Palingenesis rhetoricæ.
A semiotical-phenomenological perspective

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Résumé : La rhétorique, qui était la forme critique d'analyse dans le passé, a examiné la manière dont le discours est construit pour obtenir certains effets. Il ne s'inquiétait pas de savoir si ses objets d'investigation étaient parlés ou écrits, de poésie ou de philosophie, de fiction ou d'historiographie : son horizon n'était autre que le champ des pratiques discursives dans la société dans son ensemble, et son intérêt était de les adopter formes de pouvoir et de performance. La rhétorique dans sa phase majeure n'était pas un langage, pas de « formalisme », simplement centré sur l'analyse de dispositifs linguistiques.

Mots-clés *: rhétorique, Aristote, Coşeriu, Ardeleanu, contexte linguistique.*

Whereas Socrates was epistemically drawn to the lexical content, to the historicity and the value of primary words (Keith, Chambers, 1962: 419) – ÑnÒmata stoicea his pupil Aristotle was more interested in *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*, works by which the Stagirite,

> "based on Eugeniu Coşeriu's words, moved the centre of language from the field of cause to the field of purpose." (Coşeriu, 2012: 8-9)

Foucault also drew our attention to the fact that not only for Socrates, but for all great ancient authors self-concern has represented a fundamental field where ethics and ontology were born. Only afterwards, starting to look for the meaning of life, they have performed a "cut" on the reality, demonstrating that

> "the human being engaged in knowledge-related activities is a sui generis "sublimation" of the human being as integral being" (Tonoiu, 1972: 137-138).

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Communicational imperatives and *community challenges* (koinwn…a) have imposed the connection of the textual-knowledge plan to the temporal - phenomenological one, while their authors have been defined, in humanity's consciousness, as philosophers and rhetoricians. Social structuring and sedimentation accounts for the reasons the thinkers of all times have considered, both explicitly and implicitly rather the relation between the human nature and the sense of political community in their reflections. In its anthropological horizon, the politically organized society is seen through two perspectives: either as a continuation of the natural order, or through the negation of nature, as being of a different nature or order. Philosophy itself was to follow two perspectives – the axiom of man's natural sociability and the individual's resistance, aggression and unsociability in the nature's state (Bocancea, 2012: 4). Within this framework, Aristotle (Politics, I, 2, 1253a) defined man by the famous phrase pol…tikon zùon – (*politike zoon*) *political being*, as it is only this way that we can understand why for Aristotle, from a dominantly pragmatic perspective, virtues are named "practical" or "ethical virtues" (»qikain - *ethike*). Only the intellect's activities (artistic and scientific) are superior to these virtues that Aristotle calls "dianoethic virtues" (dianohtikaˆ ¢retaˆ - *dianoetike arete*), such as wisdom and practical cleverness. (Balca,1982: 222-223)

Not fortuitously, defining paideically the classical period, in Greece and Rome, the art of public speech held an essential role in education and in civic life, necessity that made this science the object of thorough study. Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, written in the 3rd century B.C., is still considered the most important paper on this topic. Many of the principles included in it are respected by today's speakers (and writers). When the word was seen as keeper of human thinking and feelings, the writing started to be kneaded in shapes that each nation's fantasy found appropriate to their understanding. Man is the one who builds strategies with the help of words, in order to free the time enslaved ideas, capable of overcoming the alethic threshold and entering eternity.

Thus, with an existence of two and a half millennia, Rhetoric is the oldest language science in the European area, though it has suffered profound mutations during its evolution. Etymologically, the word "rhetoric" comes from Old Greek, from the verb ·šw (Bailly, 1997: 1216) which means "to flow", skill that would demonstrate art's mastery of giving a well-structured, agreeable speech, that is "the craft (tšcnh) of good wording". Rhetoric was considered the supreme art of an educated, politically, intellectually and socially mature man. Its catchphrase was three-folded: *docere, piacere, movere* (to learn, to like, to move – to prompt to action). As the American Stephen E. Lucas (2004: 260) emphasizes, people have used public speech along the history

> "as vital means of communication. The words of the Greek leader Pericles over 2.500 years ago are still valid today. "The one who has an opinion on anything, but cannot explain it" had clearly "better not think about that topic at all". Public speech, as the name of the activity itself indicates it, is a means of getting your ideas across to the audience – of sharing them with other people and of influencing others."

