DEFINING AND RECONSTITUTION OF MAN THROUGH WORD, TEXT AND SPEECH IN RELATION WITH THE TRANSCENDENT: ONTOLOGICAL VOCATION OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT AND VISION ABOUT SELF AND WORLD IN THE WORK OF SAINT JOHN CASSIAN[1]

Abstract**:** *In the present scientific work it is presented the outlook on one's self and the world in the work of Saint John Cassian, the relation between the self and the transcendent, the defining of man through word, text and speech, the ontological vocation of the human spirit in relation with Divinity, the relationship between world and spirit, as well as metaphysical valences of the imaginary in relation with reality. The scientific text has in view the research of language philosophy, the hermeneutics, the structural anthropology and the religious symbolism. It is also shaped through contemporary references the image of the self through reference to the relationship between look – image – imaginary and contingent reality.*

Key words**:** *word, outlook, transcendent*.

I. Word that gave life and a person's education by word in the work of SaintJohn Cassian

Literature is the art of word. A word must express the truth. The truth is a concept defining the divine: "*I* – Christ the Messiah – *am the way, the truth and the life*" (John 14: 6). Literature is creation and its value is achieved and received from the perspective of a valuable concept. The whole of the valuable concepts make up the axiology as a field of philosophy. Philosophy is a set of knowledge and ideas which interpret and reflect reality under its most general aspects. Linguistic philosophy borders the field to the language science. Wisdom admirers are also complete linguists, but without relating to the metaphysical philosophy of language, and implicitly of the word, a philologist lives within a narrow circle of his conceptions. Thus, in order to objectively interpret a literary text one must know to analyse it from the perspective of several value concepts, of an axiology of literature and of art of word in general. And as the Word is a life generator, life of literature is in tight relation with its purposefulness in reality. And reality always relates with the transcendent, since humanity is the face of the heavenly Word:

> In the beginning there was the Word and the Word was with God and God was the Word. In the beginning this was with God. All through Him was achieved and without Him nothing was made of what was made. In Him there was life and life was the light of humans. And the light lights in the dark and the dark has not swallowed it. (John, 1: 1-5).

Word from word, the human being, who is a rational being, defines their existence through relation to the word. The existential Word which is not outlined only as fiction and is incorporated within the contingent reality of its existence with the divine entails the conception according to which the meaning of the Christian life is a mystical one, the word in its turn is a mystical one: a bearer and a developer of truth. This is why we shall present and define the elements which are creative, aesthetic, of national specificity, theological, philosophical, critical, temporal, atemporal, psychological and stylistic of a literary axiology within eastern and western patristics using as supportive-text the work of Saint John Cassian. The orthodox Christian does

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not theoretize, does not work so much with philosophical and pedagogical reasoning and concepts or linguistic systems, because the actual mystical word is and shall stay for him *the prayer*. In this regard, God is not only *uttered* but also *uttered* in a man's heart. The Christian, says John Cassian, bears an active condition before God, and the constancy of this condition both from the outside, but especially from the inside through the word is called confessionality. Thus, it can be said that the actual word a generator of life and acquirement of completeness is the *word bearing grace*, grace which is showed through faith and good deeds. In his *Confessional Talks*, Saint John Cassian states that by the power of word the human being can reach completeness or on the contrary, perdition. The word can have an educational or distortionary power for a human being, it can be a builder and servant word, coherent with the confessional dates of a person or, on the contrary, it can be a word which disagrees the Good, the Truth and the Beautiful, spreading the evil in the world. Saint Apostle Jacob in his oecumenical Epistle also shows the *importance of the word given* before people and before God:

> If somebody does not make a mistake when saying a word, that man is a complete man, able to fully restrain himself [...] so it is with the tongue: it is a small limb, but it can boast itself with great things! A small fire is enough for a whole forest to go up in flames! Likewise, the tongue is like a fire, it is a world of wrongdoing! The tongue has its specific place among our limbs, but it besmirches the whole body and it throws in fire our life course, after it had been lit by girdle's flames. [...] The tongue is an evil with no fidget; it is full of venom bringing death. With it we bless the Lord and our Father, and with it we course people, who are made according to God's resemblance. From the same mouth both a blessing and a curse come out. It should not be like this my brothers! (Jacob 3: 2-10)

Aphorisms used by John Cassian bind what has been said above: "*You will lose all those who speak lies*" and "*The mouth that speaks lies kills the soul*". Saint John Cassian in his second talk with Priest Joseph in the XVth chapter states that:

> ... if we have in view the weight of the words we sensibly and wisely said, we could easily remove our anxiety for your promise and [...] we are very frightened by the fact that, as it seems, our example might stand for all the weak people a reason to lie, if they knew one can break in any way his word to do so. (Cassian, 1990: 598).

