Affective Valencies of the Homiletic Discourse

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Cette étude vise à mettre en évidence les éléments de l'arrière-plan psycho-affectif, dans l'interaction homilétique. Au-delà des idées religieuses et des concepts, des images et des conseils éthiques, le prédicateur et les fidèles qui reçoivent le message du sermon se rapportent dans une manière interpersonnelle, en utilisant à cet effet-là une gamme complète de réactions cognitives et émotionnelles en particulier. Loin de rattraper des significations extérieures dans une manière passive et mécanique, les personnes engagées dans le processus homilétique construisent des significations communicatives par leur co-orientation intérieure, selon les repères contextuels. L'interaction directe actionne des énergies personnelles profondes, des univers intérieurs à peine discernables, qui ont une fonction sous-textuelle, comme une matrice génératrice d'idées et d'émotions spécifiques à l'intérieur du discours homilétique. La sélection lexicale, la création phrastique, le style de composition et de prononciation, le geste, tous sont (chacun avec un rôle complémentaire et bien défini) des marques représentatives de la personnalité du prédicateur, en intégrant sa compétence culturelle aussi, avec tout ce que cela implique. Les effets du sermon dépendent finalement du niveau de la participation des acteurs homilétiques (le prédicateur et l'audience chrétienne) dans la relation interpersonnelle présumée par une communication authentique. Dans la création de cette connexion affective spécifique à l'homélie chrétienne, un rôle important est joué à la fois par la disponibilité communicative des personnalités concernées (un aspect qui dépend de la typologie psychologique en question), et par les moyens stylistiques, paraverbaux et mimiques-gestuels pour la construction d'un tel lien spirituel. En dépit d'un préjugé assez répandu qui s'avère être une cause des échecs homilétiques fréquents, la dimension strictement référentielle du message du sermon, bien qu'elle soit extrêmement importante, elle n'est pas la source suffisante de succès. Il faut découvrir, à partir de l'exercice pastoral et d'enseignement permanent, que l'homélie atteigne son efficacité maximale seulement quand elle se concentre sur l'interaction humaine directe entre le prédicateur et la personne du fidèle, à laquelle le discours ecclésial est destiné.

Mots-clés: homiletique, communication verbale, stylistique, affects.

In a previous paper[1] we argued that the homiletic process cannot be reduced, despite its today monologue form, to a communicative unidirectional action,

[1] Marius Daniel Ciobotă, *Discursul omiletic din perspectiva ştiinţelor comunicării*, cuvânt înainte de prof. dr. Mihai Dinu (foreword by Mihai Dinu), postfaţă de pr. prof. dr. Vasile Gordon (afterword by Vasile Gordon), Bucureşti, Editura Universitară, 2012.

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deprived of the dynamism of reciprocity and exclusively endowed with the role of transmitting (religious knowledge, information, interpretations, Christian doctrines, ethical advice etc..) and, thereby, incapable of actively integrating in its economy the multiple amount of the perceptible reactions from the receiver. The conclusion we reached is that only by continuously restoring the semantic preeminence, of maximum evidence, of the generic etymon[2], we come to conceive and practice the Christian homily in a structural psycho-dialogical manner. The recovery of meaning and functional features it had "at the beginnin" can be the only way to rediscover its communicative valence of unquestionable efficiency. Although the current form of religious speech, under the influence of rhetorical technique taken as far back as the fourth century B.C, retains almost nothing of the manifestations of the primary homiletic dialogue, practiced until that time in the meetings typical of the Christian worship[3], the circularity, informal and inexplicit, of the messages specific to preacher-type interaction are preserved, taking place in a complex interpersonal setting by its nature, with many variables and psycho-emotional interferences.

***Person* and *personality* in the homiletic process**

If we admit the assumption that the homiletic act is based on interpersonal relationship (be it even embryonic, with all its potentialities and variables, more or less perceptible, but existing), then our analysis is focused on that psycho-discursive area hosting the relationship between *persons* - that of the preacher and of his receptors[4]. At this level, communicative processes occur, which usually

[2] The original meaning (used both in the New Testament texts and in the language of the later Christian eloquence) of the Greek noun ομιλία is, on the one hand, "conversation, discussion, talk" and "companionship, relationship, connection, friendship", coming from the verb ομιλέω = "to talk, to have o conversation". The Latin mentions, as an equivalent of ομιλία, the noun *Sermo,-onis*, meaning "informal conversation": *Sermo potius quam oratio* (*ordinary speech rather than discourse*), *cf*. Gheorghe Guţu, Dictionar *Dicţionar latin-român*, Bucuresti, Humanitas, 2007, s.v. *Sermo*; behold the etymological reason for which, giving them the form of a dialogue (with Gaius Maecenas, the influential Roman nobleman who promoted arts), the Latin poet Horace used for his famous *Satirae* the word *Sermones* (*Conversations*). Besides, the literary technique of dialogue becomes favourite in the great works of the humanist culture due to Socrate's subject of eros and, subsequently, to the *Dialogues* of Plato. It is significant, at the same time, the way in which the *homily* was performed (the Christian speech integrated into the worship) in the early Church: conversational, with rhetorical simplicity, against the background of expositions or paraphrases according to the evangelical text previously lectured, coupled with extempore efusions of the speaker ("the sermons of the faithful in the early ages were of the simplest kind, being merely expositions or paraphrases of the passage of the Scripture that was read, coupled with extempore efusions of the heart", *Original Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. VII, Encyclopedia Press, 1913, s.v. *Homiletics*).

