POETICS OF AUTHENTICITY AND ITS PRELIMINARY FORMS

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Abstract: *Authenticity has always had a special significance in the modern paradigm of the novel, mainly due to the innovation in the concept of novel writing, in the status of the novelist and in his relation to the narrator and to the characters. The authenticist novelist ceases to fancy oneself as the omniscient narrator or the lucid analyst of the psychic, being interested in the scattering of the inner world of the characters and in the construction of a writing which would have, just like the diary, the value of a real ,,life document''. Primarily, such type of writing presumes emancipation from the artifacts implied by the effort of literaturization. The appeal to the offers of memory, especially of the involuntary one, had the mission to help writing mirror the flow of conscience with maximum fidelity. Since real life is preferable to „the illusion of life'', the authenticist writer describes only what he had experienced directly, using the first person narrator. The authenticist poetics – assimilated to a large extent to Proustianism – has ancient roots not only in the antique Roman and Hellenistic biographies and autobiographies, from the encomiastic public type to the intimate ones (private and personal), but also more recent, „surface" roots, whose „ground" is represented by the diaries before the Proustian stage of French literature. Moreover, their roots can be also found in certain novel patterns, such as „the alleged realists", the naturalist one – oriented towards the detailed study of the characters' behaviour-and the Stendhalian anti- aestheticism, patterns which the authenticists distilled in the retorts of their poetics, a poetics whose main features are the refusal of the traditional „ enactment" and of the the" artifact of the story" and the interest for the „ human fact" and for multiple angle analytical investigation.*

Keywords *: authenticity, poetics, discourse*

During the third and the fourth decennies of the last century, *authenticity* became the expression of the innovation in the novel discourse, a evidence in our prose towards the synchronizing with Western literature represented by Marcel Proust, André Gide, Aldous Huxley, Malraux, Virginia Woolf.

The new literary trend materialized in works of fiction as well as in theoretical studies. The respective orientation - supported by Camil Petrescu, Mircea Eliade, Mihail Sebastian, Anton Holban, Max Blecher (and others) – was analyzed by G. Călinescu, în *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent*, in the chapters entitled *Romancierii 1920-1930. Romanul gloatei. Romanul copilăriei. Proustieni* and, respectively, *Noua generaţie. Momentul 1933. Filosofia ,,neliniştii'' şi a ,,aventurii''. Literatura ,, experienţelor''* .

From the point of view of Nicolae Manolescu, the new type of novel – which falls in the category of the *ionic* novel – was opened, first of all, towards the mirroring of the flow of conscience and implicitly, of the memory. Analyzing the concept of *authenticity* in the theoretical articles and in the prose of Camil Petrescu, he emphasizes (poaching a wide range of observations on the modern novel from *Istoria romanului modern*, by R-M Albérès) the contribution of the Romanian writer to the *detheatricalization* of the novel, to the emancipation of writing from the artifacts implied generally by the *doric* type effort of *literaturization :* „Ultimately, the authenticity is that concrete, substantial life, found in the street, in the daily prose,

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which, the narrator prefers, in *Ultima noapte*, as compared to the «illusion of life», to the grandiloquence of the realist (doric) novel (Manolescu, 1981: 93).

Admiring the novelty of the Proustian writing, Camil Petrescu denied the doric auctorial omniscience and, as a rule, the traditional doctrine which consisted in directing full atention to the „character", „type" and even to the"archetype". Consequently, Camil Petrescu prefers to register what he knows directly: „to describe only what I see, what my senses register, what I think. This is the only reality I can narrate [...]. In any event, I can describe only my own felings, my own images. I can be honest only as a first person narrator". (Petrescu, 2002: 27).

His own theory of the novel – understood as a ,,life document'' – was applied by Camil Petrescu in *Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război* and in *Patul lui Procust*. G. Călinescu considered that the value of the novel *Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război* consists in Gheorghidiu's confession, in the „nervous'' monologue, completed in ,,the **classical** French style of the analysis'' and from which ,,an indetermined inner life comes off, although real, like some sort of intellectual symphony, which surprises you by the exactness with which disparate elements interwine, which entrances you by the pleasure resulting from psychical clarities."(Călinescu, 1982: 745).