Interpretation of the word also refers to *creatology*, to the form of the word expressed in a specific life situation and in a fictional work. This analysis is achieved within the five levels of the creative thinking: *expressive*, *productive*, *inventive*, *innovative*, *emergent* (Landau, 1979: 66-116). The quality of the literary creation act is incorporated in the literary text. The role of the philologist is only that of identify it. The reviewer who does not express from the very beginning the concept of the perspective of which he analyses the literary work or who does not mention the elements of the literary axiology, the literary trend to which he adheres is self-discredited, because he either brings an impressionist subjective interpretation, or he declines his competence from the very beginning. A consequence with axiological valences arises from here: *the human word* remains imperfect, sometimes even lacking completely an authentic value if it is not anchored in *the life-giving word*. This regard is the source of some interesting themes for contemporaneity and upon which I shall stop for a while in the following: *subjectivity and subjectivism*; *the word as means and contents of the divine message and as a chance of unity among the Christians* and *the relationship between the word and the education or what the confessional education of a man through words is* in the work

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of Saint John Cassian. In this regard, we identify the idea according to which heresies are but some phantasmagorias, senselessness stories, which do not have a point of connection with reality and this is why "*when we speak about the word we need to make a distinction which is absolutely necessary from the theological perspective: The Word is Unique, it is the Christ from whom everything is created, and human beings' words are expressions inculcated in or not by the Holy Ghost*" (Cassian, 1990: 770). Going on the same coordinate of the work of Saint John Cassian, having as source the Holy Writ, Saint John of Damaskinos states that "*God is the Word by which all was called into existence: human beings and things, those seen and those unseen*" (Damaskinos, 1993: 21-22). Relating between *verbal message and human being* in the work of Saint John Cassian is developed by two axes, *of the speaker* and *the co-speaker*. Thus, a philosopher of the religious language, John Cassian *communicates and communicates himself*, through his work, becoming a promoter of the Eastern monarchism. Much later, the well-known author, Paul Ricceur, states in this regard: « *...meme dans les usages en apparence les moins referentiels du langage, comme c'est le cas avec la metaphore et la fiction narrative, le langage dit encore vetre...* » (Ricceur 1990: 350). By essentializing these remarks, John Cassian notices that the act of leading is linked with the wish to come into one's own of a man that can be achieved in two ways: either under the sign of *selfishness* or under that of *self-giving*. Thus it is reached introversion, a confinement in one's own outlooks, or an opening to the others which can go up to sacrifice. The manner and the direction to which someone becomes introverted or, on the contrary, opens up to the others is very important because thus there are generated essential existential data standing for a human being's confessional experience which also represents the core of this study[1].

II. Immanence and transcendence of the word into the work of Saint John Cassian

The works of Saint John Cassian aim at the confessional side taken as a natural part of our life and the confrontation with the different educational influences to which a human being is subjected. Starting from the scripturism quotation "*He who is wise in using words shall be elevated and the wise man shall be liked by the great ones*" (Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach 29: 28), Saint John Cassian essentializes the relationship between *word-language-person* in the work *Conversations with Holy Parents*. There it is a triad which reflects in any age both the human being and everything that surrounds him and that can mirror deep mutations as far as it is concerned our relationship with God and mentions once again our manner of existence. In linguistics they talk about the actual link between meaning *(morphe)* and thinking *(hyle),* between word and utterance, according to the manner in which a substance takes the shape of the space it encounters. The writing is more than a writ, an engraving with the pen on a material, because it implies a concept, a possibility, and an existence. Thus, any utterance is a means and a revelation of what exists inside a human being and more

[1] It is obvious that what it exists beyond the physical world, the spiritual world has in its turn a *contents* or a *consistency,* and the word, belonging to the two worlds, indicates a certain *form of existence.* If we refer to the word of the Holy Writ, that Word is *vivid and working* (Jewry 4:12; 1 Peter 1: 23); Likewise a human being's word must be like that, namely it needs to relate with Him, for it is a word from the Word. Thus we actually do not speak about semantics from the abstract field, but about vivid "communion" of a human being through the word (Saint Liturgy, Holy Secrets etc.).

