TEMPORAL REGIMES AND FIGURES IN THE SHORT POEM. A SEMIO-LINGUISTIC APPROACH

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Abstract: To research the status of the temporality in the poetical text, from a semio-linguistic viewpoint, we start from a certain property of the present, namely its extensibility. As poetic category, the tense with its various forms builds, through their alternation, the time continuum via indeterminable perspectives. Given their belonging to the lyric genre, short poems, especially, those in which verbal significances are monopolized by the poetic function, share nevertheless the primordial feature, in the time sphere, of the present as generic tense.On the chronogenetic time axis established by G. Guillaume, the present conceived not as time period, but as a force we feel, corresponds to a specific mode of envisaging (visée), which asserts its centrality - final chronothesis (time in esse) describing the ultimate image-time, where all ages are recurrent, within the framework of the primary system portrayed by the tenses of the indicative mood. The time vector where the image-time becomes concrete is equally the chief component of the "fundamental signifier" of an enunciation-text. Under its apparent homogeneity, the present covers, however, various types, fact endowing time a mosaic-like aspect. Within the analysis of a poem written by the German writer Friedrich von Hardenberg, we aim to operationally discriminate temporal regimes and values of the present as part of the relation identity-otherness.

Keywords: figures of the time; poetical text; chronogenetic time axis; image-time; types of present

1. Introduction

As a matter of fact, linguistic time is the foundation of all time contrasts, because language does not place non-present tenses after a position of their own, but equally reports them to the present. Against this background of our discussion on time, so difficult to master and, according to S. Marcus (1985), impossible to define (p. 5), it is deemed necessary, for comprehension purposes, to establish a limit on the one hand, between an interrogation which would found itself on time as date pre-existing language manifestations, granting it *shape*, and

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on the other hand, a piece of research rooted in linguistic categories, such as verb tenses, so as to have a broader perspective, as Jean-Claude Coquet (1997) says, on "all indices of person, instruments, positions and movements, accordingly of time" (p. 103), in the field of the discourse in act. Time regimes are thus defined in conjunction with discourse instances.

Within the poem, especially in that of extended size, verb tenses may be distributed, if we take into account the distinction text/ context, on the two categories established by L. Cifor in one of her articles: a) structural, axial/ organizational tenses and b) ornamental, contextually motivated tenses (2012, p. 2).

To research the status of the temporality in the poetic discourse we start from one of the properties of the present and namely that of its *extensibility*. A study of the tenses of the indicative mood carried out by Cornel Săteanu (1980) reveals that they forge two great systems: a primary one and a secondary one. The primary system is made up, firstly, of the present, which equally represents the centre of this system, of the *passé simple* and *passé composé.* The secondary tense system comprises the past tense – the centre of which is - together with two other heterogeneous tenses: past perfect and future in the past. Săteanu operates, with regard to the present, a distinction between the "real" present (event, moment lived by the subject) and the linguistic present (met within an enunciation, where it occurs as duration, time period). To the tenses of the indicative mood, as "real" tense (*in esse*) covering the three time axes: past, present and future, one may also add an "amorphous" tense, encompassing a virtual tense (*in posse*), contained inside the substance of verbs in the infinitive mood and manifested through the "explicit" tenses of the indicative mood. The present of the subjunctive is, in exchange, considered as a tense "in the making".

We cannot overlook the manner in which Gustave Guillaume (1990) defines the present and namely as "operator of delimitation" of the time axes with which it relates: "The present is very restricted, interfering in the unlimited extension of the tense as operator of limitation between what precedes and what succeeds it" (p. 293).

Otherwise, those presented by Săteanu comprise a series of common items with the theory earlier forged by G. Guillaume (1969). According to the French linguist, the categories of *tense* and *mood* lead to the mental construction of an *image-time* he equally calls *chronogenesis.* The *image-time* comprises *chronotheses*, or specific moods[1]. Each

[1] For Romanic languages, G. Guillaume sets three chronotheses: initial (infinitive mood, past participle, gerund) or tense in posse, where the tense did not point out its direction, the image being yet unformed, amorphous and deprived of movement; median chronothesis represented by the subjunctive (tense in fieri) does not possess axes,

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chronothesis is divided into a certain number of time axes, or tenses. The time vector where the chronogenesis concretizes, also constitutes, according to Iulian Popescu (1996), the chief component of the "fundamental signifier" (p. 138) of an enunciation-text.