Authenticity will orient the attention of new Romanian prose writers towards the novel pattern of the **diary** type, a formula in which the first person narration becomes a *convention* which imposed due to the fact that it is capable of suggest the key of total *sincerity* to the utmost extent. Dumitru Micu defined authenticist sincerity as being the ,,courage to register the activity of conscience just as it flows, without preconceived ideas" (Micu, 1994: 58).

Mircea Eliade specified in „Originalitate şi autenticitate", that authenticity means essentially, the opposite of what is **false** in literature and, respectively, the opposite of fiction, fable. The authenticist authors lay their account on the primacy of the objective, real fact. At the same time, authenticity expresses a "degraded" life style and thinking in relation to the mythical conscience (Eliade, 1991). However, as Adrian Marino stated, very often, the *non-authentic* can be promoted under the label of authenticity. The fake, manufactured authenticism, substitutes another reality to the concrete one, using " the artefact of sincerity" as it happens in certain diaries. (Marino, 1973).

In its dimension as a ,,life document'' supported formally by the use of the **first person**, the authenticist novel was not a *radical* invention of modern writers foremost of whom was Marcel Proust.

The term ,,auhenticity'' (< fr. *authenticité, authentique*, cf. lat. *authenticus*) enriched its meanings from one period to another, from one writer to another. An *ethical* significance lay at the origin of the term "authenticity", which sent towards some structural aspects of *moral conscience*, such as *: truthfulness, self-fidelity , consistency, sincerity, inner honesty*. Therefore, to be authentic meant to be true to oneself and to live accordingly to one's own distinctiveness which determines the sincere *manifestation*, without corrections and other cosmetic interventions of *personality*.

The historical roots of this novel type go back to **documentary** type **ancient** literature, illustrated by *autobiographies* and *memories* – species of the biographical genre.

In the novels *Măgarul de aur* and *Satiricon*, which belong to the second novel category (which follow the ,,adventure and trial novel''), *the criminal act* ,,is the moment of *private life that becomes*, as it were, *involuntarily* public'' (Bahtin, 1982:

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338). The third type of novel of antiquity, *the biographical novel* which was based on ,,the new type of *biographical time* and the new image specific to man on his *life course''. (*Bahtin, *op.cit:*347*),* ,,two essential types of autobiography'' had been developed. The first was the *platonician type*, in which the autobiographical conscience was marked by the chronotope ,,the life course of one seeking true knowledge'' and in which the metamophosis becomes an *inner* metamorphosis. *Apologia lui Socrate* and *Fedon a*re representative works for that matter.

The second type of autobiographies (*autobiography and rhetoric biography)* are based on *encomion* – << the funeral eulogy which replaced the old ,,lament" (trenos). Thus, the form of encomion determined the first antique autobiography: Socrates' defence discourse. Speaking about this classical type, we have to mention first that the classical forms of autobiograpies and biographies were not *bookish literary works*, isolated from the concrete socio-political event of their roaring publicity. On the contrary, they were totally determined by this event, being verbal, civic and political acts of public praise or of public self-justification of real people. [...]. This real chronotope is represented by the public square (agora). The autobiographical conscience (and also biographical one) of man and his existence in the epoch of classic antiquity had been revealed and crystallized in the public square for the first time>>. (*Ibidem*: 347, 348).

During antiquity, Hellenistic *autobiographical traditions*, laments and Roman funeral orations (,,laudationes"), had a significant place along with Roman *autobiographies* and *memoirs*, initially dependent on **„prodigia"**, that is the predictions which refered to the *destiny* of the **state.** Predictions, some of *good omen* (from the category of luck), some of *ill omen*, were directed gradually, to the dictator or to the army leader, personalities whose destinies were closely connected to the *state*.

