the rigid control of precision; on the fourth, perfection barely recalls precision and on the fifth, it only occurs roughly and by accident.<sup>15</sup> The precision of art is not a numerically quantifiable strictness. Although art does not disregard the number, it is not limited to it; whereas a work of art where we admire perfection as a result of the artist's imagination, exists only in the matter organized according to the laws (canons) specific to each art. Whether it is a sculpture by Phidias, a temple dedicated to Athena or Apollo, a sculpture or a painting from the Renaissance, Michelangelo's *David* or *The Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci, they all reference the man and the measures of the human body, which represent the ideal harmony, the ideal *beauty* sought after in every work of art. Harmony is not a rigid (symmetrical) factor, but the ideal dynamical (asymmetrical) measure that we can see in all the classical works of art because like Al. Surdu would say, all the great works of art (sculptures and paintings) pursue *the beauty of the human body* and face. So ever since ancient times, the beauty of the body has been associated with *measure* and *proportion*. Therefore, the fundamental, basic problem of the *shape* in sculpture and painting regarding the human body is finding *the ideal proportions*, so their rendering would guarantee *the beauty* of future works of art.<sup>16</sup> Considering all of the above, we believe we also managed to outline the important philosophical and anthropological (from a cultural point of view) contributions of the so often quoted book of Alexandru Surdu. One of these contributions is that we can understand the classical work of art in itself by applying his principles and method, as well as the art piece as a whole, in its intrinsic signification. The approaches to interpretation, contemporary with the execution of some works of art, as well as those that followed, up until the present – interpretation related to content or form – have rarely considered the whole. The pentamorphosis of art does exactly that. While discussing ancient tragedy, Alexandru Surdu unravels the deep significations of the spectacle, its resorts, how it was all put together, its way of becoming (as an act of creation), and how it was perceived by the public. This type of tragedy – just as ancient Greeks conceived it (author's note, M.P) – is not part of what we call 'tragedy', but its *result*.<sup>17</sup> By analysing its components, we realize that the spectacle

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 175-176.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 92-93.

was not just an act of imitation, nor just simple acting, but had a precise purpose: to get the audience in the state of the act of creation – *poiesis* – which transforms and purifies the soul. Tragedy cannot reach its purpose if it cannot trigger this change inside spectators, who, in fact, partake in the performance. We cannot rebuild tragedy just by studying it, no matter the perspective. Al. Surdu states that studying ancient tragedy, even from a philosophical point of view, is very important, but not because it can lead to its revival, but because we can achieve a better understanding of modern tragedy and the meaning of the tragic in general.<sup>18</sup> It is not enough to simply identify its classical, aesthetical parts or the phases it goes through, nor is describing them in detail, but establishing the importance of each moment as part of a whole and especially identifying the forces that give intensity to the tragic act, through their antithetical collision – the essence of the spectacle. The element that sets off the process of achieving tragedy is *the opposition* of two forces: *one* is the authentic existence, eternal, fixed, necessary, and universal – the absolute, divine force of destiny –, the second one is its opposite, apparent existence, vanishing, changing, incidental and individual – the humane, relative force of the fellow.<sup>19</sup> It is important to keep in mind that this opposition takes place within existence (they are antithetical) and not within the being, as in Hegel's theory. The forces are in opposition and they will always be, but they do not contradict each other. This is why, says Al. Surdu, only one, the absolute one, is dominant, determinant, but it can only work through its negative, fusing together and identifying with it.<sup>20</sup> To understand ancient and modern tragedy, its spectacle (dramatic in general), and the other arts, we need to pay close attention to where we place this opposition and how we resolve it. It is obvious that, inside every art, there is a tension between two forces that enlivens and structures the artistic act from inside out, being perpetuated from the author, through the work of art towards the spectator (reader, listener). This core – with a pentadic structure – energizes the work of art and gives structure by virtue of the opposing forces, not balancing it but inserting that asymmetrical tension (done in five steps) that gives it dynamism. Each work of art contains an eternal core and a tangible, contingent exterior layer. Men of the Renaissance, artists, and theoreticians have identified this asymmetrical relation inside a war of the souls or into a conflict of the spirit, by following the path of medieval theology – which took on Plato's view through Ficino, or Aristotle's, through Thomas Aquinas.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

The eternal soul – the divine one – stands against the corrupting soul, resulting in a war of the souls, a conflict between eternal and ephemeral, universal and particular, general and individual. The true spirit (found in the supreme intellect) is perturbed by the *anima*. As Robert Klein said, *anima* is most of the time portrayed as including the word *caro*; due to its superior essence, the intellect is not considered, thus reaching the opposition anima-spiritus: the flesh part of the man is weak, but the spiritual part is his strength.<sup>21</sup> This opposition is essential and pertains not only to the dramatic spectacle but also to other fields of art like music, and painting. It is represented more genuinely in those arts that use the word as an ‘instrument’ of revealing the creative tension. Ancient tragedy is probably where the unification of the divine spirit with the human spirit is more obvious, as the artistic act that produces catharsis. Since this whole issue is of great importance, we will revisit it in a future study.

### **Publius Ovidius Naso and Dante Alighieri.** **From *Metamorphoses* to *Itinerarium mentis in Deo***

*The Divine Comedy* bears the significance of a spiritual journey while being this wonderful poem that has brought together the hope of all the Renaissance artists and men of letters to render a different spiritual representation of ancient, Medieval Christian symbols. Dante puts forth a fresh poetic perspective and a philosophical view, easy to identify in his masterpiece and also in his other ethical, aesthetical, political, and theological works. All of them exude his desire to shape and transform the mind of his contemporaries through artistic sensibility and aesthetics. He attains the awakening of his Tuscan successor's taste for art and science and of their desire to create a whole new art. They are the ones who will carry out a new design for the Greco-Roman art and science, rediscovering sensibility, the love for nature, and the experimental work by pulling it out of the scholastic canon. In general, they will rediscover ancient philosophy, Plato and Neoplatonism, but especially Aristotle.

In his *Metamorphoses*, Ovid (43 BC, Sulmo, Sulmona – 17/18 AD, Tomis, Constanța) retraces mythological paths and experiences (imaginative paths and experiences) that integrate geography, initiative adventures and mythical, spiritual, ancient experiences into a heroic verse. So, in a medieval Christian context, the same cultural values of the Ancient Times

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<sup>21</sup> Robert Klein, *Forma și inteligibilul. Scrieri despre Renaștere și arta modernă* (Form and Intelligible. Writings on the Renaissance and Modern Art), vol. I, translated into Romanian by Viorel Harosa (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1977), p. 77.

generate substance and give Dante the occasion to evoke the Greek and the Roman culture in *The Divine Comedy*. It is not by chance that both writers relate to Virgil, the author of *Aeneid*, although in a different way. Another biographical detail that brings the two together is their forced exile after ‘injuring’ with their political, moral, philosophical and aesthetic view the beliefs and principles of the governing power; Augustus in Ovid’s case and the personalities and moguls of Florence in the case of Dante. While he was on the Elba Island (8 AD), Ovid received the news of Augustus’ decision to exile him (*relegatio*) to Tomis (Constanța), on the shore of the Euxine Sea where he spent the rest of his life and died (17 or 18 AD). Dante is sentenced to death after failing to pay a debt, so he is bound to spend the rest of his days in exile, from 1304 to 1321 in Ravenna.

The writer of tales of tender love (*‘tenorum lusor amorum’*), as he called himself in an epitaph, the author of *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses*, hardly fits in the Scythian atmosphere of the province, a city built by Greeks that didn’t actually amount to the commanding appearance of the imperial city. Ovid soon realizes that his past life will become just a fading memory, devoid of substance, forgotten by men and gods, disowned precisely by those who have once elevated him to the highest realms of the Eternal City. Vintilă Horia, in his novel dedicated to Ovid’s life among the Dacians, manages to grasp this feeling very accurately, the huge cultural difference between the Dacians and Rome’s elevated environment. Ovid will come to believe that his *Metamorphoses* will not have the same impact on the Shore of the Euxine Sea as they had home. He also realizes that gods can no longer talk to him as they did back in the Eternal City and the fact that they don’t even listen to him is proof that they are in fact the echo of our fears and of everything we do not dare to do unless it is in the shadow of our atonements<sup>22</sup>. Vintilă Horia underlines here a limited qualification of the *poiesis* anthropology: in spirit, man reclaims himself from divinity as long as there still is the conscience of him having the same substance; when a severance occurs, he does not become an atheist, nor self-sufficient, but rather starts feeling sorry for himself; here is where we set the line between *poiesis* and *noesis*, one which remarkable personalities like those of Dante and Ovid can pass off through creation and self-knowledge. These spiritual itineraries give forth the criteria that define man in his new life (*vita nuova*), both exile and rediscovery of self, which for Dante Alighieri can also signify, among others, an *itinerarium*

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<sup>22</sup> Horia Vintilă, *Dumnezeu s-a născut în exil* (God Was Born in Exile), afterword by Daniel-Rops (Craiova: Europa Printing House, 1990), p. 6.

*mentis in Deum*<sup>23</sup>, a path to ensure and place in his creation the most authentic aptitudes of man as a poietic entity, those divine or demonic traits, depending on the spiritual path of his creation.

Poietic, noetic and pragmatic vocations are the ones defining us culturally and historically. They are the foundation of stylistics anthropology, but according to their own categories, they also provide the teleological aspect of our existence. There are anthropological requirements in absence of which vocation cannot be fulfilled. It is always placed under the mark of this calling, precisely as Dante himself acknowledges at the encounter with the work of Vergil, his spiritual guide.

***The sacred in the poem.*** All three poems, *Aeneid*, *Metamorphoses* and *The Divine Comedy* are conceived as a spiritual itinerary of initiation, a passage between the objective material world and the spiritual one. Dante himself called his work '*poema sacra*', defined by Torraca, amongst others, as a poem that helps the living understand the spirit of the afterlife, preaching the way in which divine justice punishes or rewards the man, according to his actions.<sup>24</sup> Ancient tradition, extended way into the Medieval Times by becoming the favourite cultural topos of scholars, took initiation (the divine way) as a way to acquire knowledge and most importantly, self-knowledge. Journeys of initiation are revelations. However, in their poetic form, they always take on metaphorical and figurative attributes; they start from the individual and then come back to him, acting as purification. But, according to Mircea Florian, while for the speculative mystics the spirit is the one taking on the path of purification, for Dante is himself and the path towards purification is presented as a suggestive and realistic adaptation of the earthly life.<sup>25</sup> The new life, that under the poetic sign and the destiny of creation keeps hold of all the elements (intellectual, moral and emotional) present in each individual's life, while the poetic journeys merge individuality with sacredness, thus becoming what the Holy Parents considered to be self-devotion in divinity, as put by Saint Bonaventura, *itinerarium mentis in Deum*. This quotation can be remembered as such, but it should be comprehended according to the spirit that sustains

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<sup>23</sup> The title of one of the first works of Ion Fidanza Bonaventura; according to Mircea Florian, this title is also suitable for Dante's work and philosophy, because it achieves the ascetic purifying ideal of a spiritual itinerary through new means. See Mircea Florian, *Filosofia Renașterii* (The Philosophy of the Renaissance), afterword by Vasile Muscă (Cluj-Napoca: Grinta Publishing House, 2003), p.75.

<sup>24</sup> Edgar Papu, *Estetica lui Dante* (Dante's Aesthetics), (Iasi: Princeps Publishing House, 2005), p. 64.

<sup>25</sup> Mircea Florian, *Filosofia Renașterii*, 2003, p. 75.



it: Dante will follow this itinerary guided solely by Beatrice and she embodies Rationality, Path and the theocentric implement.

From this perspective, there are at least partial similarities, if not total, between the constituent parts of Ovid's and Dante's poems (although, in the first case, being involved and experiencing the events is attained with the detachment of the alexandrine artist, the refined aesthete). If love, as guide for Dante towards Paradise or for Orpheus in his failed attempt to get Eurydice out of Hell, can move the sun and other stars – *l'amore che muove il sole e l'altre stele* – then love also embodies the purpose of life, a mean for the Divine to rule and harmonize everything there is. But this does not mean that feminine characters are the only triggers for descending into Hell, for ascending to Paradise or towards the realm of the living beings. This part is taken on by symbols and attributes of femininity overall existent in *Metamorphoses* or *The Divine Comedy* and especially by the significance poets, artists, philosophers, and the mythical thought assigns to these attributes.

***Femininity as a sorting-out principle.*** In the *poiesis* anthropology, femininity is omnipresent, even tutelary. In this case it is not just about the double principle that exists in the natural world, where everything comes into being due to the act of creation and it becomes the source of inspiration for the poem; it is about the dualism of significance: the masculine one, a seeker, conqueror, enterprising, inquiring and the feminine one, a mediator, harmonizing, nourishing and generating power. In ancient mythology, the Greek one at large (see love between deities, supernal couples, and love between gods and humans), the keystone of creation is binary and also reflected in the sequence of knowledge. The mythological foundation is being continuously organized, restructured, or given new significance by reading and re-reading the text. This way, the meaning always changes (which goes without saying in lyric and epic poetry), thus highlighting a wide variety of significations: moral, mystical, philosophical, etc.

Nonetheless, if by the lyric rule in general, the signification gained while reading the text arises from the motif of love – elevated to cosmic principle – it is not less true that even the one bringing its contribution to organize the created world originates in love, at least according to Christian theology. Then again, there is still the need to divide and organize the created world using contrasting elements, so love and war, love and hate come together or rule each other out. Thus, the Universe is not static, but in continuous opposition, movement, genesis, recurrence.

The cycles of cosmic creation are equally reflected in poetry, theology, and philosophy.

Let us connect the above-mentioned topic – keeping in mind the importance of the motif of love, especially that of femininity as a way to organize paths and the significance of the poetic – with the issue of meaning in poetic texts. Polysemy in the poetic discourse has been a matter of importance ever since ancient times. Dante himself refers to at least two different meanings in *Vita Nuova* and in *Convivio*, a literal one and a cryptic one. Most expositors and critics – Boccaccio included – can only see the literary value of the texts and Edgar Papu, in his study on Dante’s aesthetics says that this ‘romancing’ approach that understands the text ad litteram – considering it nothing but ‘a love story’ between Dante and Beatrice Potinari – it is a superficial and flawed way to read the poem. Dante is quite explicit in this matter in *Convivio*, precisely to avoid being misunderstood; he speaks about the motives of love as parables for a different, higher content and he does not wish to give credit to the assumption that his love, poetically carried forth, comes solely as a delight of the heart. This form of sensitivity speaks not only to our instinctual side but also to the rational. He wishes to be properly understood, saying that ‘not passion, but virtue was what stirred me’, emphasizing that not everybody can grasp the true meaning of his poem without it being revealed by himself because it is ‘encrypted as a parable’<sup>26</sup>. Ovid as well feels displeased for being perceived by the public as a poet of superfluous love ‘*tenorum lusor amorum*’. However, he is always looking to achieve a different, higher meaning of love in his writing. The motif of metamorphoses alone is a direct reference to the hidden significance of change and transformation, not just simple interceptions or descriptions of marvellous, legendary acts. Same as Virgil in *Aeneid*, Ovid’s aim is to bestow a superior unity upon his poem, both aesthetical and philosophical. Dante’s poem serves multiple significations that overlap (Papu); those mostly taken into account are the following four: literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogic. Thus, in order to fully understand sacred writings, we must also resort to the allegorical signification, because a literary interpretation is never enough. There is a profound hyperphysical meaning in there, which points out kindness, compassion, the meaning of life in redemption, the sense of suffering or salvation in Christianity (this last one has the most profound, anagogical meaning). The moral sense or the fear of sin indicates the Christian’s dread of not being redeemed, but also the expectance of penitence, the horror (*Che nel pensier rinova la paura*). A

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<sup>26</sup> E. Papu, *Estetica lui Dante*, 2005, p. 25.

detailed analysis of The Divine Comedy from the perspective of those four significations is of no use in this paper.

*Meaning and structure in the 'discourse' of the poems.* Suffice it to say, *the Bible's* hermeneutics or the Christian theology constantly references supra-meanings or the metaphorical style of the Scripture. Dante makes good use of the Christian literature and dogma, being influenced especially by Thomas Aquinas. In the reputed texts, Aquinas identifies (*the Prologue of the First Sententia*) four meanings: *sensus historicus*, *sensus moralis*, *sensus allegoricus* and *sensus anagogicus*. But for now, it is of no importance if Dante can be called a 'Thomist' or not, or that he gives his texts a theological-artistic connotation. What is of great interest for our analysis is the manner in which he applies this philosophy to his work and the way he finds a poetic value that he then manages to translate into his writing. This value is taken into consideration from the beginning of the poem. The same can also be applied to both Virgil and Ovid. However, without diving deeper into hermeneutics or the literary-aesthetic analysis, there is an aspect that needs to be emphasized: poetry and art in general, sacred texts of all great religions and some philosophical works are sometimes revelations of the divine; tradition has honoured them as such, but this diminished as we got closer to modern times. Initially, they were – in poetic form- hierophanies, a mean for the divine to manifest itself.

Aesthetically speaking, all these hierophanies have in common the chant. Poems are not histories – progression of actions following the determinism line – they are chants, most of them interlinked and cadenced by *an attraction law governed by love*. For Ovid, Cupid and Aphrodite are paramount, dictating order and coherency between scenes and events, or bringing deities, gods and humans together, even from different natural kingdoms. *The Metamorphoses* also comply to this law. Aesthetically, they are governed by the pronunciation's rhythm in dactylic hexameters.

Still, why this persistent interpretation of the characters of femininity and their purpose as an aesthetic element? Because, in poetic writings, they are intimately associated with structure and meaning. The symbolic signification issued from the encounter between the poetic motif and the thematic structure of love, converted into sacred love that offers meaning and content to the theme, leads us towards a categorial dualism. This dualism is fundamental not only for the poetic way of being but also for the noietic one. Inside this opposition, that we can briefly formulate now, but we will define it at length in a different study, the feminine element is the bond between abstract and purity, or between the aesthetic and the absolute. Following the conceptual style of *poiesis* and using its attributes,

femininity is the element of diversity (it ought to divide and perpetuate itself, to accomplish the unification of masculine and feminine, a synthesis that results in diversity within the species). In mythology and Platonist philosophy, especially Neoplatonism, the symbolism of love connects or at least associates femininity with purity. *The Metamorphoses* of Ovid assigns to femininity the power to conceive (through its appeal drawn on the masculine) and the role to regenerate nature through the act of procreation and its power to rejuvenate. In *Book the Seventh*, Ovid introduces the motif of Medeea's power (limited by the Gods) to rejuvenate Aeson, father of Jason. Therefore, Medeea knows that the power she invokes does not entirely belong to her, but to the Gods, mainly to Hecate. She tells Jason she cannot take some years of his life and pass them on to his father, as he would have wanted, but rather offer his father a new life, through the power of conjured spells: '[...] *sed isto, / quad petis, experior maius dare munus, Jason, / arte mea saceri longum temptabimus aevum, / non annis revocare tuis, modo diva triformis /-adiuvet et praesens ingentibus adnuat ausis.*' (Book the Seventh, 174-178).<sup>27</sup>

The *Metamorphoses* are not just outstanding events, but transcendences from sacred to profane and also in reverse, from the divided profane towards the sacred wholeness; their unity, mythical and poetic, ensures the poetic unity – in Ovid's work – but this harmony can only transpire by the power of the muses. Therefore, if the poet is not inspired, he can then tell just an ordinary story because (as stated in Invocation, Book I) the metamorphosis is a renewal of the form; however, the true *metamorphosis* is of poetic kind and it takes place in the thought (imagination) of the poet, only possible through the involvement of gods: '*In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas / corpora; di, coeptis (nam vos mutastis et illas) / adsperate meis primaque ab origine mundi / ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen!*' Ovid's poem is a cosmogony – it narrates events from the genesis of the world up to the present day – painting the poetic picture of the primordial Chaos, the dividing of the elements and creation of the worlds, but at the same time, it is also a theogony. Symbolically speaking, the poem itself represents a cosmogonic cycle and a theogony. The theme is not narrated; it is given to him as inspiration from the Gods. The principle that forms the foundation of the theme is that of harmony of contrasts. Thus, through the power of the gods – source of inspiration for the poet – it becomes the principle of the initial *poiesis*, divine and poetic

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<sup>27</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, with an English translation by Frank Justus Miller (London, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, William Heimmann, Ltd., MCMLXXI), p. 354.

at the same time. It is then transferred, by the use of the divine inspiration, to the poet and in this way, only he can aid us to take part in this great cosmic show that has the feminine element carry the primordial role.

***Femininity as symbol of rational and the meaning of love.*** As already highlighted, Dante treats femininity, represented here by Beatrice, with a great degree of importance because it represents love and divine reason at the same time, but it is also the mediator between the poet and his work's most elevated significance, which transforms the artistic conception into a poetic work that claims itself from the initial and creative poiesis of the Divine – art imitates nature and nature is produced (conceived) by the art of the divine intellect, therefore poetry (art) becomes the granddaughter of God (Si che vostr'arte a Dio Quasi é nepote). We are not interested in this affiliation of the arts for now, but rather in the purpose of the poetic metamorphoses to invoke theogonies and cosmologies. In *ars poetica* (the art of poetry), the divine love is inspired by feminine love, which acts as a bond (between poetic inspiration and reason to be) and sets the course of the action. Ever since the creation of the Universe and beyond, over ages and eras, the feminine characters of the Metamorphoses have taken an active part in the creation and the destruction of the worlds: obeying the Divine decision, they gather droplets in the clouds and unleash them over people's settlements, causing the Flood and thus rejuvenating their establishments. The masculine – feminine duality is involved in all the cosmogonic events, either as a divine couple or a mixt one (divine – human).

As a source of inspiration and organizing standard for the narrative, love can only carry out these tasks by virtue of something greater – the divine Reason. Even so, conflicts are not to be removed. The vital energy of the writing increases based on these conflicts. They organize the expression – the chant – and represent the source of *ars poetica*. Then again, for any art to exist, it needs to reference itself to a higher category, the Beauty, but also to other secondary ones. In our case it is harmony. Love, as reason to be, is the bond between all those that exist and it acts as a harmonising factor. The absence of love kills the body and the soul, just as Marsilio Ficino also stated in his comments on Plato's *The Banquet*. Also defined as the desire to acquire the joy of harmony (none other than Beauty) love will always inhabit the other. That is why, according to Ficino, the person that experiences unrequited love is dead. The matter of love, viewed from an artistic and literal point of view – the one rejected by Dante – has no purpose if it does not include all the other meanings as well. We are not talking here about the allegorical or the moral meaning,

but the one that urges the individual towards knowledge – either self-knowledge or higher knowledge, that of the Divine Truth. It is precisely where Ovid's and Dante's art also impels us.

The path chosen by Beatrice to lead Dante on (without omitting Hell and Purgatory), using allegory and metaphors – specific to the poetic discourse alongside the mystic and the contemplative (according to Aquinas, poetry and theology both make use of metaphors not to delight, but to *tell* the truth differently) is the path towards acquiring the knowledge of Good. Using poetry as a gateway towards truth is not an assumption, but a necessity, for the sake of absolute concepts like Good, Truth, and Beauty to coexist. Even in *Philebos*, where they talk about pleasure, Socrates argues that we should strive to acquire a higher pleasure, of the mind. Therefore, not even the artistic (aesthetic) delight can further itself from the truth; they are in fact in harmony because *beauty, proportion and truth* can only be seen as equal.

The primary pursuit of poetics is not to instil pleasure and, of course, representation (allegory) – through poetic means – but harmony. This fine balance, alongside proportion, have been the main resorts in assessing the poetic ever since ancient aesthetics, and even in the Renaissance era. The common ground, towards which Plato guides us in *Philebos*, is proportion and size because it succeeds the merging of good – truth – beauty, just as Socrates concludes<sup>28</sup>.

From an ancient perspective, even that of the Renaissance, they are pursued aesthetically, not literally or allegorically. These works remain alive inside the higher category of poiesis, and while they are just as valuable, they are still situated right under the divine works, exactly what every poet strives to achieve. According to Ovid, as he states in his early verses, *The Metamorphoses* are poetic forms, but forms of the forms (this way they can take part in the poetic manner of being) because they come as inspiration from the gods. Dante as well keeps this purpose in mind and does not stop after using the symbol and the metaphor because he is able to see in the poetic representation something very close to reason and truth, a sort of super-meaning of his art, always encrypted inside a metaphor: '*O voi ch'avette l'intelletti sani / Mirate la dottrina che s'asconde / Sotto l'elame degli versi stani.*' (Canto IX of *the Inferno*).

Of course, the only way a poem can delight the reader is through metaphors and figures of speech. A metaphor's meaning, even when it seems hidden and peculiar, is a sort of challenge and precaution intentionally inserted by the poet because poetic harmony (inspired by the divine

<sup>28</sup> Platon, *Opere* (Works), VII, *Philebos*, edited by Petru Creția, translation by Andrei Cornea (Bucharest: Editura Științifică), (1993), pp. 87–95 (61a–67b).

*poiesis*) cannot accede the truth, moreover, the Divine Truth, unless through allegory. That is the reason why a chant does not tell or narrate, but it unravels. The lines are concealed behind a veil and the meaning is only suggested. Therefore, the beauty of art resulted from inspiration will not achieve harmony, unless it relies on images and representations that connect us to the Idea (not the immediate present), to Dante's *dottrina* that only addresses healthy intellects. The metaphor, which is reliant on this aspiration, subsides in the poetic order and represents an inspired *conception*. According to Socrates, aesthetic pleasure sends us in the subsidiary towards the truth. Nonetheless, not even the *catharsis*, specific to art, nor yet the aesthetic pleasure can get us close to Good and Beauty, unless indirectly.<sup>29</sup>

**Itinerarium mentis in Deum.** Both poems represent works of reference for the aesthetic standard of their time. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* puts an end to a cycle by illustrating an aesthetic period that has already reached its peak, but representative nonetheless for many generations of artists, although maybe not on the same level of impact as Virgil's *Aeneid*. On the other hand, *The Divine Comedy*, inspired by ancient writings of the same genre, alongside all the other works of Dante, established a new literary paradigm during Renaissance that will hold on to the most significant elements of content from the ancient poets, while making the transition towards the new works of the Modern Era. Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio are the founders of Italian literature, but only Dante's work truly illustrates that *itinerarium mentis in Deum*, a new synthesis, genuinely creative, which closely merges through poetry, the philosophy represented by Virgil and the theology represented by Beatrice.<sup>30</sup> Thus, seen as a new synthesis, and especially as the aesthetic ideal in the Renaissance, the poem remains a cornerstone and a source of inspiration for countless similar works and much more.

Everything mentioned so far can already unravel some of the preliminary elements that we can use in proceeding with our discussion on the Anthropology of *poiesis*. First of all, they open up a new perspective in analysing the works – pertaining to any domain of the spirit – from a poetic point of view. Secondly, we were able to identify the features of *poiesis* as the foundation of the discourse, (features from which others will also arise), like the human's way of being and the way of being of his works. Both ways refer to a certain reality or order of occurrence, merger

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 94 (67 a-b).

<sup>30</sup> Mircea Florian, *Filosofia Renaşterii*, 2003, p. 75.

and dialogue between the general human existence (historical and cultural) and a more profound reality, of the divine spirit, which lies beyond nature and history. Judging from the manner in which this merging area manifests itself, we can observe a deep and profound involvement that has a tragic and purging effect, through which the divine will is being conveyed to us all.

The encounter between humans' ambition and gods' will is not something common. The traces it leaves in the soul of the participants and spectators, the feeling and dwelling with the tragic, both change the human nature. Contradictory to modern and contemporary comprehension, it triggers fear, pain, and dismay inside us, for in the end to make us experience the specific state of the tragic *catharsis*. These traces and feelings we might experience are not intrinsic to the tragic spectacle alone. We can also attain them through writings, human deeds, and the creation of the spirit. But they are not easy to see or understand, as they have the power to shake us to the core and fundamentally change us, reanimating the truth we carry within, but ignore most of the time; it unravels *how we are* and especially *who we are*.

Previously, in *Antropologie stilistică* (An Anthropology on Stylistics)<sup>31</sup>, I outlined the basic poietic way of being at large (with its direct correspondent in the more 'methodical' area of the modern, conceptual aspect, the noetic – the state of profound reflection and conceptual deduction) and I also suggested a preliminary conceptual paradigm (with both ontic and epistemic significance) to set into action that which is particular to the human, as a whole being and as a person.

Thus, poiesis has its own time (and also a becoming associated to it) called *kairos* (or *cronos-trope*), contrary to the determinist, chronological time and it also has a 'reflection', called the 'abstract creative' thinking – with stylistic influences in the highly symbolizing representation. We consider this type of thinking to be different from the abstract intelligential thinking that conveys, in a formal logic setting, towards the concept. Poietic thinking is a type of thought rich in symbols opposing a discursive and conceptual thinking.

The poetic is specific to mythical thinking, which makes use of forms that result in images and representations with different connotations and spiritual content than discursive thinking. As a way of being and a way of knowing, it pertains to 'logos' and the representation in the poem. This manner of thinking, the poietic, also reflects itself in all the other domains, including theoretical constructions, philosophical discourse, and especially

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<sup>31</sup> Mihai Popa, *Antropologie stilistică* (An Anthropology on Stylistics), (Bucharest: Publishing House of The Romanian Academy, 2017).



the divine *poiesis* (inasmuch as it is a part of the same category of the mythical) specific to revelation in religion.

## Creation, order, destruction, revival

The origin and signification of the poietic way of representation, as well as its most profound influence are to be found in the domain of mythical creation and that of artistic representations, but not exclusively.

So far we have discussed the poietic features of ancient tragedy and we have identified categories specific to ancient Greek spirituality within *poiesis* – of a deep spiritual dynamic – like harmony, spiritual order to whom belongs the beautiful (especially logos and speech, the identity between good-beautiful-speech), but also the connection established between the divine order and the human order, achieved through logos, the analogy between the categories of reason, discursive thinking and forms of mythical thinking (or those of revelation), the communication man-divine, purification through *catharsis*. Stepping deeper into these analogies, specific to logos (from the Greek point of view), we can differentiate the categories of classical *poiesis*, as well as the characteristics of the poietic logos. Then, we will look for the same characteristics in works of art from different cultural domains.