[3] Aspect of the primary Christian ethos upon which the signs of the missionary and pedagogic ecclesiastical regression nowadays urge us to reflect thoroughly.

[4] In spite of a certain technicality, taken from the modern theory of communication (founded by Karl Bühler since 1934), the term "receptor" is preferable to "listener". As shown by its morphological structure too, the original meaning of the hiperused term "audience" (Engl. "audience") concerned an auditive act; from lat. *audio-ire,-ivi,-Itum* = "to hear" resulted *auditor - oris*

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remain in the shadow of the theoretical observations provided by the manual, but which, in fact, by their pragmatic and complex range of reactions, clues and messages it expresses, represent the determining background of the respective homiletic effect. One of the "axioms" of the School of Palo Alto confirms this reality, establishing the duality, typical of any process of interpersonal communication, of the *informational* and *relational* coordinates, without forgetting to mention that the second dimension provides decisive clues for the interpretation of the former. Thus, the first conveys the objective informational content of the message (in the case of sermon, the Christian doctrines and precepts), while the other involves psycho-emotional manifestations (the ethical and affective perception of the person of the preacher, his verbal and nonverbal behavior during the sermon, the internal emotional and cognitive responsiveness of the receptors, etc..), invariable defining, playing the collective role of interpersonal matrix of the respective conceptual content.

We must not understand that, from this perspective, the role of logical-textual factors, argumentative or linguistic, is somewhat minimized, but nor they should be generalised by giving full importance in the economy of preaching. The words, utterances and ideas of homily - *intradiscursive reviewers*, in the terminology of Maria Catanescu[5] - cannot be regarded abstractly and dissociatively, organically non-integrated in the global communicative context. Perceived only in their syntactic logic or at most argumentative, these reviewers do not exceed the status of simple utilitarian linguistic elements. When they manage to avoid, by relevance, aesthetic value and concision, the pointless profusion of the "void speech"[6], the ideas and locutions of the sermon open hermeneutic-emotional passages that build and maintain the relational dimension of the homily[7], this becoming the

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= "listener, auditor, disciple of someone" and, finally, *audientia-ae* = "listening", a word which *The Dictionary of Latin - Roman borrowings in the old Romanian language (1421-1760)*, Bucuresti, Editura Stiintifica, 1992 (authors: Gheorghe Chivu, Emanuela Buză and Roman Alexandra Moraru) mention it, with a multiple etymology, as having entered the Romanian language at the end of the seventeenth century. Although it doesn't contain a special indicator for the visual action, the term "receptor", preferred by us in this case, is based on the assumption that people present not only *hear* the sermon, but also *notice* the nonverbal behavior related to it, recepting certain messages also visually, which, for the persuasive motivation of the preaching, is an essential factor. The receiver hears, sees, feels, reacts spiritually before the whole homiletic dramaturgy of the preacher. Recent research in the field of kinesics reveals that "persons in direct interaction predominantly transmit nonverbal messages" (Mihai Dinu, *Comunicarea – repere fundamentale*, 2007, p.17). According to Ray Birdwhistell, the "father" of kinesics, they cover 65% of the importance of discursive efficiency, while the American psychologist Albert Mehrabian gives the non communicative function of the *non* and *para* verbal a significant percentage of 93%!

[5] Maria Cătănescu, „Retorica elogiului în Didahiile lui Antim Ivireanul", in Al. Gafton, Sorin Guia and Ioan Milică (ed.), *Text şi discurs religios*, II, Iaşi, Editura Universităţii „Al. I. Cuza", 2010, p.187.

[6] Petru Creția, *Eseuri morale*, București, Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române, 2000, p.143.

[7] Although the term, in the treaties of homiletics, has a well-defined technical sense (namely explanatory discourse, exegetic-thematic of direct scriptural inspiration), we prefer here the basic meaning (native), of psycho-dialogic moment, the natural product of an interpersonal Christian

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germinating soil of the ideas communicated. Since "through language emotions transform into ideas and thus become communicable"[8], the language transcends its conventional primitive function, becoming partaker of the determinant environment of our thinking and emotions[9]. It becomes, in other words, means of communication and intellective knowledge, but also interpersonal. As for the receptors, the appropriation of homiletic message releases decodifying processes that contain a deep subjective mark. Both as fundamental linguistic units, and within their syntactic and stylistic relations from the structure of that homiletic text, words involve those distinct *psychic marks* (the famous expression of Ferdinand de Saussure) which the system of the language determined in the consciousness of receptors on other communicative occasions. As such, by virtue of the unique intrapersonal profile of each of them, the semantic echoes of the locutionary level is amplified in an unquantifiable manner.