In the Roman society, the basis of memoirs and autobiographies - which had, nevertheless, a ,,deeply public'' character and which were written for the next generations – was formed by *the family* which ,,identified directly with the state''.

The works,, about own writings'' had a special form within the Roman and Hellenistic *autobiographical writings* which combined different *biographical* elements. Accordingly, *two types* of biographical structures appeared in the period. *The first type*, represented by Plutarh and which was based on action, on the character' *energia*, was called by M. Bahtin through the term **„energetic",** since it was centered on the time of **revealing the character** and not on the *becoming* and « growth of man ". In such type of literature the character does not develop and does not change, it only *replenishes*: incomplete, not revealed at the beginning, it becomes complete and round at the end. Consequently, the path of revealing the character does not lead to his modification and his becoming in conjunction with the historic reality, but only to his *completeness*, that is to the perfection of the initial form''. (*Ibidem* : 359).

The second type, is called **analytical** and comprises aspects of family life, of the social life of the character, of war, of his friendship relations, from different periods of his life. In such writings, ,,the temporal biographical series is *interrupted*: moments from different periods of life are gathered in the same section. The guiding principle here is the *ensemble* of characters, whose point of view does not take into account *time and order* in the manifestation of some parts of this ensemble(...). The main representative of the second type of antique biographies was Suetonius. If Plutarch had a huge influence over literature, especially over drama (as the *energetic* type of biographies is esentially dramatic), Suetonius influenced the **strictly biographical genre** pre-eminently, especially during Middle Ages. (the type of constructing

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biographies on rubrics has been maintained until today: as a man, a writer, a family man, as a thinker, etc''. (*Ibidem* : 360).

At that time, the **autobiographic genre** targeted at *the public exteriority* of the character. Gradually, *public exteriority dissolved* and « private » aspects from the author's existence began to be disclosed.

M. Bahtin gave evidence of *three types* of modifications made to the ,,existing public and rhetoric forms": the first had a *satirical-ironic* or humorous character, fact which proved the obsolescence of public and rhetoric forms. This category refers mainly to ,,the well-known autobiographies and ironic self-characterizations in verse by Horace, Ovid şi Propertius, which also include the moment of parodying the heroic and public forms. Here *the particular (private) is* presented under the form of *irony and humour* (in default of other positive forms of expression)''. (*Ibidem* : 361)

The second form of modification, represented by the letters of Cicero to Atticus, certifies the fact that ,,the public and rhetoric forms of the unity of image had aged, had become oficial-conventional, the glorification (as well as self-glorification) had become hackneyed and devoid of naturalness. Beside this, the existing rhetoric and public genres **did not allow,** actually, **the representation of private life,** whose sphere grew larger and larger**,** became deeper, closing more and more towards the inner self. Under these circumstances, *rhetoric- chamber* forms began to acquire greater importance, and first the form of the *letter to a friend*. In a friendly-intimate atmosphere (certainly semi-conventional) the new private-chamber conscience of man begins to be revealed. A whole series of categories of self-conscience and of biography elaboration – success, happiness, merit – begin to lose their state, public importance and pass on the private personal level. Even nature, attracted in this new private-chamber universe, begins to modify substantially. <<Lanscape>> is born, that is nature as a scope (object of vision) and environment (background, atmosphere) of absolutely private, lonely and passive man'' (*Ibidem* : 361) . M. Bahtin notices that this type of writings anticipate the man of future, ,,absolutely private'', and the anticipatory fragments ,,seem to be inserted (annexed) to the old rhetorico-public unity of human image". (*Ibidem:* 362).