2. Linguistic Tense. The Present of the Enunciation

In its basic value, the present indicates an instance of coincidence of the processes denoted by the verb with the one of the enunciation. One thus draws a line of delimitation, on the one hand, between a moment which is *not contemporary to it anymore* and, on the other hand, a moment which is *not yet contemporary to it*. E. Benveniste (1974) states that language ordinates the tense starting from an axis and this is just the discursive instance (p. 74), from where there emerges the quality of the tense within the double operation clutch/ disconnection.

As poetic category, the tense with its various forms builds, through their alternation, the temporal continuum through indeterminable perspectives. Despite this criterion of perspectival non-determination, inherent to poetic language, the time of the poem has a fundamental role in the construction of the artistic vision. The present in the brief poem seems to naturally arise from within the present, hence as inherent of the utterance itself. Therefore, each poem is forged from the first to the last line, as it is read/ uttered. Only after successive turnings and surprising turns, it finally reveals itself to us as a whole, its end being equally important (or less difficult, inclusively for the author) rather than its beginning. Thus we can infer, together with Walter Killly (1972, p. 41), that the poem "has time", and this time of its own has several meanings: a) "measurable time", that spanning from its beginning to its end, as space-time it needs to tell, read, hear itself; b) "the time of progressive perception", since what it communicates is not immediately recurrent, but erects itself; c) "the time of the entire poem", which divides in brief routes, given the stanzas or rhymes which may fragment it, creating distances, but equally proportions through images and metre.

3.The Time of the poem. Omnitemporal present

but only tensions or perspectives yet undefined, one towards past, another towards future; final (the indicative mood, tense in esse) is the ultimate image-time, all axes being recurrent. As the time vector moves from the initial chronothesis to the final one, its speed will increase and, alongside it, proportionally, both the amount of consumed energy and the amount of provided information increase. (p. 199, underlined by author). In another previous work (1929), Guillaume had already pointed out, as follows: "The issue of the mood is always an issue of envisaging (visée). The mood does not depend on the verb regarded, but on the idea through which we regard this verb" (p. 30).

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The poem *An einen Freund* ("To a Friend"[2]), written by the German poet Friedrich von Hardenberg (pseudonym: Novalis) we wish to deal with, shares the peculiarity to be written in the present, and this aspect confronts us with the hypothesis of regarding it as *extensible time.* By belonging to the lyrical genre and given its brief size (two stanzas, in whole), it has, nevertheless, as primordial feature in the sphere of time, the present as generic tense, its verbal significances being monopolized by the *poetic function*. Given its extensibility, the present does not limit itself to designate the strict moment of speech: it can broaden its temporal sphere. We then speak of the present of the general truth, equally named *gnomic* present. According to the Dictionary of the Romanian Language (DEX), the gnomic present (or of knowledge) is "the present rendering the action without reporting it to a certain time" and, as J. Kaemfer and R. Mucheli (2003) suggest, "it is frequently called when the narrator proposes, via the didactic discourse, a morally comment with regard to an action" (p. 84). In such cases, the enunciation acquires an *omnitemporal* value. This value is often reinforced by nominal collocations which do not denote particular individuals anymore, but rather *classes* of individuals.

Following the poetic structure, we ascertain that the objective present of the enunciation includes a tense which actually tends to that omnitemporal present tense, with the function of time-framework:

Was paßt, das muß sich ränden,
Was sich versteht, sich finden,
Was gut ist, sich verbinden,
Was liebt, zusammen sein;
Was hindert, muß entweichen,
Was krumm ist, muß sich gleichen,
Was fern ist, sich erreichen,
Was keimt, muß gedeihen.[3]

In the first utterances, the present of the indicative mood constantly used approaches more a *descriptive present*, given the fact that it is endowed with a prescriptive character,

[2] Dedicated to Adolph Selmniz, cf. edition Minor, Novalis, Schriften, Band I, Jena, 1923, p. 219.

[3] "What goes together, must complete,/ Those who get along, must find each other,/ Flocks of a feather go together,/ Those who love must stay together;/ What hinders, must stay aside,/ What is foul, must get better,/ Those remote, must reach one another,/ What springs, must come into flower.")