**Meanings of poiesis in Plato.** By the agency of his main character, Plato identifies in *Timaeus* the elements of the poietic through the actions of the demiurge, whose main identity is that of ‘originator’, ‘maker (ποιητή) and father (πατήρ) of All this’ (28 c 3–4)<sup>32</sup>. What is particular here is the fact that θεός and δημιουργός are identified through poietic qualities, while the demiurge’s actions are named using notions from metallurgy (manufacturing metal - χρᾶτήρ - 41d; χερᾶννυμι - 35 a3, 7), carpentry (τεχταίνειν - 36d) and agriculture (σπαρείσας - 41e). It is also important to mention that all notions describe ‘the sowing of the souls into the instruments of time’<sup>33</sup>.

As a matter of fact, when designating the actions of the demiurge, Plato uses meaningful terms that refer to activities similar to those in the field of workmanship, domestic tasks or architecture (in 55 c we find the verb ‘drawing’, in 78 b ‘weaving’, the action being that of ‘interlacing’, the most important one (σύνθεσις – 30 b 5, 33 d 2), establishing at the

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<sup>32</sup> Plato, *The Timaeus of Plato*, edited with introductions and notes by R. D. Archer-Hind (London/New York: Mc Millan and co., 1888), p. 87.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 43a, p. 147.

same time the pairing between order-good-beautiful, equality where order comes first because it avoids the temporal, chaotic perceptible and focuses towards the order within the spirit:

For God desiring that all things should be good, and that, so far as this might be, there should be nought evil, having received all that is visible not in a state of rest, but moving without harmony or measure, brought it from its disorder into order, thinking that this was in all ways better than the other. Now it neither has been nor is permitted to the most perfect to do aught but what is most fair. There fore he took thought and perceived that of all things which are by nature visible, no work that is without reason will ever be fairer than that which has reason, setting whole against whole, and that without soul reason cannot dwell in anything. Because then he argued thus, in forming the universe he created reason in soul and soul in body, which he might be the maker of a work that was by nature most fair and perfect. In this way then we ought to affirm according to the probable account that this universe is a living creature in very truth possessing soul and reason by the providence of God.<sup>34</sup>

The art of the demiurge is rational and in equilibrium, while the interwoven and constituted universe is a rational synthesis that avoids the irrational and chaotic becoming. The demiurge manifests itself as the supreme architect. The poietic capacity also distributes itself according to reason, harmony and beauty to those humans that tend towards order and reach fulfilment through their art, through poiesis.

***The Brahmanic view on creation.*** We find a different approach in the Brahmanic thinking. In *The Bhagavad- Gitā*, the one who meditates on the ‘supreme divine Spirit’, who fights himself and becomes according to Self, can be identified in Brahman – here, the order signifies relinquishing all that are fleeting and the sacrifice, two paths leading towards the universal Self – Brahman; ‘Know thou that from Brahma action groweth, and Brahman from the Imperishable cometh. Therefore, the Eternal, the all-permeating, is ever present in sacrifice.’<sup>35</sup> In Plato’s philosophy, though, the action of the demiurge represents the rational will of a supreme order. In the Vedic general approach, man tends towards the divine Spirit and towards unifying himself with it (through the individual Self). He can

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 93, 30-a-b. Reproduced text, after *The Timaeus of Plato*.

<sup>35</sup> *The Bhagavad-Gita*, with Sanskrit text, free translation into English, a word-for-word translation, and an Introduction on Sanskrit Grammar by Annie Besant and Bhagavan Das (London and Benares: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1905), p. 63.

reach this state in two ways: through his deeds, detaching himself from senses and suffering or ‘the fruit of deeds’, but also through the internal feel, his thought concentrated upon self by practicing special techniques (that include physical and psychosomatic exercises, meditation): ‘Therefore at all times think upon Me only, and fight. With mind and Reason set on Me, without doubt thou shalt come to Me.’<sup>36</sup> These recommendations are given by Bhagavad Krishna to Arjuna, when he starts asking questions about Brahman, the supreme Self, about ritual, as a mean to reach and receive the Brahman, about the essence of the beings and the gods. It is important to notice that in the Vedic thinking, the divine Poet holds a supreme position, just like the demiurge: ‘He who thinketh upon the Ancient, the Omniscient, the All-Ruler, minuter than the minute, the Supporter of all, of form unimaginable, refulgent as the sun beyond the darkness.’<sup>37</sup> We can draw a parallel between the poetic predisposition of the Brahman, as divine logos, artisan of the Universe and Plato’s demiurge, *poieten*, artisan and architect.

The writers of The Veda, kavi, are the ‘demiurgic poets’, those ‘who thinketh upon the Ancient, the Omniscient, the All-Ruler, minuter than the minute, the Supporter of all, of form unimaginable, refulgent as the sun beyond the darkness.’<sup>38</sup>

The demiurge from *Timaeus* builds the universe on the strength of the word, the order that speaks itself, same as, according to a different assumption, *kavi* (the demiurgic poets), take part in the supreme order of the world through the word and the sacred lyrics.

Within the correspondence between *poiesis* and word (logos), which causes the act of creating the Universe, lays the order of the reference mark (the vivid shape of the Platonist Universe in *Timaeus*) and also the quality of being an ‘artisan’, which man can have access to – specially the poet who interprets the thought of gods – as an author (*poietes*), who obviously takes part in something revealed by divinity. This is the type of grounding abstract we consider first when talking about the *poiesis* order, the one man nourishes himself from through what he does.

***Creation as suffering and introspection.*** The significations of the poetic act have increased in number, along with the passing of the term from a culture to another, and also through its becoming and transformation inside the same culture, from the Veda, with Brahman polarity (the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

objective absolute) – ātman (absolute self), focusing on the introspection of self that has revealed *suffering* as a possible transcendence towards self-knowledge, going further to the Socratic knowing of the self and reaching the Platonist philosophy, which sees knowledge as an indirect participation in the eternal order of Form. We should underline that the Brahmanic view, absorbed by Christianity (in a slightly different sense), once as an individual self-redemption, through acknowledging and dwelling with sin internally, and then as redemption, through translating as history the world fallen into sin, is also recurrent in Socratic philosophy. Both Buddhist and Socratic views on self-knowledge (that who knows the self) internalize deed. *Poieien* becomes internal dynamic, self-speaking of logos. The demiurgic synthesis of the Universe, created from its visible side, forced out of disarray and chaos is concentrated in the sense of self. *Poiesis* acquires the signification of Maieutics – that of generating the interior truth and uttering through dialogue. Still, workmanship, or Maieutics, as spiritual creation or re-creation, is not free. The internal logos, uttered by self for self, usually has a contradictory course, while Plato's demiurge creates freely, out of those visible and in harmony, order, and universal beauty.

On the other hand, even in self-knowledge, more than during the poetic act (reminiscence of *poiesis*), the self-revealing of man is indirect, in anguish and ordeal, against the grain. Human poetic is nowhere similar to divine poetic (generating, realization, appearance). We have already seen that in ancient tragedy, its upwards revealing course culminates in *catharsis*.

There is nothing similar – although analogies do exist – between the tragic poetic performance and the poetic of individual creation, either self-knowledge (Socratic or Buddhist), or poetic creation. It is interesting to see how a work of art is born in the modern spirit: channelled by the unconscious or the subconscious, always held back by obstacles, in a continuous fight with itself, always searching for the right form – at first a sketch, rough, hardly structured – but able in the end to unravel a content, the poetic being. Jean Grenier welcomes us, through journal notes, comments and memories of French poets – Lamartine, Valéry – inside the laboratory of creation, which seems effortless only from the outside. Sometimes, form happens before content, like a tone, a cue, an internal rhythm. According to Jean Grenier, this was the case with Valéry: the rhythm inflicted itself upon him almost like exigencies. [...] <sup>39</sup> We can

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<sup>39</sup> Jean Grenier, *Arta și problemele ei* (Art and its Problems), translation and foreword by Modest Morariu (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1974), p. 245. The

notice a common ground between the way in which ancient poietic works came to be (by exploring with human means – from here or from beyond us) and how did modern works of art: the poietic order is perceived as a vital rhythm, internal and relived by consciousness. Just like its actual representation in the work of art, order implies thresholds and fumbling, revelations and searches that gradually settle in the conscious act. Each individual that stepped inside the pristine area of the poietic, took upon himself – as poietic being - the problems of art in general. Being poietic – essentially, the act of creation specific to man, related to the divine Absolute, situated on the horizon of being as a state that gives us orientation in life – is in fact a continuous moulding that borrows ‘silences, words’ from the existence and reality of man. Being poietic also goes through different stages of development in man’s conscience. It is brought to life inside words that have poietic content (in the development phase) and it is ‘determined by their musical value and charm’.

*The inherent phenomena.* The human poietic being and the *poiesis* being are not identical, they are very different realities. But, through analogies, we can find similarities between the human poietic act and *poienin*, the absolute act. Therefore, through analogies, the human subject is searching for inherent phenomena in reality, and the conscience. The existence of a poietic reality is not a necessity, but, just as it is the case with Plato’s ideas or Goethe’s ‘inherent phenomena’, we can notice analogies between experiences, although these experiences cannot be analysed using the abstract conscience as a tool. According to Blaga, ‘the original phenomenon’ is an apparition, intuitive and not abstract. Any attempt of the pure, cold intellect to understand it can produce inside us ‘a state of madness’ (to quote Goethe). One needs to approach the original phenomena with a feeling of mystical veneration.<sup>40</sup> What we can retain from this – the idea of these pages – is that, according to Goethe, who was basically Platonic, says Blaga, intuition plays a fundamental role and through intuiting some of the original phenomena (*Gestalt*) we can access the reality of the poietic shapes, the visions or ‘artistic shapes, somehow moving, full of life’<sup>41</sup>. We can also retain another aspect – discussed at the beginning of this study – that from a Goethean (Platonic) perception, we cannot access the original inherent shapes analytically – Kantian analysis

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translation in Romanian is after Jean Grenier, *L’art et ses Problèmes*, Editions Recontre, 1970.

<sup>40</sup> Lucian Blaga, *Fenomenul originar* (The Original Phenomenon), edited by Eugeniu Nistor (Târgu Mureş: Editura Ardealul, 2017), p. 19.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

is completely inadequate. According to H. St. Chamberlain, quoted by Blaga, Kant has no aptitude for aesthetics and he is not perceptive to anything creative. The inherent phenomena become available thanks to intuition or as a result of an abstracting process, creative, generating, poietic.

On the contrary, for Goethe, the brain is like a retina that, no matter how much it thinks, it can also *see* its figments at the same time. Goethe does not think in clean abstractions; his abstractions are born with a body vivid and seen. His abstractions are not cold and dry, Socratic notions, but Platonic ideas, a sort of visions delimited in space.<sup>42</sup>

But there is also another difference between the Platonic shapes and Goethe's original phenomena: the first ones are steadfast, static, 'of an absolute immobility in their heavenly purity'<sup>43</sup>, while the second ones are dynamic and fluctuant, they vibrate penetrated by a disquietude (metaphysical, we would say), which 'manifests rhythmically or betrays an internal fight between their composing elements.'<sup>44</sup> A fundamental question still sticks: is creation a pure act, are the shapes – apparently inactive – of Platonism (corresponding the absolute Reality) and the dynamic shapes, Goethe's inherent phenomena, sides of the same reality, or do they have no correlation? Man – as a poietic being – exists through what he does, not through what he does not do.

Contemplating the inherent shapes is the same thing with the individual creative activity, or, as Leonardo da Vinci told Ludovic Sforza, the tyrant of Milan: 'I create when I seem to be inactive.' It is clear that the poietic activity – the internal vision of shapes – is something other than intellectual activity. Analysing, synthetizing, and analytical thinking are the opposite of looking inside, which 'you approach with a feeling of mystical awe'. The duality of the poietic reality – generating and non-transforming at the same time – has its correspondence in the duality of creation: the immovable Mover (Brahman, The Architect of the Universe, the Demiurge, Christian God) and 'the discoverer', the Goethean poietic fore-knower or the Valéry-type creator, who is able to absorb and internally cleanse elements from the exterior or the interior experience, both poles of the poietic that clarify each other through opposition.

Contemplation – calm and balanced – does not lack a certain dynamism, which sometimes can be translated through communicating

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Jean Grenier, *Arta și problemele ei*, 1974, p. 248

with the contemplated object, with nature or the Absolute. Jean Grenier tells us about the technique or method of a Chinese painter Kuo Hi (the 11<sup>th</sup> century) of the act of doing (painting), which meant ‘delivering a state of concentrating the thinking; in one word, you must do so that you can transpose yourself in a state almost similar to hypnosis, but a lucid one.’<sup>45</sup> From a poetic point of view, the created image, a briefly intuition of a reality which is not perceived, nor build (solely) at the level of intellect, can mirror a profound reality.

The poietic meaning of the inherent phenomenon, as it unfolds to us by following Goethe’s string of thought, lays in the power of forging and moulding – which is infinite in nature – of the archetypal element, able to metamorphose in everything there is. Therefore, besides the method, Goethe enunciates a principle (that has not been taken on, as the author intended, by the natural sciences, but by the morphology of culture, due to Nietzsche and Spengler), a principle that precedes the one considered as a research principle, long before it got proven with an experiment by the natural science, ‘opening the way towards discovering the cellular complex, to which any organism can be reduced.’<sup>46</sup> The awakening of biology and other similar sciences is based on Goethe’s principle of organically multiplying the primordial cell, even though his idea (according to what he ‘reveals’ to Schiller during a discussion) of a ‘primal optimal plant’, the mother of all the existing plants is in fact a Platonic idea (shape), that he does not postulate, but ‘see’: it corresponds to man’s ‘organic’ need to find his way inside the infinite multiplicity of shapes from the biological realm. On a different note, the creative ‘power’ of the ‘inherent phenomenon’ proves that the analytical abstraction, the strict and formal logic, would be insufficient to understand nature, because ‘if we would *only* (s. n., M. P.) understand the <<absolutely logical>> things, human language, so very varicoloured, would be reduced to a sort of algebra with conventional signs strictly definable.’<sup>47</sup> But things are nothing like this in the poietic ‘logic’ – and this is the logic being considered in almost every culture (Indian, Chinese, Ancient Greek, Egyptian, Mayan, not to mention the traditional cultures) by those who have reflected upon the ‘inherent phenomena’, the creative power of the being and its poietic character, established as the absolute principle. After making this observation, Lucian Blaga firstly identifies, from a methodological point of view, the difference between the mythical and the mythological thinking and between the poietic view (in other words, speculative) and

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> L. Blaga, *Fenomenul originar*, 2017, p. 11.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

the abstract-scientific one. Goethe and many other thinkers like Schelling, Strindberg, Otto Weininger, Nietzsche, Spengler etc. resort, one way or another, to the resources of this method. It was set up by Goethe, but its roots and applications, just as we are trying to identify them here, go way deeper; they can be found in the work of any great creator and we can place its shapes under the poietic thinking. The difference lays in the generating power of the poietic and mythical thinking (intuition) that both Goethe and Nietzsche apply, although differently, to the natural or cultural phenomena, unlike scientific thinking – the Socratic, according to Nietzsche – which kills myths, drains the poietic springs of culture and ends up in ‘the historical need of modern times to research and diligently gather around itself other cultures.’<sup>48</sup> The differences between the two coexistent and permanent visions are detectable throughout the history of culture. Sometimes, the importance of one of them for the becoming of knowledge sends the other one into second place – for example in the post-enlightenment era, when scientific thinking, analytical and abstract, ‘conceals’ with its positive advancements and obvious technical effects big areas of the social expectance, setting the poietic vision in the overshadow.

To think in a mythical (poietic) way does not mean to disorganize the elements of reality, but to contrive its deeper structure.

Blaga considered mythical thinking to be almost like divination, the gift of intuitively guessing the hidden side of existence and interpreting it without abstractions through icons – compressed abbreviations of some great experiences.<sup>49</sup> Considering this view, in retrospect, but still looking towards the future, we can see the entire force, the power of the primal revival of the human experience (of great experiences) given to us by the poietic thinking and the poietic abstraction, ‘the compressed abbreviations of some great experiences.’ This is for certain the origin of every type of experience and all the others are subsequent to it– the scientific one, obviously – but also a way for the two types of human ways of existing and knowing to harmonize and influence each other through the connection between poietic and noetic. On the other hand, the poietic way of being does not question the world, the existence, but builds it, re-builds it, re-establishes it by creating a certain type of man, a complex and complete personality, a person that sits face to face with God. Only these two can communicate and only from this communication and through it, the true spiritual creations are born, the total experiences.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 51.



We need to search for this communication because it is the foundation of our spiritual universe, the poietic universe. If we can talk about anthropology in general, the poietic anthropology is at its core. This study sets out to look for them, identify or suggest them. Throughout our spiritual history – the true history that defines us, anthropologically speaking – we can see emerging, unfolding, and becoming true, setting their stamp, their seal or stigma, the human beings capable of offering us cultural guidance.

This poietic type of human is capable of living and being transformed by great experiences. We can also change through him. His works – true purifying intuitions – elevate us, slowly but surely, into the spiritual horizon. The poietic works are complete, visionary abstractions. The question is, of course, how can we distinguish these works and their authors. How can we tell which one is part of the *poiesis*? I believe the answer is the visionary abstraction: only those works that contain an abstract poietic vision are the result of a total experience and bear the stamp of the primal poietic. Only those can connect us to Divinity. Powerful ideas are visionary ideas. By maintaining the distinction – that has guided us the entire time – between poietic and noietic, we can say that the prime works of the spiritual tradition belong to *poiesis*. Their authors, as well as the cultures (in their traditional stage) they belong to are poietic authors/cultures guided by a visionary idea. The symbolic-visionary or the abstract poietic ideas are primordial, while the noetic is secondary, perceivable, accumulative and causative, in a chronological order. Based on the established coordinates it will be easier to identify works/authors with a poietic perspective. Moreover, being in the presence of the abstract poietic as a state of mind, captured by visionary works of art, we would be able to say a few words about the anthropology of *poiesis*. Great cultures are natively poietic in all of their domains, not factual creations, perceivable or accumulative that last long enough to impress the noetic conscience then disappear and self-destruct. I do not believe in negative creations nor in creating by destructing – amenable to determinist and causative temporality. The modern cult of the ephemeral and the creative arbitrary does not form a culture and it does not last in spirit, therefore there is no creative way of the negative or the destructive. J. Grenier believes that *destruction* is a form of creation. He says it is a complete paradox to consider destruction as such, because it seems to be quite the opposite of creation; therefore, this fact is apparently not known and actually almost hard to imagine.<sup>50</sup> So, there is nothing left to say, other

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<sup>50</sup> Jean Grenier, *Arta și problemele ei*, 1974, p. 225.

than postulate that the poietic and the poietic actions are affirmative in themselves. They have facts – spiritual – on their side, in their plenitude, to affirm life and this is why we can say the Goethean intuition (which moves away from Newton's and Kant's logic) states the Platonic intuition and its eternal alive shapes, abandoning the logic of fragmentariness and the relative positivity of the exact sciences. L. Blaga said that the battle between exact sciences, whose limits were impressively precise identified by Kant and Goethe's manner of thinking, was a sort of battle between the logic of death and the logic of life.<sup>51</sup> We hope that man's self is expressed in his bright side, following the poietic and the human ideal, which builds and states itself as a whole while anything that overpasses the self is not creative will and poetic imagination, but a deceivable aid of the poietic creation towards which we tend to go out of ignorance. Isolated between appearances, the creative individual in the positive pragmatic area 'is happy to do absolutely anything he wants, without always knowing what he wants.'<sup>52</sup> This confuses him and alienates him from himself and the permanent source of organic poietic. J. Grenier thinks the result also represents a certain fragility of creation because there is no eternity of the created work. The consequence is a reign of the impulse, therefore frailty of the work and frailty of the existence in general, which offers the created work an infinite value because we discover that a created work is even more valuable when we are concerned about its days.<sup>53</sup> Considering what Jean Grenier said, we conclude that every creation must start from an impulse that crushes personality, incites it to exist and offers the possibilities that dwell on the inside, able to become something, to open towards the humane and towards the universe, just like Constantin Noica also believes.<sup>54</sup>

### **The Being as *poiesis* in *The Romanian Sense of Being***

In his work, *The Romanian Sense of Being*, Constantin Noica considers the individual availability towards the being a temptation, a relentless tendency of the beings to emerge, a poetic release, modulated from the possible towards the real. The being strives to exist and it sometimes gets detached from tender bursts, not all suddenly towards the absolute but towards the self, being something and something else at the same time. In

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<sup>51</sup> Lucian Blaga, *Fenomenul originar*, 2017, p.5.

<sup>52</sup> J. Grenier, *Arta și problemele ei*, 1974, p. 224.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Constantin Noica, *Sentimentul românesc al ființei* (The Romanian Sentiment of Being), (Bucharest: Humanitas Publishing, 1996), p. 10.

Romanian, the word tender, *fraged*, comes from *fracidus* < *frango* that also gave the language the word *fractură*, which also exists in English as fracture. Though this fracture is not a rupture, but a birth (Noica reminds us here of the expression Dimitrie Cantemir used, ‘tender nature’, the inherent quality of our nature to limber and adjust in time, a fusion of possibilities and contraries at the same time). Noica explains the transgression that takes place starting from the level of the inert, inorganic being towards the alive, revived, and tender being of the vegetal and organic:

The fracture, which is the messiness of the rigid, the inert, the inorganic, the bone, has become sympathetic with the tenderness of the organic and the flesh. Loaded in the real world, set in the time and flesh of reality, the being loses its rigidity or else it would break, just by simply incarnating in something else. It becomes tender, agrees to modulate, and weaves with the world and its fleeting creatures. Are not them all, individuals, thoughts, and galaxies, momentary creatures inside the great cosmos? But the being must exist in them and it cannot do so without getting tenderized, but not fractured. Therefore, seeing the being in the world means following the situations in which it has been.<sup>55</sup>

What is the connection between all these transformations and the being, the being as *poiesis*? First of all, they need to be understood as a becoming within something, inside an order negated by being, because being initially favours chaos. This is the way nature seems to indulge in its initial chaos, refusing the order of creation, in absence of which it cannot get done. The same negation of a pre-established order can easily be noticed in existentialism, from the perspective of the individual tempted by the creative act in Albert Camus. This individual understands the act of creation as an atrocious chaos, an anarchy. Creation is done at the cost of tremendous torments because his entire being rejects the order the creation implies. Even so, without it, he feels he could die.<sup>56</sup> Noica narrows the

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>56</sup> Albert Camus, *Notebooks 1942–1951*, reproduced by J. Grenier in his *Notes (Chaos and creation)*, *On Creation*, p. 186. From the perspective of the individual, confused by the supreme gesture of the Creator, the absolute creation, *ex nihilo*, is the opposite of the meaningful and organizing poieticity, suppressed to *act*, the creation of the unleashed interior creation, whose consequences try to indefinitely delay them: ‘The act is more important than the creation. Creation is the consequence, the result. It is something that follows – a product –, but beautiful indeed, sublime is the act, *actus*, that sort of apoplectic spasm like Empedocle used

tendency of nature, as an act with a meaning that finishes in reality, down to the ‘promises’ or the possibilities recorded in the modulations of the verb *to be* in Romanian, that tend to be, but not quite get to be the form *este/is*. According to the Romanian philosopher, these are ‘a sort of immanence of the real («este să fie» or «it is to be»), an attempt in the reality («era să fie» or «it was about to be»), non-fulfilment in reality («n-a fost să fie» or «it was not meant to be»), generalizing in reality («a fost să fie» or «it was meant to be») or relativizing in reality.<sup>57</sup>

The interest of Noica’s book is to discover those regions of the being concocted by the inflections of the Romanian verb *to be* and to open up the preposition *within*. He observes these elements in Romanian folkloric creations, in the poem of Eminescu (*Luceafărul*, variously rendered as ‘The Morning Star’, ‘The Evening Star’, ‘The Vesper’, ‘The Daystar’, or ‘Lucifer’), in fairy-tales and the work of Constantin Brâncuși etc. All of them reveal areas of the poieticity of being that invent itself, but still does not have the power of *is*: ‘[...] isn’t it about areas as important as those we usually explore through «is»?’<sup>58</sup> he asks, mainly rhetorically, since the possibilities of being as a ‘tender nature’ significantly offers just as many situations in which the being enters and becomes.

***The frailty of the becoming of being.*** If we manage to capture something from Noica’s idea it, will be that the *poiesis* being subsists in the possibility to return upon itself and to regenerate on the most obscure level, but maybe not on those levels essential to existence. This is possible due to *tenderness*, which lays in the possible; the quality of tenderness can pull it out of inertia. *Poiesis* can also be understood as possible and in poieticity, which is fulfilment, we can find countless paradoxical situations, flexible, fragile states that lead to overcoming the limit.

The paradox of the possible is that, although related to *posse* and *potentia*, it still lacks any power. It even expresses the lack of power, in a way. Even though it does not represent some sort of indifference («poate să fie, dar poate să nici nu fie» or «it can be but it can also not be»), it still contains a sort of passiveness that condemns it to inertia, in any plan it emerges.<sup>59</sup>

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to say, which generates [...] this moment. It is also the ultimate aspiration of the artist.’ (Ibid., p. 179).

<sup>57</sup> C. Noica, *Sentimentul românesc al ființei*, 1996, p. 27.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

The paradox of poieticity, reflected in the being, casts away the ‘indifferent’ because *poiesis* represents plenitude. Once it has emerged and it is now penetrating the horizon of being, *poiesis* gets inspired from itself, especially from the objective self that no longer constricts but redirects towards being – it is its own purpose, not cause.

The poietic, as described by Noica through the modulations of the Romanian feeling, is understood while *becoming*, in its permanent flow towards the aspirations of the being, frequently fragile. Inside the relation being-*poiesis*, the irreducible necessity and the simple causality, both have a purpose (important in everything it aspires to be, no distinctions), but especially the becoming and mostly the goal of this becoming. On the way to their becoming, the beings unravel their precariousness so much that, if there was no thought or even a glimpse of a thought (presentiment) to give account for any aspiration, they would have already failed. Precisely this native impulse (present in everything and everywhere), the desire to be something, can be captured in language by the inflections of the verb to be, which lead ‘to an increase of reality inside reality’<sup>60</sup> and this can only be possible because in our thinking, we are the ones able to account for what it is, but also for what it is not and could have been. The poietic assumes all that infinitesimal fumbling of the precarious being; that is what we need to account for and that is what could have been, as part of the being. These fields of the being, which have still to reach an individual, can somehow (poietically) be designated by those experiencing the pre-feeling of occurrence or that ‘being within’, particular to Noica. Towards individualization, just a glimpse of a second and you can miss any becoming ‘within’. Noica thinks that in their precariousness lays everything that has individually taken shape<sup>61</sup> and analyses this precariousness (of all six inflections of the verb ‘to be’) based on the initial state of the individual in any of the domains of life/knowledge/action it is about to manifest in: the moral one, aesthetic, logic or the chaos of nature. There is no individual in its still fragile precariousness, but it will be; it ‘represents a detachment from the universal disentangle.’<sup>62</sup>

**‘Bursts’ of the individual and the order it seeks.** For now, the individual is in a continuous appearance (the precariousness of appearance is also visible in *poiesis*, which tends to be in a whirl of yet uncertain shapes). The individual is compatible in any situation, continuously

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

balancing between being and non-being. Noica says that with every individual detachment from the initial chaos, with every organizing (logical) of chaos into a generality, done by following a law, the individual regenerates. The individual is suspended and stalked by non-being, but its detachment is directed: it needs, at the cost of falling into non-being, to get in the shape of 'being within', precisely what distinguishes *the individual* from *the particular*; something particular is *in* the given generality, which it makes particular, while something individual is *within* a generality and has a becoming on the inside.<sup>63</sup>

We need to take a step further into the ontology of becoming within, as Noica understands it, and the ontology as *poiesis*: for the Romanian philosopher, becoming is becoming within being and it gradually becomes clear (through its subjective projection). In general, there is in nature a becoming for becoming, just as, rising towards domains where the directed subjectivity intervenes, there is a becoming within being. We will not focus on the shapes and areas of becoming because they have already been discussed in other papers, but we will argue some situations when the logic and the poietic are coordinated or subordinated. We will talk about *poiesis* as a translation between two domains and, finally, as a subordination (or becoming within – also called return from within) of the poietic domains to a general state, exactly like it was captured by the artists of the Renaissance, Michelangelo (in particular). In *Dialogues with Michelangelo*, recorded by Francisco de Hollanda<sup>64</sup>, we notice the interest of the artists in organizing the domains of art into one field only. He notices this preoccupation in Michelangelo as well while discussing the role and place of painting among the liberal arts. Referencing artists of the Renaissance (Rafaello Sanzio, Baldassare da Siena, Bramante, but also Fidias and Praxiteles), Michelangelo sets painting first, specifically drawing. Referencing the true painter, previously described by Hollanda, he says he wishes to be able to execute these works (architectural, of sculpture – the masters of ancient times and from the Renaissance excelled in more than one field of creation, author's note, M. P.) more skilfully than true masters. He believes *there is only one art or science and that is drawing or painting* and all the others are nothing but its branches. Of course, if we consider everything we could do in life, we will notice that each one of us paints the world, either by creating new shapes and figures, wearing new clothes, building and taking over space with buildings and painted houses,

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>64</sup> Francisco de Hollanda, *Dialoguri romane cu Michelangelo*, translation after the Italian version, *Dialoghi romani con Michelangelo*, by Victor Ieronim Stoichiță (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1974).

or even by cultivating the land. Therefore, he who pays attention and understands will realize that painting itself represents man's work of art or at least some part of it does.<sup>65</sup>

While talking about the role and importance of arts, de Hollanda and Michelangelo address most of the ancient and contemporary works of art and the already established authors (poets, architects, painters). They think poets have worked so hard just to plead in favour of perfection of painting and did so with such tenderness, proficiency, and so much music and richness of words, that there is no way they could ever be gratified. Most of their intensity (of famous poets) goes into the ability to paint amazingly or imitate a good painting.<sup>66</sup>

This new perspective is very important, as it offers an integral concept of the whole *poiesis*, which coordinates not only arts or the artistic reality, but also reality in general; it also offers a solution – from a categorical point of view, because *poiesis* is in fact a category, not in the Aristotelian way, but the Platonic one– to an older problem: the purpose and the place of art as *logos poietikos*. The first *logos* is not just knowledge and contemplation outside action, at least regarding the human condition, which is asserted through a complete action, through *logos poietikos*. On a subjective level, self-becoming does not occur outside action and the action – *poietikos* – is creative, logic and abstract (in a creative and generating way).