Within the third modification, a special place was held y the so-called ,,consolations" built under the form of *dialogue*, such as *Consolatio*, by Cicero, whose model influenced, over centuries Augustin, Boethius and Petrarch. The same category includes, as Bahtin states, the letters of Seneca, the autobiographical writing of Marcus Aurelius entitled *Către mine însumi* and the autobiographical works which fall in the category of c*onfessions.* The works of this category had the status of *soliloquies* (solitary conversations to oneself). The author's consolations reflected a new attitude towards himself, towards the ,, «own self», with no witnesses, without any concessions to the voice of «a third person» whoever it might be''. (*Ibidem*: 363). Such writings promote the conscience of *the solitary man*, who ,,seeks comfort and supreme instance in himself and, directly, in the sphere of ideas, in philosophy . (*Ibidem*:363). The personal aspects – among which the theme of own death, especially– acquire a large weight. With all these new elements, which had a huge influence over the evolution of such forms in the European literature, the third modification is still tributary to the rhetorico-public styles: ,,There is, as yet, noting of that authentically solitary individual who maes his appearance only in the Middle Ages, and henceforth plays an enormous role in the European novel. Solitude here is still a very relative and naive thing. Selfhood though it encompasses the private sphere, is still basically rooted in the public''. *(Ibidem*: 363).

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The summary of some chapters from the work of M. Bahtin aims at emphasizing the ancient (and forgotten roots) of the authenticist novel type.

On close inspection of authenticism, one may find that the respective formula has ,, fresh'', and ,,surface'' roots at the same time. On this line, *Proustianism* had more types of ,,antecedents'' among which we can mention the **diaries** of the literary period preceeding the ,,Proustian'' one, when ,,intimate writing'' (,,saturnine'') had great success and even those from the period when Proust lived. The diary of Maine de Brian - ,,one of the founders of the genre in France'' opened the ,,taste for self-analysis'', stimulated '' the spiritual exercise and ,,surely brought about the apparition of a special type of *diary : the spiritual or the metaphysical diary*, in France and in other European literatures…'' *(*Simion, *2005 : 25).* We mention, in the same train of thought, the diary of Stendhal, another founder of the genre, which respected ,,the principle of spontaneity and, through it, **the principle of authenticity**. A principle which became a rule of the diary genre'' (Simion, *op.cit* : 30, s.n.).

As regards the Proustian ,,insistence'' on a ,,certain characteristic", there are several models which influenced Proust which can be retrieved in the writing of the ,,alleged realists", and, at the same time, in ,,the psychological meticulosity" from Dostoievski's novels.

Another characteristic of Proustianism (and, implicitly of the authenticist novel) is rooted, under the aspect of anti-aestheticism, in the writing of the French classical writers, and, especially in the work of Stendhal. As important *preceding forms* of authenticism, we can mention the observations of George Călinescu which pertain to the *classical* and S*tendhalian* values of Camil Petrescu's writing, the prose writer who declared himself preoccupied by the authenticist technique and implicitly by the synchronizing of the autochthonous novel with the Western one. *Ultima noapte*, *G.*Călinescu affirmed, << is rather a S*tendhalian novel*. Stendhal rejected the phrase, the style, as he was an anticalophile and felt a visible pleasure (especially in his *Jurnal*) to note down the experiences he had been through. The Stendhalian hero has the capacity to see himself living, and he instills voluptuousness in this duality. Hence, we would say that,, experience'' novel, we would say that,,cognition'' novel (as the author himself used to all his drama), can be applied to *Ultima noapte.* [...]. Camil Petrescu is a remarkable prose writer, with a manifest gift of clear diction, more colourful though, than many deliberate colourists. He assimilated perfectly that air of formal tepidity, of precision demanded by the incontestable authenticity of facts, specific to *French classical writers* such as Prevost and Diderot, before Stendhal>>. (Călinescu, *op.cit*.:743, s.n.). The Stendhalian influence over Camil Petrescu's writing had been also grasped by other literary critics : Tudor Vianu, Perpessicius, Alexandru George, Alexandru Paleologu.

Proustianism could be found in an incipient state in certain novel forms, incompatible with authenticism, in point of auctorial attitude. In this regard, we have in view the detailed account of the characters' *behavior* in the naturalist prose and the writing which determined the *pittoresque-descriptive* style of the ,,alleged realists'' from Daudet's school, which, besides the pleasure to linger ,,over the *decorative and pittoresque* aspects" gave a special attention to the ,,scientific'' study of characters' manners and psychology. Basically, the alleged realist : << on one hand, wishes to create an almost,,scientific" literature, a social and psychologial ,,study" of manners, but this positivist scientist hides an alexandrine poet behind, who indulges oneself in describing anything, on condition that the description should be out of the ordinary, crafty and excessively ornate »". (Albérès, 1968: 47).

