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THE EDITORIAL.
STRATEGIES OF INTERACTION WITH LITERATURE

THESIS SUMMARY

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The Editorial

Strategies of interaction with literature

Our study highlights aspects that need further analysis in order to establish a definition of the editorial and of the strategies used in the construction of its discourse. The theme focuses on settling the circumstances in which the journalistic text interacts with the literary space, the fusion being transformed into a form of persuasion. Shaping the public opinion is related to the role of the press, which, not only broadcasts opinions on a large scale, but it has the strength to educate the public, to induce certain theories, to contour. Perceiving the other's opinion, be it in approval or in disagreement, is made as a result of the journalistic text's influence on its readers. The way in which the literary intervenes within the editorial text can be perceived as a paradoxical meeting between literariness and journalistic objectivity. This generic hybridity is determined by the literary and its mimetic influence on the journalistic codes.

At the core of our research lies Richard Brodie's theory regarding the existence of memes, which function as cultural codes. If the foundation of the human being is related to the discovery of genes and the mutations that take place over time, in the domain of culture, Brodie thinks that memes are primary cells, informational units, on which the structure of universal knowledge and the human mind are built. From this perspective, the human mind is permanently assaulted by already established information, which influences and shapes it. Every time one reads a newspaper, said Brodie, "you catch a virus of the mind", this being a means of manipulation through the written text, which continuously pastiches, in a more diluted or concentrated manner, the creations of past generations of publicists, depending on the creating individual and the era that he belongs to. The dissemination and inoculation of the "virus" depend on the strategy used to reach the reader's mind, on solidifying ideas within a coherent and persuasive text, in which the connection to literature acts as a catalyst. "The global brain" (BLOOM, 2007) activates, through the relation existing between these memes, the changes determined by the international explosion, as well as the bombardment with such manipulating impulses, done by the mass-media. The editorial, with its privileged status and its force given by the freedom of discourse, contains such memes and resorts to literary forms in order to accomplish its objectives, thus becoming a generating matrix for an interactive exchange of ideas.

The chosen authors are mimetically different, concerned with decoding the editorial, in order to illustrate the personalized vision on certain aspects of the Romanian society. The four editorialists, Mircea Cărtărescu, Mircea Dinescu, Andrei Pleșu and Cristian Tudor Popescu, have different cultural and literary backgrounds and are talented writers, who draw firm lines in the literary area of the editorial. Their names will surely remain in the history of the contemporary written press. Mention should be made that the editorial is a living text, which is most often published, simultaneously with the event and which encompasses the most recent cultural and literary, political, social, economic options which exist in society at a certain time.

This is why we have decided to identify certain key-concepts, which may help with determining the way in which the editorial comes near to literature. The authors of our choice offer the possibility to observe that editorial publicist is doubled by the author publicist. The percentage differs, in the sense that, in the case of some editorialists, the elements of a writer are more visible, Mircea Cărtărescu being a european poet and prose writer, who has received numerous prizes and has gained national and international recognition. Known for his studies on philosophy and metaphysics, Andrei Pleșu tried out his talent in the domain of journalism. In his most recent book, published in 2016, *Neliniști vechi și noi*, he openly takes on this status. „In the end, this is what I am: a publicist.” (PLEȘU, 2016, 2). Mircea Dinescu, a creative and exuberant editorialist, defined by the literary material, is also a poet, as he likes to call himself, and his lampoon editorials are present even nowadays on the *Cațavencii* newspaper’s site, where he usually publishes. Cristian Tudor Popescu is also part of the duality specific to the authors enumerated before. He published several novels and short prose, as well as science-fiction literature.

It is noticeable that the connections between the two domains are unseparable, which offers flavour to the publicistic text, through the editorialist’s writerish talent. Transdisciplinarity offers the chance to observe the integration of the literary in the journalisite text. In this respect, the editorial would function as an included third party of a hidden kind (Nicolescu, 2007:53), influenced by literature to which it belongs and to which it does not belong, all at the same time. Thus, it establishes the connection between the information provided by reality, the basis of the text, and the conscience. The flux flowing through these two components, becomes the necessary element for integrating the editorial’s components within the same context.