Man thrives to overcome himself as much as possible, and this becoming – limited by life – cannot be reduced to contemplation, action, or knowledge; it is wholesome, and this wholesomeness of the human being can only be reached by setting it inside the creative *logos*, as *poietikos*. Therefore, Michelangelo thinks the creative man – in different domains like art, science, knowledge, politics, and moral actions – should let himself driven by *logos*, the abstract-creative logic, that he identifies within painting, especially drawing (although it is just a manner of saying because *drawing* is the abstract reality, the last poetical idea and the *logos* of art in general). This view belongs to the Renaissance, rooted in Neoplatonism, and brings art, in its purest form, on the same level with the poetic vision or 'the mute poetry' (painting), like Lattanzio used to say. In the absence of painting, no writing could get us into a reflective, meditative state.

Now it is time to connect the two ideas: that of Michelangelo, Platonic in its essence, and that belonging to Noica, situated not very far away from the idea of the becoming *logos/being* within a full shape, at whose roots

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp. 72–73.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

we can see the Shape of the same Plato. In their last phase, both ideas show the same oscillation – a version of becoming within being – of the individual that tends towards its general. Michelangelo reduces every successful becoming within spirit to the abstract of painting, represented by drawing – poietic abstract. Noica sees the tendency to detach from the initial chaos – biological, historical, the chaos of the word not yet crystallized in a poietic word/thought – as a dormant logos organizing in abstract or concrete realities, finally leading towards being. There are individual natures that tend towards generalizations which they cannot reach or understand, just like there are abstract beings that search for the reversed path towards a particular *face*. There are tendencies or determinations of something towards something else on both sides.

*The individual side of general.* Here we notice a tension, an irresistible desire to overcome the limits of its own nature, in the individual and the general. A conflict is born, that can also have a poetic form, a beautiful one, with philosophical and poietical aspects, just like Eminescu's poem, *Luceafărul*.

The serenity of Cătălina, the feminine character of the poem, is the tranquillity of the individual being that knows it cannot overcome the condition of human life, no matter how much it wants and even though it can initiate – while dreaming – dialogues with superhuman beings. Noica warns us that the anguish and the contradiction between the concrete horizon and the general one can only be resolved by admitting the impossibility of overcoming the measure of its own being. The anguish is not hers, it is of the being of light, he says. The first one, buried as it was in the darkness and sleep of its nature, clearly feels there is no way out of her condition; but she wants to transform it. That is everything the general can ask from the individual being, what the girl is asking: to brighten her life. It is as if, from the beginning, the poem passes the responsibility of the best meeting on to the general.<sup>67</sup> It is possible for the meeting to never take place. But it is not just about chance, as it is not a necessity for the meeting to happen. In the poietic logic, the purpose of the meeting between natures/beings and realities lays in the appearance and *accomplishment*, which *transfigures* reality itself; this is not the logic of the individual in relation to the general, but the logic of *establishing*, which can only be: a creative abstract done in a concrete-abstract work, that can be the work of man close/similar to the work of the Creator, or a transgression of realities, from those with concrete and common meanings to abstract and general

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<sup>67</sup> C. Noica, *Sentimentul românesc al ființei*, 1996, p. 93.



ones. Not all of them can become poietic beings, but individual existences can *catch* abstract shapes – inside great creations: poems, tragedies, architectural works, political acts – just like the general takes an individual being. Noica believes some generalities do *catch* life, meaning they get an individual face, just like there are individualities that catch something general and then also lead to being. That could, indeed, be the fairytale of the being, or its pattern: an individuality gives itself determinations that catch on a general nature, or a generality that determines, specifies, and materializes itself.<sup>68</sup>

The poietic role (and the way of being) is transparent in the poem and this transparency is the change of a reality into a different reality – taken in itself and towards self in written or folkloric creations. The space in which we can find the being/logos is not the real/natural one, but that of the poietic logos, where tender natures can change into beings or they can aspire to become beings.

The assessments to which the heroes from Romanian folktales are subjected to – like Prince Charming in *Youth without age and life without death* – represent obstacles for the being to poietically transform.

Noica also analyses these journeys/mutations of the created (natural) being towards the poietic being. Stable, natural, and common beings cannot understand the impetuous, forging beings and the fire that guides them towards attempts of a different kind. These beings are of a distinct rank. Noica thinks the emperor's son does no longer wish and cannot be part of what only goes around. He is of a different kind, the one that starts the ball rolling, where life and things spin better and faster. In the name of this calling, which he anticipates, he remains unturned, stable as a rock in his decisions.<sup>69</sup> Now it is not the time to discuss the differences and the consequences of the best becoming of the 'spinning' order when it gets to be spoken or more precisely become part of logos. The fact is, while becoming within being, uttering (the time of speaking) is what renders a good order – of things and life in general – while the being (logos) is spotted in its horizon, even though not everything that gets to be uttered truly becomes a being.

The Romanian feeling of being (its modulations) acknowledges the possibilities given by uttering to notice and render the path of being accessible to any becoming – even to the most insignificant, humble and fragile embodiment from different worlds – towards something truly meaningful. The being utters itself on every occasion it has, and the only one able to do it is the man. Still, according to Noica, there are moments in

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 92-93.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

the act of speaking and ways to conjugate speaking when order can recover the true becoming – becoming within being – and we can truly find the meaning of being inside the poietic speaking, the *poiesis*.

Therefore, in regard to the being (and the presentiment of any appearance), the ‘humble’ beings, the appearances or the tender nature cannot be part of the purpose or the true becoming without a good utterance.

***The Reason of Being.*** The reason of being is logos, the uttering, but a poetic uttering – in the folktales analysed by Noica, in the poems of Eminescu, in the Romanian words and verbal phrases, especially the old ones. It is the only one that can make the picture of the being whole. In the thesaurus of language, in the poetic works, and the works of art in general, we can see the expressiveness of the being as *poiesis* and its true reason. That is what offers us the possibility to transform when we can grasp its meaning and we utter it. Painting is also uttering, says Michelangelo, sometimes even more suitable for the being than poetry, because not only it ‘imagines’, but it also reintegrates man into a poietic category, of an occurring poietic being. The entire logos and the poietic order, uttering and eloquent lay together at its base. Sometimes, one manifestation of spirit, in its poietic manner of being, becomes accountable for the order of uttering *poiesis*. Francisco de Hollanda takes Michelangelo’s idea and develops it, stating that painting is sometimes more eloquent than any other art, including poetry or architecture, because even him, with his little talent, as disciple of a master with no tongue, thinks that painting has much more power to create effects than poetry. He also believes painting has a greater force and vigour in making the spirit and the soul sensible, by inducing joy and laughter or sadness and laughter with a more fruitful eloquence.<sup>70</sup> This overturn in the order of manifesting the poietic as a way of being/doing, that the creative man appeals to, can confuse us, but being as *poiesis* finds the patterns identified by spirit. Not everything suddenly happens. Some are overcharged with humane, like the epos, the drama or the lyric, ‘too involved in the adventures and chasms of man’<sup>71</sup>, while others, at a certain time while becoming within being (from a poietic point of view), can better illustrate an ontological pattern in prolonging the feeling of the being in its rational becoming, just like, according to Noica, Eminescu’s poem or the folktales.<sup>72</sup> In order to see the bigger picture of

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<sup>70</sup> Francisco de Hollanda, *Dialoguri romane cu Michelangelo*, 1974, p. 81.

<sup>71</sup> C. Noica, *Sentimentul românesc al ființei*, 1996, p. 90.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

the meaning given to *poiesis* by the human spirit – ontological and epistemological – we need to rise and find peaks where logos utters and speaks about the order of things and life seen as a whole. It is important to choose the perspective of the becoming of *poiesis* because this offers us the privilege of looking into the depths of the human soul when we need to make the fundamental decisions.

Man is a peculiar being. He is not satisfied with the fruits that come in handy, but he is eager to go beyond the bounds of nature, looking for the endless spring of life, the Tree of knowledge, and the chance to reintegrate himself into the Being. Every attempt is made in order to overcome his human nature. He sometimes bounds with the elements of nature, with the humble beings (that still keep a meaning which man can understand, a meaning of the being), with the beasts and the fantastic monsters, tamed and aroused by the Mistress of the Palace, the Great Lady. She can tame everything, except the man, whom she offers the freedom to choose and to be. According to Noica, everything becomes good and unspoiled again in the hands of Being. But if the beasts can become good again, man is also able to be the worst beast of all and, at the same time, the best of all the Great Lady's puppies; his appearance gives her joy because she 'has never seen a human soul around her until then'. The Mistress rejoices and does not condemn the one that comes to feast from the tree of Life.<sup>73</sup> Let us ponder upon this metaphor of the spiritual food that reintegrates man into the order of the uttering being, the eternal order of logos.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

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## CHAPTER II

# *POIESIS* AS EMULATION OF MAN WITHIN RESEMBLANCE TO DIVINITY AND SELF-DENIAL

### **Imitation or *Anamnesis*?**

Those who think or do – philosophers, scholars, or artists – consciously or unconsciously place themselves in the antechamber of Divinity, and sometimes, they rival with God.

While the ancient Greeks understood this claim as a blasphemy, verbally or quietly supported, people from the Renaissance considered it a logical conclusion, based, just like Marsilio Ficino did, through Platonism and Neoplatonism, on the resemblance of the human power with the divine one, naming the scholars, painters and sculptors progenies of God. Jean Gimpel quotes Ficino's opinion on human strength, which according to him is almost completely similar to the divine: what God creates with his thought, the human spirit can create inside of him through intellect, express it through language, and write it in his books, materializing it using the matter that already exists in the world.<sup>1</sup> This way, the man assumes a set of determinations that only belong to divinity and lead towards the disintegration of the divine art, the *poiesis* art – the power of doing and knowing combined in a singular individual will – and finally, to self-negate the creative individuality, because many attributes of the Renaissance man go over to the savant (the alchemist who wants to discover the philosopher's stone, to synthesize the elements of matter, something which the artist only dared to represent, to replace divinity by recreating the matter). Art was only a step away from tragedy, the art that generates *catharsis* and reintegrates man into the purifying divine logos through participation, compassion, fear and shuddering, onto negating the divine hierarchy and replacing the celestial order of the logos with a

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Gimpel, *Despre artă și artiști* (On Art and Artists), translated by Pavel Popescu, preface by Titus Mocanu (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1973), p. 50.

mechanical, determinist one, as well as an intellectual knowledge, where the starting point and the interpretation perspectives belong to those sciences that study separate domains of reality. *The anthropology of poiesis* perceives man in his attempt to understand, emulate and rebel against the divine authority, and then in his wandering and decline, when he becomes aware of the lack of poetic in his work because he had replaced *poiesis* with categories of the aesthetic in art, or categories of the poetical and philosophical knowledge in science.

***The meaning of freedom of creation in the Renaissance.*** Humanists play an important part in all of these. They will awaken, just like Marsilio Ficino did, the emulation and vanity of total freedom of the Florentine artists, making the purpose of art, as representation and journey towards logos, a goal in itself, a mirror with no insight of what lays beyond – order and logos – art for the sake of art.

That has been the case ever since the dawn of Humanism; the work of art is now more important than its purpose: we do not admire the war and the conquest of Gaule, but Caesar's *Gallic War Commentaries*. We find out from an anecdote that a humanist on his deathbed refuses to kiss the cross because it is ugly. Jean Gimpel concludes that beauty of the action fades away compared to the beauty of style. The crucifix became a work of art.<sup>2</sup>

Seen as a whole, these alterations have significant consequences in the history of culture. They took place gradually and the issue of emulation in the artistic act, as well as the freedom of creation, are distinctly dealt with in every period (in ancient times and the Renaissance, art and knowledge are canonical and methodical activities, with a logic and a methodology set by different agencies: first the mentor, the leader of the philosophical school, then the Church, those who supported the artistic act through ideology, programs and money, the businessmen, etc.). Still, compared with the divine poetical act of the initial Creation, man's action, emulation of divinity, and his desire to elevate through action at the level of the Creator, only takes place as a *resemblance* process, just like Ficino also observed.

The fundamental issue of *poiesis* is the essence of action: is it creative in a traditional, primal way, as the divine logos, or is it just similar?

Up until the Renaissance, the work of art had no significance by itself, but had a different reality in mind, something more profound, a creative initial act, an idea, an ideal form, a principle. All the elements that took

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

part in its making offered harmony, balance, and ‘perfection’ and were part of the whole logos harmony. The artist was not a creator back then, but he considered himself *inspired* at best, as having a gift or a talent to serve an idea or the will of a god. Depending on whether he had a divine gesture in mind or an idea, he took part in the harmony of that idea or perpetuated the Creator’s gesture. Beauty was the relation between the work of art and the action (form) the artist had in his intention.

***The science of doing.*** Michelangelo – educated in the platonic spirit of Beauty, either following the discussions held at ‘Careggi Academy’ or after reading the works of the Florentine humanists – had no idea he could emulate the Creation, but thought he possessed some sort of *science of doing* and his spirit should reflect the celestial beauty. He ended up thinking he was a genius, due to the ideas of the humanists, not because of the work itself or the path perceived through it.

Ficino himself supports the analogy – mirroring – as relation between the work of art and logos, just like he describes it in *Commentaries on Plato* or other works, by saying that the handiness and the science of the artist become visible in paintings and architectural buildings; we can see the image and the composition of the artist’s spirit in them, almost for real, because they express and reflect their soul just like the mirror reflects the face of the person looking into it.<sup>3</sup> The spiritual reflection gives man the opportunity to see the Creator’s Face in a blurry image.

***Anamnesis and the spirit of ideal forms.*** We will discuss the notion of resemblance in contrast with the ideal order and the organizing spirit in a creative manner. The first one indicates that human intelligence does not fully reflect the Idea, the ruling Forms from which the subjective spirit gets inspired through *anamnesis*. Ideal forms are firm, steady, perfect. Subjective knowledge cannot ignore concrete forms, accidents, and contingencies. Neoplatonism cannot elude the aspiration of self towards ideal perfection. The idea of order operated by a higher principle than the ‘technical’ one, an ideal principle regarding form, that can also apply to art is originally Platonic.

However, Plato does not give arts – except the dithyramb, poetry inspired by bacchanalia – the possibility to access ideal forms, unless indirectly, through *mimesis*. As a matter of fact, Beauty, as seen by Plato in *Symposium* before formulating his theory of Ideas, was an ideal you can

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 51.



gradually reach through love, an ideal that leads us from loving sensible things to loving intelligible things.

Beauty is nothing but detaching the attraction (affinity) for sensible things from the material world. First, we admire beautiful shapes, then we deduce the beauty of shapes in general, and finally, the beauty of the soul, which links the 'aesthetic' sensibility to good. According to Plato, love and idea are the foundation of Beauty, but things are not beautiful per se, in themselves, nor are the works of art, unless they lead us towards the intelligible Beauty. In *Phædo* only, Beauty earns the right to be part of the Forms, the primordial realities.

Under the Pythagorean influence, Plato has underlined the formal characteristics of beauty: order, harmony, and measure. Mircea Florian thinks that, whereas Beauty is acclaimed as the archetype Idea, the supreme Reality to which we get closer through 'the theory' or contemplative intuition, an act of immediate consciousness, Art undergoes a disgrace nobody will accept. This degradation can be explained if we consider the ratio between Idea, absolute essence, and sensible things.<sup>4</sup> The Idea was not the poetic ideal from the beginning. Understood as the absolute reality, the emanation of superhuman intelligence, the Idea does not fit the ideal of a *poiesis* that does not exceed the boundaries of the work of art as such without negating the work as a gesture. That seems to be the humane factor of the deed, which must give meaning to life, one way or another. Not necessarily a useful or aesthetical meaning, but one that elevates life and *finds* the signs and meanings of a higher will, even in the ugly and the grotesque, and clears the pain through beauty that cannot pierce into the surface.

In other words, to quote Nietzsche, no matter how much we struggle to set an ideal for beauty, beyond the work of art, an ideal of the art for art, the art per se will fail and the works of art will become an add-on that we can ignore. The piece of art will get dissolved into theories and speculations if we forget the author's intention.

**'Practical science' and 'poetic science'.** The idea of a self-sufficient art or a domain able to account for the artistic phenomenon, like aesthetic theory, was not even possible in ancient times. Aristotle distinguishes the theoretical sciences: metaphysics, physics, theology, to which we add two more groups, identical in their concern with action, but different if we consider the role of the action: 'practical science' (ethics, politics, economy), where the target of action is the action itself and 'poetic

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<sup>4</sup> Mircea Florian, *Metafizică și artă* (Art and Metaphysics), (Cluj: Echinox Publishing, 1992), p. 101.

science', where the target of action is the 'creation' (*poiesis*) of a work of art, therefore, of the 'arts'.<sup>5</sup>

Apparently, this concern with delimiting the domain and reference of action and speaking about the artistic phenomenon also existed in ancient Greece. Unlike Plato, Aristotle thought the field belonged to *poiesis* (creative action), without limiting art by using Beauty as a formal ideal. The fact that, nowadays, we define the aesthetic according to Beauty is more of a modern mindset (Baumgarten). In ancient times, art was associated with *poiesis*, where the focus is on doing, on creation.

Moreover, the theory of art as *mimesis* is a decay of the purpose of art, mostly due to Plato, who wanted to establish an agreement between arts and his metaphysics (the theory of Form), considering the products of 'art' nothing but second-hand imitations of the Idea, as they do not emulate the essence, but its sensitive copies.

The idea of an independent domain of art and its rearrangement concerning other theoretical or practical domains will be resumed during the Renaissance, but in a completely different way and not due to the humanists, but thanks to the artists, who sensed the artistic act to be not only a formal aesthetic ideal (Beauty) but more of a poetic ideal, creative and also able to organise. Ficino did not discover something new, a way of bringing the artistic act closer to the primordial *poiesis*, nor a path less approached by creators of all time, but he formulated a theory, different from the Aristotelian one, thus generating a twist, where Beauty and love are associated with *poiesis*, but on a different level. If we consider the artistic phenomenon/act as a non-integrated and autonomous reality (art for art), with no connection to other creative domains and lacking its poetic side – which sort of belongs to other 'non-artistic' domains as well – the path we will take is wrong from the beginning. *Poiesis* does not describe (only) the artistic act, and art is not poetic by definition, even though Aristotle established the realm of art as *poiesis*/creation.

***The bivalence of the act of creation.*** *Poiesis* is bivalent. It can be achieved in two ways. First, the phenomena that are part of its realm can be comprehended theoretically through contemplation (mirroring) but they also represent the enlightened, the revelation, the sacred (categories belonging to the religious phenomenon). Through *poiesis*, we can create a vision of the world (*Weltanschauung*) specific mainly to poetry.

Poetry, as well as philosophy, is a theory, in the sense that it transcends immediate needs through intuition and contemplation, freeing man from

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

daily worries. As the essence of liberty, poetry creates its own form (idea) without the need for an outside one.

Creative and poetic art purifies and elevates (*catharsis*) it incites passions, creatively freeing them. By setting *poiesis* in opposition with reason (logos), we cannot perceive art as revelation, thus abandon the poetic act to the occult and the irrational domains. Marcel Raymond, quoted by Florian, saw a real danger in the mystical abandonment and the relinquishment of reason from art. That is the result of establishing a fundamental discrepant opposition between the artistic form and the poetic idea: dissociating art from logos and considering art to be a quest for form without the ideal content. Art is not a recluse in the complexity of human life, just as no other form of culture is, but it maintains close relations with science, philosophy, ethics, technology, and especially with religion.<sup>6</sup> Considering these relations, we can therefore understand the ‘crises’ that art goes through in different eras, especially during the modern and the contemporary period, because they thought it belonged to the field of aesthetics, understood as beauty. The principle that led to a true ‘restoration’ of the aesthetic perception during the Renaissance was acknowledging the law by which nature ‘reproduced’ the divine will. By understanding the laws of nature we can ‘imitate’ or represent the primary intention, the divine creativity – the poetic principle of *sui generis* – and through knowledge, alongside recreating the natural beauty, the artist can produce everlasting works of art, just like nature does.

It is a naturalist aesthetic principle, as Herman Nohl also states, but different from the one that led to the art of the 19th century.

Behind the work of art, it becomes visible the perfect symmetry between the human creative gesture and that initial one of the divine Creation.

***Creation and nature.*** Art is based on nature, the generating source of everything; it reveals the cosmic mechanism and the reality that lays beyond the surface. The artist shapes and molds just like nature does. M. Florian says that the artist has the ambition to penetrate the laws of the world and the cosmic secrets; he perpetuates, in a more profound way, what nature has already began shaping.<sup>7</sup> Michelangelo as well, thinks that the artist transforms from a craftsman or a technician that uses the elements made available by nature and contributes in the making of a work of art symmetric with nature, into the imitator of God’s everlasting work.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

This is a naturalist view, contrary to the Platonic theory of reminiscence encompassed in the concept of *mimesis*. The naturalist view from the Renaissance replaces the second degree reality, namely the artistic work of art, poetic par excellence, with a first rank reality that directly reflects the reality of the primary Form: it no longer is a deteriorated aesthetics that would never attain the enigma of the ideal unique Beauty, but a creative one, in the initial sense of *poiesis*.

As a result of the Renaissance naturalism, Beauty is reintegrated into the world. Using the middle ground between the Pythagorean doctrine and Aristotle's concept of form, just like Saint Augustin did, we can reassert the beauty residing in the mathematical ratios: symmetry, order, and congruence of parts (*congruentia partium*). They are all laws that can be numerically established, culminating in Unity: the numerical unity of natural beauty reflects the ideal unity of form and the divine intelligence. Art becomes a path towards knowledge (*via cognoscitiva*), the knowledge of sensitive things. By knowing the laws of nature, the artist gains access to the ultimate creative intelligence, the divine. Through the natural aesthetic of Beauty, grounded mainly in the Aristotelian philosophy, but also in the Neoplatonist idea of the divine science, and through the study of proportion and symmetry, Leon Battista Alberti, Leonardo, or Dürer introduce a new view on aesthetics, as a new principle of the artistic Beauty, that coincides with *harmonia mundi: concinnitas*, the creative symmetry. The artist becomes the scientist. He is a generating force, an inspired one, and also a physicist, one that studies the laws of natural phenomena. His work of art is the reveal of cosmic geometry. The two overlap, and sometimes the first surpasses the work of nature, its beauty becoming the revealed law.

The renaissance poietics lay under the Aristotelian influence while maintaining the idea of *mimesis*, the certainty that by imitating nature and infiltrating its fundamental law, we acquire the secret of the original *poiesis*, the revealed truth.

## **Self, Person, Historical Becoming**

How does the other reveal myself to me? That is a question with Socratic implications. It constantly refers to the necessity to reinitiate the revealing dialogue of the truth that belongs to us, but we can only discover it inside the other. My true being is not a sum of my experiences, nor is it a rational evaluation of all the representations of me in the other. Dialogue, in a maieutic approach, can render approximate representations of the other, but it cannot reveal the being we are taking part in. The person, as

an underlayer of personality and a carrier of the individual self, is *entelechia* (using the Aristotelian term), that which synthesizes the individual self in communion with the other-selves from society but also *energeia* (the vital energy of the soul and the spiritual energy), through which one takes part in a dialogue with the inner self, the others or the Divine Person.

Man cannot be fulfilled, unless in a society whose history he undertakes, meaning the integration of a more complex reality, that the self entirely bestows himself upon because it is the only way he can exist as a person: through experiencing the destiny of the community. Outside the community, man can only partially assert himself, one-sided. Throughout history, man could not apply himself to a purpose assumed as meaning and personal way of being and he could come to know himself only by communicating himself to others, especially if he fully experienced the dialogue and the feelings it involved. Nowadays, man also acquires knowledge, he lives, sets, and assumes virtues but real mindfulness is experienced where his roots are, in the community he belongs to by destiny. His connection to the world – the cosmos – is inside the community.

***The self and the creative person.*** Having a poietic personality, man throws himself into life with everything God has ingrained in him, increasing his physical and spiritual energies, brought up to date inside the community, through merging and experiencing the self by identifying with its soul. This unity transcends any problems the self might have and bonds him with the others under the same destiny as a poietic self. The inner self is subjectivity aware of everything the world represents and there are two types of connections between the self and the world. First, we have the logical relationship, between the conscious self and the object that exists outside of him. Secondly, we have the practical one, where the subject takes action, using instruments and producing changes in his existence. Consciousness and action result in knowledge, from a logical point of view, but from a pragmatic one, they induce changes in the physical, material underlayer of existence, generating what we normally call things.

Knowledge is a logical tool used to organize the objective existence and the subjective reality. But human nature cannot be reduced to these logical relations between the self (subject) and the object, either interior or exterior, which lead to knowledge and culture, nor to its ‘instrumental’ actions and their result in the objective world. Theoretical relations are the foundation for those functions in charge of acquiring knowledge while practical actions, which test the theoretical patterns, generate new areas of reality. We can split it into objective reality (of a natural nature) and ‘processed’ reality, transformed with tools, later called technological

reality. Nonetheless, these realities do not wear man out because he is much more than knowledge and practical qualities. *Man is a spiritual unity*. The inner-self itself is an object for another self, which it knows, as there are logical connections between different selves. This subject-object relation leads to a rupture inside the self and divides it into two levels of consciousness. One level focuses on the self as subject, creator, and organizer of reality, while the other focuses on the object of research, thus giving it a different meaning, of objective being, the only one able to authenticate and make universal the existence and the laws introduced into reality by knowledge. The empirical self, the focus point of the aware self, is also an objective self, object of natural and historical sciences.

The inner self is not conscience in general, nor does it become pure subjective intention because the notion of self cannot be separated from that of person. This latter notion reveals itself not as a subject opposed to an object, but as a wholeness, an actively cognitive being that lives itself and reality. Moreover, it does not present as an authenticated existence or objective being, but as a whole, a cosmos the self wants to be part of.

***Means of relating to the world of self and person.*** Between *self* and *person* firstly stand the different ways in which each organizes their psycho-volitive strengths, their specific manners of training the individual abilities for knowledge and action, and secondly, their particular way of relating to the world. The self freely and extensively develops all its spiritual availabilities: emotional, volitive, those related to knowledge and to living intensely, especially emotionally. It also develops the way it relates to the levels of reality. The self does not specifically refer to a certain level of reality, unless as an individual self, therefore the way it takes on qualities (even the intensity) is different in every individual and mostly unable to communicate. Starting from the most profound levels of reality, vital or material, and continuing with the superior ones, spiritual and cultural in general, the individual experiences each through its self, but at a different intensity, generating ‘arguments’ and justifying actions according to the internality of the experience the self relates to.

The person embodies the individual self, linking its particular experiences with the world of values and it also differentiates man’s individual ‘options’ intensified by his inner self and pointed towards certain areas of reality or scales of values. While the self is the most profound justification of the individual intentionality, the person is the one coordinating, according to the availabilities of the self, the functions and personal abilities for action, knowledge, and interaction, getting them to work together. The self’s intentions are mostly without reason, according

to its inner availabilities and experiences, preconscious or unconscious. The person motivates the individual self, directing its experiences towards a particular set of values mostly incorporating everything, aware of what sets man apart from all the other entities in the world, as an individual, and what brings us together, as humans, through culture and history. *Self* and *person* are different, not so much in their domain of activity, but in the way they guide us through life, making us aware of the purpose and meaning of our existence as historical beings part of a community.

*Person* and *self* partially overlap. One can experience the individual self and can communicate, even only through analogy, one's experiences, but one can transcend the individual self only as a person, integrating from the domains of sensitive and spiritual reality only what is meaningful, achieving unity for one's being, historically and culturally, prioritizing values and how one relates to them.

***The fulfilment of man as person.*** Man can be defined as man through *person* and personal fulfilment. The notion of man is generic and it differentiates us in relation to reality, which it even transcends, whereas the person asserts itself inside a community and always remains an individuality that fulfils itself sympathetically together with other people. The person is unique; it carries values and common meanings which it transforms through its particular way of being into manifestations of its non-recurring individuality. At this time in the discussion, it is implied that *person* and *self* entirely belong to a conscious individual, living and experiencing, acting and reacting to existence through the way the individual positions himself as a subject.

However, *person* and *self* both belong to a complex reality, the man - natural and social at the same time. Being circled twice by the areas in relation to which they are defined, natural reality and history, *person* and *self*, both acknowledge special connections and distinct realms of reality and being. Concerning these realms, the *self* gains a personal feature and the person individualizes itself, constantly relating to *self* as to something indestructible, the domain of absolute and profound interior being, because only through the interior self can the person assert itself as active, eager to know and gain value. Most importantly, only through the inner self, the person connects with life, lives, and experiences reality. Exactly here, in every person's way of being and its way of experiencing the real, the unreal, or the metaphysical world, we are interested in the *singularity that evades the world* and transcends all these ways of relating. We are not interested in the plurality of 'ways of being' to which we gradually pertain

because this singularity implies every feature of reality to which the historical individual relates.