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than that the word is placed at the border between immanent and transcendent. Afterwards John Cassian goes on and explains the spiritual meaning of the word in the work "*Of the Lord's Embodiment. Against Nestorie*" through the anagogical but also spiritual meaning of the *icon* as just *face of the divine face, of Christ.* Usually, when we speak about God we say that we *theologise,* but this verb implies not only bearing a discussion about *something* or *someone*, but performing a very hard work at the inner, personal level, a confessional fight for dispassion[1]. A human being can talk about Him and with Him only to the extent in which he actually lives the relationship with Him, a relationship that He initiate from our very conception as human beings into our mother's stomach and with the other conception, the spiritual one through Baptism and through *Word*. Here it is not only about a *mere ethics of talking*, but about something which cannot be equivocal, because to talk to or about God means to lead a life, a permanent visiting of Lords' house and an indwelling together with Him. The triad *word-language-person*, which defines the best a human being as a creature that can speak, is in direct relation with the confessional condition of a human being as essential form of his link to the heavenly Father. The onfessional education *through Word* is a permanent process in a human's life and which supposes the approach of many aspects: *teaching, canonical, cultural, liturgical and other* as stated by Saint John Cassian:

> A man who persists in practice or daily habitualness of God's Sacraments acquires a kind of being and a language which is specific to Christianity: God's Genius language. In his being there is no longer separation regarding the values of knowledge and the confessional ones, between the concepts of his existence and the way in which he wishes to reach God.[2] (Cassian, 1990, p. 543).

The value of the word and the enormous responsibility a man has when he expresses in a way or the other, send to the realities which are beyond the earthly world. Analysts of the literary speech already admit that: « *La pratiaue de l'ecriture paraît mettre en contact avec des forces ou des processus aui depassent l'homme...* » (Veyne, 1990: 135)[3]. So, the axiology of the word converges with theology. Immanence and transcendence of the word is generally dissociated depending on the different manner of circumscribing the notion of reality, and the *word* testifies about this reality.

III. Defining man through word, text and speech in the work of Saint John Cassian. Verbal communication and confessional communication

In Marseilles, John Cassian based on the theological teaching institutes, perpetuates and emphasises the culture of the philosophical grammar. It was actually that *Trivium* or *The Art of Building a Speech*, absolutely necessary for any time, even for the present one. Starting with the scripturism statement "*That a man is given through the Holy Ghost a word of wisdom, and to another man, through the same Ghost, the word of knowledge*" (I Corinthians 12: 8) we can infer that in Saint John

[1] See the work of Saint John Cassian, *On monasterial settlements leading a community life and on the remedies against the eight main sins*, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1990, p. 162-266.
[2] To analyse the aspects of the confessional education by the power of word *teaching, canonical, cultural, liturgical and other there must be analysed* the work of Saint John Cassian, *Confessional Talks*, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1990, p. 303-723.
[3] To analyse the literary speech Paul Veyne in his work *Rene Char en ses poemes,* Gallimard, Paris, 1990, p. 335 takes the ideas of Nathalie Heinich from the work *Etre ecrivain, creation et identite,* Editions la Decouverte, Paris, 2000, p. 332.

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Cassian's scriptures the field of communication remains wide even in a case in which the word has the acceptation of exchange of information between a person, an organisation or a collectivity – taken, by turns, as emitters and receptors, whatever might be the bases and the manner in which the exchange takes place[1]. Any human activity, individual, collective, social supposes information issued, received, analysed. Communication is a part of action and reflection. Again being inspired from the Holy Writ John Cassian states that "*if through language you do not say a word easy to understand, how will people understand what you said? You will simply be people who talk in vain*" (Cassian, 1990: 592). Speaking about confessionality, Saint John Cassian underlined that:

