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Michel Foucault... în mișcare.
Numele Foucault este ușor de pronunțat în japoneză

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Title: "Michel Foucault...on the move. The name Foucault is easy to pronounce in Japanese"
Abstract: The present study approaches Michel Foucault on the move, hypostatizing him in Japan, a space that places him in a privileged philosophical and critical position – "... my name, Foucault, is easy to pronounce in Japanese, much easier for example than Heidegger" – valuating an updated/actual relevant axis, marked by travel/visit/lecture – postcolonial criticism – transnationality. The phrase in-motion, [here] in-Japan clarifies the reason why M. Foucault opted for the East – West division and not for another one, resorting extremely rarely to the term "Asia". Instead, he will refer to a vocabulary tributary to the West – East relationship, part of an intellectual commitment of the moment, of an intellectual involvement and critical interest in the West and the East. By preserving the dual pair of terms – Occident – Orient –, Foucault will identify both the speculative universality of modern Western ways of thinking, but also the critical specificity of extra-European thinking, rethinking the very operational formula of Western philosophy, freeing the role of "non-Western" forms of thought. In-Japan certifies and completes the Foucauldian field of interpretation explicitly named in the dialogue of two Prefaces – *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge Classique* (1961) and *Les mots et les choses* (1966).
Keywords: Michel Foucault, Japan, Orient – Occident, on the move paradigm, travelling theory.

Rezumat: Prezentul studiu îl surprinde pe Michel Foucault în mișcare, aflat într-o raportare spre în-afară, ipostaziindu-l în Japonia, spațiu care îl situează într-o poziție privilegiat filosofică și critică – „... numele meu, Foucault, este ușor de pronunțat în japoneză, mult mai ușor, spre exemplu, decât Heidegger" – pe axa reactualizată și de interes, și astăzi, marcată de călătorie/vizitare/prelegere – critică postcolonială – transnaționalitate. Sintagma în-mișcare, [aici] în-Japonia, clarifică rațiunea pentru care M. Foucault a optat pentru delimitarea Orient – Occident și nu pentru o alta, recurgând, extrem de rar, la termenul „Asia". Acesta va oferta, în schimb, lexicul tributar relației/raportului Occident – Orient, ca parte componentă a unui angajament intelectual al momentului, de implicare intelectuală și de interes critic în chiar reperele acționale ale Vestului cu ale Estului. Prin conservarea perechii duale de termeni – Occident – Orient –, Foucault va identifica, deopotrivă, universalitatea speculativă a modurilor occidentale moderne de gândire, dar și specificitatea critică a gândirii extraeuropene, relansând însăși formula operațională de filosofie occidentală, prin chiar eliberarea formelor de gândire „non-occidentale". În-Japonia certifică și completează câmpul de concepere, de receptare și de interpretare foucault-ian numit, explicit, în dialogul a două Prefețe – *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge Classique* (1961) și *Les mots et les choses* (1966).
Cuvinte-cheie: Michel Foucault, Japan, Orient – Occident, paradigma mișcării, teoria călătoriei.

Michel Foucault...în mișcare

La debutul anului 1978, Michel Foucault (însoțit – în ipostaza de *companion privilegiat* – de către Daniel Defert) întreprindea un (ex)curs prelungit în Japonia, demarând o serie de interviuri și de prelegeri, într-un/printr-un contact nemediat nu doar cu *intelighenția* japoneză a momentului, dar și cu spațiile particulare de interes – spre exemplu, vizitarea spațiilor carcerale –, demers parte a unui experiment transnațional – receptat personal și politic, dar și integrat unui proiect/program-manifest al gândirii critice activ-activate. Detenta menționată se cere a fi poziționat-localizată în *mișcarea*[1] lui Michel Foucault, dinamică deschisă din anii 1955, prin plecarea în Suedia, lăsând să se (între)vadă nu ezitările între/dintre o carieră universitară și vocația de eseist-jurnalist, ci însuși parcursul/traseul deschis și conjugat, ghidat premeditat înspre dez/re-orientarea în interiorul propriei gândiri.