**Person and self throughout history.** Traditional and modern philosophy (even the most renowned thinkers) have reflected upon existence and reality using Platonic and Aristotelian terminology. Later on, the interest went towards different fields and existence gained the significance of a real, immediate, natural existence, studied by natural sciences, but also that of a ‘mediated’ reality, the reality of man. Moreover, there was an interest in man’s existence and being in the world throughout history because, according to Alexandru Surdu, towards the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, existentialism arose (‘the philosophy of existence’ or ‘the existentialist philosophy’), for which Existence plays a significant role. The origin of this interest, mainly for the human Existence, is to be found in Schopenhauer’s writing about World (*Welt*) and those of Dilthey about Life (*Leben*).<sup>8</sup> Existentialism focused on the self as an active subject, on the becoming of the self, constantly dividing when coming in contact with exterior ‘challenges’ but mainly on the alienated self, inside a history ‘made’ at some point against man as a person. That became a reality that stood above community, a historical reality that alienated because it no longer *belonged* to man.

Seen as such, history is no longer the existence of human consciousness transcending existence, it becomes a reality opposed as object to an individual consciousness; the historical world is no longer a world where all consciousness come together and communicate, taking part in the same reality that transcends the consciousness of each individual. However, man is man as a person, taking part and experiencing the meaning of community. *Taking part means here coming together and communicating the individual experience, experiencing this experience, an actual practical fulfilment and working together.* This cooperation is done by virtue of an ideal or destiny that brings knowledge together and fulfils it as personal goal. Knowing nature and yourself cannot exhaust the personal man and his purpose in the world because he is a becoming person, rebelling against the world as a being that creates his own purpose.

We consider person to be correlative to self and not a counter pole of the self that belongs to one, while it also distinguishes one from everything else. The self is particularly set on the past, while person anticipates and

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<sup>8</sup> Alexandru Surdu, *Filosofia pentadică III. Existența nemijlocită* (Pentadic Philosophy III. Immediate Existence), (Bucharest – Târgu Mureș: Romanian Academy Publishing and Ardealul Publishing, 2014), p. 31.



bends time. The self organizes in contrast (subject-object), while person *represents the creative poetic*.

The person (Lat. *persona*: the mask worn by an actor of ancient theatre; *personare*: ‘sounding along’) defines the human being as integrally and harmoniously developed, physically and mentally, but especially as an ethical and rational subject. The notion gained legal connotations as a possessor of civil rights and moral ones as a responsible human being, practising and promoting virtues, not out of constraint, but because it understands the principles. During ancient times, the person was assigned to those having legal and political rights and could responsibly exert their social attributes, accomplishing their duties towards the *polis*. Later on, during Christianity, human beings were seen as persons equal before God’s law. Understood as having a consciousness, able to choose between good or bad due to free will, they were redeemed through their actions and their divine soul, thus becoming immortal before the Person of God.

***The genesis of personality.*** In the genesis of personality, the self is the one that tends to and pushes towards certain directions or meanings. But where do all these intentions that the self transforms as an active subject into knowledge and then will of action come from? They come from an experience acquired through direct and sensitive contact. However, experience is not a *sumum* of intentionality according to which the person situates itself, but an activity that sets in unison all attributes of the thinking self and most of all, an effort to *unify and participate*, select and situate for man to *make* himself. Mircea Vulcănescu thinks the role of unifying all the information gained through personal experience belongs to personal conscience.<sup>9</sup> There are courses of development that underline a certain trait or other of the entire field of experience that contribute to self-development, just like the self/person channels the specific functions (will and intellect) towards different areas of reality and experience. A scientist, a philosopher, or an artist, each develops and gets differently involved, selectively using experience and its data.

***Personal knowledge. Metaphysical temptation.*** Man’s ambition to know firstly represents the adequacy regarding the objective data of the conscience and the unification of these data into coherent systems of judgment that could explain some realms of reality (the object of particular

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<sup>9</sup> Mircea Vulcănescu, *Pentru o nouă spiritualitate filosofică. Dimensiunea românească a existenței*, I (For a New Philosophical Spirituality. The Romanian Dimension of Existence. I), foreword by Constantin Noica (Bucharest: Eminescu Publishing, 1992), p. 49.

sciences) or existence as a whole (philosophy). Secondly, man transcends these data and unifies the most general significations of experience, reaching extreme situations when rationality falls over meaning beyond the realm of possible experience which knowledge cannot grasp (*greifen*) but still intends to integrate inside possible experience (knowledge in general), or personal experience. Personal balance (experiencing the Whole), the metaphysical temptation, transcending any experience, is the person's tendency to harmonize with experience and Transcendence (everything there is beyond possible knowledge). Transcending and unifying the whole experience is not possible except through reason because possible experience and knowledge are limited by human's existence (biological), just like knowledge in general (what we call *culture*) is limited by history. We cannot explain everything through reason, but we can reflect some of what is beyond, and we can *speculate* what Transcendence is, as a *personal experience* that integrates all the possibilities of our human nature, but not through the selective use of certain realms of experience. Being incapable to integrate the whole experience does not make us abandon this philosophical ideal, of reasoning the entire existence, even if this ambition sometimes becomes suspicious.<sup>10</sup> However, through personal experience and consciousness of the Whole, through subjective and objective experience, the person puts us in balance with the world and the existence. Transcending this possibility is proper to the man *that makes himself* and does not give in to temptation, nor wastes himself into existence, but lives as a singularity, a person continuously becoming (being made). Nae Ionescu thinks that, when man realizes this self-becoming, the moment he starts *to live himself as a singularity*, that is the moment he understands world as a unit and experiences it as a whole. At that moment, transcendence becomes one.<sup>11</sup> This complete understanding of the purpose of existence and the meaning that transcends the objective, even the subjective existence, is the moment man realizes that everything keeping him bound together is the spiritual unity.<sup>12</sup> Whereas the person, towards which the self aspires, the one replenishing and transcending experience, is not a whole, except through life – poietic living, as we would call it, in the plenitude of personal life - , that which makes it possible, because, as Nae Ionescu says, life enables you to move inside

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Nae Ionescu, *Tratat de metafizică* (Thesis on Metaphysics), unedited course, written in shorthand by Dumitru Neașu (Bucharest: Roza Vânturilor Publishing, 1999), pp. 211-212.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

this singularity, entity, spirit.<sup>13</sup> Considering life (not as understanding of the whole experience, but as an overcoming of it) to be the same as soul, Nae Ionescu thinks Christian-orthodox philosophy makes us live and accomplish the purpose of our life as a singularity, where we can all find each other and communicate. This singularity through which we all communicate and where there is togetherness is what we call beyond transcendence – God.<sup>14</sup>

***Personality as synthesis between subjective and objective self.***

Overcoming the moment of subjectivity through a complete conversion into objectivity does not solve the relation self - personality, because consciousness is the permanent coupling of the subjective self with the objective self. In other words, the self is held captive *in another*, which we can guess, but we will never know. The person reflects and ‘processes’ the tendencies of the subjective self, coupling them with tendencies of other-selves, reflected in different persons, through trans-subjective dialogue. This dialogue is more of a lyrical manifestation of experience – like metaphysics, sometimes –, an intuition of the other’s subjective experience and a projection of my experience over everything there is, at the same time. This projection is not just a free intention or a simple process of my subjective experience data, but an adaptation of experience to other experiences, a dialogue between experiences that are not just considering exteriorization (objectifying the experiences of the self), but also the intuition of difference and participation – we take part in a dialogue with all our being, which does not communicate only formal, through a natural or abstract language. Overcoming subjectivity, based on the self’s appointing and referencing of a pure logical boundary (subject-object) is not possible, except through dialogue and participation. The subject-self reclaims itself as the knowing self in the relation subject-object, but also as the self personally realized from dialogue with other-selves, inside a community, taking part in others’ experience by translating its own experiences onto the other, through love and action. As long as it remains an instrumental action, purely practical, without knowing the other, not an ideal that brings solidarity into a community (Max Scheler), or an action that helps people be part of a community. The action remains pending in the tangible world and it cannot reach the poetic trait of the participative man that makes himself. No person can be dissolved into history – past conjuncture or situation, with no real repercussions in the present time – because it gets involved in history as an active part, able to spiritually

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

provoke, ideally, an entire generation and beyond. On this subject, Petre Țuțea said that while the apostles dissolve into the absolute, the role-models dissolve into generations. Those who become role-models are paradigm and trend creators, thus crucial for the polis.<sup>15</sup> This phrase represents the paradigm of the poietic personality that we take to and by virtue of which we try to open, as much as possible, the anthropological perspective of human personality, opposed to history in order to pursue transcendence. Throughout history, we notice the dissolution of the being, no matter how we analyse it: genetically (biological), ethically, philosophically, scientifically, because man does not open up to a theory that thinks it can surprise and describe him, in order to reveal him to us.

*The poietic openness of person towards new horizons.* History does not create personalities, but ranks them because the person does not take part in history as a being that opens up towards new possible horizons (Heidegger's *dasein*), nor as a destiny. History is not the potential of the human being, nor an occasion for self-recovery, but a permanent register of pretend negations or repeated concealments (failures), hidden inside historical theories or testimonials, ideological more often than not, or able to ideologize – under the aim of historical reason that almost always ends up under a causality. Personality is part of the experience of a generation and the experience of the other, who discovers me through dialogue inside a community, the being besides me who reveals me to myself ('me découvre à moi-même').<sup>16</sup>

So far, we have outlined the noetic version of personality, on top of the ontological one and complete with the corollary of applied action. Still, there is also a poietic side to personality, which integrates all possible experiences and transcends every experience, even Transcendence itself: experiencing Transcendence, the metaphysical attitude. However, metaphysics does not reveal a purpose for man as a person; at most, it replaces his drive towards the absolute. This drive is stimulated by reflection, mainly theorizing based on the concept of something for a reason – derived from a theoretical and categorical model from a scientific aporia or the tendency to reflect upon the religious, artistic, or ethical phenomenon – which is not enough for it *to be*. Metaphysics theorizes in the virtue of logic and critical method about *problems* that come from intuiting the fact as a given: given by sensitive experience or by the unification of consciousness with

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<sup>15</sup> *322 de vorbe memorabile ale lui Petru Țuțea* (322 Memorable Sayings of Petru Țuțea), 4th edition (Bucharest: Humanitas Publishing, 2007), p. 53.

<sup>16</sup> Gabriel Marcel, *Du refus à l'invocation* (From Refusal to Invocation), (Paris, 1940), p. 56.

knowledge of functions, operations, and logical-ideal results of thought, along with reason.

The unity of deeds of consciousness is based on the singularity that emerges from the development of logic, applied by sciences to empirical facts or phenomena. From the perspective of particular sciences or metaphysics it is impossible to reach the ideal essence of the first unity, like phenomenology intends to by means of deduction and permanent reductions, using the method of ‘transcendental doubt’ or the eidetic reduction. In fact, the fundamental philosophical or metaphysical questions end up in a system of doctrines – the essential structure of any metaphysical system that rationally justifies itself and sometimes perpetuates other systematic perspectives, dogmatic and spiritual, but does not expand and cannot rationally sustain the spirit which is constantly looking for *other solutions* by generating a system of truths relative to the subject that interrogates or self-interrogates. Any method ends up on the edge between Transcendence and the Absolute, on either side, because no matter how general the question is, from the subject’s perspective, it calls for something objective, real or ideal, called either organizing law for contingent actions or essence of general phenomena, a priori or ideal. With concern to experience or the empirical intuition, it reaches probable, not absolute statements and entirely valid judgements through eidetic reduction or transcendental doubt. Still, no method can really and objectively satisfy man’s thirst for knowledge but just perpetuate or banish it in the history of thought, scientific or philosophical. Knowledge, as an intentionality towards empirical or ideal phenomena, refines and reduces to a rational, logical, and intuitive structure the essence of the object or its signification, also objective in the intention of rational conscience, to the ideal ‘fact’.

According to M. Vulcănescu, our knowledge reaches the first through empirical intuition and the last through pure intuition or ideation. [...] Eidetic reduction is not accomplished through isolation and aside consideration of any quality, but through temporary doubt, precisely through a momentary neglecting of all the existential judgements regarding a phenomenon. The result is an absolute phenomenon, deed of the pure or transcendental conscience, that is conscience in its essence, independent from any individual or factual element.<sup>17</sup> The knowledge gained, as act of conscience, refers (intends) to something, meaning it ultimately materializes by focusing on an ideal object, noema, which is different from the real empirical object because it is irremovable and indestructible.<sup>18</sup> Being

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<sup>17</sup> M. Vulcănescu, *Pentru o nouă spiritualitate filosofică. Dimensiunea românească a existenței*, I, 1992, p. 166.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

focused on something that belongs to it, of an ideal nature, conscience can only partially, even truncately find itself in the discovered object, *noema*. Reflection and self-reflection indefinitely multiplies its surface, endlessly repeating acts and thoughts, just like in a game of parallel mirrors, multiplying knowledge, without transcending the actual act of knowledge.

However, there are areas filled with significations, and places, fields, unexplored rhythms, just like those towards which art is heading, inside man's attitudes and intentionalities (the man who considers himself a person that reflects God's image). Both religion and art, or faith and the poetic use the interior image as reference, externalized into the artistic object or the artistic act and the Image, either imagined or guessed through reflexive methods, sometimes artistic, other times as a pure contemplative vision of Transcendence, able to mirror the Divine, just like an icon. The poetic person moves in an asymptotic manner towards Transcendence and sets in motion everything that belongs to human nature, as a possibility barely reflecting established actions and places or sacred actions and places. Taking into consideration the results and thoughts of different researchers, we consider Renaissance to be the time when the issue of person was truly considered from a poetic point of view, but negative terms were used and they could not establish a genuine humanism. Instead, they concealed the issues of man and the love of God through a 'simulated' act of total reflectiveness and through the 'self-knowledge of ignorance', like Petre Țuțea called it. Humanism opened the gates for modernism and for acquiring knowledge/self-knowledge about the nature of self through positive reduction to the 'truth' of natural science. Considering the person to be destined to a single purpose, that of knowing the other or knowing something - either placed in the immanent or in some other place, beyond – without *a mediation* of that someone or something to participate or to be involved, not necessarily as consistency between the subjective self and the indifferent objectivity, is like understanding the process of thinking to be just '*accordatio mentis et rei*'. However, personal thinking means participation and fulfilment of something higher than self, and the poetic personalities, which we will describe on a different occasion, work towards accomplishing a destiny and the reason to be of the persons integrated into a historical community.

## **Consideration on the moral of *Energetic Personalism*. Vocation – between work and creative imagination**

*The moral of energetic personalism*, a course held by Rădulescu-Motru at the Romanian Academy on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 1946<sup>19</sup> adds, from the perspective of ethical and philosophical categories, a supplement to the system of *Energetic Personalism* (paperwork published in 1927 at ‘Casa Școlilor’ (The House of Schools) by discussing two themes that have been a permanent pursuit for the philosopher: total fulfilment of the personality of a man of vocation and the moral responsibilities he takes on in contemporary society. Personality, as Rădulescu-Motru presents it in his studies, previous or posterior to the one published in 1927, like *Puterea sufletească* (*The power of the soul*) (1908), *Elemente de metafizică* (*Items of metaphysics*) (1912), *Vocația* (*Vocation*) (1932), *Românismul* (*The Romanian spirit*) (1936) and *Timp și destin* (*Time and destiny*) (1939), incorporates ideas and ethical-psychological concepts that have been around ever since the Greek ancient times, up until they were embraced by Christian ethics, into the work of humanists and philosophers from the Renaissance, bringing them into the modern era. Organizing the elements that describe the energetic personality, of a vocational-cultural type and participating in its identification, determines the philosopher to conclude that these are predominant in individualities that assert themselves creatively – like Rădulescu-Motru says, they reach the state of personality for a civilized social life.<sup>20</sup> After establishing and stating the theoretical principles that describe the energetic personality, the philosopher enunciates the philosophical, ethical, scientific, historical and cultural conditions that lead to a total assertion of the vocational aptitudes and the crystallization of the fully aware and original self, the man. In his energistic approach, these consist in the tendency to identify with his work, his profession.<sup>21</sup> His intention is, at first, to introduce a definition of personality that would set it apart from the one given by Kantian apriorism – practical reason for justifying moral acts. He manages to do so by correlating the common individual personality, asserted through work and professional experience

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<sup>19</sup> *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Literare* (The Annals of the Romanian Academy. Memoirs of the Literary Section), III<sup>rd</sup> series, tome XV, transcribed in *Revizuirii și adăugiri* (Revisions and Additions), III<sup>rd</sup> notebook (Bucharest: 1946 (vol. IV, 1998), pp. 135–169.

<sup>20</sup> Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, *Personalismul energetic* (Energetic Personalism), in *Opere alese* (Selected Works), (Bucharest: Romanian Academy Publishing, 2005), p. 304.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305.

with the personality that generates itself in relation to nature and history. The premise is that personality does not entirely govern itself based on moral rules imposed by customs, traditions, or common laws – ethnic or natural ethics – nor based on penalties imposed by civil or criminal codes and it does not follow the moral of philosophical systems that take principled stands without the constraint of some mandatory standards, but it correlates the vocation of both inner (psychological) and cultural self with historically standardized necessities or the natural laws, in terms of its options: fulfilment through work or the deliberate choice to perfect its particular vocational aptitudes. The difficulty comes from determining what vocation is in the ethical/social complex of professional constraints. In other words, to identify specific psychological elements and the moral categories that vocational personalities hold or incorporate.

***Elements and traits of the creative personality.*** The elements that work together to crystallize the creative personality – free from the social-economic constraints of the work that sustains living or profit – are creative intelligence and the way to use it to fully develop a set of aptitudes in a field where man can be freely active. Deliberate action maintains the enthusiasm for work and stimulates its continuous advance. Man's capacity for vocation is not just about exercising native abilities (talent); it overpasses the desire to prove himself through refinement in the field where he activates (for example, the artistic field) and leads the person towards achieving perfection in the interest of a social ideal. In other words, the vocational man is active in a free and creative way in all the domains, as long as there are no imposed conditions related to the division of labour or the strict provision of immediate needs.

The moral of energetic personalism takes into account the biological and psychosocial evolution, as well as the moral ideas of other philosophies, looked into by the author, with emphasis on the importance of Kantian criticism regarding the expression of ethics based on the autonomy of conscience, thus setting the ground for anthropology, built on the principles and categories of thought but also on the categorical imperative, from an ethical point of view. According to Rădulescu-Motru, the Kantian solution is a significant turn from an anthropologic point of view because it appoints the autonomy of will and the ethical categories and norms, deliberately taken on. It is based on the categories of practical reason – thus appointing the categories that coordinate the moral values, alongside the categories of the intellect. The liberty and the autonomy of will cannot explain from a practical perspective both reality and the concepts/categories of other domains that are part of the field of conscience, like art, aesthetic



values, and religion, easily confused with ethics. At least this is what we deduct while reading Kant's *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, says the Romanian philosopher. He also discusses the solutions offered by post-Kantian philosophers (especially Hegel), by positivism, the dialectic-materialism of Marx, Wundt's experimental psychology, the pragmatic solutions, and so on. Besides the Kantian apriorism, which he pays a considerate amount of attention to, theoretically and historical (fundamental in critically approaching moral theories), Rădulescu-Motru cannot find a significant ground for personalism in all the other philosophies, descendent of rationalism, because they do not consider the person in its psychosocial, cultural and historical complexity, but only starting from certain epistemological and/or pragmatic elements, which they sometimes generalize. Therefore, this leads most of the times to antinomies and fallacies like *petito principii*, particular to pragmatism, arisen while proving the usefulness of some quasi-general theories, or truths already established by universal sciences (the atomist theory, the laws of evolution, those of progress in knowledge etc.). Not even the pragmatic argument of the enriching experience can have a universal validity because, in Rădulescu-Motru's words, if we admit that experience is the foundation of reality, we cannot logically deduct anything other than the reality of the individual is being enriched and not in the least the universal reality.<sup>22</sup> Rădulescu-Motru bases personalism on the value of individual experience, that enriches the self and elevates it to the level of personality.

***Experience and crystallization of the self.*** The philosopher considers experience important as an act of conscience, having a double ontological meaning: it is the result of the evolution (transformation) of the cosmic energies that end up in the human brain and transform into cultural evolution. By equalizing conscience and cosmic energy, the reality of conscience (the subjective self) finds its place in the realm of cosmic becoming, which changes in a teleological manner and heads towards the superior level of personality. Viorel Cernica thinks that energy, the original reality, evolves towards 'the energetic correlation' of personality. Once this happens, a new horizon emerges, a horizon incorporated into energy that also intensifies it and directs it towards its perfect form, the energetic personality. Evolution suffers mutations from nature to culture.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 288.

<sup>23</sup> Viorel Cernica, *C. Rădulescu-Motru – posteritatea formulei filosofice personalist energetice* (C. Rădulescu-Motru – the posterity of the philosophical formula of the energetic personalism) in idem, *Căutarea de sine și chemările tradiției. Studii și*

Thus, anthropology has a cosmic finality, the field of culture. Rădulescu-Motru understands conscience as energy, therefore, personality is not just a simple epiphenomenon of energy, but something that establishes a purpose for the natural transformations. The subjective self, which tends to indefinitely crystallize, represents, on one hand, energy or evolution (causative) of the matter and product of feelings and moods on the other, without putting an end to the evolution, because, in the cosmic teleology, energetic evolution can expand up to the edges of the universe, its final purpose possibly being the divine personality.<sup>24</sup>

Any philosophical system is a particular view of the world, especially of man's place in existence. Energetic personalism suggests an approach focused on an anthropological project. Besides the Kantian ontological and teleological significations, personalism targets a philosophical and ethical reconstruction, emphasising the poetic way of being.

Related to this last aspect of energetic personalism, we need to mention the resemblance (at least methodological) between some of the ways in which Nae Ionescu and Rădulescu-Motru approach personality, even though their philosophical views are almost always different, as the first one is a logician and the promoter of a Christian philosophical system for metaphysics, and the second one is a rather scientific thinker, sometimes a positivist, with a broad psychological background. They both admit that the only valid philosophical and/or metaphysical approach is anthropology. Rădulescu-Motru bases his theory on Kant's critical apriorism and the psychophysical evolutionism with an energetic nuance, while Nae Ionescu thinks that the metaphysical issue, where he includes personality, is not related to the activity of thought, but it answers a profound necessity of the human nature, indifferent to logic and even to psychology. According to Nae Ionescu, it is not a matter of thought per se, but of balancing a natural reality, man; the human being in its wholesomeness.<sup>25</sup> Even though the fundamentals and the perspectives on the issue are different, they meet at some point, at least as a field of initiation, but also with regard to the solution because both of them tackle it from an anthropological point of view. They also have in common the implicit teleology: for Rădulescu-Motru, the finality of the evolution of energy is the human personality, even the divine one, while for Nae Ionescu, metaphysics is a sort of

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*eseuri* (The Search of Self and the Lure of Tradition. Studies and Essays), (edited by Mihai Dascăl – Casă de Presă și Editură – Publishing, 2002), p. 95.

<sup>24</sup> C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Personalismul energetic*, 2005, p. 292.

<sup>25</sup> Nae Ionescu, *Tratat de metafizică* (Treatise on Metaphysics), unedited course, stenography by Dumitru Neacșu (Bucharest: Roza Vânturilor Publishing, 1999), p. 92.

disclosure or a *confession of faith* of someone resurrected<sup>26</sup>, a balance between existence and the individual who missed out on redemption.

***The relation of art with philosophy.*** Either explicit or implicit, this vision allows many correlations, wilfully underlined by Rădulescu-Motru in most of his studies. The most important one is the relation between philosophy and art. This relation is also considered when he discusses the works of art (having metaphysical and cosmological signification) belonging to Constantin Brâncuși. He underlines the antinomic identity and unity between matter and spirit, represented by art in general and by the sculpture of Brâncuși in particular. From an ontological perspective and that of aesthetical categories, the unity spirit-matter seems to be the meeting point between its theoretical build and the artistic vision of the sculptor born in Hobița, pointed out by the philosopher in the preface of a book about the sculptor's work: Brâncuși strives to pierce into the subjective layer of the current human conscience in order to reach the cosmic shapes where spirit identifies with matter, only to render through art only *that*, what life initially was, in the primordial *egg* of the spirit-matter singularity, a purpose I strived for as well, in my philosophical work.<sup>27</sup> Both the artist and the philosopher are 'challenged' to reveal their personality through a universal image/idea and to get their poetic selves in tune with the spiritual meaning of the cosmos. Unlike the philosopher, the artist is able to discover in the actual core (full of symbolical signification) of the matter upon which he exerts his vocation. Both also put forward a series of values and moral norms. Contemplating a work of art opens up two-fway associations and thoughts in our conscience, from the inner subjective self towards the universal objective one, while metaphysics chooses the reversed way, from a strongly symbolized image/concept towards the inner self. Like V. Cernica said, you no longer contemplate yourself as an isolated subject, but as the universal subject itself, as man per se. According to energetic personalism, in his universal state, man gambles one chance. His world gains a certain recognition and by recognizing another in his own being becomes obvious for him who abides by the imagistic rigours of this concept.<sup>28</sup> The philosopher and the artist, both challenged by two essential disarrays, one existential and the other

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>27</sup> C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Prefață* (Preface) to V. G. Paleolog, *A 2-a Carte despre Brâncuși* (The Second Book on Brâncuși), (Craiova: Ramuri Publishing, 1994).

<sup>28</sup> V. Cernica, *Căutarea de sine și chemările tradiției. Studii și eseuri*, „Somnul” *brâncușian și ideea personalismului energetic* (The Idea of 'Sleep' in Brâncuși and the Energetic Personalism), 2002, p. 103.

ethical/moral, follow the rigours of their own conscience (poetic and reflexive at the same time) in order to sort out the world. On one hand, the philosopher searches for and regains the ontological and moral principles in the formal and logical order of the discourse that he cannot surpass, being constraint by concept, the instrument of thought. On the other hand, the artist, by rejecting the reflexive-dialectic order of formal logic, enters the disarray of the being and heads towards the chaos of the primordial beginning: he reorganizes the Cosmos by focusing his creative intention on matter. Both impose the rigours of their 'art', in its initial meaning of creative logos and hold the self-imposed moral responsibility of *vocation*: fulfilling the ideal form, that of the primordial One, but in different, although not contradictory ways (aesthetic and belonging to discourse).

The union between these two ways takes place in the conscience. Its finality is the human person, which for Rădulescu-Motru is the product and purpose of the evolution of universal energy. The evolution of energy is not meant to help the biological and psychological individualities be preserved or survive. Its purpose is the cultural ideal. The result of work and occupation is not a complex personality, but a trained one, that inserts itself into the natural, even historical order of evolution, but it does not aim for an ideal. The realm of culture and ideal values cannot be reached following this path, secondarily capitalizing on the energy needed for survival, but through spiritual energies, existent in humans (personalities) with cultural vocation. The teachings of energetic personalism, as explained in *Vocația, factor hotărâtor în cultura popoarelor (Vocation, decisive factor in peoples' culture)*, the author's systematic implementation of thought, aim for the unconditional, self-examination as the purpose of existence (evolution of energy), heading towards the spiritual and able to take the shape of human personality while unconditionally (ideally) evolving towards the divine person. Vocation – in its ethical sense – corresponds to the free complex man, aware of his creative spontaneity, able to implement this spontaneity as objective law (Kantian postulation) that has its source on the inside, in the subjective experiencing the existence. Rădulescu-Motru thinks that just by enunciating, moral law becomes a determinant of will. Man does not require a physical impulse to be ethical; the mere presence of the formal rule of the moral law in his conscience is enough for his will to be determined because man is free, the ability of self-determination lays within him.<sup>29</sup> Enunciating the categorical imperative is not enough in order to be freely agreed upon if it is not also internalized and accepted in the creative spirit: as a person, man is aware

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<sup>29</sup> C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Personalismul energetic (Energetic Personalism)*, 2005, p. 255.

of his creative vocation, the true purpose of free action. From the perspective of logic formalism, the ethical concept and the creative spirit cannot be reconciled, unless through a formal rigor without a cultural finality. Moral formalism can only be applied inside the limits of critical philosophy, the Kantian apriorism which can only conceive the personality in general, not in particular, creative through its own will, therefore free. Rădulescu-Motru's opinion is that Kant perceived experience only as a rule of logic, therefore, he naturally reached a formal definition for personality as well. In Kant's philosophy, personality is seen as an unconditioned something, without a historical past or future. The degree and variety of personalities, as well as the deviations from its normal structure remain unexplained.<sup>30</sup> For Rădulescu-Motru, culture is the result of creative personalities, the only ones able to implement values and standards, ideals; work and activities necessary for survival can build characters and strong types, but the creation of values and ideas is not possible for individualities that lack vocation. However, creative personality cannot be reduced to a self-perfecting will or to the maximum use of individual abilities (specific to a professional), even if it is one of the ways in which an energetic personality can develop. Creative personalities have the capacity to use their native abilities to a maximum, but also to anticipate, have intuition and foresee what is not conditioned by a previous evolution. Therefore, says the philosopher, education can contribute in the making of a professional personality, but its contribution is minimum in the self-becoming of a complex human. Experience and culture set the necessary conditions for a personality to arise, but only the exceptional, vocational personalities have imagination, the capacity to implement values and ideals, and the disposition to anticipate in just a single intuition what is the right direction for the development of its own self.

According to Rădulescu-Motru, vocation is an organizing principle, having important anthropological and especially poetical significations because it trains all faculties of the self. First of all, the basic mental ones, like sensibility, then the superior ones, like cognition and volition. Moreover, the philosopher includes in his definition historical, spiritual, cultural, and philosophical elements that have been previously used, especially by personalist approaches from the Renaissance, focused on ethics and aestheticism. Vocation is not a trait for just any kind of personality, only for the creative ones. Not all humans get to discover their vocation and use their abilities and faculties so they can re-join in what they do the most profound part of their self with what culture and time

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 257-258.

offers them, nor can they contribute through their work to a real spiritual 'revival'. The type of vocational personality that Rădulescu-Motru has in mind is not an Apollonian one, but rather from the Renaissance, able to develop his cognitive abilities and become active in the majority of the social fields, by energetically changing principles and values according to its own vision, under the imperative of vocation which stimulates it.