Deepening its persuasive valences, some theoreticians of the genre have considered Rhetoric as identical to politics, which made Cicero consider it "part of the science of the rulers". For him, the science of the rulers is equal to wisdom. Let's not marvel that others, among which the famous Isocrates, considered Rhetoric mere "philosophy". Its rule-based character determined some authors to consider it as a variant of logics. If for Chrysippus, for instance, Rhetoric is "the science of speaking correctly", in Greek philosophy there have been thinkers who have given Rhetoric its natural rights,

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through appreciations true to the spirit of this science. Aristotle's and Cleante's, definitions respectively are the most appropriate to the essence of Rhetoric: for both philosophers "Rhetoric is the science of speaking well", a point of view owned by Marcus Fabius Quintilianus (1993: 114), who sets some of its rules as well.

Subsequently, from the science and art of speaking well and efficiently (that is of argumentative practice) in the ancient times, Rhetoric focuses on the ornamental aspect, on the tropes and figures of speech in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (when it also performs a significantly normative character, against which Romantic writers will rise. This opposition will basically make it disappear for a while). It has, however, survived as annexes to stylistics and enjoyed a remarkable revival in the second half of the 20th century, in linguistics and structural poetics. (Roman Jakobson, Tzvetan Todorov, Roland Barthes, Gerard Genette and all the *new* French *critique* in the'60s and '70s), when the normative aspect was completely eliminated, but kept the emphasis of the importance of figures of speech/tropes in the discourse. Let us also remember Borges who tried to solve the dichotomy between existent and created, as he was persuaded, like many others, (Cassirer, Carpentier, Marquez,) that, by neutralizing the contraries, "the real and the poetic can become synonymous." (Arhip, 2003: 77)

From a comprehensive analytical perspective, in the discourse, the

> "logics of the subject helps differentiate, according to textual typology, various types of discourse, articulated themselves, according to the purpose of communication (intent of communication or creating effects), to the specificity resulting from the use of language, to the relation with the linguistic context and with the communication situation", emphasizes PhD Professor Sanda-Maria Ardeleanu (1992: 4-8).

This technical consideration, as well as other opinions, can turn Rhetoric both into art and science, theoretical and practical, of elaborating all types of discourses.

> "Traditionally, *Rhetoric* combined the art of building discourses with a theory about these discourses." (Ducrot,1996: 110)

Vasile Florescu identifies three types of definitions of Rhetoric: **1**. "creator of persuasion", that Plato ascribes to Gorgias **2**. "ars" or "scientia bene dicendi" (Quintilian), "that is the range of technic or more precisely scientific, not empiric rules, that turn a community into a perfect one. *Bene* refers both to the result of the communication and to its aesthetic quality." **3**. "ars ornandi", born in the Middle Ages and later on, when Rhetoric "turns into literature" and becomes synonymous to stylistics. (Florescu, 1973: 11-37)

Traditionally associated to "*ars bene dicendi*", Rhetoric actually makes reference to a wide range of contextual meanings: **a**.- persuasion and conviction, that is to say the creation of the assent; **b**.- seduction or manipulation; **c.**- creating the plausible, the opinion, suggesting inferences or even calculating them on behalf of the interlocutor; **d**.- suggesting the implicit through the explicit; **e**.- creating the figurative sense, deciphered based on its literal meaning; **f**.- using a figurative and stylised language (literary language); revealing the speaker's or the author of the text's intentions by means of the "traces" of the enunciation in the utterance. (Meyer, 1982: 17-18) the relevance of the rhetoric discourse is ensured, in semiotics, by certain "marks", among which the content does not come first, but the form that it takes, making the passage from textual linguistics (explicitly hermeneutic) to textual grammar (implicitly the architectonical inner structure) of the text. The first to utter and describe the phrase "*textual linguistics"*, around 1950, was Eugeniu

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Coşeriu, as, starting from the structuralists Harris and Pike (according to whom the sentences of the statement are part of a discursive structure, characterized by coherence),

> "the introduction of the concept was determined by the necessity of setting in a common framework of textual grammar and of narrative theory." (Ardeleanu,1995: 18).

The relation language/knowledge transfers and describes, from an epistemic point of view, the relation language/reality, as, according to Searle, language is a phenomenon of entity, extremely complex, partly physical, partly spiritual, partly social, partly natural – named Man, which determined Saussure to qualify it as social phenomenon. The matrix component of knowledge phenomenology, through the participations to the paradigm changes of science, language ensures its temporal and textual synchronicities through its own paradigmatic changes, aspects that made Eugeniu Coşeriu define, from the point of view of the category, the concept of context in three fields: **1**.- *idiomatic context*, which directs us to the so-called "historic" language deeds; **2**.- *verbal context,* which expresses the range of verbal signs sequentially ordered-discursive; **3**.- *extra-verbal context,* which reflects the non-linguistic circumstances: we talk about *time, place.* (Coşeriu, 1989: 310-315)