Interesat, în particular, și, cu precădere, de geografia ideatic-culturală a civilizației non-occidentale (a se vedea *punctele-în-mișcare* – Tunisia, Japonia, Iran etc.), construcția perspectivei de raportare foucault-iene în/spre *în-afară* se poziționează în corpus-ul unei gândiri etalate în/prin prefața din anul 1961, la *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge Classique* (eliminată/prescurtată în ediția în limba franceză, din anul 1964, variantă preluată, ulterior, de blocul traducerilor, cu excepția celei în limba italiană, până la restituirea completă din anul 2006!), drept parte echivalentă a Orientului păstrând limita raționalității occidentale și afirmând că „Orientul este pentru Occident tot ceea ce acesta nu este, deși aici ar trebui căutate valorile sale originare"[2].

Cu privire la *Orientul lui Foucault*, atribuindu-i, astfel, primului o trăsătură specifică, și celui de- al doilea termen un posesiv arondat unei *arheologii a tăcerii*, Marnia Lazreg etalează evidența unei stări de raportare explicită, în sensul în care, cu toate că M. Foucault nu a dedicat vreun spațiu punctat/punctual, ideatic și textual semnificativ Orientului, în opera sa, metoda prefețelor elucida(n)te (de la prefața din anul 1961, la *Istoria nebuniei,* la o distanță de cinci ani, cea a *Cuvintelor și lucrurilor)* poate fi considerată o detentă deschisă/inauguratoare, în fapt, de încadrare a percepției general-punctate emise privind culturile non-occidentale[3]. Marnia Lazreg lecturează prefața *Cuvintelor și lucrurilor* întrevăzând în *Foucault-dublul-lui-Borges*[4], o relație justificată/justificabilă printr-o afinitate recunoscută, explicit, („această carte își are originea într-un text de Borges. In râsul care, la lectura lui, zguduie toate obișnuințele gândirii – ale gândirii noastre: ale aceleia care are vârsta și geografia noastră – denivelând toate suprafețele ordonate și toate planurile care cumințesc pentru noi forfota ființelor, făcând să se clatine și hărțuind, pentru mult timp, milenara noastră practică a Aceluiași și a Diferitului"[5]). Pe de altă parte, Marnia Lazreg identifică o formulă, explicit, contrastantă între cei doi – nodul comun rezidă în utilizarea Orientului drept *trop* – Foucault accentuând spațiul, operând cu un cumul de categorii la limită – Orientul este un spațiu *expansiv și delimitat* –, arondându-l modalității borges-iene, fie cu scopul de a tulbura imaginația occidentală despre China ca spațiu ordonat și vast, fie a o deruta supraîncărcat, prin versiuni utopic-amplificate până la a conveni asupra existenței spațiului-heterotopie sau a valida o taxonomie atractivă, din punct de vedere epistemologic: „Totuși, textul lui Borges merge în altă direcție; acestei distorsiuni a clasificării care ne împiedică s-o gândim, acestui tablou lipsit de un spațiu coerent, Borges îi oferă o regiune precisă al cărui simplu nume constituie pentru Occident o mare rezervă de utopii. China, în închipuirea noastră, nu este oare locul privilegiat al spațiului? Pentru sistemul nostru imaginar, cultura chineză este cea mai meticuloasă, cea mai ierarhizată, cea mai surdă la evenimentele timpului, cea mai legată de pura desfășurare a întinderii (...). Astfel încât enciclopedia chineză citată de către Borges și taxinomia pe care acesta o propune conduc la o gândire fără spațiu, la cuvinte și categorii fără cap și coadă, dar care se bazează, în fond, pe un spațiu solemn, supraîncărcat de figuri complexe, de drumuri încâlcite, de peisaje stranii, de treceri secrete și de legături neprevăzute; ar fi deci, la cealaltă extremitate a pământului pe care îl locuim, o cultură preocupată în întregime de legiferarea orizontalității, dar care n-ar distribui proliferarea ființelor în niciunul dintre spațiile unde ne este cu putință să numim, să vorbim, să gândim"[6].