The vocational personalities are not the professionals, but the romantic creators of every culture, individualities determined by an ideal, political, artistic, or even scientific, able to infer what is proper to the self and to discover the path that will bring them spiritual development. Their fundamental aptitudes, cognitive and volitional, render them capable of feeling not only what is specific to their personality but also the right paths for the development of the cultural field they are active in. Their actions creatively stimulate all those involved in the same field, and sometimes they fundamentally revolutionize values or norms, questioning more often than not the ground principles of that field, threatening its existence. Creative and vocational personalities are equally rational and visionary, and they guide their actions so that their entire life, mainly spiritual, will pursue a goal, while the principles/values based on which they take action have a general signification. Their actions also express the joy of creative imagination by means of which they continuously discover the availabilities of the self, enriching reality and anticipating the right path for them to develop their creative potency, free of constraints (foreign to their own rational and creative principles).

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# CHAPTER III

## THE METAPHISICAL SIGNIFICATION OF ARTISTIC CREATION

### **Rembrandt and Brâncuși – creation and knowledge**

We will start this brief philosophical and aesthetical excursion with the work of a great Dutchman, followed by a series of references to the creation of the Romanian sculptor Constantin Brâncuși, using an interesting finding as a motto, to emphasize the subject we are interested in the poetic creation and its close connection with the sacred, the realm where the light that guides any poetic intuition rises from, and heads towards. The motto is as follows: ‘We cannot consider a genesis of the world without acknowledging the existence of a metaphysical core, different from the world.’ This quote belongs to Lucian Blaga and, it is the opening phrase in the exposition of the Great Unknown, the Generator of all in his Cosmology, called *Diferențialele divine (Divine Differentials)*, that opens *Trilogia cosmologică (The Cosmological Trilogy)*. Both Rembrandt’s and Brâncuși’s creations head towards a core of a metaphysical origin. The path taken by Rembrandt is a more tumultuous one, filled with mysteries and seen from the perspective of the gradual revelation of the sacred. The chiaroscuro of his compositions has in a very particular way the role of the minus-knowledge from Blaga’s philosophy. But his creation is guided by a higher and more profound path that lures and makes him aware of the world’s phenomena, which he explores using tools proper to his art, but also of those phenomena that reveal significations from a different world, that of the sacred. This path, unique for that matter, is faith. Faith forgoes knowledge without relying on dogmas or a concept, and tolerates the rebel souls like those athirst for the Absolute, they cannot find in the vicinity of material things or inside the soul of conformist people.

Son of the miller Hermen Gerritszoon von Rijn, born in Leiden on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1606, he decides not to attend law and theology courses at the University founded by Wilhelm de Orania, being rather taken by ateliers, where he comes to understand the secrets of drawing and of the



chiaroscuro, first as an apprentice of Jacob Isaaczoon van Swanenburg and later on, in 1624, as the apprentice of Pieter Lastman. He is mostly influenced by the dramatic art of two artists coming from completely different environments, the German Adam Elsheimer and the Italian Caravaggio. He received education in the classical spirit, specific to that period, which insisted upon historical and biblical subjects, with mythological references or depictions of laic scenes having moralistic implications. His focus is mainly on the study of portraits, either individual or framed by specific scenes and paints them in bright, contrastive colours, like no one before him did.

Rembrandt is one of those great independent spirits, aware that by giving up material wealth and accepting the suffering of creation, one can become enlightened and at the same time, able to cast purifying glimpses in the hearts of those interested in one's work when it remains free of any constraints and uncontrolled.

Following a profound inner purification, after giving up on fame and the vain attention from his commissioners, as well as on love (after the death of Saskia, the one that made him discover in the feminine face a way of expression that transcended matter), Rembrandt became a spiritual mystic.

The transformation took place when light incidentally hit the shiny surface of the material draping the bodies, confining and enriching them with significations which gave away ambitions or impulses towards something completely different from the inner beauty of the soul.

***The symbolic reconfiguration of the human microcosm. Resemblance and transfiguration.*** For Rembrandt, exploring the inside, the human microcosm, bears the significance of a returning, a search for the *resemblance* with self, after great failures in his personal life. His painting style and the subtlety of the human face are guided towards a symbolic reconfiguration by the intuition that life leaves traces that can be deciphered, not only through analogies between the face reflected into a mirror but also through the face reproduced on the canvas (for self-portraits) because the true light of the face comes from beyond, like a remembering. But no face allows itself to be deciphered – otherwise it will just be a photograph, a snapshot that only leaves us with the memory of what it was – it must be intuited through poetic decoding of the initial creation. The human face reveals to us, beyond its expression (easy for any talented artist to capture in a painting), *a face of life that transforms us*. The image is not real, meaning that every reflected object can be determined through a simple reconfiguration of its expressive elements or

geometrical proportions; it reflects a timeless part of life that no longer singularizes man as an individual, but describes him as a person in relation to something else.

We can see in Rembrandt's work both a re-placing of the world and a repositioning of the poietic self in relation to the world. The Absolute is being overflowed into the world and the immanent is being filled by the being; this world, in its simplicity, communicates and reveals a whole. The divine takes shape from the impact of light with raw material. The painter can only utilize his canvas and the colours of his palette, meaning uncertain, casual, and unrefined possibilities that seek to be organized by the poietic intuition of the person that has a perspective and introduces a law – inspired – in the chaos of sensations acquired through experience. The exterior reveals itself as carrying a message that the painter can no longer find in the spirit and text of the sacred books, written by theologians or philosophers, but in the fluid shapes of the nature that inspires his paintings, and in the light of the faces he paints. The work of art is fulfilled by the painter's will and condition because he knows how to cross past the contingent and the plain representation of the object that instils a particular motif, landscape, or portrait, but also through an idea – or inspiration, as we usually call it – that refocuses the direct intuitions from a theoretical perspective towards making them subordinate of the poietic intuition. Just like the pretext-object, the work of art is not whole, except through the thought and hand of its author, but it does not get fulfilled just because it suggests a reorganizing of the world (like Heidegger thought), but through that element that challenges the beholder to experience his intuitions, continuing those of the author. The work of art has an extrinsic finality – the actual condition of the environment that represents the reason for inspiration, and the means used – but also an intrinsic one, the painter's personality. He who *sees* does not just follow the object of interest as a simple receptor and possibly as the initiator of a motif put at his disposal by the arrangement of elements in nature, because he is at the beginning of this road, rearranging the perceived elements in a suggestive, figurative order, taking part in a spiritual singularity that offers perception new meanings. The painter takes the concrete thing, recreates it, and places it in a symbolical situation, revealing its ideal condition, worthy of awakening inside the beholder meanings and questions beyond the object itself: it awakens a metaphysical sensitivity. Rembrandt fosters this almost mystical power to decipher the meanings of the material world, which can hide but also intensify the being in its search for the light that can reveal itself to us. While admiring his paintings, the beholder experiences joy as a mix of shyness and astonishment, exhilaration and

self-suggestion, delight and comprehension, because each of us takes a part of what he brings for ourselves, without it necessarily being an answer to a question. This is the case with all the great works of art: right from the beginning, we do not expect to give, but rather take something for ourselves, although we get frustrated and remain indifferent if we get everything at once and the work of art does not allow us to penetrate its intimacy, inside the being it symbolically reveals to us, so that we can also leave there a part of our being. We can call this connection communion or communication. Both words reference the act of experiencing in conjunction and the joy of connecting with something more elevated than ourselves, understanding this joy, and being able to spread it. The beholder's self communes/communicates with the artist's self, each giving the other a part of its self.

We will call this state participation. It can manifest in multiple ways. Before achieving the actual connection, in order to reach participation, both the artist and the beholder are under constraint and stimulated to limit their expectations, then to transcend any issues both might paradoxically have. The restrictions come from them having different experiences throughout their existence. The transcendence takes place symbolically, as experience gains a new meaning. The paradox relies on the tragic and sometimes on the absurd consciousness of a limited existence or a limited condition of experience in the real or the historical existence.

Throughout his existence, man has always gotten into situations which have constrained the primordial purpose of his being. He got banished from paradise into the Universe, and mainly focuses on acquiring knowledge and comprehension, which then got him infuriated. Therefore, there is this innate tragic consciousness of the absurdity of existence and the permanent negations he stumbles upon while questioning the world or himself. His tendency to question and reflect is compensated in life, the actual existence, by this other fundamental inclination of his, action. Struggling to not get caught in between action and knowledge, the creator (in this case, the painter) focuses on deciphering significations that come in handy through contemplation or on decoding the symbols of the material world. The painter does not use *theoria*; he uses the image of being reflected and encoded inside matter. Theory and action cannot be separated by the signification of the individual thing, its concrete representation, or the particular meaning of an image open towards an abstract reality.

***Metaphysical signification of representation in art.*** Considering all of the above, the most suggestive period in Rembrandt's creation is that of self-portraits and the one having religious subjects. We will consider only

a series of seven works (The Alte Pinakothek in Munich) commissioned by Frederick Hendrick, Prince of Orange for his gallery at The Hague, called the *Passion Series*. This includes *The Descent from the Cross*, *The Raising of the Cross* (1633), *The Ascension*, *The Entombment*, *The Resurrection*, *The Adoration of the Shepherds* and *The Circumcision* (1636–1649).

*The Passion Series* is suggestive for its meaning, not as much for its theme, and the exceptional situation in which a subject, beyond its commercial aspect (Rembrandt was getting 1200 florins for each painting) places the artist when it gets close to the sacred meaning of an image, painted by other great classical painters before him (as an example, he got his inspiration from *The Descent from the Cross* by Rubens, 1612, Antwerp Cathedral). First, there is the setting of the theme into a historical and social context, then its significance as an existential limit, which is also an indication of a different realm of the being that overpasses (as a symbol and experience) any register or ‘realm’ of the objectified being, (as seen by Husserl), because it is impossible to point a single theoretical meaning or historical individual.

Therefore, a poetic situation is created which aims not at the judicious, but at the singularity that has the value of symbol or of purest abstract. Mircea Florian thinks that every theory, every knowledge should go from abstract to concrete using its powers. This transit is a continuous process. No matter how deep the process of materializing, individualizing on a theoretical level goes, practice is always superior because it can move in concrete conditions which can elude even the most profound knowledge, to a higher or lower degree.<sup>1</sup> Still, the painter does not theorise, but renders an emulated image of the reality of spirit into the reality of nature, using his own means. *The Descent from the Cross* is a classical pyramidal piece, with obvious elements from the Renaissance, that dims the secondary characters, the powerless witnesses – whose passiveness is underlined by the brown hues of their sliding and portraits, evoking even stronger their inseparable connection to the earth, their intensive resignation – and brings forward, through the powerful effect of the chiaroscuro, the central triangle that lays open in its zigzagged diagonal the face of Jesus Christ, literally running down, crushed, heading towards the darkness and the death that prowls around all of us. The painting’s composition is simple, but it will be overturned in *The Ascension* (1636), where the triangle that draws Jesus Christ into Transcendence has its base in the sky, suggesting a clear separation between the transcendent and the immanent, but still able

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<sup>1</sup> Mircea Florian, *Recesivitatea ca structură a lumii* (Recessiveness as Structure of the World), vol. II (Bucharest: Pro Foundation Publishing, 2004), p. 111.

to communicate through the reflections of the light coming from the Absolute and the revealed Truth, painted on the faces of the apostles as they part with their Messiah. The painter communicates then and there, but also in the present. We do not understand the message *differently*, but as being the same issue of the subject raptured by doubt, ongoing till absurdity, in the game of his existence, permanently directed towards *that* beyond: the world of the revealed Divine. Between The Descent and The Ascension stands the telluric mystery of death, the miracle of Resurrection and the fear (permanently connected to the hope for salvation, redemption) of falling into the dark, into ignorance. In the Christian symbolic acquired from the Gospel, the meaning of life, faith and redemption is unequivocal. They have particular meanings for each individual.

The individual is forced to get involved in the ritual, but he cannot mimic participation, not even symbolically, in actualizing *in illo tempore* some archetypal scenes, like death and resurrection, in this case. The limits of participation, in the sense of implication and subjective experience, can vary to a certain degree, but it will always have an impact on the one involved, either as an author or a beholder, through the sacred signification of life overcoming death, precisely what draws the subject in, the actual fact of upgrading inside the painting the meaning of the symbol, no matter the context.

Moreover, it is not easy to draw the limits of such a participation, for it varies in function with an indefinite number of factors. All we can say is that the *actualisation* of a symbol is not automatic; it occurs in relation to the tensions and vicissitudes of the social life, and, finally, with the cosmic rhythms.<sup>2</sup>

Symbolic thought is always involved in the fine arts. The reality translated into an image is not the real one, behind it stands the subjective view of the artist, blended with the abstract meaning of the depicted motif – in this case, death and Resurrection – in the concrete signification, that refers to a certain representation of the motif, historically inbuilt: attitudes, gestures, objects, scenography etc. Between what is represented and the signification given to the motif through interpretation stands the personality of the author. The artist has this possibility of acquiring an abstract meaning, a spiritual world that is the ‘substantial World, while the

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<sup>2</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols. Studies in Religious Symbolism.*, translated by Philip Mairet (New York: Sheed & Ward, Harvill Press, 1961), p. 25.

physical remains subordinate to it'<sup>3</sup>, using a concrete image and this (having a symbolic thinking) indicates the consciousness of freedom the artist owns in the act of creation. Moreover, the reality of the symbolic image the conscience aims for and in front of which the concrete representation loses all its meaning offers the subject the ultimate purpose of his act, that has no other higher signification than the one sighted by the poetic conscience. The consciousness of freedom in creation, in the sense of exerting the creative will that aims towards the substantial reality of the spirit, cannot be defined solely through its concept, as a theoretical abstraction, but also by using the final purpose of the poetic conscience, which identifies again with freedom, that freedom that sets in motion both the action and the thinking, everything taking place inside the conscience and the soul of the artist. Therefore, we can say that from Hegel's perspective, still opposed to our own representation of the purpose and way of manifestation of the poetic conscience, creative teleology is also the goal of history, as manifestation of the spirit. 'This is the result towards which the process of the World's History has been continually aiming; [...] This is the only aim that sees itself realized and fulfilled; the only pole of repose amid the ceaseless change of events and conditions, and the sole efficient principle that pervades them. This final aim is God's purpose for the world; but God is the absolute perfect Being, he can, therefore, want nothing other than himself — through his own Will. The Nature of His Will — that is, His Nature itself — is what we call here the Idea of Freedom;'<sup>4</sup> Freedom as manifestation of God's will is what gives dynamism to the creative gesture of the artist.

A strong subjective personality fuses the individual objects that serve as a reason to create with itself and gives them a new meaning, in the virtue of its own interpretation of an archetypal or Christian symbol, by introducing, in this case, its vision: firstly, its inner experiences and secondly, the overlapping of the abstract meaning with a different one, emerged from the concreteness of the situation represented by the dialogue between these two meanings. The new meaning takes on something from the creator's self, so that

when he abandons his *reason* in favour of working in the studio, his vision [Rembrand's – author's note, M. P.] on things and beings ceases to be objective. Dreams, passions, and intuitions of a restless soul intervene between the object and the painter. When he decides to look at a scenery

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<sup>3</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, with prefaces by Charles Hegel and the translator, J. Sibree, M.A. (Batchose Books, Kitchener, 2001), p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33-34.

not from the outside, but from the inside, in what he believes his memory to be genuine and impartial – which in reality is the container of some spiritual transmutations – he finds his own self, yearning and anxious.<sup>5</sup>

Marcel Brion captures in a very precise manner the two psychological processes that take place in the mind of the painter when he reconfigures *the reason*, approached from a new representative order: interiorizing and, at the same time, giving new meanings to the ‘objects’ he uses as an artistic pretext (scenery, human faces) emerged from his own experiences. The painter *can only render* his vision on things and people, which is precisely what grasps the beholder’s attention and impresses him. That is the reason why art means something for us, or else it would not rise to the level of a subjective artistic representation. It is also important to keep in mind the author’s thinking process: stripping the visible object of its objective features (thing or being) and transferring it into a new abstract order, a different reality, still regarded from the inside, his genuine and impartial memory.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, all the great artists do the same. *Mona Lisa* is nothing but the spiritualized portrait of a lady contemporary with Da Vinci, and Michelangelo’s *David* represents, in the ideal sense, the biblical hero, a strongly subjective vision in fact. But all these representations, all these different views that render images with markers in the objective reality (sceneries, actual characters, historical or mythological, even biblical) somehow become self-portraits of the artists themselves because through this process, of stripping the reason of its objectivity, the author watches the scenery (or any object or being he wishes to paint – n.n., M.P.) in himself and not in its exterior.<sup>7</sup> At this point, we are not interested in the ‘un-objectifying’ act per se, but rather in the re-assigning of an abstract significance to a concrete image through strong individual experience. Abstract in a symbolical way: the artistic/poietic representation in general does not follow a law or a principle (rational), but *an extreme situation* that took place sometime in the *illo tempore*, in a sacred time or space. Its significations, which transcend the concrete representation, can awaken a mood/feeling *of another moment* in both the artist and the beholder, which repeats itself and acquires a higher meaning, one that each of them *gives to themselves*. This is not general knowledge of an abstract reality; it is the revelation of *significance* of the act represented in an image, like that of sacrifice and faith from *The Sacrifice of Isaac* (1635) or

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<sup>5</sup> Marcel Brion, *Rembrandt*, translated into Romanian by Rodica și Leon Baconsky, foreword by Marius Tătaru (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1973), p.132.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

that of trans-incarnation, the transition of matter into the revealed spirit from *The Incredulity of St. Thomas* (1634). Both have meaning as an experienced (relived) revelation, due to the ability of the artist/ beholder to reload the symbol-image with the signification of the sacred act, impossible to represent otherwise.

***Purpose and symbolism of light in the artistic representation.*** Earlier on we discussed the double signification of the artistic/poietic act, that allows the artist to invest and the beholder to achieve meanings, *differently* experienced by each through one and the same representation (in this case, painting), because, after a deep internalization, both can intuit connections between what they experience while creating/watching the work of art, with something that transcends the time and space of that experience.

The element that allows this connection, in a greater or lesser extent, is the *capacity* of the artist to translate (transpose us into the poietic of the act itself) the power of suggestion and that of effectively objectifying a symbolic act, through the technical and concrete elements at his disposal and their arrangement in the work of art. The creative act in itself makes this perceptivity possible, differently experienced by each of us. We are still able to identify it as being so intrinsically ours after un-objectifying the image or at least its concrete meaning. The science of painting is a poietic art that opens up the gate towards knowledge through an immediate intuition, not a theoretical knowledge, but a metaphysical one, of the spirit, where experience and reflection come together. Rembrandt's works of art have this power of suggestion, not through composition or harmony, but by combining all the technical possibilities with perspective, so that it can enhance the experience of the viewer in achieving an abstract/symbolic intuition. Light and its distribution throughout the painting play a particularly important part, especially in classical and traditional works. All the great artists were able to understand the symbolic purpose and significance of distributing light in a painting, or even in sculpture, which leads us to believe that they acquired the symbolism and therefore, the technical possibilities of artistically representing the signification of light while coming in contact with the represented object.

Rembrandt is a master of applying and distributing light, both through the chiaroscuro technique, which he perfected, but also through colouring, giving light a meaning that transcends the plain highlighting technique, creating a fabulous frame where things seem physically unreal but deeply spiritual. Light has symbolic values that burden or disintegrate elements of the composition according to the artist's intention, which does not rely that



much on the science of composition or the technique, but on intuition or talent, the genius of the artist. To see means to intuit a state where the spirit is revealed in all its purity, unachievable using different materials and techniques, but suggested through composable elements and a poetic capacity, non-reflexive. Cogitation or *Vouç* can manifest itself in the reflexive being and it can even lead to revelation, but it can never be revelation itself because *only intuition can fully render it whole through a poetic act*.

There is no need to discuss the purpose, signification, and value of light in the Christian symbolism of icons, basilica architecture and painting because there are countless references in history, art or aesthetics. We need to focus on the symbolical meaning of light in the works of Rembrandt that have a religious subject and reference the dogma of the Holy Trinity, precisely on the significance of light – such as it has been passed down in the Gospel – as Word that gets incarnated, Holy Spirit that descends over the world and lights the individual human conscience.

Through the Word of God, Light descends in the world and unravels in each of us the sanctity of the primordial Creation: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.’<sup>8</sup> The word is the Being that reveals the beginning and the end, in whom everything there is in the world becomes harmony and unity. The word is the primordial power and the purity of Creation that overcomes any attempt to diminish it, an attempt very familiar to man, who is recurrently haunted by this intention, perhaps ever since the Renaissance, when he visits the negative and destructive elements of the revolted individual consciousness, in its attempt to reinstate in time and history a new signification to Creation, the initial Cosmos. Hegel introduced in the western culture the subject of freedom and the necessity of re-establishing the spirit which, through negations and successive syntheses, finds itself again in history. However, as a result of this urge to positively change the traditional values of the spirit and modify them in history, in order to make way for progress, a feeling of separation arose in most fields of culture, in science and philosophy. J. Grenier said that our civilization is one of disruption; our aesthetics is one of disruption, because creation is something that eventually finds its balance and ends up breaking itself, so to say. It stops, therefore it needs a new start, so we need to destroy everything created to be able to recreate.<sup>9</sup> All of these statements are not

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<sup>8</sup> *The Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to St. John*, in *The Holy Bible*, translated from the Latin vulgate, diligently compared with the Hebrew, Greek and other editions in divers languages (Douay-Rheims version, 1609, 1582), p. 1374.

<sup>9</sup> Jean Grenier, *Arta și problemele ei*, 1974, p. 183.

here to encourage a reorganizing – not even by a separation from the stable principles of rational thinking – of consciousness and traditional values of the Greek culture through a so called spiritual revolution, but point out a fact, an actual state of the consciousness, noticing the split in the domain of existence once man claims the power of knowledge. At the same time, traditional art, with all its aesthetic and philosophic principles, as well as classical values like harmony, beauty and unity, should not crack from just a mere demand or desire to aesthetically reconfigure the modern spirit. The artistic work, better yet, the non-work of negativist schools will not be able to deconstruct traditional art because they have nothing positive to replace it by, just because their poietic principles and values aim towards something beyond existence, something intrinsic to man, which supports the good, the beautiful and the true. The focus point is on man and his relation with his surroundings, but especially in relation with himself, from the perspective of his conscience and the way he thinks about increasing his qualities and aptitudes, basically his creative abilities. This is, of course, an anthropological perspective. Our analysis focuses on pointing out these aspects in the works of great artists because we are interested to see to what degree does this preoccupation (for a field of reality, aesthetics in our case) extends or limits the tendency to head towards other concerns the individual conscience has in mind. The artistic act is in itself directive and restrainable as an aesthetic activity, if by art we understand a way to investigate reality using proper cognitive and also affective means, but also a way to open other possibilities, that we cannot reach from science, for example. According to Alexandru Surdu, the act of artistic creation is connected to talent, imagination and inspiration, elements mostly related to the unconscious. This is why sometimes it was believed that art is not a suitable object for a scientific analysis per se. Art addresses, even discloses itself to the senses (sensation, perception, intuition). Its approach is to awaken feelings, induce pleasure, joy and contentment – feelings differently manifested from one individual to another. However, science does not belong to the individual, but to the universe, nor it belongs to the exception, but to the rule.<sup>10</sup> Thus, experiencing actual constraints regarding our availability towards the field opened by science, the universal, the artistic creation (the poietic way of approaching reality) is not less of a rational act. Moreover, despite all the theoretical and critical statements of our days, that focus on *reproductiveness* and the aesthetic quality of the image-object, art does not mean reproduction, not even in its mimetic section, the structure of the

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<sup>10</sup> Alexandru Surdu, *Pentamorfoza artei* (The Pentamorphosis of Art), (Bucharest: Publishing House of The Romanian Academy, 1993), p. 11-12.

real, or even that of natural beauty.<sup>11</sup> Works of art are in themselves a whole and their meaning awakens inside the aware self its profound, affective and intuitive side, which does not always vibrate in the conscience in order to stir thoughts or the ‘positive’ act of knowledge and logic interpretation of the real. The poietic act in itself speaks to the senses (sometimes to the unconscious experiences as well).

**Face, object and creative imagination.** Moving forward in our attempt to clarify the problems the artist faces regarding the action that shapes the work of art, we need to go back to a previous statement, already discussed, referring to the un-objectifying of the reference model the artist takes as a symbolic landmark of the art piece. This process does not take place on the level of intention but becomes obvious when the implicit reference of the artist comes from the exterior, the objective reality. It loses its status when it shifts into the field of aesthetics. Faces, décor objects, sceneries, they all acquire aesthetic significations (losing the natural, architectural ones, anthropologic in one word) when the artist introduces them in the work of art. The significations usually referenced by aestheticians, theoreticians, or art critics do not belong or are not acquired through the process we can call ‘aestheticizing the object’, but through poieticizing, a deeply subjectivising act, a shift of the object from the area of the real into that of the unreal or supra-real, which exclusively belongs to the poietic imagination of the artist.

The objects and the faces in Rembrandt’s works of art do not belong to reality, nor are they aesthetic pretexts that shape the imagination which transforms them. They are *apparitions* in the sense of intuition belonging to a supra-reality with poietic responsibilities. Thus, the work of art is not an effort to accurately reproduce a model, nor is it an objective fabrication with aesthetic attributes, but a poietic view thought and experienced by the artist, with abstract attributes (sometimes metaphysical) of a supra-reality accessible only to his imagination. As Alexandru Surdu put it, in simple words, no matter how many dialectic moments are there in the creation process, the artist always produces *different* works. He does not produce the same work. The kitsches we often admire are usually *exact* replicas of an ancient model that entire generations of *artisans* have produced in mass. In these cases, we admire the model, the prototype, not its replica.<sup>12</sup> However, the model cannot undergo changes because, through self and in

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<sup>11</sup> Roland Barthes, *Rhetoric of the Image, in Image-Music Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), p. 43.

<sup>12</sup> Alexandru Surdu, *Pentamorfoza artei*, 1993, p. 50.

itself, it sustains the work of art, seen here from a Platonic point of view, that offers us something different from a third-degree imitation. Not even the artisan or the creator of the prototype possesses perfection. This belongs to the model created by God (Demiurgos) or to the Idea, in the Platonic philosophy. The stages of the final work of art, as well as its material elements, help the creation and the work itself, acquiring in the end the significations of an original whole, without the possibility of it being reduced to its components. Therefore, in this case, the part does not reflect the whole.<sup>13</sup> Original indeed, but how? Rembrandt's *Passion* series, discussed here, could partially answer this question, of course. *The Raising of the Cross* corresponds to *The Ascension* (of Jesus to Heaven), with all its counter-meanings and logical antinomies of a basic theoretical or critical approach, because they cannot reach its core or deplete the problem. Furthermore, *The Descent from the Cross* and *The Entombment* could stand in contrast, theological, dogmatic, symbolic and even aesthetic with *The Resurrection* and another painting, which is not part of this series, *The Incredulity of St. Thomas*, commissioned by Amelodnck Leew, because from a semantic and symbolic point of view, they start from the inside of the same tensional core (logic and symbolic) that opposes life to death and darkness to light. These oppositions basically aim towards an ontological model of the cosmic existential cycle, referencing ancient cosmologies or archetypes. The origin of this representation and its meanings in an ontological or logical sense are irrelevant because beyond any logic or philosophic positioning, the work of art has its origin in the imagination and will of the artist to mirror (*speculum*) his inner world. However, this world is supra-real and the images do not reflect real models, but ideal ones. Their origin, referencing the archetype, loses all meaning when the modern artist wishes to differentiate us all and be original. According to Jean Grenier, the modern artist thinks an original work of art should have a certain freedom that would allow us to consider its creator free from all the constraints built by society around the individual and offer the beholder or the listener at least the illusion that he is witnessing something never seen or heard before, even though this supposed novelty has been repeating over the years.<sup>14</sup> Originality means to express the desire to manifest yourself in a certain way and not another, to distinguish yourself from others, thus guaranteeing permanence to your individual being, recognizable in the work of art. However, in the poietic sense, originality references the Idea and the work of art communicates something through what it manages to unravel as phenomenal apparition

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>14</sup> Jean Grenier, *Arta și problemele ei*, 1974, p. 266-267.

from the originality and beauty of the primordial Creation, not through particular means of expression (important for the way we perceive the work of art, but not enough).

The artistic act distinguishes itself by this permanent reference to the ideal form, what is beyond appearance. It needs to include something from the original poietic of the primordial creation because this is what makes an artist authentic, the intuition of a being hidden into a material form.

***Inside and outside the work of art.*** Moving on towards another way of manifesting the beauty as the essence of the primordial poietics, sculpture, we can understand why another great artist insists, with fervour and intransigency we might add, on achieving the universal form, easy to identify by anybody anywhere, through countless returns to his work and motifs. We are talking of course about Constantin Brâncuși and his sculptures, filled with such strangeness, they sometimes seem unreal. Brâncuși is no mannerist and he never wished to amaze through originality but wanted to unravel, like Constantin Noica would say, that *inside, that interior* (content proper to the work of art) permanently residing *outside*. That is how Noica understood most of Brâncuși's work, as a constant becoming within something beyond its material self, that is to say, the being as essence or universal. All man-made creations seem to have an inside = *inside*, just like the Pyramid has its secret tomb; however, something like The Cock (Rooster) has an inside = *outside*, its inner self is revealed: it is a song that grows, a being or a gullet that grows, in other words, a growth, like in the endless column and this is something that everybody can perceive, even if they don't know about The Cock (Rooster) and the cock-a-doodle-doo.<sup>15</sup>

In all there is, the man-made things, thought or imagined, and especially in art, which is a distinct area of reality that completes itself and intertwines with other areas, because it requires references to other components of reality as well: truth, goodness, justice, freedom, natural sciences, ethics, law, politics and even to the field of philosophy, which it studies<sup>16</sup>, we can notice an unsuppressed yearning and search for the being, a continuous becoming that never gets shut or confined, but always adapts, in order to reach it or increase it. Counting from the innermost part of the inorganic world, through constant changes and mutations, moreover into the organic world and especially into that of the spirit, nothing is resilient and given once and for all. According to Noica, the organic has

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<sup>15</sup> Constantin Noica, *Sentimentul românesc al ființei*, 1996, p. 179.