For instance, the fact that the same utterance can be expressed using tonal variations ranging from "kind" to "rigorous" is an easy but telling example regarding the decisive influence of the relational (affective) level on the quality of the reception act. From this perspective, in case of sermon, the quality of the pastoral relation between the church orator and the receptors of his discourse plays an essential role. Represented by the concept of *relational authority*, it is expressed by the level of listeners' confidence in preacher's words, resulted from the "development of good pastoral and personal relationships and from the stimulation of a sense of human research for authenticity and values shared"[10]. Being possible only in terms of a minimum relational setting, the knowledge of psychological data about the receptors of the sermon will allow the orator to anticipate, with some limits, of course, the reactions generated by speech. The possible information gaps can be improved by using tools such as dictionaries, books or asking experts, a much more difficult solution, if not impossible, in the case of interpersonal relationship dysfunction. "Man affects message. Listeners do not hear a sermon, but a man", says the American Professor Haddon W. Robinson in his course of

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relationship, that can be perfectly illustrated in the model given by the Old Testament by describing the hierophanic dialogue on Mount Sinai: " face to face, as a man may have talk with his friend" - Exodus 33:11.

[8] Henri Wald, *Limbaj și valoare*, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1973, p.126.

[9] The explanations on the subject, essential in the philosophy of language, that "word is not only the coat of the idea, but directly participates in the formation of the idea itself" were the concern the famous philologist Henri Wald: *Realitate și limbaj* (1968), *Homo significans* (1970), *Limbaj și valoare* (1973), *Expresivitatea ideilor* (1986), *Homo loquens* (2001). H. Wald follows the linguistic doctrine of Wilhelm von Humboldt, the founder of the modern university, according to whom "language is the maker organ of thought" (central idea of a text entitled *On the Diversity of Human Language Construction and its Influence on the Mental Development of the Human Species*, published by Humboldt in 1836).

[10] „Relational authority comes from developing good pastoral and personal relationships and fostering a sense of a human quest for authenticity and shared values so that listeners will trust what the preacher says", John S. McClure, *Preaching Words. 144 Key Terms in Homiletics*, Louisville – London, Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, s.v. *authority*.

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homiletics[11], paraphrasing the famous definition of preaching given by Phillips Brooks, namely the "truth expressed through personality".

"An endless mystery that wants to be known by itself and also to make it known more and more"[12], the human *person* remains, paradoxically, a universe ultimately unknowable, which makes it perhaps the most difficult epistemological object. If we consider the structural similarities, postulated by the Christian personalism (where the "mystery of the human person reflects the mystery of the Godhead"[13]) we come to the conclusion, far from being satisfactory to us, that both God and man can be known only on the basis of the personal *energies* manifested in relation to otherness, the depth of their inner existence obstinately eluding the direct epistemic approach of the others. If, on the one hand, in the interpersonal knowledge it represents the great obstacle, on the other hand, in a self-referential regard, this apofatism of the person is not necessarily valid. Self-knowledge is one of the principles to which the universal philosophical reflection has paid special attention. Socrate's advice of ascetic doctrine value, the true knowledge of the limits of your own interiority is the key to overcome the limits of the self. In other regards, not too different, but theocentric, identifying perfection in the man "descending into humility", in the saint who feels and sincerely bewails his moral falls[14], everything in the sense of an ascension to the inner lights of perfection, the Christian spirituality of philokalic origins assigns (even if somewhat metaphorically) to the intrapersonal knowledge some virtues that are much superior to others, such as seing angels or rising from the dead.

All personalist thinkers agree on certain defining traits of the human person: its irreducible *uniqueness* (individuality), *interiority* (consciousness) and *autonomy* (freedom). Although not completely independent of the various circumstantial factors, the human personal entity is exercised according to an internal *autonomy*, a *stability* or *consistency*, that allows a predictability of the behavior depending on the personality structure, and finally, on the *motivational specificity* that cannot be assessed but based on its effects. As a sum of psychosocial traits inherited or acquired (environment, education, cultural influences), personality, in its turn, has three essential functions - *epistemic, pragmatic* and *axiological*[15] – in the virtue of

[11] Haddon Robinson, *Arta comunicării adevărului biblic*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Logos, 1998, p. 24.

[12] Dumitru Stăniloae, *Iisus Hristos – lumina lumii și îndumnezeitorul omului*, ediție îngrijită de Monica Dumitrescu, București, Editura Anastasia, 1993, p.189.

[13] Paul Evdokimov, *Viața spirituală în cetate*, prefață de Michel Evdokimov (preface by Michel Evdokimov), traducere de Măriuca și Adrian Alexandrescu, București, Editura Nemira, 2010, p.108.