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occurring throughout the entire poem. Under its apparent homogeneity, it covers various types of present, fact endowing time a mosaic-like aspect.

The surface arrangement of both stanzas, not deprived of that ludic charm of each creation, prompts a feeling of perfection due to the excessive care for form, a wholly novel one, ironically abstracted from an older conventional formula (with its double terza rima, it appears as a reversed sonnet concentrated in eight lines only instead of fourteen). The first octet distinguishes itself as an apparent *homogeneous sequence*, through the recurrence of the grammatical rhyme, the second one presents itself, if we have in view the means of alignment of the lines and keep the criterion of the rhyme, as a *non-homogeneous structure*. The two quatrains imitate the same format, but lack constant rhyme.

From a thematic viewpoint, this poem is a meditation on the idea of the perfectibility of the real, characterized by phenomena of mutual attraction and rejection. In the first stanza, the object is achieved as poetic game rich in variations, with two basic words: *was* ("what", "who") explicit, *das* ("that") rendered once, then eclipsed. D*as* ("that") is associated with the verb, thus vigorously keeping in the subtext the presupposition of an *ethos* – because of the mention of this *devoir faire,* on a moral dimension. In this first part of the poem, we thus meet the two types of time: "real" and "amorphous", time enounced at the beginning, creating, each time, a bridge starting between a form (flexionary) of the finite verb and another one, the one given by the form of the infinite verb (deprived of flexion), under the influence of the modal verb.

Novalis has, ascertains the exegetist V. Voia (1981), the general tendency to establish analogies between the reports of the natural phenomena with the mathematical series. A quotation from Novalis confirms this fact: "And as the idea gives itself up to an endless row of clauses, similarly the most varied phenomena and happenings of life are mere variations of an idea" (p. 122).

For this German poet, the knowledge seeking to attain superiority is not possible in the absence of love, inclusively in a theoretical sense: "each object loved is the centre of a paradise" (II, 432/50). In this poem, as well, the unity consists in the Idea depending on the function according to which one structures and develops a project of thought, organizes the world, the Creation as a whole. Those presented under the form of an ideatic *corpus* of hypotheses "must" constitute itself in equally the same paths of harmonization and synchronisation, between what is perceived and what is envisaged, between what is given and what is (to be) forged, to transmute in durable value. Here, everything is positioned according

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to an a priori structure of to *be opened towards something*, and, from this standpoint, one excludes the possibility of an exercise of our will originating from a game of fantasy or caprice. We see however, that this game is far from being a rigid one, stiffen by strict rules, in the context in which they all converge towards axiological categories, of Platonic type, the Good and the Beautiful, envisaged thus as eternal ideas and as being united in the idea of love, through that they merge aesthetic grace and deontological rationality. And the criterion of selection of such values is the conformity with the vital rhythms portrayed first through the metaphor of the plant.

3.1. Actual present of the poem

In the second stanza - a sequence of direct discourse - the present receives a deictic value, indicating thus the coincidence between the time of the proposition and that of the enunciation, situation when one may more conspicuously speak, together with Ligia-Stela Florea (1999), of an *actual* present. If the first stanza preserved this uniform structure, keeping the same rhythmic pattern, as foreseeable and undefined alternating within an anachronic structure, the second one changes the tone and tonality of the message cast in a similarly special arrangement, but with another dynamics. Consequently, its main feature is a first moment of inflection as compared to the previous stanza, due to the *appellative* function which replaces the descriptive one and determines the withdrawal of the indicative mood before the imperative mood. However, its content obliges to a return to the title, in relation to which it appears as an expansion of the announced topic, the address to "a friend" being presented under the shape of a repeated communication, which has previously been concluded with a failure[4]:

Gib mir die Hände,
Sei Bruder mir und wende
Den Blick vor deinem Ende
Nicht wieder weg von mir.
Ein Tempel - wo wir knieen,
Ein Ort - wohin wir ziehen,
Ein Glück - für das wir glühen,

[4] What one may catalogue, according to G. Genette (Figures III, 1972), as an external analepsis, in the order of sequence of events, in other words, as retrospection, but beyond the temporal field of the "narrated world".