<sup>16</sup> Al. Surdu, *Pentamorfoza artei*, 1993, p. 176

taken over something from the wave's expansion, which gets distributed without being divided, precisely as life does. [...] the organic overwhelms the massiveness of the inorganic anywhere it emerges, exactly with the strength of the becoming, the bearer of the being, over the 'became one' that had occluded the being.<sup>17</sup> There are transformations, as well as continuities, that manifest themselves as a unity of opposites in art, the poetic singularity, a distinct self-standing domain of reality, previous to all the other domains of manifestation of the spirit. Al. Surdu considers that an art piece has a specific way of being, and that is to be somehow or other, to look in *a certain way* or to be able to imagine it in a *certain manner*.<sup>18</sup> Being, or existing per se and its ways (or, as Noica called them, modulations emerged out of prying and questioning, some sort of hypotheses or situations of existence<sup>19</sup>) is actually a permanent deciphering and search of a being, of that confused and dark part of the being, but especially of the brighter one, that can elevate it and its works of art.

C. Noica believed that, in the Romanian culture, the only ones who truly thought about the being and also found ways to indicate and explain it, were language, a poet and a sculptor. He goes on to say that the concept of being has two sides: a darker one, that takes into account the weight of things on earth and those from the sky of generalities in order to obtain the being and a brighter one, which considers the being in its universality. Romanian language, together with the poet Eminescu gave us the first perspective, while the bright side is shown by language again and, surprisingly, the sculptor Brâncuși.<sup>20</sup> To decipher the meaning of *poiesis* as a way of being for works of art, using everything we have discussed so far, especially the works of Rembrandt, we need to underline the more intimate structures of creation, pertaining to the permanencies the artist relays on and references while working. The artist considers these permanencies, which are part of the work's structure, as a principle of the work of art to be, but he also references the becoming and the novelty it represents for the spirit. Other references are about the being or the path it shows, not always located inside it, but on the outside, just like C. Noica talked about Brâncuși's works of art: revealing their self to the outside.

Ever since ancient Greek philosophy raised the issue, the being has been more often than not understood as a unitary and indivisible monolith, the incorruptible One, not as a becoming. C. Noica said that those who have discussed on the being have overwhelmed man with its massiveness.

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<sup>17</sup> C. Noica, *Sentimentul românesc al ființei*, 1996, p. 172.

<sup>18</sup> Al. Surdu, *Pentamorfoza artei*, 1993, p. 178.

<sup>19</sup> C. Noica, *Sentimentul românesc al ființei*, 1996, p. 151.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

The being must free us, not overwhelm us. The being is a *lysis*, a release, not something given before or behind us. And if it is so, behind as well as before, the being still is something like ‘you would not look for me if you had not already found me’, meaning a great, perpetual novelty.<sup>21</sup> Considering the being as a becoming that aims novelty, Noica indicates both the means for a good becoming, and the works of the being, starting with its most humble buds from its yet inanimate nature, showing us, like he says, the modulations of the being – verbal fumbles or thought flashes – that do not render it precisely, but offers evidence or snapshots of the being; that is to say the being as a *it was not meant to be*, not as *it was about to be*, or as a *will have been*, a *would it be to be*, *it is to be* or *it was to be*. Other evidence of the being is to be found in those works of art that man generates, like Brâncuși, which are in the universal of the being, in its essence and no longer in its simple existence.<sup>22</sup> The natural thing to do is wonder why, according to Noica, some works of art are closer to the universal essence of the being, like those of Brâncuși, and also, why is that they reveal something different, permanently situated on the outside, not on the inside? We will easily find the answer in his ontological view, where the pure, simple becoming, as well as the becoming within being, organize both existence and thought.

A presence detaches from existence, while another is ‘satisfied’ being within itself and for itself, well-rounded in what it is, sometimes suspended, so that, after all its ceaseless attempts and restarts, ‘either satisfied or unsatisfied with itself, it can represent true oblivion of the being’<sup>23</sup>, to use Noica’s words.

Becoming within being aims towards something that transcends human nature and the things around us. Through his works of art, his thought, and everything culture stands for in general, man also manages to detach himself from the becoming per se and aims at something else, something that is not in himself and for himself but belongs to the revealed being, or at least the being indicated in his thoughts and things. This kind of successful (most of the time) attempts are in fact the works of art. According to Noica, Brâncuși’s works of art exist within something else, they show the path of refinement, they are continuous movement, a flight or the actual flight, like his Birds (the *Maiastra* or Bird in flight), that are not just representations of something, they do not endlessly repeat a harmonious model (Mlle Pogany is not just a face of a face; the gates and

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 174.

the columns are not just representations of the concept of open/closed or that of height), but distinguish from the becoming within becoming.

*The Sleeping Muse, The Maiastra, The Flying Turtle* are not plain representations, nor simple presences; they are insights and paths suggesting something different from the mere presence or the harmonious development suitable to an artistic canon.

We can notice that at least related to form, the art pieces follow a set of rules and norms rationally inferred, particular to each art. In painting, sculpture, or architecture, proportions are rediscovered by the artists of the Renaissance, whose point of reference is the human body. The extremities of the body were set in a pentagonal framing, where the human body was delimited inside two geometrical figures, a square, and a circle. The square corresponds to the first attempt ever to represent man, called *quadrature del corpo umano*. The perfect pentagon resulted from the combination of these two geometrical figures is based on the golden cut and man is 'the only being known to us with these proportions'<sup>24</sup>, to quote Al. Surdu. However, the principles of visual representation through painting can be deduced from a general one, introduced by Plato in his own philosophy of eternal Forms (Ideas) as a coordinating factor and generator of any known shape, the *principium agens* of all material or spiritual creations, especially in art.

Aesthetic principles and categories additionally include norms, methods, and techniques taken on by all the arts, that establish, particularly in classical aesthetics, a sort of propaedeutics, a set of rules based on the principle of imitation (this was the agreement between all the schools and studios for centuries, underlined also by Plato). The subtlety and the logic-methodologic coding of the norms that lay at the base of imitating nature have been, for the classical-traditional societies, the golden rule; this rule rendered invention and novelty unimportant, later introduced in aesthetics by Aristotle as a fundamental trait of the arts, based par excellence on a poetic and creative principle. Conforming and strictly applying the pre-set rules had been the standard in traditional art, in the absence of which no art could had been conceived, especially painting. The basic norms of every aesthetic or painting course had been established ever since the Renaissance (actually, they were restated from ancient studies) and had become the approved set of rules for the classics, easy to identify even in da Vinci's *Notebooks* or his *Treatise*. These rules were succinct, just like Jean Grenier presents them at the beginning of his book: imitate nature, worship ancient times, express passion with trustworthiness, relate poetry

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<sup>24</sup> Al. Surdu, *Pentamorfoza artei*, 1993, p. 76.



with painting, give primacy to drawing over colour, organize according to light.<sup>25</sup>

We have already analysed them in a previous paper that aims at highlighting the tight connexions between art and science during the Renaissance and the following period, starting from a central concept for both spiritual fields, the concept of representation.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the rules of classical and traditional art follow imitation and realism and not the *poiesis* as principle of creation. Contemporary arts, especially Brâncuși, are somehow nonconformist, without disregarding the classical rules and thus, able to return to the primordial womb of *poiesis*. The main purpose of art is not imitation, nor achieving the formal perfection of the represented object, but the interior *fulfilment* of the art piece that unfolds itself as becoming within something spiritual, taking on a form that is not simplified, but on the contrary, it is almost perfect, ideal and able to conjure the joy of the being unfolding in the simplest, most known shapes. There is an old aesthetical principle, coming from Plato, but also spread amongst other non-European civilisations, that sets perfection on the inside of the produced object, which contains, besides the novelty factor, an idea glimpsed in its essential purity. This principle also belongs to traditional art, folklore and mythical creations, and we can also give an example from an old Japanese saying: Perfection is not about creating unusual, unfamiliar objects, but about making normal things in an exceptional unique way.

***The Being from inside things.*** Brâncuși highlights, not just once, the joy of discovering the being inside things, the regular common ones that still contain an essential core. His art is not illustrative, nor abstract; it is essentially deictic. According to Noica, each thing has become something else. Mlle Pogany is not lady Pogany, the bird is not a bird, the kiss is not a kiss. Even the beholder's way of perceiving, his senses, become something else in front of these art pieces. The greatest anguish while beholding Brâncuși's work is the inability to touch it, to surpass the distance and the momentariness of sight in order to reach the intimacy and the tender glide of touch.<sup>27</sup> These simple observations reference profound truths, so let us not forget that art is within something that brings happiness, love and the joy of '*settling within being*', to use Noica's

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<sup>25</sup> J. Grenier, *Arta și problemele ei*, 1974, p. 79.

<sup>26</sup> Mihai Popa, *Știință și reprezentare în arta Renașterii* (Science and Representation in the Art of Renaissance), (Bucharest: Publishing House of the Romanian Academy, 2014).

<sup>27</sup> C. Noica, *Sentimentul românesc al ființei*, 1996, p. 154.

words. Permanence and durability come from a belief equally simple, emerged from an aphorism belonging to Pascal, that Noica often appeals to, saying ‘you would not look for me if you had not already found me’, but not in the sense of suffering and sad waiting for something that is not about to come, a sort of agony until the end of time, because permanence and durability are innate to things since the beginning of the world and the work of art we search for ‘does not depend on an escape from the world, but on a better settling, along with everything belonging to the world inside the being’.<sup>28</sup> This settling contains from the beginning some sort of serenity of the being. Beyond the meaning of continuous sufferance and misery of life, happiness is love that brings knowledge, perfect in its simplicity but differently understood by the feeling or the will to be something or within something, because it does not have an individual essence. Any person listens to his heart, but he is also being listened to. Conception and creation, the original *poiesis*, are the undecidable and undeniable philosophical traits of the being, but they are also not an act of will, they do not come from the individual that chooses (like in St. Augustin notion of *volo, ergo sum*) and they are not the foundation of the rationalist voluntarism, taken over and altered by Descartes in his *cogito, ergo sum*. Like Nae Ionescu said, if St. Augustin had set the true premise of will, he would have understood – as Scotism or Descartes did – the concepts of good and bad as left to be decided by divine will, or he would have had to agree with the nominalists when they were arguing with the followers of realism – like it was the case of Wilhelm de Occam, a post-Scotist.<sup>29</sup> The fundamental power of love – in its Christian essence – rests

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Nae Ionescu, *Neliniștea metafizică* (Metapsysical Angst), (Bucharest: Publishing of the Romanian Cultural Foundation, 1993). The priority of will over the feeling of love from divinity is nothing but the reversed postulate of St. Augustin from an illuminist or scientific perspective. Between the believer and God, contrary to Thomism and from a psychological perspective, love is not prior to knowledge, nor a motivator, but fundamentally belongs to it, similar to Platonism, where love is knowing conscience headed towards the Idea, its perfect form. In the quoted book of Nae Ionescu, *Funcțiunea epistemologică a iubirii* (The Epistemological Role of Love), love is nothing but a consequence of *everything*. Existence is just one, inseverable; in the world of opinions and multiplicity, love is the form that aims precisely at recovering the eternal singularity; but its field of influence is dreadfully reduced to the sensitive reality; love has no place in the world of real existence, with the supreme being – where singularity is accomplished forever. This is why Greek gods cannot love because love is totally passive – precisely like it is in the entire religious and philosophical pantheism. (p. 83). Christianity, founded on the Old Testament and the primordial creation of the world through

entirely inside the poietic way of being. It has been clearly stated by Brâncuși: ‘I offer you joy’, and he does so by means of the same form preferred by any believer in beauty. The essence of Christianity is not sentimentalism focused on acquiring redemption through love, but a way to prepare and guide the individual to meet the Supreme Being, which is not provable, but meant to be experienced originally and indescribable. One can prepare for it, at best; but it is impossible to conceptually learn or understand it.<sup>30</sup> Let us make this statement our conclusion here.

### **Giordano Bruno – *A General Account of Bonding.* Love and knowledge**

*De vinculis in genere* is included in *Cause, Principle and Unity, And Essays on Magic* by Giordani Bruno. In a Romanian edition, based on an autobiographical note by Bruno, the publishers thought the text prefigured a wider study because according to the author, it would have had three parts: *De vinculo spiritus naturali*, *De vinculo spiritus animalis*, *De vinculo spiritus divino*. The project was not completed according to the initial plan, but that does not make the paper less important, nor does it diminish its perception by modern critics or inside the totality of Bruno’s work.

*De vinculis in genere* has an important signification precisely because it submits to a detailed analysis the bonds of Eros and Beauty. We ought to read this book while having Plato’s theory in mind – also referenced by the author – because desire, just like in the dialogue *Phaedo*, has a completely different meaning when seen from the perspective of Reason and Beauty in general, particularly by Plato and Pythagoras, whom the author gives the rightful importance:

According to the Pythagoreans and the Platonists, the bond of beauty is said to be brightness, a beam of light and a certain motion, or at least its shadow and image and trace. It has spread out first into the mind, which it adorns with the order of things; second into the soul, which it brings to completion with the sequence of things; third into nature, which it

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Word as *spoken Logos*, unlike Plato’s ideas, overturns this relation and its meaning. God’s generating power was triggered by love and the permanent movement of the spirit towards God is nothing but the natural reaction of the creature towards the stream of love it was born from and through. (Ibid., p. 88).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

diversifies and sustains with its seeds; and fourth into matter, which it supplies with forms.<sup>31</sup>

We will focus on the third part of this last chapter, *On cupid's bond and on bonds in general (De vinculo Cupidinis, et quodammodo in genere)* and extend our analysis towards other modern or classical texts that discuss the relation between Beauty, Love and Knowledge from a rationalist perspective, mainly from the ancient times, like Platonism or Neoplatonism.

**Beauty, reason, love.** According to Socrates in *Phaedo*, Plato sets the concept of Beauty in his system of ideal Forms: '[...] it is absolute beauty which makes beautiful things beautiful.'<sup>32</sup> Of course, the notion is discussed in the context of realities that reference categories or types that include them from an ontological or epistemological point of view, like the soul or the beautiful things subordinate to Good, Truth and Beauty. Their idealness cannot be directly stated, starting from the analysis of the relations between concrete things, just like our senses (desires) presents them to us, but from what sustains them as a whole, a singularity that includes the world, which is a superior type of support and that is 'the divine strength' (unable to be discovered by a simple search in the real world, but by a second navigation into the ideal world).<sup>33</sup> The logic function of love cannot be negated and therefore neither does Giordano Bruno, even if he places love under a type of practical bonding (knowledge), unlike the Greeks, who understood love based on faith, not on reason or any other kind of knowledge: 'As a result, they venerated both love and hate at the same altar.'<sup>34</sup>

Therefore, alike Socrates, Bruno cannot grant a different meaning to the erotic (or other kind) relations between humans, or between humans and things other than the signification of primal practical knowledge:

But, for us, love, like all emotions, is a very practical form of knowledge. Indeed, it is a type of discourse and reasoning and argumentation (*discursus, ratiō, ratiō, argumentatio*) by which humans are most powerfully bound,

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<sup>31</sup> Giordano Bruno, *A General Account of Bonding*, in *Cause, Principle and Unity. Essays on Magic* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 165.

<sup>32</sup> Plato, *Phaedo*, translated by F. J. Church (New York: The Liberal Arts Press), p. 54 (XLIX).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52-52 (XLVIII).

<sup>34</sup> G. Bruno, *A General Account of Bonding*, in *Cause, Principle and Unity. Essays on Magic*, 2004, p. 163.

even though it is never listed among the primary types of knowledge. Therefore, he who wishes to bind believes that reason has neither a greater role nor a more important role than love in binding, although indeed the latter falls under the genus of knowledge.<sup>35</sup>

This quote is as Socratic as it gets, but Bruno uses more nuances in analysing the cause and the types of bonds (erotic or of another nature) by reducing the cause of the capacity to bond to just two, by properly knowing the genus and the appetite suitable to the genus. The conclusion he reaches is that a subject can only be bound ‘in all its powers and components’.<sup>36</sup> There is still the need to discover the reasons and the meanings of the actual relations between people in general, especially those who pay a special attention to the issue from a philosophical point of view.

Nae Ionescu, Romanian professor of logic and metaphysics between wars, makes a short but significant introduction to this issue from a historical and philosophical perspective in his *Funcțiunea epistemologică a iubirii (The epistemological role of love)*, opening course held in 1919 at the Letters and Philosophy Faculty of Bucharest.<sup>37</sup> The text partially discusses the importance (leaving aside the assumptions made by those philosophers who are interested strictly in the scientific or psychological perspective) of love and its connexion to intellect and reason, as well as its epistemological meaning. N. Ionescu considers there are two important stands in the history of thought, somehow opposite, related to love and conscience: the first follows a psychological approach, focusing on the effect of passion on the capacity of knowledge. The second one is mostly metaphysical and understands love as a result of knowledge, taking into consideration the support each has to give to the other on their common path from experience towards truth. The last one is, as Nae Ionescu put it, the view that has always found its expression in the great metaphysical systems leaning towards ethics, particularly from India, but also easy to identify in the Christian world and Greek philosophies.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the second stand distinguishes itself from other scientific approaches because

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

<sup>37</sup> Published in *Izvoare de filosofie. Culegere de studii și texte* (Sources of Philosophy. Anthology of Texts and Courses.), I (Bucharest: pubs. „Bucovina” I.E. Torouțiu, 1942), pp.1–17. The reference is for Nae Ionescu’s text, published in *Neliniștea metafizică* (Metaphysical Angst), notes by Marin Diaconu (Bucharest: Publishing of the Romanian Cultural Foundation, 1993).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 78-79.

of its philosophical implications, meaning it is a call, a ‘personal creation’, that generally expects, beyond any other method, as Nae Ionescu highlights, adapting the overall existence to the metaphysical necessities of the human personality<sup>39</sup>. Therefore, we consider that, by means of these traits, it is a poetic way of being, where Eros/love bears a fundamental role. Even great philosophers and thinkers like Goethe, Leonardo, Giordano Bruno, Pascal or Spinoza – who understand knowledge as *amor intellectualis dei* – place at the core of their philosophical view ‘the prolific doctrine of Eros’<sup>40</sup>, each of them reclaiming, directly or indirectly, Plato’s view on love. Setting aside the psychological perspective, Nae Ionescu also believes that covering the theme of love in its inseparable relation to the faculties of cognition is the true, undisputed practice of philosophy beyond any other method. Philosophy is a personal creation. Thus, Nae Ionescu stated that it relies on the spiritual richness of each one of us; on the inspiration we each get from above; on the excruciating pain coming from the questions awaken in us, demanding solving; on the intensity of our need to overcome life’s contingency and rise above, until we reach redemption or at least peace.<sup>41</sup> Considering all of the above, the Eros (seen as connection between existence and the constituent essence of the individual self) sets in balance the immediate reality and the supra-reality. The Eros is also inseparably beautiful, visible in the real world through matter. According to Bruno, who follows the Platonic/Pythagorean tradition, the manner in which the Eros appears, its *apparition*, is done gradually and the bonding is named after the medium it touches and organises: ‘brightness, beam of light, act or simulacrum and trace’. As it descends into the lightless depth of nature, according to how in can sensitize each medium that it touches, ‘this beam of light is clearest in the mind, clear in the soul, obscure in nature and most obscure in the material substrate of natural things.’<sup>42</sup> The ideal shape (the mould) of the original beauty is accessible to the faculties of cognition, especially to rationality. Natural beauty fades away and becomes frail over time. Moreover, crossing into the sensitive world, beauty becomes a relation, whose incentive ‘consists chiefly in a certain mutual orientation between a captor and a captive’<sup>43</sup> and love becomes so much more enduring as it is founded in something other than the adored object.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 76-77.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>42</sup> G. Bruno, *A General Account of Bonding*, in *Cause, Principle and Unity. Essays on Magic*, 2004, p. 166.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

*Love as mediator between rational and irrational.* A series of correlations is possible – and has been done throughout the history of thought, by Bruno as well – between love and beauty, love and good, or love and truth. In what concerns the categories and from a poetical perspective, when discussing the first relation, between love and beauty, we have in mind a field that has often raised interest among philosophers in their psychological and aesthetical literature. Plato's followers established the irrational as the origin of love in its relation to beauty.

From the perspective of knowledge, love becomes a mediator between beauty and truth, an argument used mainly when the issue of beauty is looked at from an aesthetical point of view. Mircea Florian considers that art, as a reflection of the subjective or the irrational, as strange as it may seem, was eventually redirected towards knowledge: irrational art became a way to penetrate the absolute, a reality that is not the abstract reality of the rational, but a deeper one, more authentic. Their functions have almost been reversed: the rational, abstract, utilitarian art renders symbols, while the irrational art functions as a gateway towards the concrete of a reality non-utilised, solely contemplated.<sup>44</sup> Giordano Bruno tackles the issue in different terms, mostly from a psychological perspective, that of the bonding exerted upon the subject by a different subject. This employs attraction as much as bonding, consciously or unconsciously upon the object of bonding. Under these considerations, we can raise the issue of knowing the adequate genus or reality that attracts us: 'There are two causes of the act of bonding, and they are the same as the two causes of the essence of that which, as such, can be bound: namely, knowledge of some kind and desire of some kind.'<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Mircea Florian, *Metafizică și artă* (Art and Metaphysics), (Cluj: Echinox Publishing, 1992), p. 97. M. Florian writes this based mainly on ancient literature, consecutively bringing into discussion, from a metaphysical and logical perspective, the aesthetical antinomies: form-content, descriptive-prescriptive, subjective-objective, artistic beauty-natural beauty. The previous quote references the fundamental antinomy of philosophy that has troubled most thinkers, starting with Plato: is the aesthetic knowledge? Thus reaching the essential antinomy between rational and irrational. However, there is also a rationalist perspective on the artistic beauty hidden here, seen on one hand as an implication of the love for beauty, and on the other as a reference to Greek antiquity, Plato, Plotinus, and Aristotle. In the case of the latter, love is considered mainly from the poetic perspective, also stated in Mircea Florian's work, but as a question: 'Are beauty and the art of creation manifestations of a spontaneous activity, of a fantasy or intuition?' (Ibid., p. 96)

<sup>45</sup> Giordano Bruno, *A General Account of Bonding*, in *Cause, Principle and Unity. Essays on Magic*, 2004, p. 164.

It is interesting to note that, from this perspective, the medium of bonding is attraction or passion, in the absence of which, no bond is possible, especially since precisely the attraction of knowledge, in its elevated form, manifests as love for wisdom. Yet, Bruno moves on to say that passion or the desire for bonding also expands into other fields, from aesthetic to rational, from practical to theoretical, from rational love to the magic practice of dominating or simply relating to the object of passion:

If something has no desire at all, then it cannot be bound spiritually in any way at all. Furthermore, if something has no knowledge and desire, then it cannot bind anything either socially or through magic.<sup>46</sup>

Let us now go back to Bruno's interpretation on the dialectics of beauty (originally from Plato), because he says 'the bond of beauty is said to be a brightness, a beam of light and a certain motion, or at least its shadow and image and trace' (G. Bruno, *op. cit.*, p. 165), therefore the dialectics of the bond made possible by beauty takes on a circular direction: initiated in the eternal world of perfect shapes, it shines like a beam of light taking over the mind (while revealing the order governed by the divine Beauty – acknowledged almost instantly and completely by the intellect, order revealed by lightning or a beam of the illuminated conscience), then, after being intuited, it penetrates the soul, the only one able to feel 'the development of things'. The bindings – with love, the experienced connection, as the sole direction towards affectivity – take place according to this dialectics, following a circular pattern: from the transcendent realm of shapes (Ideas), through the mind, able to intuit the ideal order, towards the soul, which they enfold. Thus, through a spontaneous intuition, the soul becomes sensitive and realises, exclusively at this level, the development of things. The following moment is the actual act, efficient cause, yet not formal (it is not the same range with the primordial Creation, but its shadowed reflection, its simulacrum, its trace). Transformed into action, beauty bonds with nature, inducing its germination, unconscious act or becoming for the sake of becoming, while still maintaining an important purpose in our opinion, the fourth one in the descendent order of Bruno's (platonic) dialectics: when it reaches the matter, it shapes it – poetic purpose par excellence – and pulls it out of the nonsense, becoming, elevating it to the level of form that reflects eternal Forms. By combining both principles, the active one of spontaneous

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.



creativity with love, the passive one, repetitive and reproductive by nature, the binding it sustains obeys the rule:

the bond of love has a nature which is both active and passive. And by this, things act, or are acted upon, or both, as they desire to be ordered, joined, united and completed, insofar as it is within the nature of each thing to be occupied with order, joining, union and completion. Without this bond there is nothing, just as without nature there is nothing.<sup>47</sup>

This is the dialectics of Bruno related to the idea of beauty descended into nature.

*The organising function of love.* As discussed so far, following the Neoplatonist tradition, Bruno gives love an intermediary role. However, its main one is to enable the connection and the union of elements. In the natural order, beauty becomes an active factor: it bends and inflicts to bring into action the common goal of all living things, reproduction, without the need of a particular mediation – like is the case with superior, human love – because being based on desire, it brings about a continuous flux, also natural and dialectic, ‘the passing of everything to all’ (even though here, it also conforms to the rules of genus). Therefore, here, love (intermediary bonds) possesses a natural function, organizing and differentiating genres and their variations, the species. The description of the degrees of bonding is made possible as pure function to differentiate and organize nature, because ‘just as there are various species of things and differences between them, they also have various times, places, intermediaries, pathways, instruments and functions.’<sup>48</sup> However, the higher function of love is not resumed only to organizing the classes, the genres and the species because it represents the origin and the ruler of all it exists in nature and in the spiritual world, but especially in the divine being. As we ‘observe’ its effects, we also discover its double-purpose, becoming aware that paradoxically, love acts as an intermediary between the divine and the demonic, the good and the bad, the ugly and the beautiful. Moreover, as a sorting-out principle in general (not as an action), and because bindings tend towards perfection, love also references the spiritual order, not just the material one. The sign of its bindings is the sign of perfection and closeness between Good and Beauty.

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<sup>47</sup> G. Bruno, *A General Account of Bonding*, in *Cause, Principle and Unity. Essays on Magic*, 2004, p 172.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

The primordial chaos is organized under the initial impulse of pristine love and that of the indistinct binding, led by instinctive desire. Later on, inside the world of human affection and sensibility, but also inside nature, love acquires double characteristics as demonic and divine. Still, the ideal, the perfect form, the Logos is actually order in its universal meaning intermediated by love and in this sense, exclusively in this sense, we can say that ‘love is everywhere a perfection, and this bond of love gives witness everywhere to perfection.’<sup>49</sup>

If love coordinates an intermediate reality, placed between good and bad, beautiful and ugly, it becomes good and beautiful as well, but not through the effect of the bonding it inflicts, but because this is how all things look for good and beauty (*ibid.*, p. 172, *supra*). Love transforms by combining the principle with the desire of each individual, placing us into ‘communication and participation’. The possibility given to us by binding – love, and beauty – becomes the rule. That is to say, the binding of love is established in obeying the rule. The power of love is complete when the diverse is brought under the power of the whole through mediation and by referencing a rule; it is also the placing of individuality inside logos or the principle, as love is proper (common) to both the active and the passive principle, equally part of everything. ‘[...] the bond of love has a nature that is both active and passive. And by this, things act, or are acted upon, or both, as they desire to be ordered, joined, united and completed [...]’.<sup>50</sup> However, love establishes a type of order which does not comply with the power of concept, nor is it rational, therefore, it cannot be analysed or explained through judgement or reason. This is why, especially in art (the aesthetic reality), the rule of scientific knowledge does not apply and it is impossible to base aesthetics on the critical philosophy of Kant, as E.H. Gombrich<sup>51</sup> tried to.

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>51</sup> Sheldon Richmond, *Aesthetic Criteria – Gombrich and the Philosophies of Science at Popper and Polanyi* (Amsterdam/Atlanta: Rodopi Publishing, 1994). The inadequacy of critical thinking to the artistic domain was stated ever since Descartes because art cannot obey the critical rationalism and the artistic phenomenon remains separated from the objectivistic or reductionist (logic-cognitive) tendencies of critical philosophy. Art works by a different logic, that of the ‘suggestive metaphor’, able, just like love is, to balance the contradictory reality and to intervene whenever there is a discrepancy between the concrete and the abstract world. ‘Revelatory metaphors are used when man becomes “Man” indeed. That is the moment he places himself within the horizon and the scope of mystery.’ (*Geneza metaforei si sensul culturii* (The Genesis of Metaphor and the

***Love is formative. Mediation between concrete and abstract.***

Considering this actual reality (conceivable in just a certain way – the formative idea of love acting as an active principle in the material world) our starting point, we can only establish (not by use of classical logic or concept, of course) if the realities intermediated by love, between concrete and abstract, ugly and beautiful, good and bad, have finality in the natural world or a transcendent reality. Bruno gives an ascendant meaning to love, towards perfection. He considers the imperfection, the relative and the unstable to be, in general, traits of the concrete world, but also that we cannot say the material world is ugly and mean in itself like some Peripatetics think. Beautiful and ugly are terms we can use while talking about how something relates to something else – not so much aesthetically, but regarding the formed things, in contrast with the non-formed ones. Bruno also mentions that Aristotle is more careful when discussing about matter, because ‘matter is not <<ugly>> or <<evil>> as such’<sup>52</sup> and it ‘tends and moves equally towards goodness and evil, ugliness and beauty’.<sup>53</sup> Binding, order, forming, all are aggregation states, tendencies towards order and perfection, in the absence of which nothing exists, ‘just as without nature there is nothing’<sup>54</sup>. This particular statement is very important because it underlines again that love gives purpose (it is the forming principle, it generates the shape moulded after the perfect Form, the ideal, situated somewhere close to Divinity), purpose by which it lets itself get penetrated as from a necessary order, through the common rule of nature itself. Imperfection characterizes the primordial Chaos, the disarray and uncertainty before Creation:

Because of this, therefore, love is not a sign of imperfection when it is considered in the matter and the chaos, before things were produced (Bruno refers here to Plato, *Symposium*, as overcoming the peripatetic view and also references Aristotle, *Physics*, related to the relative platonic concept of pre-existent forms – author’s note, M. P.). For indeed, anything which is considered in the chaos and the brute matter, and is also said to be love, is simultaneously said to be perfection. And whatever is said to be imperfect, disordered and not to be, is understood not to be love. Thus, it is

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Meaning of Culture), (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură Universală, 1969), p. 280.