There are many such cases in the history of the romanian press, some of which will be analysed in a separate chapter. Literature is an aid for the editorial, both with the help of its expressive means and through its cultural references. The thematic insertions determine a multifaceted perspective within the comparative analysis of historical realities. The editorial takes

over these two components in order to transfigure and project them on certain events, situations, characters, matters, ideas and mentalities.

The thesis contains five chapters, systematically ordered depending on the necessity of clarifying certain concepts and text analyses.

In the first chapter, **The concept of editorial**, we expanded the definition of this type of text, in subchapters, such as *Definitions of the editorial*, *Editorial typologies in the european press and american press*, *The written editorial*, *The illustrated editorial*. The last subchapter synthesises the place of the article: *The editorial, the representation of an assumed politics*. In this part of my thesis I focused on the discussions on the role of the editorial, namely that of being demonstrative and descriptive (D. Maingueneau 1996, 1998, P. Charaudeau (1983,1997, 2005). I followed the analytical guidelines regarding the “media content”, as well as the two co-substantial components of the editorial: to be captivating and informative, underlining the existent types in the French and anglo-american press. I have observed that the editorial is connected to opinion article and commentaries, in the American newspapers, which determines a memetic effect, through the seeming growth of freedom of speech and the induction into the reader’s mind of an active participation in commenting the subjects of reality.

In the second chapter, The evolution of the editorial in Romanian culture, we offered a diachronic perspective on the Romanian editorial. The case studies were conceived in such a manner as to offer possible patterns and to highlight the memetic ideas that arise from the interaction of editorial writing with literature, which has been used later on by contemporary publicists. This chapter has been structured as follows: *The beginnings of the editorial*, *The Editorial from “Timpul”*, *Trifle and the editorial*, *The editorial in the inter-war press*, *Nae Ionescu – journalism and philosophy*, *Tudor Arghezi and the pamphlet-editorial*, *Ion Vinea and the manifest-editorial* and *Literary press and the party – the engine of the editorial in communism*, *The editorial nowadays*.

The incursion into the 19th century journalism gave us the opportunity to mention some important historical elements, like, for instance, the appearance of the first newspaper in 1829, in Bucharest, entitled ‘Curierul românesc’, initiated by Heliade Rădulescu, followed by “Albina românească” in Iași, coordinated by Gheorghe Asachi, and in 1828, in Brașov, “Gazeta Transilvania”, initiated by Gheorghe Barițiu. The cultural interaction began with observing the fact that “Gazeta” becomes a “mirror”, which means that the action is one of identifying the self through others, Watching the others, in an attempt of creating imagology, the person is actually looking at himself. This type of auto-reflection determined by the existence of what was connected to the

cultural genes is significant in the construction of an identity image, which the population of the Țările Române needed. At the end of the 19th century, the press phenomenon grows, because the writers of the epoch are also active editorialistically. The first example is Mihai Eminescu's publishing, "a conservative prophet of national tradition" ((STANOMIR, 2008: 347), who thought that a difference should be visible between the political texts and the ideological inheritance of the contemporaries. I saw that Eminescu's articles represent a starting point for the Romanian journalism: " a universality of the creative structure of our journalism" (Spiridon,2003:12). His style of editorial is taken over by the journalists that followed. Another writer and journalist, I.L.Caragiale brought up the "trifle" editorial, as well as the intertwining of species and genres, in a playful interaction, " a game with several strategies" (Manolescu, 1983:12).