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Ein Himmel mir und dir.[5]

By continuing to compare the two stanzas, we can observe, at a declarative level, that the operation of clutch/ declutch manifests itself through the appearance of three instances: at first the narrative instance Ego0 highlights a possible Ego1 rational ego, in relation with a time of the *existence*, while in the second stanza we affirm an Ego2 affective ego, in the temporal regime of the personal *experience*. At the level of the significance, the first octet founded itself on the fundamental sememe /*alteration/*, with a view to the suspense the otherness of those related, or of a discrepancy apparently fundamental of the opposed, with reference to *nature* (in ecologic or sociologic meaning) the second grants priority (to the formation) to the plenary, free nature. Extrapolating, we can infer, appealing to Ricoeur's personality (1955), when it reports to the being of the historical, that the poem positions in the presence a dramatic scission between a *moi de recherche* and a *moi pathémique* (pp. 31-34). We equally ascertain an alteration of the narrative perspective, with a predominantly *external* observer, to an acting one, with an *internal* observer; from now on, the narrative ego is an ego-character, within the dialog framework of the "word told", while the reader continues to remain in the third instance of the dialogue, as it was established by Bakhtin.

This sequence of direct discourse with an evident pedagogical and restorative function changes the reference, makes the passage from a he-friend to a you-brother, which leads to a modification of the perceptual field regarding an *alter*, still conceived not as an object but as a person. The structure of the other belongs to the organization condition itself of a perceptual field, the terms updating it being pre-existent to it. The meeting in the dialogue is enriched in knowledge by the re-cognition of a system of shared values, underwritten and stimulated by a speaker who constitutes in a benevolent, transformative presence center. By revaluing the relationship, *you* receives here another ontological profile, namely it develops and realizes the possible universe corresponding to it, from the perspective of a confessing ego (Be a brother to me *as* I am for you too). Communication reduction to one reply only is sufficient so as to build that *être à deux* of Merleau-Ponty (1945, p. 407) prefiguring a world "woven" from the two beings of the discourse, structurally affine, bearing with them the memory of their identity.

[5] "Give me thy hands /Be my brother once more and do not deprive /Me of your sight /Before thy end. /A temple - where we kneel,/A place - we travel towards,/A destiny - devouring us,/A heaven for me and thee".

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In the original, the first three lines are crossed by an eschatological pulsation signaled by the semantic rhyme *-ende*, whose "linguistic-temporal etymon" seems to be a symbolic form receiving, hic et nunc, an arrangement in an *image-time*, "closed" by the hypothesis of virtual *phoric* terminativity. This worrying notion of end is updated and articulated in our text, in two manners. First of all, on the *proximity* isotopy, by means of the distance/closeness opposition: G*ib mir die Hände* [...]*/ Nicht wieder weg von mir*, and then on the temporality axis, by means of a notion of Ianus type, *wieder* ("again"). We can see the fear of end, at the same time, aggravated and euphemized, in the very significance of return and bend moment of the *wende* lexeme, whose phonic identity with the derived noun *Wende* is obvious. This German noun gathers heterogeneous temporal significances (individual, social-historical, astronomic), by means of two of its meanings: a) fatal, faith related, "crucial moment" (or change and revolution); b) cosmic-natural: "solstice" (*Sonnenwende*).

By continuing to preserve the idea of mutual correspondence, we can also notice that the deictics *I-you* take now the place of the two complementary generic pronouns (*was-das*) of the first octet, covering states and relationships between beings and objects, so as to highlight other values, more personal, having their expression in metonymy (the hands and the eyes) and symbol (the temple). This is caused by a difference installed in the *modality* area too: the first octet showed, as we could see, the deontic issue of "having to/ knowing (doing)", the second contains an implicit, complementary *modalisation*, of the type *vouloir-pouvoir* être/ faire en commun (*wanting-being able to* be/ create together). By examining the presuppositions, the statement lets us understand two formulations at the conditional mood which diminish the speaker's force of the imperative, by governing the order and the domination. They are subordinated to "I say", referring to the invitation for the present: "if you wanted" (offering to the other time and freedom to think) and the promise for the future: "then you would see that...". The stanza maintains the interrogatory meaning of the first one (*was*), but it remains open, taking into account that, at the express instance of the recipient, the poem does not textualize an explicit affirmative answer from the sender. However, the address as part of a dialogue or monologue *nolens volens* conforms to the postulate expressed by Paul Valéry (1973) in his *Notebooks*: "All mental facts are nothing but question and answer" (p. 891), and of the two, mentions Valéry in another excerpt, the answer is the marked term: "Even when it questions, the spirit is an answer" (p. 988).