> A priest needs to be a master in communication taken as spiritual work because he needs to immediately adapt the appropriate confessional recipe, to identify himself with the person in question, to help him and make him confess his sins. The dialogue which is being created during the confession between the priest and the believer is very complex, but his most important data are those related with the confessional charge. Through his attitude and through his artfully disposed words the confessor can build, can gain the trust of the other through affective transfer, or, in a negative situation, as result of hesitations he can block communication and shatter trust [...] the priest is called to turn the mere communication into a confessional communion. This is achieved when the verbal elements involved in the dialogue of words exchanged depends their significances from the usual level towards the spiritual one. In this situation, the purpose of verbalisation is no longer strictly to inform, but especially to educate or, as required, confessional transformation. Having a public addressability, priest's communication includes elements from the scheme of the mass communication, but valences circumscribed to the confessional experience are added in, which surpass the corporality.[2]

In our undertaking we start from a certainty: to live within a society means *to communicate*, to exchange between us the people multiple information, this exchange it is not reduced only to the level of ideas and lexemes; inter-comprehension or, better said, comity (cohabitation) has for the society the same importance as it is breathing for the human body[3]. In the current language, using the word *communication* does not encounter special issues. The fact that this communication concept represents an

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[1] The Embodied Word taught us about the good order in a word. There are a few examples in the Holy Writ: "*I am telling you that for any shallow word they utter, people will give account in the Judgment Day*" (Mathew 12, 36); "*Any man who says any words against the Son of Man, will be forgiven; but he who blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven*" (Luke 12, 10); "*But as you have plenty of other things: faith, word, knowledge, diligence, your love to us, so you should have plenty of this gift*" (2 Corinthians 8, 7); "*Healthy word and chastely, so that the adversary should be ashamed, since anyway he has got nothing bad to say about us*". (Tit 2, 8).

[2] See the work of Saint John Cassian, *Conlationes Sanctorum Patrum, XXIV* (Conlationes or Conversations with Holy Parents, XXIV), EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 1990.

[3] Pr. Lector Dr. Viorel Sava, in "God's Liturgical Language", in *Moldavia's Prayer Light*, no. 01 (1999), p. 3 states: "*Given that the utterance has its origins with God the Word, the word is a bearer of grace and it has the power to change people, to renew their way of thinking and manifestation. The word bearer of grace touches the depths of the human creature and calls to a new life by Christ. We can also learn this from the second chapter of Deeds of the Apostles where we are told that those who had listened to the speech of Saint Peter on Pentecost (the fiftieth day) were penetrated into their hearts (5, 37-38). When the word gave to God penetrates into one's heart He makes from a man a new human creature*".

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interaction can be found in its etymological root: *communico, are, avi, ătum* = to make common (by giving), to share something with someone, to share and make common (by taking), to associate, to take over oneself (Guțu, 1993: 89). Communication concept[1] is tightly related with the information one. In the communication science, *information*, in general, is what is communicated in one available language or the other. But, this must be considered as a combination of signals and symbols. Bearers of information, signals can develop meanings that, due to some contextualization data, can be decoded. Information concept supposes three aspects. First of all, it is about the *syntactic aspect of information*, about the succession required by graphical, auditory or electrical signals. The succession is required by the emitter. Secondly, it is about the *semantic aspect of information*, about the meaning awarded to signals based on social conventions. Meaning cannot be identical for all who participate in the communicative act. It is important to make the distinction between the intentional semantic information (information that the emitter would like to convey) and the achieved semantic information (information that the receiver detaches from the received message). Thirdly it is about *the pragmatic aspect*, what happens with the received information or its effect upon the receiver. All these data acquire special valences when we arrange them in a theological and confessional perspective in the Holy Writ and in the work of Saint John Cassian. Through word God made the world: "*In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth... And God said...*" (Genesis 1: 1-3) and: "*In the beginning there was the Word and the Word was with God and God was the Word. In the beginning this was with God*" (John 1: 1-2). John Cassian states that upon the new making of the world that is the embodiment of Messiah, the *fiat*[2] of Mary the Virgin was particularly important, as speech and answer to God's Word. Together with the divine power, Mother of our Lord actually participated in the bodily conception of the Son of the Eternal God.