[14] "The saints are holy only for the others, to themselves they are seen burdened with sins [...] as the hero knows not that he is a hero, the scholar knows not that he is a scholar, while the wise say that the foolishness of the world is wiser than him", Constantin Noica reflected, in an essay entitled "Regula, excepția și nașterea culturilor", in *Despre demnitatea Europei*, ed. a 2-a (second edition), București, Editura Humanitas, 2012, p.21

[15] Paul Popescu-Neveanu, *Dicționar de psihologie*, București, Editura Albatros, 1978, s.v. *personality*.

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which it creates a relative extent of ideological meanings and sets the coordinates of the interpersonal relationships in which it is involved. Despite these theoretical guidelines about it, the person frequently proves, in situations that would justify the predictability of its behavior, a deep spontaneous character, inconsistent with the expectations of the others. Avoiding strict classifications and epistemic patterns that try to assign an identifiable constancy to it, the human personality is actually controlled by a *dialectic tension* (Emmanuel Mounier), a dynamism, internal but perceptible also in the exterior, by which it manages its identity crises. This is how, despite current talk about the *peers*, the essential dissimilarity that human persons actually present among them, by their internal unrepeatable structures, has all chances to contradict the appearances of this term so frequently used.

As personal beings, we considerably resemble at the generic level, but we are fundamentally different regarding the modes of perceiving external reality. Personality remains a praxeological concept, because, as it is "a diffuse force, irreducible to intellectual qualities or certain tendencies of the individual (choleric, phlegmatic, passionate)"[16], the only analytical grid valid remains the way in which our own manifestations are perceived by the other personalities whom we interact with. At this level of discussion, the ultimate and most desirable attribute of a personality remains *authenticity*, a concept synonymously associated, not without insignificant differential nuances, with notions of *honesty, truth* and *spontaneity*. Despite the result, inevitably obscure, of our use of the language services, the authenticity of the speaker's personality reflects the way in which his spiritual substance, ultimately untranslatable, transposes however, spontaneously and honestly, to verbal and mimic-gesture expressions meant to share, as much as possible, that inner content entirely faithful to the Truth.

Considering that in the act of perception "the understanding scheme is personalized"[17] according to the extent of our own emotions and cognitive marks[18], the semantic asymmetry that we find in the current practice of communication is due to the essential difference between the intrinsic experience of the participants. This happens because our spiritual substance (the connotative meanings assigned to words, the domination of different cultural *patterns*, the intimate semantic-associative mechanisms, values assumed, beliefs, aspirations, likes, etc..) is nothing but the result of an unrepeatable formative direction. In case of verbal communication, although dictionaries commonly assign a linguistic equivalent of

[16] Didier Julia, *Dicționar de filosofie*, traducere, avanprefață și completări privind filosofia românească de dr. Leonard Gavriliu (translation, preface and annotation by ph.d Leonard Gavriliu), București, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 1996, s.v. *personality*.

[17] Eugen Negrici, *Imanența literaturii*, București, Editura Cartea Românească, 1981, p.8.

[18] The order of the enumeration of these perceptive factors is not random. The American researcher Joseph E. LeDoux found that the *amygdal nucleus*, the intracefal organ responsible for our affective life, is the one which receives first, before the neocortex, the optical or acoustic signals we receive, which explains the anteriority and the prevalence of emotion upon the logic in the human receptive behavior. See the work *The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious underpinnings of Emotional Life*, New York, Touchstone, 1998.

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words (denotation), in the consciousness of each user there are different semantic polychromies of a word (connotation), which, in the process of reception, exceed by far the pure denotative function. In this phenomenon specific to the receiving consciousness we must find the explanation of the feeling we have, almost every time, that our utterances do not find themselves, from a semantic point of view, in the mind of the other but with some variable differences. Sometimes, the answer or reaction we receive shows, as clearly as possible, the change which the content of our message suffers, once arrived in the psychic environment of the receiver. Other times, this incongruency between the intended meaning of the one emitting a message and the one the receiver proves is felt much later, together with its consequences, some even unpleasant. A relative substitute of the human instinct of unity and communion, the verbal communication ends up by finding the fundamental incommunicability of the states of consciousness that generate the words: "between what we say and what we would want to say the equivalence seldom obeys the mathematical rule"[19].

By virtue of this assumption, the homiletic communicative background puts to dialogue several axiological personal *patterns* that exist, of course, against the background of an identitary plurality. The preacher shows a certain type of personality, which comes in touch with similar personalities or very likely, different, with personal cognitive and emotional organisations, which makes the progressive dynamics of the homiletic relation involve, as expected, adequate variations. As „we cannot speak of person/personality outside the interaction with other persons/personalities"[20], the homiletic relation channels initiated have, in fact, two interacting poles, of a constitution that is radically different in terms of numbers and, of course, in terms of structure: the singular personality, of the preacher and the collective one, of the receiving public. Therefore, the different intensities of the personality of the preacher become sensitive (and, thus, susceptible to influence), to the same extent, both to the autogenerative ideation of the discourse and to the personal presence of those he has in front. He has to manage, from a psychic-discursive point of view, „the cadence of a double rhythm: the personal spiritual rhythm and the spiritual rhythm of the listeners"[21]. The „Grammar" of this inexplicit conversation will configuratively depend on the level of reciprocal sensitiveness of the homiletic interacting persons, which will make the rhetorical global effort of the preacher concentrate on the „knowledge of the nature of his receptors, with a view of understanding their passions"[22] and place, from a quasi-physical point of view, in the position of receptor. The empathic

[19] Ştefan Munteanu, *Introducere în stilistica operei literare*, Timişoara, Editura de Vest, 1995, p.71.