Trying to demarcate Rhetoric from poetics, the representatives of Group μ state that, taking into account the fact that

> "the theory of figures was far from absorbing the object of old Rhetoric – which justifies the use of the phrase "*New Rhetoric"* by Perelman in order to design a theory of argumentation – Rhetoric is perceived, gnoseologically, as the knowledge of language figures characteristic to literature. Through poetics, we understand the exhaustive knowledge of the general principles of poetry, that is *stricto senso* poetry as literature model. Thus circumscribed, the matter we are interested in is shrunk down to examining the contribution of rhetoric, that cannot pretend to exhaust the literary object, to the creation of an objective science of this object." (Dubois, 1974: 30)

Therefore, structuralist Rhetoric (named *Neo-rhetoric*, a sort of "compressed rhetoric", in Gerard Genette's words) partly overlaps poetics and focuses on the deviation and the figure concepts:

> "Rhetoric is the knowledge of language figures characteristic to literature. [...] Rhetoric, study of formal structures, extends, therefore, necessarily, into some trans-rhetoric, which is, certainly, what was once called the second Rhetoric or poetics. Its mission is to explain the effect and the value of these modified words that poets utter and, beforehand, the mission to determine the percentage of modifications compatible, not only with good figure functioning, but also with its acceptance by aesthetic consciousness." (*ibidem*: 33)

Rhetoric at the end of the past century moved its centre of interest from persuasive function to emotive and poetic functions, especially through *New Criticism* and *La Nouvelle Critique*. Current rhetoric takes into account all types of discourse and interferes with subjects such as poetics, stylistics, pragmatics, hermeneutics, text linguistics and discourse analysis. Post-modern rhetoric analyses the effect of rhetoric figures on the meaning of the text in all types of discourse: literary, scientific, political, publicist, advertising, sportive, juridical, administrative, religious etc. in both written and oral variants, as well as in spoken English, in vernacular, argotic and licentious, academic, in conversations etc. That is why, its research topic overlaps more and more with the one of

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discourse analysis. That is why some representatives, even among the most prominent ones of this subject try to minimalize the current importance of Rhetoric:

> "Rhetoric is the theoretic and applied science of public use of the word, pronounced before a doubtful audience, with a contradictory witness. Through its discourse, the orator forces themselves to impose their representations and phrases and to orientate action. Rhetoric was defined by theoreticians of the ancient times and brought to the contemporary times by a paradigm of autonomous research." (Charaudeau, Maingueneau, 1991: 11).

Restricting the research field is obvious in this definition. The annexation of some rhetoric territories by the discourse analysis remains implicit. Discourse analysis, also named *text linguistics* in some cultural milieus, is the youngest of language sciences. Appeared in the second half of the past century, it focuses on discourse study from all possible perspectives. Maingueneau (1991: 11) placed it "at the crossroads of human sciences" and one of the definitions he gave to discourse analysis implicitly proved it was all about a heterogeneous subject: "a range of research that approaches language placing the activity of the subjects in the forefront, as well as enunciative dynamics, the relation with the social context.

> "Orientation towards Rhetoric of discourse analysis is obvious, especially since current Rhetoric re-values ancient Greek-Latin, medieval, pre-romantic and structuralist neo-rhetoric palingenetic Rhetoric, becoming, in its turn, an inter-disciplinary science which looks at the act of communication not only from the perspectives of argumentation and persuation, but also as a fact of actual verbal art. For the inventors of the phonetic principle themselves, the benefits will be ripen late. They cannot capitalize on the advantages of the grading system and keeping an important "change" of orality, a phenomenon known under the name of *aurality:* the texts are created with the help of writing, but published by word of mouth, upon a public reading/recitation." (Cornea, 1988: 75)

Throughout time, public discourse has been an essential way of personal emancipation and of civic implication, the dedalic route of the text (the labyrinth-like logic of the meaning) including, beside textual grammar and a set of semiologic codes (textual and discourse linguistic analysis) which

> "converge towards the paradigm of textual investigation as, beyond the fact that language sums up to a transparent code of communication, its use, its creation and understanding of the sentences do appeal, indeed, to non-linguistic knowledge and require inferential processes." (Moescler, Reboul, 2001: 13)

It fixes the place where, on the temporal axis, the past fusions with the present, in a perceptible syncrony

> "as *objective* understanding, that is *anthropological* understanding (which appears or might appear in studying the human being) and as *subjective* understanding, meaning the human being's self-understanding (which appears or might appear in their own speaking performace or in their attitude towards language)" (Coşeriu, 2009: 136)

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