<sup>52</sup> G. Bruno, *A General Account of Bonding*, in *Cause, Principle and Unity. Essays on Magic*, 2004, p. 172; cf. Aristotle, *Physics*, 1, 9 (192.a. 24).

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

established that love is everywhere a perfection, and this bond of love gives witness everywhere to perfection.<sup>55</sup>

Since the text was left unfinished, we do not know Bruno's opinion on the dialectics of bonding which directs love towards knowing the perfect form, but he indicates only the types and traits of the bonds that naturally put together the bonded elements through attraction or rejection, the particular cases and the general forms of bonds, as well as their time and place, their causes and effects. Bonds become more complex as they rise into the rational. For humans, desire and love are led by a single principle, the rational, but equally, they possess instinct, which is intermediated or intensified by will. G. Bruno also analyses the type of relations, the genres, and the degree to which the objects can be bonded. While doing so, he says that there are four realities gravitating around God, unable to escape the attraction of the divine (for Bruno, God represents the universal nature or the universal good, the absolute beauty<sup>56</sup>). These realities are swept into a circular movement, unable to detach from the centre, 'only by the distance of each of their circumferences from its proper centre'<sup>57</sup> and if they do detach, they will be obliterated. Their order of evolution is always the same, eternally bonded and moved by the Divine Creator. According to Bruno and following the Platonic view, these realities are: mind, soul, nature and matter. They have different degrees of stability and movement, as follows: 'Mind, in itself, is stable; soul, in itself, is mobile; nature is partly stable and partly mobile; and matter, as a whole, is both mobile and stable.'<sup>58</sup> There is also a specific function of the sensitive (knowing) soul corresponding to each reality and its elements, able to be bond. The one reality that bonds more stably is the reality of mind, while matter, the correspondent of forever organized things or on the contrary, of things that are in a continuous movement, has its bonds destined to be either stable or continuously mobile. Between the reality of mind and that of matter, the quality of bindings (equal to the means of knowledge/sensibility) is in the area of the heart (according to the ratio between sensibility and desire), described as having complete mobility, but also in the area of nature, part mobile, part stable (according to the genders or the species sensible to binding). 'Everything which is bound has an awareness in some sense, and in the nature of that awareness, one finds a certain type of knowledge and

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 172-173.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

of appetite, just as a magnet attracts or repels different kinds of things.’<sup>59</sup> There is a type of bond corresponding to each type of sensibility and the binding subject needs to assume and consider them. Moreover, starting from the areas specific to each reality and manner/form of binding, and acknowledging each study and paper on the subject beginning with Aristotle, we can make judgements on the actions and interactions of objects, on the particular ways of knowing, and the corresponding functions of thought. In other words, we can obtain the systematics of the sciences and disciplines dedicated to the special study of the domains of reality. Related to the specific domain taken on in his analysis, Bruno references Aristotle when discussing natural reality, physical or biological, especially *Physics*. When he talks about types and manners of knowledge, he references Plato, especially *Symposium*, as well as other Latin authors: Lucretius and *De rerum natura*, Cicero and *Tusculanae disputationes*, Pliny the Elder and *Naturalis historia*, Ovid and *Metamorphoses*, Vergil and *Bucolics* and so on. By distinguishing between the different areas of reality and their corresponding functions and degrees of sensibility, Bruno also aims at classifying the faculties of thought/sensibility. He takes on from Aristotle the substantialist theory related to sensibility/thought, establishing areas and degrees of excitability, according to the soul’s strength (*dynameis*) to attain pleasure or displeasure, and to remember or forget connections and qualities:

The more that a soul is bound to one object, the more it turns away from and rejects others. [...] A more pleasant action excludes a less pleasant one; the soul that is intent on hearing neglects vision; he who observes more attentively becomes deaf.<sup>60</sup>

By establishing the manners and the types of bindings between subject and object, done according to the more frequently used faculties and biases, we can also identify different types of humans: those contemplative by nature are bound by divine elements while beholding sensitive images, the voluptuous ones feel the need to touch the object, the moral ones are inclined towards conversation etc. Therefore, the first one is the heroic type, the second type is the natural human and the third one, the rational. Of course, these categories are not established once and for all, but they can change and alternate, as they are heterogeneous and able to switch disposition and affection according to mood or according to the attraction

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 157.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

or the repulsion against the object of desire: ‘As a consequence, no bonds are eternal. Rather, things alternate between bondage and freedom, between being bonded and escaping from a bond, or they transfer from one type of bond to another.’<sup>61</sup> As a result, we can draw many parallels between Bruno’s view and modern psychological theories. Bruno theorized and systematized texts and ideas of ancient authors in order to open a new approach to the mind, the faculties of knowledge, and the psychic processes, all of which will become of great interest in the post-Renaissance era. His classifications and suggestions, at least in the psychological field, most of them contain prolific ideas that will later be developed by the humanities, or psychology, ethics, and aesthetics.

It is also of great importance the way he tries to explain the affective and volitive relations, his analogies while trying to define the connection between fields of reality and particular faculties of knowledge and also his functional dialectics, objective and subjective, of sensibility and the faculties of thought (intellect, reason) when man binds with natural and social reality. Everything we mentioned is significant for referencing the mobility of bonds and the ability to go from one mood to a completely opposite one.

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

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## CHAPTER IV

### *POIESIS* AND METAPHYSICS

In its original, Platonic meaning, *poiesis* is a continuous figment of reason. The Universe created by the Demiurge before the dawn of time is a replica of the eternal model. However, since it does not yet include all possible beings, it is not similar to the model<sup>1</sup>:

So he set about accomplishing this reminder of his work, making the copy after the nature of the model. He thought that this world must possess all the different forms that intelligence discerns contained in the Living Creature that truly is.<sup>2</sup>

The Demiurge does not accomplish, unless by thinking of an eternal form. He imagines shapes that are not inside the realm of time. The human intellect, opposite to the divine reason, can observe, analyse and compare the diversity in nature, but it cannot imagine Form or Ideas. The one creating needs the capacity to think and imagine the pre-existent form (model). Reason relies both on imagination and intuition. Conceptual thinking, led by method, owns the calling of clairvoyance and organizing experience and imagination; intuition is not intermediated, but it is an ability constrained only by its spontaneity. *Poiesis* is pure spontaneity, the most direct path towards the idea. The original poietic act is rational (logos) because imagination does not lack logic, but the logic of the poietic act (the free figment of imagination) is permanently connected to intuition. As a creative act, *poiesis* has a universal vocation and can be confused with life. *Poiesis* cannot be reduced to the aesthetic, or the sensorial experience, just like it is distinct from reason in its way of being because it is also an organizer, but without a concept.

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<sup>1</sup> *Plato's Cosmology. The Timaeus of Plato* translated with a running commentary by Francis M. Conford (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1937), p. 117 (39E).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



***Imagination and poiesis. Symbolic harmony.*** The term *poiesis*, to do, is closer in meaning to the artistic act just because, similar to the aesthetic creation, the poietic imagination is driven by its own imaginative rules and metaphysically guided. *Poiesis* – specific to the Platonic Demiurge – has a universal vocation, imagines and creates the world as a whole. This whole is also contained by a smaller part and the image of a perfect work of art reflects the universe. The true dialectic power of *poiesis* is the spirit, which uses the imagination. The image created under the poietic impulse represents Beauty in its concrete sense, therefore we can quote Petru Comarnescu and say that imagination is a strong faculty of the metaphysical human sense.<sup>3</sup>

As symbolic harmony, the image is abstract. It can invest something with spiritual meaning and it can act as an intermediary between intuition and argument. Where concept fails, the image, by referencing the act, brings to light a meaning that no longer belongs to the concept. For example, in *Phaedo*, while discussing the origin and the divine purpose of harmony, Simmias references the relationship between the chord found by the musician while playing the lyre, perfect and divine, and the lyre itself, the object that produces the perfect sound. For the purpose of his demonstration, he relies on images, because they can defer and strengthen his words but differently than dialectics and concept would. Poietic imagination and metaphysical imagination are intuitions of the whole, while the concept loses part of the whole and keeps the essential.

Poetic intuition means creative logos, vital logos, inseparable from the act, in its broad sense of power and imagination to represent the idea in a concrete conception, as only artists can have.

For Plato, this topic focuses on the relation between body and soul: the soul is influenced by pleasure or pain, ‘because every pleasure and pain has a kind of nail, and nails and pins her to the body, and gives her a bodily nature, making her think that whatever the body says is true’.<sup>4</sup> Since the soul is shackled by sensations, it cannot partake in the intelligible truth: the noticeable (the aesthetic) entraps thinking, but the intelligible (*noiesis*) sets it free, because philosophy is what releases the soul from the temptation of pleasure or from the weight of suffering, the ephemeral trammels of the body; ‘the soul of the true philosopher thinks that it would be wrong to resist this deliverance from captivity, and therefore she holds aloof, so far as she can, from pleasure, and desire, and

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<sup>3</sup> Petru Comarnescu, *Kalokagathon*, anthology by Dan Grigorescu and Florin Toma, introductory study and notes by Dan Grigorescu (Bucharest: Eminescu Press, 1985), p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Phaedo*, translated by F. J. Church (New York: The Liberal Arts Press), p. 34 (83d).

pain, and fear.<sup>5</sup> Socrates, as well, thinks that the soul of the one who fears can never inhabit together with the divine, pure and eternal keeper of its form (Plato's doctrine of ideal forms). Dialectics is about uttering, about the redemptive word, even though the method does not evade the image, not even in Plato's discourse, because dialectics and dialogue are arts and true art is about *poiesis* – creating images –, a direct path towards the Transcendent, just like philosophy, the best path and the most difficult to follow, but 'embarking on that, as on a raft, risks the voyage of life, unless a stronger vessel, some divine word, could be found, on which we might take our journey more safely and more securely.'<sup>6</sup>

***Intuition and abstraction.*** Intuitions use images. They can sustain a logical argument and uphold the concept in a more eloquent manner, not through analogy, but by understanding the abstract and pure symbol – *the poietic abstract* – resulted from putting two images together (a concrete one with an ideal one, symbolic and abstract one). This is precisely what Simmias states: this relation, between material and divine, can also be asserted if we think of the relation between a chord and the lyre.

It might be said that the harmony in a tuned lyre is something unseen, and incorporeal, and perfectly beautiful, and divine, while the lyre and its string are corporeal, and with the nature of bodies, and compounded, and earthly, and a kin to the mortal.<sup>7</sup>

To prove this same idea, Cebes uses a different image, prompted by Socrates: an old weaver and the attire he had weaved; after the weaver dies, the garment – the result of his act – lives on, maintaining, through its physical endurance, something from the old man's intuition about the art of his creation, used while weaving. But Cebes comes back to say his argument is weak because the use of an image to reveal the relation between the body and the soul, without the symbolic/abstract base is not relevant: the garment eventually disintegrates, therefore we cannot state the immortality of the soul. 'But if he cannot prove the soul's immortality, he who is about to die will always have reason to fear that when the body is disunited, the soul also may utterly perish.' (87 d-e).

Images can only sustain an argument through their symbolic signification and the poietic abstraction they reference, not through their power of suggestion as a mere aesthetic, expressive and harmonious act, because they lack in conceptual character. However, according to B. Croce, who follows Kant's ideas, the aesthetic imagination is a prime, fundamental

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 34 (83 b).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 36 (85 c).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 36-37 (85 e).

activity and it lays the foundation for judgement because it does not deal with the immediate signification, but with direct intuition.

Meanwhile, for Kant, as P. Comarnescu writes, the function of aesthetic judgement is of great importance, because, through its activity, it sets the meeting point between the world of senses and reason.<sup>8</sup>

Released from its aesthetic function, the creative, poietic imagination targets the pure abstract, the original act of creation: this way, imagination comes back to the movement of the idea that needs to assert itself through a concrete form, which, according to Hegel, can be the synthesis of Beauty and Idea; through content and form, imagination attains a true unity, available to the senses.

Poietic imagination offers man the power to synthesize and extend beyond any limits and theoretical constraints, its visions and ideas, therefore it is a fundamental faculty of the metaphysical sense. Creative imagination is free and able to produce; it is life itself in unconstrained action. In his *Poietics*, Aristotle defines tragedy not as a mimetic act, in its platonic meaning, but as imitation of a certain action and life, where life 'consists in action'.<sup>9</sup> Man gets involved in the poietic act through imagination and with his whole self, able to intuit and experience the abstract signification of the act, similar to the case of religious act. Imagination is not unravelled inside *poiesis* by the theoretical contemplative act.

Separating *poiesis* from contemplation did not take place until later on, after the ancient Greeks, during the modern era, by isolating action (practice) – self-sustaining, voluntary initiative – from theory. *Poiesis* includes the creative action into a theoretical context, in which logos comes first. The necessary purpose of life is not action per se, like pragmatists think, or the reality of senses, but merging reason with practical vocation, which dominates both theoretical 'activity' as well as the aesthetic one. The phrase from the beginning of the gospel according to John, 'In the beginning was the word', does not exclude the poietic unity of the logos that creates, like Goethe tries to interpret it in *Faust, Part two*.

The will of Plato's Demiurge is active in *poiesis* and it also signifies action but, most importantly, logos. It is not pure practical action or will to act beyond Reason, but *poiesis* which unifies idea and act. Separating action (practicality) from idea (theory) is, according to modern intellectualism (Schelling), yet another attempt to re-integrate logos into *poiesis*, under the threat of the materialism's interference (materialism understands

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<sup>8</sup> Petru Comarnescu, *Kalokagathon*, 1985, pp. 58-59.

<sup>9</sup> Aristotel, *Poietics* (Columbia University Press [1902]), p. 27, apud P. Comarnescu, *Kalokagathon*, 1985, p. 59.

practice, especially the social one, as a way to verify theory using deliberate acts).

The wholeness of the poietic act is being revealed by the power of imagination as reason coordinated faculty. Poietic man is under no constraint in his action from social norms or natural laws, but free to pour out his imagination, thus opposing his lively form of the soul, harmonious, beautiful, and pure – which emanates from himself and objectifies – to matter. The imaginative act is not a given, but an unobstructed externalization that conquers time and space. It is the Demiurge's initial act of creation that unravels its own formal will. H. Bergson understood the creative intention of the subject as a process – evolution – in the order of things and beings, that subordinated time<sup>10</sup> and was able to create time, following a pre-established schedule, innate to nature itself. However, unlike the act, it is impossible to program the creative intention because, since it exists in nature and things, it is a continuation of the initial, metaphysical act, which remains unknown and only intuited by man. That is the act through which God creates and programs everything there is. The poietic man can imagine and creatively act only through deliberate participation in the divine act. The freedom of the poietic act is similar to the one obtained through game, a consciously assumed freedom, which recreates the world and gives it meaning. The nature of the poietic act is the same as that of the divine act and, through intention and participation, it gains eternal meaning and reveals to the subject something from the abstract act of the initial creation' purity. Through poietic intuition, the individual subject overcomes transience and causality and acquires the intuition of becoming towards the eternal being, a becoming that takes place in time. Quoted by Socrates, Plato says the soul – of eternal essence – needs to be purified in the course of our lives, and 'we have to take care of it, not merely on account of the time which we call life, but also on account of all time.'<sup>11</sup> The purpose of this care is also to be found in the aesthetic act, even though only by practicing – of poietic essence as well – the love for wisdom it becomes whole, 'because after we have found that the soul is immortal, the only refuge and salvation from evil is to become as perfect and wise as possible.'<sup>12</sup> The shaping power of the poietic act is not limited to intention, nor determined by time and lost in the possible, as Bergson thinks, because in its essence, the act is made out of the same substance as the spirit. By summarizing B. Croce, Petru Comarnescu sais intuition creates simple images of the possible, objectifying impressions,

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<sup>10</sup> H. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 39.

<sup>11</sup> Plato, *Phaedo*, ed. cit., p. 62 (107 c-d).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

no matter which. Furthermore, we can call this intuition productive association, if by association we mean a synthesis carried on by the formative/constructive function of our spirit.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, if we can underline the identity between the function of intuition and that of association in the aesthetic act, then we can do so even more in *poiesis*, the act of creative imagination, which is completely different from simply objectifying impressions; *poiesis* means constructing, objectifying the idea, manifesting the being/thought. Moreover, *poiesis* is not just a simple association or mimetic function, it is representation and creation. It is an act, not just a possibility that consumes itself in expressions that have no spiritual objective content because *poiesis* is part of the Idea or Idea in its pure development. By reflecting its pure procedural character, man can truly and completely manifest in *poiesis*, becoming, as Noica put it, within being.

Abstract and constructive, *poiesis* is the act of the spirit. It is contemplation and action, able to capture the harmony of idea in its pure advancement. The cooperation between the imaginative poietic function and the contemplation, mirrored by being, represents the pure abstract of the idea, the synthesizing function where sensibility, memory, and thought merge the inner self with the exterior. Here, the abstract is unity and not dissociation, as logos that acts creatively. P. Comarnescu also believes contemplation can reveal the soul beyond the present action. It is the expression-image of the soul beyond the present and sees in order to see what comes after having seen for action.<sup>14</sup> Also as a function of knowledge, but unable to substitute contemplation (theory), the imagination creatively stimulates the subject to integrate both theory and action by overcoming their mutual rejection. The strength of the idea lays in the imagination and it is abstract, meaning pure logos, completely similar to those works of art that expose the personality with everything it humanly has to offer. Either real or imaginary, the poietic personalities represent individualities opposing the constraining reality and the norms that limit the action. Their poietic imagination creatively reshapes the world, just as Don Quixote did. Nothing is peculiar or outlandish for poietic imagination, because the tragedy of man is flawlessly played out and the world is his stage, alongside the ugliness, the grotesque of the situations and the randomly absurd imperatives, so much that reality sometimes becomes unreal, and thus, life imagined as action – even if in fact it is a delusional fight against windmills – it is filled with substance. Poietic imagination sets in motion

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<sup>13</sup> Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic as a Science of Expression and General Linguistics*, pp. 4, 5, 7. Cf. Petru Comarnescu, *Kalokagathon*, 1985, p.36.

<sup>14</sup> Petru Comarnescu, *Kalokagathon*, 1985, p.36.

all the faculties of a conscience confronting with itself and the world, gathering under the same spectrum the sensibility, the experience obtained through senses, as well as reason (the functions of representation) and sets them apart from a certain type of spontaneity which distinguishes it from the conceptual intellect or the abstract and spontaneity of reason, able to connect judgements, but unable to create ideas. Kant also makes two distinctions: one between sensibility and the conceptualizing intellect and the other between the imaginative power, freely manifested in arts, and the spontaneity of reason, exactly how Rodica Croitoru explains in her book *Fericire și lege morală la Kant (Happiness and Morals in Kant)*. She says that, having the capacity to work directly with the abstract, reason does not need to be concerned with intuition in order to get information. Kant calls this quality of reason to self-sustain through ideas without the need for exterior objects to intervene in order to receive impressions from them *pure spontaneity* (as opposed to the spontaneity of the intellect which is produced with the help of sensibility).<sup>15</sup> This anticipative sensibility in relation to the intellect represents that *primum vivere* that offers support to reason – which cannot be spontaneous, unless it occurs along a sensible experience – as well as to imagination, which relies on the same reality of senses and builds its image on the elements of perception.

***Knowledge and action. Dialectics and spontaneity of thought.*** Action and knowledge converge and collaborate without being spontaneous to an absolute degree, just as the imagination of Don Quixote, while being highly poetic (able to organize the world on a symbolic level), it still does not wander away from reality and sensibility because this is where he embeds his images and consumes his drama (action). Theory or action, contemplation or imagination, the dialectics of spontaneous thought or the unrestrained game of the artistic/creative act, none of these can completely disregard reality but manifest according to the individual and his sensibility. In one of his books, previously quoted, Mircea Florian says that knowledge is not adapted to reality and action beforehand, nor once and for all (meaning a priori), but empirically, gradually, depending on each particular case and according to the needs of the action itself. Conscience has its own set of generalities, basic points and abstractions which are being absorbed in the active reality by the silent pantomime of the individual processes, the base of reality.<sup>16</sup> Depending on reality,

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<sup>15</sup> Rodica Croitoru, *Fericire și lege morală la Kant (Happiness and Morals in Kant)*, (Bucharest: All Publishing, 2008), p. 60.

<sup>16</sup> Mircea Florian, *Recesivitatea ca structură a lumii (Recessiveness as Structure of the World)*, vol. II (Bucharest: Pro Foundation Publishing, 2004), p. 112.

knowledge/action suffers a double constraint (*ananke*): that of the sensible, mixed into contradictory sensations imposed with logic by the conceptual intellect and the constraint of becoming, according to the laws of thought (abstractions imposed by reason). Hence, if philosophy is for ancient Greeks the path towards which the soul continuously tends, by purifying itself from the temptations and constraints imposed by the body, then the poietic way, equally creative and abstract, offers man the conscience of his participation in the divine order, to which he belongs.

No matter the temptations we submit ourselves to, inherit to ourselves, and no matter which path towards self-fulfilment we chose, experience is always reduced to a fact of life – precisely what *poiesis* is – that does not help us justify anything, but simply balances our existence and remains the only way in which we want to realize what we *are*, *what is the meaning of our life and everything that surrounds us – the metaphysical question*.<sup>17</sup> Considering this metaphysical preoccupation in terms of experience as a whole, undifferentiated, raw and totally general, as Nae Ionescu does, we consider, just as he does, that it is an anthropological issue, therefore it is the only field of study where metaphysics and poietic experience make sense. *Poiesis* actually clarifies a fact of life, fact which is also a concern of being as such. Man experiences life as it is and as an experience that can reach a limit. *This metaphysical preoccupation tends to clarify me, reassure me and give me balance*, as Nae Ionescu puts it.<sup>18</sup> He thinks the metaphysical concern arises when confronted with a close to an edge experience and it is also the ultimate consequence of this kind of experience – the reason why it is strictly anthropological – understood under its general aspect of act or attempt towards salvation and deliverance of those who were unable to redeem themselves through piety.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, under the same anthropological terms, Socrates believes that for each individual, when time comes to consider one’s entire experience, ‘not merely on account of the time which we call life, but also on account of all time’<sup>20</sup> (as previously quoted) and knowing that your soul is immortal, it is mandatory to take care of it to its full extend, beyond time. The issue of the immortality of the soul is discussed according to how each individual’s conscience places itself according to existence as a whole and most importantly to collective history, which it is a part of. We

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<sup>17</sup> Nae Ionescu, *Tratat de metafizică* (Treatise on Metaphysics), unedited course, stenography by Dumitru Neacșu (București: Roza Vânturilor Publishing, 1999), p. 37.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Plato, *Phaedo*, ed. cit., p. 62 (107 c-d).

are defined more by the historical experience of the community than by our individual experiences. This is what Nae Ionescu is interested in, the 'metaphysical strength' of history, the absolute meaning of historic experience. Under *speciae eternitatis*, the metaphysical solutions are relative, but for each individual aware of history, they become absolute – undeniable – because any experience takes place in history, therefore each individual does not make history, but it is a historical being. Related to this, Nae Ionescu explains that what happens besides us and with us happens in history. History occurs; nobody makes history, history is being made.<sup>21</sup> From a metaphysical perspective and for that individual unable to redeem himself, history represents the absolute. Metaphysics is a solution and an anthropological occupation because it can be done only in relation to history, not just simply to time: I reference myself as an individual to the history I am a part of because history includes every experience, even the individual one. According to Nae Ionescu, history is a reality that surpasses the self, a reality one cannot tailor and is unable to see beyond it. In as far as one has a metaphysical activity, inasmuch he is not redeemed; in as far as one has a metaphysical activity, inasmuch one cannot surpass history. *For any metaphysician, history is an absolute.*<sup>22</sup> From the anthropologic perspective of the anthropology of *poiesis*, the metaphysical solution is relative because when we reference history, the horizon of any metaphysical solution becomes relative as well. Nae Ionescu goes on to explain that when we reference each individual, the relativity of the metaphysical experience in itself, considered just like any confession of faith, becomes highly approximate. There is another factor in the absence of which no solution is valid; being a personal solution, of an individual that lives sympathetically in his community, any metaphysical solution takes on because it is the confession of faith of an alive thought. This type of thinking experiences itself and lives itself the most intensely in relation to Transcendence. Metaphysics must fertilize and enrich a generation, an entire historical era. As Nae Ionescu put it, one's solution cannot remain a personal exercise if it resonates with the other fellowmen. It will become the metaphysical confession of faith of an entire generation.<sup>23</sup> After understanding this, we discover that, in general, personality can only assert itself in history and at the same time, we believe that poetic personalities, which do not always follow statistics, or precisely because they can intuit the course of history (which, for the subject represents the transcendental horizon), are able *to make* history and change its course according to their

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<sup>21</sup> Nae Ionescu, *Tratat de metafizică*, 1999, p. 26.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.



intuition. Every person that somehow overcomes the possibilities – always limited – of their field of action, asserting themselves creatively, evades historic time and the realm of necessity, the linear determinism. The freedom of man lays in the history to be made – a collective history where people are more or less agents, not subjects –, but *true freedom* belongs to those personalities able to overcome their status as agents of history and become subjects. Only by taking action in history, one can grasp the meaning of its becoming and this goes beyond generations and time. These personalities are chronotropic, factors of initiation of a becoming reality, those who, by fully creating themselves, they present as entirely free personalities, able to acquire the meaning and the spirit of an entire period and community through personal experience and especially through unconstrained creative action.

History is where man assays his potency and finds the frame to accomplish his personality. Therefore, in history, man is free. But how can man, as a historic being, be fulfilled? How can the creative, poietic man be free inside a small fraction of the history *being made*? A history which for him is an absolute; a history which is transcendence that goes beyond his being, beyond the particularity of his existence? Only after reaching the intuition of the meaning of his life as a being that exists in history and after realizing that as a historic being, he can only relatively act and acquire knowledge. The person becomes aware that he can make history and he can *make himself* in history (not an abstract one, but representing the being and the existence of his people). The person becomes aware of the community it belongs to and gives itself to it. The purpose of the poietic being that overcomes and integrates the historic being is the purpose of Transcendence. This purpose is obtained through devotion, says Nae Ionescu, that is to say, love for a higher entity, the community that includes personality and the historic being. This singularity, *the community to which you devote yourself to is permanent, in century*. Your lineage goes on forever. Of course, it goes until the end of the century, as it is said. It is possible for a nation to disappear, but accidentally. In theory, *a nation* lasts until the end of a century, until history will also last. It is a permanent existence to which you can devote and support, inside which you can find your balance and in regard to which you can constantly remain in this ecstatic state.<sup>24</sup> Man does not *understand* in history, he is looking for a meaning of history that he can include in himself and he can find this meaning through self-devotion and by becoming part of a different unity that, even though it surpasses him as a historical being, it also integrates him, granted that he freely commits to it,

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<sup>24</sup> Nae Ionescu, *Tratat de metafizică*, 1999, pp. 174-175.

out of love – love for living in a community as a destiny, not love for understanding. Living as part of a whole in a permanent becoming, the poietic man exceeds himself through knowing the natural and historic reality, but mostly through experiencing the metaphysical tension. Man can integrate in a noietic way in the natural order (that ‘something’ already done) through rational knowledge, but this also limits his possibilities, because knowledge or the noietic way of being is constantly a fracture. However, the poietic way leads to man creating himself inside an organic unit, in which he takes an active part, and by means of which he gets accomplished. Moreover, his natural (biological) being, his historical being, and his capacity to acquire knowledge are always aiming towards Transcendence.

***Intellect, reason, speculation.*** The attempts to define metaphysics in terms of science and to ‘solve’ the issue of transcendence through a critical method will always fail. A ‘positive’ metaphysics cannot be reasoned, just as we cannot agree that, beyond the so disapproved ‘positive’ experience of experimental sciences, metaphysics will also include the possibilities of the poietic intuition (which is platonically closer to theory). It is therefore obvious the impossibility of the positivist science and metaphysics to come to terms, especially nowadays, when science stumbles increasingly often upon metaphysical problems. Not even the period of neocriticism or that of logical empiricism could cut the enthusiasm of poietics because, as Mircea Florian notices, being poietic does not abide by the immediate experience, but it surpasses the given of experience and, just like metaphysics, it gets further away from analysing this given.

Metaphysics cannot become a ‘metaphysics of questions’, like Nicolai Hartmann understood it, the metaphysics of a field (*Gebietsmetaphysik*) because it is not a separate domain; metaphysics is overall connected to everything known and aims towards the unknown background where everything we know is projected, towards the penumbra or the trans-intelligible that envelops our science, in Mircea Florian’s words.<sup>25</sup>

***The poiesis of the transcendent.*** There is a way for metaphysics to get closer to art because it is the *poiesis* of the transcendent, the original *poiesis*; and even if it uses categories, the means of reason and the given experience, the ‘result’ of this process transcends experience.

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<sup>25</sup>Mircea Florian, *Metafizică și artă* (Art and Metaphysics), (Cluj: Echinox Press, 1992), pp. 53-54.

Still, it has become obvious that, in its absolute sense, metaphysics cannot dispose of experience if it is interested in the results of the particular sciences. These sciences reach, at some point, boundaries beyond which the syntheses they are based on, and also use what is given as a launching pad, only have relative importance. Probably, by enlarging the meaning of the term experience – a process already begun – so that it includes the experience of thought at large, it is possible to bring to light areas that unify the exact sciences with metaphysics and other spiritual fields that are now claimed by religion and arts. In its classical meaning, ever since ancient times and up to the modern era, metaphysics has not gone far from poetry and art because it uses a poetic and a metaphorical language.