[20] Mihai Dinu, *Fundamentele comunicării interpersonale*, Bucureşti, Editura All, 2008, p.21.

[21] Sebastian Chilea, „Predicatorul", in *Mitropolia Olteniei*, Anul X (1958), nr.3-4, p.178.

[22] "to understand the nature of listeners in order to comprehend their passions", Thomas O. Sloane (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*, Oxford University Press, 2006, s.v. *Audience*.

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ability is, thus, one of the *sine qua non* qualities of the personality of an efficient homiletic communicator.

In the light of the unique amalgam of positive features (and, inevitably, of imperfections) that constitute its inner nature, that *anima* with which C.G. Jung identified "the real internal force of the personality"[23], the adaptive-flexional capacity of the speaker provides, ultimately, the level of success of communication. Practically, the religious orator is involved in an interpersonal relationship with each receptor, a fact which, obviously, considerably amplifies the complexity of the homiletic interactional environment, determining us to focus even more on what happens beyond ideas and words, but also to find, at the same time, "the relation of forces" in which the preacher is, from the beginning, minoritary[24]. At this level of communication, based on the fact that "the significance given to signals (words, paralanguage, mimic-gesture *n.n MDC*) cannot be identical for all those taking part in the communicative act[25], but also, as through the agency of the conotative function, "the context can change any type of language"[26], we have to admit the existence, necessary indisputable as a matter of fact, of a interactional psycho-mechanics powerfully depending on the specificity of the personalities involved, meant to built the semantic globality of the homily.

Verbal pathos or emotionality *in* and *by* word

Although in their paradigmatic dimension (*virtual*) the constituent elements of the language compose the linguistic selection background of a socio-cultural community, in terms of syntagm and, implicitly, phonematic (the *material* side of language) words prove their descent from an inner space streaked with emotional preponderance specific to the person who uses the language. Beyond the grammatical principles established by regulatory convention, the choice of words, their syntactic-semantic coordination and stylistic expressiveness have as a source,

[23] Paul Popescu – Neveanu, *op. cit.*, s.v. *person*.

[24] This aspect can generate an inferiority complex in the psyche of the preacher, expressing through hyper-emotivity or fright. The intention to provide all listeners present with homiletic "satisfaction" makes him try an inhibitive feeling of affective and intellectual weakness, the negative rhetorical consequences of which are easy to be inferred. In a study dedicated to the occurences of psychological phenomena in the act of preaching, Marcu Banescu gives the following recommendations to eliminate the fright and timidity in the sermon: 1) a permanent a *self-education effort* aimed at enhancing the potential qualities, 2) *thorough preparation of speeches* (which makes the speaker "master of the sermon content, master of himself and master of his listeners), 3) *autonomy* in drawing up the sermon (without many "loans"), 4) avoiding hidden *oratorical narcissism*, which, paradoxically, acts harmfully on the creative capacity, 5) continuous exercises of *visual interaction* with the public; cf. Marcu BĂNESCU, „Emoție – trac – timiditate", în *Mitropolia Banatului*, Anul XXXIV (1984), nr. 5-6, p. 332-337.

[25] J. J. Van Cuilenburg, O. Scholten, G. W. Noomen, *Ştiinţa comunicării (Communication Science)*, versiune românească și studiu introductiv de Tudor Olteanu, Bucureşti, Editura Humanitas, 1998, p. 26.

[26] Eugen Negrici, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

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"often subconsciously, the temper and character of the speaking subject"[27]. The literary and oratorical concept of *style* is based exactly on this individualized mark which the author imprints on the text issued, at the level of the linguistic code used, but also at the level of the global message. Interacting with the communicative context (which includes, in the first place, the receptors of his speech) and lexical material available, the orator comes to innovate in terms of style, using linguistic means meant to intensify the expressiveness of speech. "There are the same words, no doubt, but not the same values at all"[28].

Even if the issuer from the pulpit of the Christian message does not share to the audience a personal thematic corpus, unique and personal, but a system of precepts previously formed in the history of the Church, therefore supra-individual truths, however, "the catalytic power of the sermon in the discovery or rediscovery of the structures of this doctrine is based on the ideas, beliefs and attitudes of the preacher"[29]. In the stylistic phenomenon, the referential component of communication deeply interferes with the subjective one. A verbal message never contains pure ideas, but, as impersonal as one would like, communicates, hiding and revealing at the same time, "a reflection of the speaker's psychic intimacy"[30]. Thus, in a perfect complementarity, the grammatical sense, the degree of emotionality transposed by speaker to expression by means of verbal and paraverbal vectors and the intentional dynamics of the nonverbal language determine the stylistic profile of that homiletic production.