Interesting for our reading hypothesis is the fact that this quatrain also allows to an equal extent a reading from a reversed perspective, of a *you* addressing to the poetic ego,

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which would lead to the hypothesis of the indistinction of the ego voices of which derives the I/ other alternation, of the assertion with good reason, according to R. Marian (2005, pp. 86-87), of a *plurivocity* in its very structure, by integrating the other (you, he). Or, as A. Indrieș (1989) asserts, this "polyphony of the person is brought forward in the discourse" (p. 89), and much more, in our opinion, in the poetic discourse of Novalis, where the topic of the double conjugates the aspiration to the primary unit and the need for knowing himself, similar /coincident with the penetration into the mysteries of the Universe and into the mysterious being of one's own ego.

The use of the imperative of the three verbs (*geben, sein, wegwenden*), subordinated to the supplication, accentuates the actual value of a very improved present which institutes as ornamental time and adds an emotional nuance to the personal pronouns (I-you-he), enriching them with passion reflexes of the inner life. The mood changes, too, in the poem: the descriptive one from the beginning is replaced by the mild mood of an addressed discourse having a pedagogical and restorative function at the same time. A more decided soteriological nuance appears then in the last enumerative series, or maybe appositive only, where the exigency of the divine, felt only at the beginning, is strongly highlighted. The "transfiguration" of the poem finds its appropriate expression in this anaphoric serie *ein Tempel, ein Ort, ein Glück, ein Himmel,*which constitutes in the same number of indubitable reference points for the spirit, evincing that the unknown *was - das* take a firm contour in the poetic imaginary, focused now on a logic of the interpersonal relationship. The tendency towards a *cohesive* personal and space-temporal unit is clearly delineated not only by the significance of the indefinite *ein*, but also by the clear manifest manner of arranging the morpho-lexematic units in the three consecutive lines of the terza rima. The new *form-sense* arising as from a poetic prayer marks the already announced "bend" towards a distinct manner of adequacy of the composition plan at the semantic level.

3.2. Sacerdotal Time of the poem

The actions designated by the three verbs (*knieen, ziehen, glühen*, all dynamic), that we can see again immersed in a prescriptive present, trigger all the three compartments of the human being, body-soul-spirit, while the conscience maintained awake on *one* accentuates its coherence and shows its essence: the divine filiation. The aspiration towards a unit incurs a correlation of all the temporal variations, diversely aspectualized: iterative, inceptive, durative, terminative, which creates in a synchronic and therefore poetic manner (in synthesis

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and accord), an architectonics of the being and of the time or, more specifically, a four-dimension spatial temporal continuum. The temporality axis goes hand in hand with the more and more extended axis of spatiality (*wo-wohin* in relation to the internal/ external category), illustrating a high-line visionary geometry, an initiation route, from the perspective of an *evolved ego*, excited by the divine benevolence. However, these lines are a continuation of the invocation, and, by this very fact, they are attracted to the present, the same present of the dialogue I-you, so that the verbs "to give" and "to be", more precisely, "to offer" and "being able to be" remain implicit for the fraternal cooperation.