However, the element that brings them close is the primordial intention, inherent to *poiesis* as well, that can translate as the unification of all possible experiences under logos (experience and knowledge). Contemplative *poiesis* or *theoria* can be relevant in both cases: towards the immanent and also towards the transcendent. The secret of existence cannot be revealed by the advancement of knowledge or rational discourse because it is present all around us and cannot be dismissed. We cannot overcome logic through fiction or eliminate it, as positivism pretended to because it always deepens and the antinomies we reach through transcendence can be solved by wholesome knowledge. This knowledge can be a prolific contradiction, sometimes poietic, like the minus-knowledge or the ‘Luciferian knowledge’ of Lucian Blaga. The analogy between metaphysics and *poiesis* could be the ‘open mystery’ that reveals to us theoretically or poietically, not through reason. Any creation, in any field, is an intuition beyond regular logic. Creative intuitions bring about questions for which reason has no answer. When dealing with the being, philosophy does not limit itself to reason, but becomes, similar to poetry, a complete intuition, an experienced fact. Nae Ionescu used to say that the first statement about the being per se should not be to define it as a category of logic but to define it using a fact of life.<sup>26</sup> Basing metaphysics on a fact of life does not bring it closer to art, nor reduces it to feeling. Inside the fact of life, as a fact of conscience, we intuit the truth of life, therefore it stands right next to the act of faith. Poietic experience and aesthetic experience do not exclude each other, as the last one is a component of the first. Poietic experience could be the supreme, absolute intuition based on which to organize our lives, the most subjective and intimate act – just like the act of faith – that cannot be assigned to a category from a logical perspective. We cannot define metaphysics without including the universal and

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<sup>26</sup> Nae Ionescu, *Tratat de metafizică*, 1999, p. 93.

especially its references to logical categories, not even when it emerges from a fact of life. *Poiesis* grounds itself inside the individual – similar to metaphysical constructions – but it does not aim towards logical categories and if it reaches them, they become antinomies. Thus, however different their ways might be, *poiesis* and metaphysics are brought together by their final goal, the unifying, absolute idea, where Beauty coincides with Good. They both have a theoretical finality and reflect Everything, the Absolute, the ultimate Idea, or the Being in its exceptional purity. The *poiesis* is not logical, but it is abstract – ideal in as much as it is intuition of an ideal order. Moreover, it is not analytical, nor intellective, or rational, but contemplative and abstract.

This view brings *poiesis* closer to art but differentiates it from philosophy, especially from the metaphysical attitude and preoccupations, although, from Bergson's perspective, which we do not entirely agree with, their final objective is creation, even though 'pure intuition' does not make their methods and solutions identical. By enlarging the meaning of experience – focused on self, not on conscience in general: self or individual conscience –, transcendence or metaphysics is, according to Nae Ionescu, based on the possible experience, not on the real one, which is immanent and necessary. Sensitive reality is not questioned under necessity, but reality and experiencing a possible reality are. This possibility, which can be initiated as a fact of life, is the source of metaphysics. In Nae Ionescu's own words, this second trait, the possibility of sensitive experience, is more important for constructing metaphysics from a methodical or fundamental perspective. Obviously, the dilemma of the finite and that of the infinite is a problem, a metaphysics; but constructing metaphysics per se is possible starting from this issue of the possibility of sensitive reality. In this case, the transcendent translates into the conditions that make the sensitive reality possible.<sup>27</sup>

***Possible experience and sensitive reality.*** Without any doubt, the possible experience inside sensitive reality is the line beyond which we start asking questions and interrogate the transcendent, but in a one-way direction, from the angle of possible experience and that of constructive liberty, 'which science does not allow it to man'. (L. Blaga, *Cenzura transcendentă*, 1934, p. 13) According to Blaga, this possibility has even more nuances and it does not stand under the influence of cumulative, open knowledge of the intellect or rational knowledge, but that of the 'minus-knowledge', the Luciferian one, which deepens the mystery of

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

existence. Another nuance, somehow considered by Plato in his concept of anamnesis (reminiscence), but especially by St. Augustine and Plotinus, states that metaphysics is not possible through systematic construction, but as spontaneity of thought, through pure creation, which connects it to art and *poiesis*. Blaga also says that experience is absorbed in metaphysics by the spontaneity of idea.<sup>28</sup>

Nae Ionescu places the condition of metaphysics inside the possibility of the sensitive experience, but this experience is based on actual living or on an act of faith, not on science.

Therefore, art – creative *poiesis* – as well, gets close in its intention to metaphysics. This idea is not new; it has a certain continuity in Romanian philosophy. Vasile Conta understands metaphysical produces as ‘quasi-knowledge’ or acts of poetic imagination (similar to H. Vaihinger’s ‘fictions’, Renan’s ‘poetry of ideal’, Fr. A. Lange’s ‘poetry of notions’ or Bergson’s ‘myth-making function’ (function fabulatrice).<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, C. Rădulescu-Motru has a different view, inspired by the critique of the Kantian apriorism, stated in his *Elemente de metafizică* (1912). His purpose was to move past the merging between science and art and find a foundation, different from the transcendental one, through the energetic personalism, which he uses to connect the ‘transcendental conscience’ with ‘the real conscience’ of scientific energism. Related to this idea, M. Florian says that metaphysics is a science whose purpose is to give us the most complete and the least relative knowledge about the world. It does not bring anything new to science, but suggests a different type of knowledge from that of positive science, a superior, wholesome one, inside which old adventures appear in another order and another light.<sup>30</sup>

**Transcendence.** The issue of transcendence arises when philosophers adopt an overall, systematic view, like it is the case with V. Conta, C. Rădulescu-Motru or L. Blaga. Also, following the tradition of the school founded by Titu Maiorescu, the subject of metaphysical construction has continued to kindle the interest of philosophers throughout the in-between wars period (Nae Ionescu, Mircea Vulcănescu) and even after, in the postbellum (Mircea Eliade, Constantin Noica). Moreover, Alexandru Surdu, in his *Filosofia pentadică* (Pentadic Philosophy) approaches this subject systematically, from the perspective of category, initiated by Plato and Aristotle, but also found in Hegel. From his viewpoint, Transcendence

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<sup>28</sup> Lucian Blaga, *Cenzura transcendentă* (The Transcendental Censorship), 1934, p. 14.

<sup>29</sup> M. Florian, *Metafizică și artă*, 1992, p. 58.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

lays somewhere beyond the fact of life, through the more obvious opposition between immanence and transcendence, between the logic of intellect and reason and the speculative dialectics. Similar to most works on metaphysics, he discusses the ontic, the epistemological, logical, psychological and linguistic aspects of it, but all in relation to speculation, which changes the orientation: not from experience towards the transcendent, but from Transcendence towards Existence. A. Surdu believes this ‘deserves a special attention because it marks the particular character of Speculation used to follow the reversed pathway of transcendence, not *from* Existence, but *towards* Existence.’<sup>31</sup>

By making this distinction, we can notice a split between the intellectual, rational logic and speculative logic, but most importantly, it becomes obvious the change in the signification of the first, brought about by the reissuing of the problem in terms of speculative dialectics applied to a philosophy of categories. A. Surdu thinks that the interest in the problem of Transcendence is obvious in contemporary sciences, even more than in the actual philosophy, since cosmology and cosmogony separated from it and are claimed nowadays by astronomy and astrophysics, but also due to the similarities between physics and microphysics with philosophy, in exemplary illustrations in the speculative-dialectic character of Transcendence.<sup>32</sup> Cosmology and cosmogony are obviously included in poetic creations, but their motifs have been gradually withdrawn from the area of fundamental myths by physics and astronomy. The only connection left between existence and transcendence, apart from the interest taken on the subject by contemporary physics, is religion. Surdu defines religion in general, from *religo, religare*, as the connection between Transcendence and Transcendentalism with the non-intermediated Existence and the transition from one to another, which implies a discontinuity, a leap (*raptus mentis*) for the human person, with profound implications, psychical, logical and linguistic – a completely different way of thinking, talking or keeping quiet.<sup>33</sup>

There are rare periods of time in the history of culture when nobody felt the need for metaphysics. Focused on transcendence and identified with it, metaphysics is an act of creation. Similar to artistic creation, it answers an inherent need of man to harmonize himself with the world and the universe. Any metaphysical construct demands man as a person,

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<sup>31</sup> Alexandru Surdu, *Filosofia pentadică II. Teoria Subsistenței* (Pentadic Philosophy II. Theory of Subsistence), (Bucharest–Târgu Mureș: Publishing House of The Romanian Academy, Ardealul Publishing, 2012), p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

therefore man needs to assume, under all aspects, his individual experience, but also the historical one, his spiritual history.

No matter under which aspect, metaphysics is not a concern of geometrical reason, but a spontaneous and absolute necessity, the equilibrium of life, able to take on all the possibilities of the self; it is the 'vital, inner self', understood as power to create organically. The interest of metaphysics reaches the edge of existence and goes beyond, because it is a personal creation, just like the artistic one, as Ortega y Gasset defined it.<sup>34</sup> From the same point of view, poetic vocation also means personal implication, but only up to a certain point. Man cannot separate himself from the cosmos under the reign of creative and spontaneous *poiesis*, or that of metaphysics and the uttering about being.

Using the opposition between subject and object, knowledge substitutes the order of Creation with the order of man. However, the order established by the subject, the knowing self, is always truncated. Thus, existence, the object of knowledge, can never be depleted. This is the purpose and the elation of knowledge, which progresses only in relation to the unknown. Knowledge always tries to place the unknown as subject, in the rational order of man that also means alienation from existence. Nae Ionescu explains that, when a man has reached the end of the process of knowledge, he has also reached this initial position – and here intervenes, as we call it, *the angst*.<sup>35</sup> Harmonizing with transcendence, whose meaning we search for in our individual existence, is nothing but metaphysical angst, unable to realise only as a knowing self, but also as a poetic self.

Metaphysics tends to substitute the alienated self with a personal self, complete and complementary to the subjective self, but it is unable to do so without overcoming the feeling of breaking the bonds with the cosmic order, because this is the point where it intersects with the poetic way of being, which is much more than knowledge. *Poiesis* represents the self's transcendence, escaping the self, but alienating the subject, which will never be creative through self, because it needs to be complete in the sense of Creation. Precisely as the poetic act, the metaphysical one is an act of experience, of re-harmonizing and overcoming alienation by aiming at actual knowledge and thus, reaching the firm belief that each one of us is a God. These words belong to Nae Ionescu, and he goes on to say that anguished man does not feel separated from creation. He feels isolated from something else, the Creator. This disconnection is of a completely

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<sup>34</sup> José Ortega y Gasset, *Absența celor „mai buni”* (The Absence of the Best), in *Eseiști spanioli* (Bucharest: Univers Press, 1982), pp. 345–346.

<sup>35</sup> Nae Ionescu, *Tratat de metafizică*, 1999, p. 170.

different nature.<sup>36</sup> Related to creation, the alienated man feels incomplete and unable to fill the void with knowledge, but by placing himself, as an alienated individuality, in something else. He needs to escape himself and devote his person and his desire to find harmony and accomplish unity to the world.

Acknowledging one's incompleteness, activated by metaphysical torment, together with existential angst and the need to escape oneself represent the experience of life, which ancient Greeks thought could also be activated through *catharsis*, a transfiguration act. In a very particular way, which transcends the individual knowledge, metaphysics becomes similar to the poietic state, open as well towards the being, not as subject, but as a person who devotes herself, transcends the given and imbues herself with all the meanings of existence. Nae Ionescu also said that man needs to step out of himself. Man needs to find a way to give himself in order to become whole and achieve balance. He also needs to give, not just take. And not consider himself to be everything. He must not own but bestow, give himself, limited as he is by the process of acquiring knowledge and through the consequences of this process.<sup>37</sup>

From the moment the self transcends the possibility of knowledge as a reflection (gathering) of an objective content, it translates its 'abilities' – intellective, rational – into a field that cannot be contained (*Begriff*), but intuited at best. *Poiesis* does not have this problem. Its intention is bestowing, not containing an object and<sup>38</sup> re-initiating the act of creation. To quote Nae Ionescu, metaphysics can also be a moment, 'a solution for grasping' transcendence, but it cannot be done rationally. Just like art, the metaphysical solution is an anthropological fact, a personal solution, an experience of what life is – that is to say both devotion and sacrifice of the self, for a higher purpose – transfiguration of life and reality (state of grace). Obviously, the realms of reality do not coincide and each approach, either metaphysical or poietical, is a solution in itself, but when referencing a higher realm, that of the being, they converge: they are both creations of man, a man who assumes complete and total experience of life, not just rationally investigating reality, but also through speculation.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 171.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 191.



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# THE JOURNEY

The history of knowledge is a journey. The history on man, of each man in particular and of all people together, is a journey, started somewhere, nobody knows exactly, which will never end. The journey itself is a sort of recognition and self-reclaiming. Not even man's huge curiosity, that drives him to touch, hear and especially see – most of the times using the eyes of his soul – is able to make him linger at a certain margin, everything always pulls him further, beyond. The most vivid encounter can only be described through lyrics. Therefore, there is no other suitable journal to record this journey – sometimes initiatory, other times carried on simply to forget the deceitful state of things, self-induced – than a poem, quest and recovery of the initial form. Every poem means courage and surprise, never disappointment.

To understand this requires *courage* and, as its prerequisite, a surplus of *strength*: for one comes only so close to truth as one's strength *allows* one's courage to dare advance. Knowledge, saying 'yes' to reality, is just as much a necessity for the strong as are, for the weak (inspired by weakness), cowardice and *flight* from reality—the 'ideal'...<sup>1</sup>.

The difference is that, out of everything we are tempted to attribute to reality, nothing prevails, except in the image or the symbol, and man is a coward if he does not accept the sign or the symbol of his own history (or that of his fellowmen). Discovery is for each of us a beginning:

The sun above, red or green.  
Couldn't tell if autumn was still.  
Seems like the story begins somewhere,  
not far from us, and the days sway  
at the thought which today, as of yesterday,  
gathers them all and hurries away.

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo. How to Became What You Are*, translated with an Introduction and Notes by Duncan Large, Oxford University Press, published by Oxford University Press Inc., New York, 2007, p. 47.

Of the light, blue at that time,  
 a warm green detaches – takes notice  
 as quick waters gather around,  
 the sound, a gate that now becomes open,  
 you listen to them, before you walk out.

Each time we approach a great truth, which is not a goal, we are determined to remain there every time and get saturated by its meaning, but mostly, we are determined to experience it, with everything it represents to us at the moment of discovery.

I'll stay, I keep saying,  
 I'll wait for at any time  
 the vivid sound, calling me today,  
 to materialize, trees of this forest,  
 astounding,  
 to increase in hearing –  
 organ of air and water – and I'll listen,  
 to decode  
 its silent whisper.  
 Everything floods into contrast  
 and accumulates,  
 he, who shouts of fear  
 in the empty city, where only dogs  
 can sniff  
 the upcoming cold,  
 is the one knowing the day and time  
 of our journey to unfold.

We do not doubt the objective of our journey, because, essentially, each one of us chose it with the entire fibre of their being. Those who would not grasp its meaning and its purpose will let others do it – and it is not an aesthetic pursuit, but simply a challenge – sons or fellowmen along whom they have travelled and rejoiced, cried and wondered:

We're headed – towards where? –  
 no one, actually, knows.  
 We wonder around the unknown alone  
 where drops of an unseen world,  
 depleted of fear and trust,  
 await us – although no god still calls.

A bird cries out in the void,  
 on the edge of beyond – a dormant world –,  
     a string caresses another,  
     over nature and humans, the invisible  
     bursts into pieces – and howls.  
 Don't stop – this dream does not await.  
     You need to relentlessly work  
     on the word, like a forger, like a plower,  
     destined to overturn  
 the furrows of verb from the vast meadow  
     where once will sprout – when  
     the golden light will start follow,  
     and stunned we'll speak,  
     like in the incipit –  
 words of steel, or just plain words.

When we choose a goal, we do not search for it, but it finds us, each one of us and all together. According to Paul Valéry, what we owe faith always resembles faith! In his opinion, his revelations are nothing but a certain type of events and he needs to interpret one more time the *events that bring knowledge*. Our intuitions, even the most fortunate ones are somehow inexact results: *through excess*, compared to our usual clarity; *by lack*, compared with the infinite complexity of the tiniest objects and the real situations they pretend to present us with.<sup>2</sup> If we were ever to find a

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Valéry, *Introducere în metoda lui Leonardo da Vinci* (Introduction to the Method of Leonardo da Vinci), in Romanian by Șerban Foarță (Bucharest: Meridiane Publishing, 1969), p. 78–79. Translated after Paul Valéry, *Introduction à la méthode de Léonard de Vinci*, Édition Gallimard, 1957. Valéry will come back to his notes (the quoted one is part of *Notă și digresiune*, the second essay on the one that also gives its title, written for Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Française, 1919) and what he writes on the side seems relevant for the poet's option to form the reality that shapes his thought and imagination; he says that our thought can never be neither too complex, nor too simple because the reality it wishes to reach can only be infinitely complex – inexhaustible; and also, our thought cannot appraise and use what it had appraised, unless it gave reality a *simple form*. This is why the poet never refuses himself the 'surprise' to discover and simplify reality, which proves to be as complex as the thought that explores it and, to the extend it gets simplified – into an image or concept –, the thinker, as well as the poet/painter, also encaptures it into an idea-symbol. Valéry says that our personal merit – that we sigh for – is not to endure intuitions, but to grasp them; and not so much grasp them, but study them... and the comeback we have for our 'genius' is sometimes worth more than its attack. (*Ibidem*, p. 79.) The result of the confrontation with

justification for action or for our comeback at reality, it would be inside us, not as a success or a form of courage, but as a desire to confront the knowledge demon:

I raked the plum orchard today.  
 I made a pile out of white branches.  
 The ancient wounds are now healed.  
 The seeds from dust, sown last autumn,  
 are in bud. From under gates of thorns,  
 through eyelets mended by new spikes,  
 greedy faces follow us. The eyes fixate  
 the tender vines of yore promised  
 and delayed new sunrise. They prowl not the ripe fruit,  
 but the fresh nook, of the hard-earned  
 labour. Thorns of the garden are still on defence,  
 steel grating against staring eyes,  
 just waiting to engorge.  
 I keep away from long ago and hide across the edges  
 from myself, forever scourged,  
 still waiting for the dawn to find me  
 in another realm. I give no name – it knows me well –  
 and I don't utter, I, the deed hoarder,  
 just wait for it to give a sign  
 and be without tremor: this who I am, shall remain.  
 And then I go, excited by a demon,  
 Who watches me and keeps on pushing  
 Towards things yet hidden. Whispers from the sky,  
 from under earth, the ancient furrow  
 descend or trap me in seclusion.  
 I bear inside the bending hour  
 and do not linger, but slide through days,  
 behind me only silence is laid over  
 and my deeds are left to praise.

And then I left. I said, the journey  
 can start from here or anywhere else:  
 there are sad angels on the tiny furrows  
 and cheerful demons sleep inside, enclosed.

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reality is important because it gives us the opportunity to identify our limits as subject able to acquire knowledge.

Only my step is clear in the quarrel  
and just his voice impels me and can travel.

The journey must start somewhere. Though is not history we are concerned with now – history breaks, unbinds and scatters through time what God bound inside us since the beginning –, but the moment when history mislays its course, the awaited occasion to find our path. One needs a great hiatus between himself and the world to be able to see where he is headed and no experience prepares one for that – out of those experiences that usually happen to people.

All the more reason to attempt an explanation. – Ultimately no one can hear in things – books included – more than he already knows. If you have no access to something from experience, you will have no ear for it. Now let us imagine an extreme case, where a book tells only of experiences which it is quite impossible to have often or even just rarely – where it is *the first* to speak for a new series of experiences. In this case simply nothing will be heard, with the acoustic illusion that where nothing is heard *nothing is there*, either... Ultimately this is my average experience and, if you will, the *originality* of my experience.  
3

The fact that we wake up somewhere – nobody knows how we got there, history does not say that – and we acknowledge the futility of experience in general and that of all possible experiences can mean that from that point on we have found our true meaning.

Perhaps this is where all begins, I utter.  
I am unknown to me, but still, if I could  
know where I come from and to which purpose  
to devote my life's course, which mystery  
I'm gathered from, what secret  
wraps me in its arcane and  
helps my quailing steps move on,  
would I be mellow, then?

Angels await me, I have to say  
and always guard me on my way.

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<sup>3</sup> Fr. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo. How to Became What You Are*, 2007, p. 37.

And every place I pass, I greet,  
 confused by some unknown account.  
 God chose this way, it seems to be,  
 but also mine, at least the wait.  
 Our step is spurred by sounds of fiddle  
 and beats of streams in flowing current,  
 spring colours, new beginnings are born of seas  
 and call for us in murmured voice.

The sand was warm – endless trails  
 were often freshen up by green billows  
 and all around, scattered like speckles,  
 the tides of sea had gathered  
 shells – the deaf wager of a fight  
 that water has tossed on land.

I took steps carefully within crushed worlds  
 beneath the cruel game of time.

‘Can you see all there was just sitting  
 in piles and layers stacked by time?’  
 and bending over, he picks up the same  
 old seeds planted in shells,  
 where the speck of time blows no breeze  
 and in my palm it pours it all,  
 sand worn out by the waves’ roar.  
 ‘Perhaps like this you hoped to grow,  
 but you conceived just barren fruit  
 that didn’t sprout and now is out,  
 forsaken in life’s shadow.  
 And yielding seeds, you lost sight of  
 and left them be on their own,  
 but you still owe them, not to me!’

For those who meet and decide to travel along life, the guiding signs only point towards the future. They can only decode them together and the path they choose is the only galaxy guiding them. No experience, other than the one they share and communicate, can direct their steps. Their world is not on the outside. Their world grows from the inside, arranging time and space for themselves.

The journey, started long ago,  
appeals to words – those tiny fiddles  
that go along all the attempts  
and merge in sound – just one –  
of endless Sea. No shore is there  
where our weary bones  
have not yet sat, in waves of time;  
Pale sand, melted from them,  
resettled us in shells  
and spread across  
remote beaches.

The trace of present steps, still burning,  
lays over travelled ones. We move on quietly,  
white tracks, drawn in by the same calling,  
in constant sift, like golden  
torches melt in the sun.

A new soul kindles from the old.  
That soul I search for, to see me whole,  
yanked out of roots I used to know  
and urged towards realms now closed.

From the sea foam of vast waters  
To high above, a burning melancholy  
engulfs me. Deceitful lures  
I leave behind, drained corpses.  
I say, the journey start from here  
Towards seven corners of the earth.

The realm is open by  
the furrow of tireless waters  
and paths that no one wanders.  
At a new harbour her eyes wait for me  
and next to her, willing to lead  
towards rising skylines, the renewed me,  
a brand new boat, the callow wave can split.

The waters under cliffs are clear,  
high above, enduring stars,  
long threads out of the dark they tear  
onto the map of sleepy oceans.  
Some days the signs can change,  
so the traveller who knows the way



awaits the time for him arranged  
 and dreams about new spaces. Numbed was  
 the lure steering him  
 towards unknown worlds, to try  
 in gentle steps or hasty way  
 to fill the void just on the outside.  
 But, from the past, bizarre flashes,  
 scattered like dew on branches,  
 the light of ancient mysteries,  
 stopped luring him. In vain he climbs  
 to the old pier, the lighthouse flashes in deceit  
 to plunge and plummet all  
 the ships that didn't know how to omit,  
 out of incompetence or greed,  
 the troubling nets with prey filled,  
 unworthy and deficient for the being.

Some spaces can enclose us  
 like prison walls, but  
 morning light  
 cause them to vanish. Thus the idea  
 of road appeared out of nowhere,  
 'cause nothing shows the hidden path,  
 unless our heart, where is the spark  
 that makes us dare.

This path though, is not one  
 where you can turn, just on a whim  
 or just because, there, in the distance  
 and grim storm, appears a danger  
 you cannot outrun.

'If you set off, endure, don't go astray  
 towards heights or phony caves,  
 keeping the balance is out of place  
 now, so *have the guts to be today.*'

Thus spoke to me the Voice  
 I haven't heard in a long time.  
 I didn't stay, but set off  
 towards who I am, true and sublime.

So, listen to your heart's call,  
I'm telling you, the third time,  
'cause in her Path she holds you  
and urges you so clear:  
'Be who you are and have no fear.'

In this volume we tried to outline a possible journey that could reveal forms and realities we will maybe better clarify on a different occasion.



# ABSTRACT

Relieved from its aesthetic function, the creative (poietic imagination) aims at the pure abstract, the primary act of creation. This way, imagination returns to the movement of the idea, which needs to be asserted through a concrete form. According to Hegel, the concrete form can represent the synthesis of the Beautiful and the Idea; through content and form, imagination reaches true unity, accessible to the senses.

The poietic imagination offers man the power to synthesize, to extend the visions beyond any theoretical limits and constraints, and thus it is a fundamental faculty of the metaphysical sense. The creative imagination is productive, formidable, and free; it is life itself in free action. Aristotle says, in his *Poetics*, referring to the tragedy, that this is not a mimetic act in the Platonic sense but an imitation, not of man, but action and of life, and life “consists of action”. By imagination, in the poietic act, man is involved with his whole self, which intuits and lives the abstract meaning of the act, as in the religious act. In *poiesis* imagination is not detached from the theoretical or contemplative act.

The separation of *poiesis* from contemplation was not the preoccupation of the ancient Greeks but came later, after the Renaissance, in the modern era, by isolating the action (practice) – as an independent, free, voluntary initiative – from theory. *Poiesis* integrated the creative action in a theoretical context, where the logos prevails. The necessary purpose of life is not action in itself, as in the pragmatic conception. It concerns not only the reality of the senses but also the unity of reason and of the practical vocation, which dominates both theoretical and aesthetic “activity”. “In the beginning was the Word,” – the text that opens the Gospel of John, does not exclude the poietic unity of the creative logos, as Goethe tries to re-interpret it in *Faust II*.

Abstract and constructive, *poiesis* is an act of the spirit, it is contemplation and action that sees the harmony of the idea in its pure unfolding. Also, as a function of knowledge, but unable to substitute contemplation (theory), the imagination creatively stimulates the subject to integrate theory and action by overcoming their mutual rejection. The strength of the idea lays in the imagination and it is abstract, meaning pure logos, just like those works of art that expose the personality with everything it humanly has to offer. Either real or imaginary, the poietic personalities represent

individualities opposing the constraining reality and norms that limit the action. Their poietic imagination creatively reshapes the world, just like Don Quixote did. Nothing is peculiar or outlandish for poietic imagination because the tragedy of man is flawlessly played out and the world is his stage, alongside the ugliness, the grotesque of the situations, and the randomly absurd imperatives, so much that reality sometimes becomes unreal and thus, life imagined as action – even if it is a delusional fight against windmills – it is filled with substance. Poietic imagination sets in motion all the faculties of the conscience by confronting with itself and the world and gathering under the same spectrum of the sensibility the experience obtained through senses and reason (the functions of representation). Poietic imagination sets them apart from a certain type of spontaneity which distinguishes it from the conceptual intellect or the abstract and spontaneity of reason, able to connect judgements, but unable to create ideas.

The vanguard of sensitivity in relation to the intellect is that *primum vivere* that supports both reason – which can only be spontaneous on a background of sensitive experience – as well as imagination, which relies on the same reality of the senses and leads / builds its image on elements of perception.

The action and the knowledge intersect and collaborate, not entirely spontaneous, as Don Quixote's imagination, poietic in the highest degree, which orders the world at a symbolic level, does not depart from reality or sensibility, because here it embodies its images and consumes the drama (the action). Theory or action, contemplation or imagination, the dialectic of spontaneous thinking or the free play of the aesthetic/creative act, they can never completely ignore reality, depending on the individual and sensitivity. Supported by reality, knowledge/action bears a double constraint (*ananke*): on the one hand, that of the sensitivity mixed in contradictory sensations, to which the conceptual intellect imposes a logic, on the other hand, that of becoming, according to the laws of thought, of the abstractions imposed by reason. While, according to the conception of the ancient Greeks, philosophy is the path towards which the soul tends all the time, purifying itself from the temptations and constraints of the body, the poietic, equally creative and abstract, offers man the consciousness of participating in the divine order, to which he necessarily belongs.

Adopting this perspective, we discover that personality, in general, can only be asserted in history, and at the same time, we believe that poietic personalities – who are not always subject to statistical laws, or precisely because they sense the course of history, which is a transcendent horizon for the subject – can *make* history and can change, as a result of their

intuition, the course of history. All those who, one way or another, go beyond the possibilities – always limited – of their sphere of action, creatively asserting themselves in a field, surpass historical time, the empire of necessity, and the linear determinism. The freedom of man is within the made history – of the collective history, in which people are more or less agents, not subjects of history – but *the true freedom*, which fulfills the law, is of the personalities that exceed their status as agents of history, becoming subjects of history, because acting in history they see the meaning of its becoming, which goes beyond generations or eras. They are chronotropes or triggering factors of a reality that becomes, they are the ones who accomplish themselves while offering themselves as completely free personalities who, through their personal experience, but especially through creative, free action, discover the meaning, the soul of an era and the community.

Man, in history, does not *understand*. He seeks a sense of history that encompasses him, and this meaning is as a gift of self and entry into another unity; although he surpasses it as a historical being, he integrates it: he offers himself freely and out of love not to understand but to live a community as destiny. Living as a unit that constantly becomes, the poetic man goes beyond himself not so much by knowing a natural or historical reality, but by experiencing metaphysical tension. In knowledge – rational knowledge – he integrates himself noetically into the natural order, into something ready-made, but he limits his possibilities because knowledge or the noetic way of being is permanently split. Poetically, he creates himself within an organic unit, in which he participates and gets fulfilled, his natural (biological) being, as well as the historical being, his capacity of knowledge being always focused towards Transcendence.