The coordinates of the public perception on the personality of the preacher form what the modern rhetorical studies call the *persuasive ethos* or the charismatic virtues of the speaker[31], a factor credited with a major share in the economy of speech. This extraverbal influence of the transmitter can have three stages: *initial* (the qualities previously recognized by the public: competence, morality, common sense, willingness, authenticity, etc.), *derived* (the public impression can change during the speech, depending on the logical quality and the expressiveness of the presentation) and *final* (the first two stages, accumulated). The ideas, but especially

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[27] Dumitru Irimia, *Structura stilistică a limbii române contemporane*, Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1986, p. 13.

[28] Paul Valéry, *Poezii. Dialoguri. Poetică şi estetică*, traducere Marius Ghica, Bucureşti, Editura Univers, 1989, p. 570 apud Irina Petraş, *Teoria literaturii. Dicţionar-antologie (curente literare, figuri de stil, genuri şi specii literare, metrică şi prozodie)*, Bucureşti, Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 1996, s.v. *trop*.

[29] Marcu Bănescu, „Emoţie – trac – timiditate", p. 336.

[30] Tudor Vianu, „Dubla intenţie a limbajului şi problema stilului", in *Modele de analize literare şi stilistice*, ediţie îngrijită şi prefaţă de Al. Hanţă, ediţia a II-a revăzută şi adăugită, Bucureşti, Editura Albatros, 1989, p. 80.

[31] To analyse this concept from a rhetorical perspective, see Constantin Sălăvăstru, *Mic tratat de oratorie*, Iaşi, Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2006, p. 59. On the same topic, a very good writer of homiletic studies duly noticed: „A preacher is different from the other not so much by the soources he uses or the topic he approaches, but by what he has and offers from his human personality, from his labour and sensitiveness": Pr. dr. Marcu Bănescu, „Păcatul suficienţei", in *Telegraful Român*, nr.15-16/1986, p. 4.

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the words of the sermon borrow, therefore, the ethical and emotional authority of the one who uses them. It is this "ability to put his emotional life in the service of speech"[32] that turns the preacher into what the Christian missiology calls a *confessor* of the Gospel, not just a messenger of it. The personality of the orator achieves a nex with the conceptual universe he preaches and, from this existential position, seeks to obtain the affective consensus of the others. It is only under such conditions that his sermon becomes genuine "teaching utterance"[33], according to the model of Christ and the Apostles. By the virtue of the conative function of the sermon, this personal expressiveness of emotional origin has an „energetic" character too (in the Humboldtian sense), as, based on the concept of *behavioral synchronism*, the emotions, transposed to verbal and mimic and gesture expressions, exert an important influence on the receptor, stimulating his thinking and particularly the feelings. In the reception of the sermon, people exceed the pure intellective dimension, letting themselves dominated by feelings, aspirations, positive or negative moods etc. Given this inner dynamics, extremely hard to be predicted, of the receptive process, the preacher is fully aware of the reality according to which "the speech conveys not only the logical dimension of the idea – the judgment - but also its infralogical area - the pragmatic-affective attitude"[34].

A fundamental generative principle of style is the linguistic *choice* or *option*[35]. Determined from double direction - the expressive value of the word and the individual attitude of the speaker towards the subject and the receiver[36] - the lexical selection configures the stylistic identity of the text. Arguing the existence of anamnetic-semantic resources of the word, Gh N. Dragomirescu wrote in the pages of his matchless encyclopedia of the figures of speech: "Word is, by definition, a deposit of *latent* images expecting nothing but the lucky integration in a syntagmatic uniqueness that would activate its meanings: to make it "expressive" and "original"[37]. The appropriate syntactic gesture, the happiest combination of sentences are born in the inner dynamics of the speaker, stimulated, of course, by two other important factors: the personal-affective specificity of the receptors and the extraverbal context (psychological, social, cultural, physical, temporal). All these elements are added the influence of the discursive *subtext*, namely the totality of meanings that the message involves. That is why the preacher, the verbal homiletic transmitter, but also the listeners to a significant extent, "personalise the

[32] *Ibidem*, p. 60.

[33] Bartolomeu Anania, *Cuvânt înainte* la Ioan Toader, *Metode noi în practica omiletică*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Arhidiecezană, 1997, p. 3.

[34] Henri Wald, *Expresivitatea ideilor*, Bucureşti, Editura Cartea Românească, 1986, p.66.

[35] Together with two other, as present and active in the stylistic genesis: *deviation* (deviation from the linguistic rule) and *specialization.*

[36] Roman Jackobson called it *emotive* or *expressive* function of the linguistic communication, identifying it, together with five other (*referential, poetic, metalingual, phatic* and *conative* or *rethoric*).