Also, the *expressive level of the language used by John Cassian* is characterised by the special utilisation of Latin, by the quality of the used language, by that *unique tonality* of which Garabet Ibrăileanu spoke, through the creation of new meanings of words (called by some researchers *module-words*), through the creation of groups of words with a new meaning (*module-collocation*), by connotative emphasis given by the orthographic signs, by wording techniques used by the author, by literary language models which he puts into circulation, which are imposed through imitation and this is why the influence of the great writers in language development is appreciable. It can be thus found that *literature has a role of modelling one's personality*, thinking and expressing through the convincing word which penetrates through images, feelings, models, musicality, through the word functions, because it makes us participate in heroes' life, express our states of consciousness, assimilate models. The word in the work of Saint John Cassian also has, apart from the *transitive function*, the following functions: *reflexive, symbolic, connotative, referential, sacred, according to objective laws, secret, of light, sacred*. These functions give either a conscious value or one which is hard to notice to the word and to the text expressivity.

At the *inventive level* we can find that the patristic text of the work of Saint John Cassian has several features such as: human prototypes achievement, use or creation of

[1] To see Von J. Cuilenburg, Scholten O., Noowen G. W., *Communication Science,* Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 1998, p. 23.
[2] To analyse Saint John Cassian, *On Lord's Embodiment. Against Nestorie*, EOBMBOR, Bucharest, 1990, p. 749-883.

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literary species, use of both philosophical and theological concepts in achieving heroes, in metaphors, in the narrative structure. At the *emergent level* it indicates a comprehension according to objective laws of the universe. Heroes are built based on a law, they become *subjects,* that is they make the archetypal act ordered by a law, by a divine will, is structured by an *ideologeme,* it has several hypotheses, it represents a dimension of conscience. In the *Confessional Conversations*, John Cassian addresses the main themes of the monachal life: purpose and finality of monasticism, about vices and virtues, prayer and contemplation, secrecy and discernment, free will, about temptations, evil apparitions and devil, friendship, so that afterwards, he should end up in quadripartition of the biblical acceptances. As a follow-up of main themes research, Pr. Dr. Gheorghe-Damian Pătrașcu makes a full analysis of the Cassian's monastic doctrine, contemplated in the Holy Writ which becomes in its turn the spiritual food of the monastic life. The book manages to bring to the present day essential elements of the monachal life and to present a full analysis of the biblical sources of which John Cassian inspired himself in *Confessional Conversations*. Cassian states that persons who wish to attain perfection must stop every day over only one text of the Holy Writ, which would keep the mind busy for a longer while and must not pass from one text to the other, from one psalm to the other, relentlessly wandering about through Bible. Who wishes to reach the true knowledge of the Holy Writ should acquire the steady humility of mind and to meditate day and night upon what he red. Cassian offers to the Latin monachism an ascetic and mystic doctrine of high level. More than that, Cassian states in his Dialogues that monachal life was seen from the very beginning as a follow-up on *Scripture,* on God's Word who is Christ, life that begins simultaneously with the Church, springs from it, more exactly from the first Christian community from Jerusalem.

IV. Conclusions

Starting from the biblical quotation "*For from the word wisdom is found the same as from the languages teaching is found*" (Jesus son of Sirach, 4: 26) in the scriptures of Saint John Cassian the communication of the confessional communion has also an educational impact. Education is indissolubly linked with the Church, and a person's pedagogy must be conceived and capitalised in a confessional manner so as to achieve good interhuman relationships. The soul can be reinforced as a citadel. Senses are the gates of this citadel, or its walls. And through them either the good or the bad can enter a soul's life. The first gate that must be subjected to discipline is the mouth that is the tongue. This, so that every bad word should be avoided and all the good words should be built in, should be educative: "*No bad word should come out of your mouth, only good words should instead, so as to build in what is required, to give grace to those who listen*" (Ephesians 4: 29). When Christ – the Word speaks through the mouth of a priest, He communicates himself through the priest to all those who have faith. Thus, the word is a *confessional food* and it is shared only with those resembling Him that is with those who wish the sins purification and the progress in the confessional life. These earn the earnest of the eternal life, as Saint Pavel tells us about the Christians who: "*have tasted God's good word and the powers of the future age*" (Jewry 6: 5). Also, orthodox theology means to speak *with* God, not only *about* Him, since He is always the centre of our existential seeking and of our words. Education through word is an act of experienced faith. The word must be embodied into deeds, for otherwise "*the faith with no good deeds is as dead*" (Jacob 2: 26). Confessional education through the Word is achieved within the Church, where the communion, the communication and

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the Christians' community is gathered around the Person of our Saviour Jesus Christ, of His teaching. Confessional education to which John Cassian urges us to acquire has therefore as base the theandric model in which God and man work synergistically, the speech takes its source from God's Word.

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