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As concerns ,,the dynamics'' of writing and novel conception towards modernity, Albérès placed **Zola,** the naturalist**,** before Balzac, Hugo and Dickens: « Balzac, Hugo or Dickens offer us the joy of the *demiurge. [...]*. however, Zola is not a ,,demiurge"; he carries a ,,study" – the study of the railwayengine driver, of the haberdashery shops and does not know more than the author of a ,,study". Balzac knows everything, like a head of police who would have access to the files o Providence... and, actually, Hugo in *Mizerabilii* identifies himself with the Providence. He knows the destiny of his characters beforehand [...] Everything is pre-established in Dickens, too ». (Albérès, *op.cit*: 39-40).

Another model assimilated by Proust, filtered in the retorts of his poetics of the diary **retroactively** was Flaubert, but not in his role as a founder of the ,,artistic description'', of the *polished style,* but as an author having a decisive contribution to the modification of the ,,reader's perspective", and, respectively of the ,,artist's perspective''.

Attentive to these *new* offers of the prose, Proust combined the technique of describing some apparently decorative details or apparently insignificant ones, with the interest for the game of tones in the inner life of characters. Also, unlike some traditional authors, his auctorial perspective – and of other modern writers- did not benefit from the ,,joy of the demiurge" or of the ,,head of police" who can access, as R-M Albérès said, to the ,,files of Providence''. In other words, the author does not now the destiny of his characters beforehand.

The modern paradigm of the novel implied: renunciation of the point of view of the *creator*, in the role of a director, embracement of the point of view ,,of the individual'' and the plurality of perspectives, in order to ,,valorize simply and solely the incongruity, the incoherence of conscience, reduced to itself, to its phantasms, hesitations, to its secret...Rather than a ,,novel' or a story, the book is a poem on the mysteries of conscience''. (*Ibidem*: 32).

In such novels, *the narrator* observes more than the author, and this ,,degrading'' of the auctorial instance is compensated by the appearance and importance of *reflexive – characters*. The story, the epos are replaced by *analytical investigation,* by the interest for *the world of self,* by the psychical reasons of *the inner reactions of characters.* The dislocation of logics and chronology, the incongruency of facts, „the truth of hazard", the appeal to irony or to the juxtaposition of the characters' lives are much more necessary procedures as compared to the ,,depicting the characters" from the realist novel of the *doric* type.

These observations of R.M. Albérès concerning the aspects that characterized the new novel, and the authenticist one, prove to be essential. The traditional novel was artificial since it implied an ,,enactment'' by an omniscient narrator and a masterly story; the new literary period opposed ,,another novel whose outlook is different: the novel that is not a complete lesson but an enigma; the one we do not expect, which do not prove to be the logical continuation of a well-written book''(*Ibidem*, : 126).

Consequently, in the ,,new'' novel creations, the author gives up the „artifact of storytelling", preoccupied by intercepting the human fact beyond the artifact of fiction. "As it had not been *interpreted before* the human fact preserves its whole mystery''. (*ibidem* : 27). Therefore, ,,the novelist ceases to be a rational anlyst of the *psychic*; instead of a superficial order he could not superimpose, he seeks the richness of the chaos, of the secret, the anxiety, the pathetic, ,,going deeper in the *dispersion of the inner world"* (*Ibidem*: 128).

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The modern poetics of authenticity valorized, in a new spirit, some preliminary literary forms, which proves, one one hand, the fact that no literary trend appears out of the blue, through the decision or the discovery of an author or of a literary group, and on the other hand , the fact that the relation among different literary systems (trends) is a dynamic one, involving the recovery and implementation of some models belonging to diachrony on a new aesthetic spiral, or, on the contrary, disjunctions or violent denials.

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