[37] Gh. N. Dragomirescu, *Mică enciclopedie a figurilor de stil*, chapter. „Sursa stilistică a limbii la nivelul gramaticii", Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1975, p. 9.

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message to different extent"[38]. The reflexivity of issuance encounters the emotional *patterns* typical of the addressees (transitivity), which facilitates, through the locutionary values, the affective transfer. From the perspective of the homiletic transmitter, the solution of maximum efficiency lies in the sense of the responsible combination of different linguistic registers, subordinated, obviously, to the effective preaching of the Christian precepts and, ultimately, to the soteriological purpose of preaching.

As a complementary element towards the stylistic profile of speech, the *affective accent* or *insistence* becomes perceptible at the phonetic level, a "subjective way of emphasis, determined by emotional reasons, with expressive function"[39], based on the relation between the dynamic accent (physiological-expiratory) and the musical one (generated by the extension of some vowels). In constant correlation with other phonological elements (intonation, duration, intensity, rhythm) and with the prosodic ones (rhythm, rhyme, pauses, tempo), the affective accent creates new stylistic valencies in the context. Thus, the preacher priest prefers certain words, which he places in different discursive sequences, giving them an obvious affective mark, meant to transmit the state of mind of the speaker, but also to change, in the same direction, the feelings of the homiletic receptors. In the following examples, the spiritual presence of the speaker becomes perceptible, especially phonetically: "Replace the good deed with *the better* deed" (the *stylistic* accent placed on the modal adverb *better* suggests the idea of qualitative progress of the current Christian practice), "Through m*aa*ny attempts passed the first Christian martyrs to overcome the persecuting paganism of those times!" (the affective *accent* takes the form of vocalic extension, showing the sympathy and admiration of the preacher towards those people and, at the same time, aiming at the religious and moral impulsion of the audience), "This *re-vol - ting* attitude of Cain was the first murder in the biblical history of mankind!" (the phonetic separation into syllables of the adjective and the concentration of the articulation energy on the first syllable highlight the speaker's indignation towards that gesture, intending to create the repulsion of receptors to the sin of murder).

The argumentative and linguistic instrumentation specific to the *pathos* dimension aims, thus, at stimulating the passional character of the public. It is found in that rhetoric function called by the ancient theorists *animos impellere* (resort to feelings, to *soul*) and which found a favorite ground of manifestation in the *exordium* and *epilogue*. In fact, analyzing the structural taxonomy of the oratorical speech, we reach the conclusion that the dominant manner in which it was designed and presented meets the emotional demands: 1. **Exordium** (affective mark) → 2. **Narratio** (logical-demonstrative intention) → 3. **Confirmatio** (logical-

[38] Dumitru Irimia, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[39] Angela Bidu-Vrănceanu, Cristina Călăraşu, Liliana Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu, Mihaela Mancaş, Gabriela Pană-Dindelegan, *Dicţionar de ştiinţe ale limbii*, ed. a 2-a, Bucureşti, Editura Nemira&Co, 2005, s.v. *affective*.

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demonstrative function) → 4. **Epilogue** (affective mark)[40]. The *Logos* is, thus, enclosed by *pathos* and *ethos*, rhetorical dimensions that predominantly communicate the speaker, intending to involve, by this, the feelings of the receptors. This entitles us to infer that the appropriate environment to exert the persuasion is an *emotional* one. For this reason, as an homiletic text inevitably bears the mark of the state of mind of its transmitter, "that emotive and musical meaning of things, hastened in its subjective intimacy"[41], but also, to an equal extent at least, of the collective receptor (what Michel Riffaterre called "the stylistic of decodifier" or the *effects* of language), the semantic level of the sermon is the product of this affective hermeneutics.

The homiletic type interaction presents perceptive manifestations similar to those of conversation. The researchers in the field of interactionist psychology reached the conclusion that during the conversational exchange communicators undergo, in stages or discontinuously, *interactional micro-emotions*, which they do not retain as such, they remaining in a stage rather subliminal[42]. In the case of orator, this affective substratum becomes perceptible in the lexical typology used, in the declarative and phraseological combinatorics, at the supra-segmental level of the language (phonetic variability, verbal flow, pitch of voice, intensity, pause etc.), in the mimicry and gestures complementary to the speech and in the synthetic organization of the discourse (the global semantics of the sermon). The most productive stylistic quality for the creative liberty of the preacher remains *the novelty* of the linguistic units used (words and syntagms). This transformational dynamics of the style reflects what the linguist academician Iorgu Iordan called, using an expression that became legendary, *the life of words*, namely "the speaker's heart into the words"[43]. In this regard, it is impossible to ignore the fact that the homiletic discourse enhanced for many centuries the old church language, that "turned from a defining component of our old literary writing into the distinct variant of the modern Romanian culture"[44]. Therefore, the importance that church

[40] According to the model of a known trope, the French semiologist Roland Barthes sees this affective framing of the message as a "chiasmus construction"; R. BARTHES, „L'ancienne rhetorique", *Communications*, 16, 1970, p. 214.