The third chapter analyses the perspectives upon the editorial, taking into account the perspective of the literary, the normative perspective, the polyphonic perspective, the perspective upon the public space. The functioning of the cultural and literary memes through the editorial, gives birth to a discourse that offers several possibilities. The significance of the ideas, that we have found while analysing the editorial's evolution, are a continuation of the evident interaction between the editorial and literature. The literariness of a text is, as Gerard Genette classifies it, of two kinds: "constitutive and conditional" (Genette, 1994:88). The constitutive literariness is specific to fictional texts. In the case of the editorials, we will refer to the "conditional literariness" which exists partially in the text, where the emotional functions is determined by the subjectivity of the discourse. "The universal anthropological attitudes" could correspond, in our opinion, to certain forms of memes and can determine new duplicates of the ideas present in the editorial. The persuasive power stems from the relative accessibility of the text, as well as the large number of loyal readers.

The fourth chapter, Literariness and persuasion, focuses on *Persuasiveness and discourse*, *Persuasive Strategies*, which were further developed into *Persuasive strategies at linguistic level* and *Persuasive strategies at cognitive and identity level*. The persuasiveness that a journalist can achieve in relation with his readers, through writing, is invariably connected to the act of creation. The linguistic strategies have determined a classification according to the type of language used in the editorials of the following journalists: an intellectualised language in Andrei Pleșu's case (given by the value and aim of the addressability), a pamphlet language in the case of Mircea Dinescu, a raw language specific to Cristian Tudor Popescu, cautious language in Mircea Cărtărescu's case. Starting from the idea that the image constructs itself in the form of analysis, somewhere between symbol and sign (Durand, 1977:34), the editorial often uses so-called systems of image, which know two fundamental types of expression: ideatic and mediatic (LULL, 1999: 15). *Thus, the*

images are constructed by resorting to the “vibrant forms” of reality, that are sometimes shocking, a form of the interweaving of the literary and the cultural within the publicistic text.

The fifth chapter concentrated on *Interference strategies of the editorial and literature*. It debates upon argumentative strategies, the strategies of the declarative paradox. In this context, we have focused upon two situations: *on irony – a discursive and declarative category* and *on the quantity and linguistic methods of reference*. The third subchapter is dedicated to the *associative strategies*, where we speak about the *editorial and the places of memory*. In the subchapter dedicated to irony and quantity I exposed theories on the definition of irony – in the context of the editorial discourse (V. Jankélévitch, L. Hutcheon). The difference that exists between irony and other forms of communication, with a double meaning, like, for example the allegory or the metaphor, do not set aside, in W. Booth’s opinion, the “face value”, that is to say, the superficial value or sense, the prime meaning. While analysing the dual functions of irony, I identified these features in Andrei Pleșu, Mircea Cărtărescu, Tudor Popescu and Mircea Dinescu’s editorials. The editorial undulates between irony and seriousness, within a carefully studied balance, which is kept by the authors. Irony is also perceived depending on the way in which the reader relates to the text. I have also identified several aspects of irony and the way in which they appear in the writings of the authors that I have chosen: subtle irony, perforating irony, the elaborated and the intentionally rood one. That is to say, irony helps the larger, not necessarily specialised public that is attracted to exceptional phrases, decode the message. Thus, the text becomes more accessible, consolidating its plasticity at the same time. Yet another category of paradoxical strategies is the one referring to “quantitative language”. This form of strategy hyperbolises numbers or quantities. It is a way of bringing the editorial discourse closer to the literary one.

In the last subchapter, we concentrate upon the concepts that form the basis of the associative strategies: collective memory, individual memory, “the discursive moment” (Sophie Moirand), as well as the manner in which the text is built, and which represents the subject matter of the editorial. Thus, the importance of the text no longer relies in what it says, but rather in its effects upon the collective memory. The links that are created stem from the union of the editorial’s words, the capacity to memorise and transmitting a message to the community. On the other hand, they are based on linguistic constructions belonging to the collective memory of the community. This triggers already stored memories, in a memetic form. The places of memory find their pattern within the editorial texts. They are aggregations containing several sedimentary layers. One of these narrative coatings can be called “collective memory”. It appears in the shape of nuclei of mythical, social, political kind and it always refers to the past which is projected in the present. “The past is like a museum for the western world and ‘existential’ for the eastern one.” (2005:204), Pleșu wrote

in an editorial dedicated to gastronomy, thus observing, mimetically, the role of the historical inheritance in the construction of the present.