As regards the versification, the last line which also pencils the purpose of the purposes, seems however to be an "orphan" rhyme with that *dir* remained in suspension such as *mir* at the end of the first quatrain. The poetic creativity harmonizes them in a novel manner, first of all at typographic level, as the tension highlighted by the hyphen disappears and then they also relate phonically: by an external and by an internal rhyme, after the previous symbolic meeting in that poetic *wir* of the intersubjectivity and of the sacred communion, starting from the premise of a primary consubstantiality (acc. l. 5: *Ein Tempel*[6] - *wo wir knieen*). We talk in this case of an image of the time with a *sacerdotal function*, as this one "[the sanctuary] is effectively the place of the sacred action" (according to G. Gusdorf, 1996, p. 70). Thus, the two pronouns involved in the communication exchange, from brother to brother, "close" the deictic time of the poem and open an ample, indefinite beach between α and ω. Its strongly subjectivised end also ascertains us on the fact that the gestures for order instauration, so insistently exposed at the beginning, do not only concern an exterior, but they express the will of recapturing the inner balance and the need for being compatible with the divine will/ being. In this case, the last quatrain can also be conceived as a coded answer of the fraternal *alter*, originating from the perplexity of the awareness of a charisma otherness within one's own identity. Having as clue the "spiritual horizon of the human being", this twofold possibility translates, from the perspective of the religious discourse, by the two constitutive fundamental axes: "the communion with the neighbor (having the same genesis and the same call)" and "person inseparability from the existence for the great Creator" (acc. Dinu, 2008, pp. 149-151). In this mannerist, savant construction, product of an intuitive-romantic spirit, concerned in preparing "pillars and arches for the architecture of the Being"

[6] In the context, the temple also appears to us as a temporal (possible presaging) figure, to the constitution of which also contributes the similarity, or maybe even the identity, at an etymologic level, of the root temp- which represents the basis of the Latin words tempus and templum, also present in another poem (cf. Es ist an der Zeit) by Hardenberg.

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(the expression belongs to R. Marian, 2005, p. 121), the three hyphens highlighting the silence and hyperbolizing the mystery have also the role to introduce, starting with the selection of a manner of existence conjugated with efficiency manners (based on the symbol of the temple), the range of certain important metaphors with revelatory function:

a) the metaphor of human being, place and time consecration;

b) the metaphor of the attraction and of the transgression of limits;

c) the metaphor of fortune (*Glück*: hazard, destiny) in mutual inter-conditionality with that of the inner fire (of moderate intensity and pulsation, as form of protecting time), predicting

d) the final metaphor of the state of grace, valorized as shared sublime gift.

The metaphorical waterfall which seems to rise from a moment of absolute lucidity (in Novalis philosophical meaning, characteristic to a far-sighted spirit only, acc. V. Nişcov, 2008, p. 164), subliming the inner pulsing and absorbing the energies of the higher reality, (re)constitutes the figure of a complete present, where the present takes the shape of a miracle. The propension to the accomplishment of the ego and the sense of blow up mark the definitive and very visible rupture from the previous constructive schemata of the poem on the one hand and institute a new inflection moment on the other. This effervescence taking place in the inmost being of the ego develops at the expression level, by means of a range of analogies and homologies based on his manner of "believing", through the conversion of an axiological system (previously based on trust) in faith values, instituted in the very poetic universe. At this axial moment of the poem appears the perspective of salvation of the ego by means of the other, which transfigures in this context in that "interchangeable simultaneity", identity and otherness, previously mentioned, convincingly analyzed by R. Marian (*idem*, p. 158), but otherwise realized in Eminescu's novel *Sărmanul Dionis*.

We assist, at the end, to the reconfiguration of a universe, where the reader must not necessarily see a *locus amoenus* where no one is alone, but rather a interiorized area of the voluptuousness - *Wollust* - within the mystic meaning evoked by Novalis (III, 425/794 - *cf.* also M. Mocanu, 2014, p. 264 and p. 344). Should we consider the chronogenetic axis established by Guillaume, we notice, at the level of the entire poem, an advance tendency of the temporal vector from the final chronothesis combined with the initial one towards the median chronothesis represented by the conjunctive (time *in fieri*), so that the last quatrain performs a whipping return to the final chronothesis, where the present loses its quality of era

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separator. By its exclamatory value, the imperative imposes a quick tempo, under the tension of the end, seen as a time limit and as a vainness, which impregnates the protagonists and the operations, a tempo which has to be accelerated, for a future achievement. The condition is a chance (to happiness, *Glück*) in which the involved actors must participate, not in any manner, but with the fervor of the person in charge with the necessity of accomplishing it.

As a matter of fact, the selection of a subject conjugated with the value and fervor of the creation is a feature of the literary movement which also includes Novalis' creation, a feature very exactly noted by Lucian Blaga (1977) in *Philosophical Essays* (p. 171): "The romantics did not want to be just *touched*, but also grown, enriched, completed, by the work of art; that is why they used to resort to all the available means in order to increase the suggestion and first of all to the inherent possibilities of the great subject" (underlined by author).

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