[41] Tudor Vianu, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

[42] Jacques Cosnier, *Introducere în psihologia emoțiilor și a sentimentelor. Afectele, emoțiile, sentimentele, pasiunile*, traducere de Eliza Galan, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2007, p. 87.

[43] Iorgu Iordan, *Stilistica limbii române*, București, Editura Științifică, 1975, p. 13.

[44] Gheorghe Chivu, „Am devenit lingvist?", in *De ce am devenit lingvist? Omagiu academicianului Marius Sala*, volum îngrijit de Emanuela Timotin și Ștefan Colceriu, Bucureşti, Editura Univers Enciclopedic Gold, 2012, p.57; for the importance of the religious language in the configuration of the European culture, see also Eugen Munteanu, *Lexicologie biblică românească*, Bucureşti, Editura Humanitas, 2008: A privileged factor in the interference between the cultures and implicitly between the national languages of Europe is the biblical text" (p.407). On the same argumentative direction, Rodica Zafiu notes, in an excellent study dedicated to homiletic language, that "sermon is one of the most stable types of texts by which the tradition of the rhetoric was preserved and continued in the European culture", „Ethos, Pathos și Logos în textul predicii", in Al.

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terms and expressions hold (the lexical set which, by its obvious archaic character, has a diminished affective potential) in the linguistic competence of the preacher represents the main factor of the tension between traditionalism and innovation at the level of their discursive performance. Drawing a conclusion, for the time being, to a problem that is still open and actual, we believe that the presence of the church vocabulary in the stylistic structure of the preacher nowadays becomes a secondary demand, rather aesthetical, being justified as long as it does not affect the semantic congruence, a *sine qua non* condition of the effective communication[45].

Conclusion

The homiletic communication undertakes a semantic territory deeply rooted in terms of interpersonal relationship, between the preacher and the faithful receptors. Far from taking, passively and mechanically, exterior meanings, the *persons* involved in the homiletic process forge the communicative meanings through their inner co-orientation according to the contextual marks. The direct interaction puts into action deep personal energies, inner universes that are hard to discern, performing a sub-textual function, with the role of a matrix generating the ideas and emotionality specific to homiletic discourse. The lexical selection, the creations of phrases, the compositional and prononciative style, the gestures, all are (each with its well-defined and complementary role towards the other elements) representative marks of the personality of the preacher, the scope of this concept integrating the cultural competence too. The spiritual effects of the sermon depend,

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Gafton, Sorin Guia şi Ioan Milică (ed.), *Text şi discurs religios*, II, Iaşi, Editura Universităţii „Al. I. Cuza", 2010, p. 27.

[45] Although aware of the undeniable historical and literary value, but also of a certain spiritual expressivity of the church language, we believe that the persuasive motivation and the psycho-pedagogical one of the sermon can persuade the Orthodox orator nowadays not to sacrifice, by linguistic attachment to the past, the principle of discursive accessibility, the inviolable condition of a good communication. The obsolete (archaic) forms of the ecclesiastical speech often produce semantic obscurity, therefore, they must be trusted to the specialized philological approach (diachronic study of texts and linguistic typologies), for scientific purposes only. As for it, the homiletic language will facilitate the understanding of the Christian message by the actual world only if it adapts, with maximum communicative realism, to the linguistic competence of the receptors in the respective historical period. To this end, the practice of permanent dialogue with the parishioners (in order to perform a thematic and linguistic diagnosis), the synonymous variation updated (to avoid lexical monotony) and the prophylaxis of wooden language (an anti-language phenomenon characterized by the very annihilation of subjectivity in the written and oral expression) are just some of the means advisable. However, we must also draw attention on a few "traps" watching the church orator eager for such a stylistic compatibility: the extreme of the linguistic picturesque, of the metaphorism which "impresses before convincing" (Rev. Stephen Slevoacă), the excessive colloquial orality ("the familiar language, Rodica Zafiu drew attention in one of her curative interventions in *Romania literară*, is a counterweight and useful store for language varieties, but can also assume a negative dominant role the moment when threatening to break into any context, erasing the boundaries between registers and leveling the expression"), the frequent use of slang register, media topics, politics and so on.

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ultimately, on the level of involvement of the homiletic actors (the preacher and the Christian public) in the interpersonal relationship implied by an authentic communication. In carrying out this affective connection specific to the Christian homily, a very important role is played by the communicative availability of the personalities involved (aspect dependent on the psychological typology in question), but also the stylistic methods, paraverbal and mimic and gesture in order to build such a spiritual connection. Despite a quite widespread prejudice, that turns out to be a cause of the frequent homiletic failures, the strict referential dimension of the message of the sermon, although extremely important, is not a sufficient source of success. We shall discover, from the continuous pastoral and didactic exercise, that homily reaches its maximum efficiency only when it focuses on direct human interaction between the person of the preacher and the person of the believer to whom the ecclesial speech addresses.

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