The comparative method gave us the opportunity to highlight some patterns, which depended both on the era when they were published, but also on the literary figure that created them. Along its history, the Romanian press has known time spans of evolution and decay, which means that inevitable loans took place, from the areas where newspapers had a healthy tradition. Nevertheless, surrogate zones were created, an event that took place in other areas as well.

The significant conclusion of our research is that both the editorial and literature form a prolific unity, which is necessary in refining the journalistic style, an ideal chemical and multidimensional formula, capable of acting upon society, of educating the public and of becoming a landmark, within the chaos of mundane life.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATEMENT.....	4
CONCEPTUAL LANMARKS OF THE RESEARCH.....	9
I.CONCEPT OF EDITORIAL.....	13
I.1.DEFINITIONS OF THE EDITORIAL.....	15
I.2.TYPOLOGIES OF THE EDITORIAL IN THE EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN PRESS.....	25
<i>I.2.1.The written editorial.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>I.2.2. The illustrated editorial.....</i>	<i>28</i>
I.3.THE EDITORIAL, REPRESENTATION OF AN ASSUMED POLITICS	
I.3.1. Editorials and editorialists.....	31
II. THE EVOLUTION OF THE EDITORIAL IN ROMANIAN CULTURE.....	34
II.1. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE EDITORIAL.....	35
<i>II.1.1. The editorial beginning with „Timpul.....</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>II.1.2.The trifle and the editorial.....</i>	<i>45</i>
II.2. THE EDITORIAL IN THE INTER-WAR PRESS.....	49
<i>II.2.1. Nae Ionescu – journalism and philosophy.....</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>II.2.2. Ion Vinea and the manifest editorial.....</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>II.2.3 Tudor Arghezi and the pamphlet editorial.....</i>	<i>56</i>
II.3. THE LITERARY PRESS AND THE PARY – THE ENGINE OF THE EDITORIAL IN COMMUNISM.....	61
II.4. THE EDITORIAL NOWADAYS.....	68
<i>II.4.1. Editorial politics, from belief to compromise.....</i>	<i>74</i>
III.PERSPECTIVES ON THE EDITORIAL.....	78
III.1. THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE LITERARY.....	78
<i>III.1.1. Incursions of the editorial on the territory of the literary.....</i>	<i>79</i>

III.2. THE NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVE.....	87
III.3.THE POLYPHONIC PERSPECTIVE.....	95
III.4. THE PERSPECTIVE UPON THE PUBLIC SPACE.....	101
IV.LITERARINESS AND PERSUASION.....	108
IV.1. PERSUASION AND DISCOURSE.....	109
IV.2. PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES.....	112
IV.2.1.Persuasive strategies at linguistic level.....	115
<i>IV.2.2. Persuasive strategies at cognitive and identitary level.....</i>	<i>123</i>
V.INTERFERENCE STRATEGIES OF THE EDITORIAL AND LITERATURE.....	136
V.1.ARGUMENTATIVE STRATEGIES.....	137
V.2. STRATEGIES OF THE DECLARATIVE PARADOX.....	149
<i>V.2.1. On irony – a discursive declarative category.....</i>	<i>150</i>
<i>V.2.2. On quantity and the linguistic means of reference.....</i>	<i>158</i>
V.3. ASSOCIATIVE STRATEGIES.....	160
<i>V.3.1. The editorial and the places of memory.....</i>	<i>162</i>
CONCLUSIONS.....	168
Bibliography.....	173
Annexes.....	189

KEY WORDS:

Editorial, literature, presuasiv, strategies, memory