Prin filtrul receptării prezentate, implicit/inclusiv, Japonia se menține, pentru Foucault, în ipostaza unui spațiu apt a-i livra (re)sursele necesare, menite de a fi utilizate în aprofundarea unui cumul de percepții privind alteritatea culturală, de spațiu, deopotrivă, *fascinant* și *enigmatic*, ambele denotative, oferite de către Michel Foucault, ca alternativă la a-și cataloga atenția, pentru Japonia, în termenii de *interes profund sau superficial*,

[1] *Refuzul-de-a-se-opri* este confirmat, inclusiv, prin oferta (neluată în calcul de către Foucault) invitației lui Maurice Pinguet, de a deveni Director al Institutului franco-japonez din Tokyo – a se vedea, în acest sens, John Rajchman, „Foucault in Asia: an Introduction", în Michel Foucault, *The Japan Lectures. A Transnational Critical Encounter* (Routledge, 2024).

[2] Marnia Lazreg, *Foucault's Orient: the conundrum of cultural difference, from Tunisia to Japan* (Berghahn Books, New York, 2017).

[3] *Ibidem,* 14.

[4] Apropierea lui Foucault de Borges nu este una deloc întâmplătoare, nici inedită, ci, mai degrabă, o afinitate dezvoltată [a se vedea, ilustrativ, M. Foucault, „The Fantasia of the library", în D. F. Bouchard & S. Simon, *Michel. Foucault, language, counter-memory, practice: Selected essays and interview* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1977)]. Noutatea/diferența constă în recursul nu la enciclopedie, în general, (reper considerat esențial în cuantificarea schimbărilor receptate în relația/raportul *scris – carte*, pivot angrenat *literaturii în căutarea sensului*), ci la „*o anume* enciclopedie chineză" (s.n.), tocmai în/prin sensul și semnificația particulară a receptării diferite a semnificației culturii non-occidentale.

[5] Michel Foucault, *Cuvintele și lucrurile* (Editura RAO, București, 2008), 39.

[6] *Ibidem*, 43-44.

considerând-o un reper inconstant, ca preocupare, dar un punct atractor/atractiv specific, acela al istoriei raționalității occidentale și al limitei de care aceasta dispune[1]. Cu toate acestea, *fascinația* constant exercitată și devenită modalitate exterioriza(n)tă – cu trimitere la kimono-ul lui Foucault sau la patul gândit în tradiția japoneză, la capul ras – poate lăsa impresia unui prim impuls nietzsche-an, acela de a se opri/stabili (ambele nu exclud, în acest context, *mișcarea*!), contrabalansat însă de o realitate practică și printr-o realitate practică, aceea a dificultăților lui Foucault în certificarea categoriilor de analiză care îi susțineau concepția privind relația/raportul Orient – Occident, dar și a frustrărilor și a perplexității manifestate cu recurs la fundamentul cultural occidental.

Paradigma mișcării/teoria călătoriei

Teoria edwardsaid-iană a *călătoriei* devine în cazul/speța lui Foucault o modalitate integra(n)tă în corpus-ul deplasat al *paradigmei mișcării*, formulă decretată, de către Sandro Mezzadra,[2] integrată unui proiect critic particular, transgresând coordonatele itinerarului, prin rutele circulatorii, inclusiv, ale teoriei critice, tocmai în această manieră capabilă a fi – prin cuantificarea forțelor istorico-politice – mutată și reinventată în alte locuri/spații. Cu privire la *Foucault în Japonia*, John Rajchman[3] individualizează însăși mișcarea percepută amplitudinal în chiar transmutările internaționale resimțite, deopotrivă, în Franța, dar și în Japonia, în anul 1978, convenind asupra faptului că, tocmai „colonialismul european din secolele al XIX-lea și al XX-lea și antiimperialismul au propagat gândirea critică europeană, creând, în acest proces, condițiile discursive prin care filosofia sau teoria sunt traduse și reinventate în afara Europei”[4], și că, pe acest fundal angaja(n)t, „călătoriile devin o chestiune critică și teoretică numai atunci când oferă o modalitate de a lăsa deoparte propriul *discurs*, sau preconcepțiile, oferind în schimb o modalitate de a deveni *străin de sine,* printr-un nou tip de schimb cu ceilalți – deopotrivă, personal și politic (...)”[5].

Foucault-în-Suedia deschide seria unor repere-în-mișcare extinse – *Foucault-în-Polonia, Foucault-în-Germania, Foucault-în-SUA, Foucault-în-Canada, Foucault-în-*Brazilia etc. – implicit a lui *Foucault-în-Japonia*, trasee care punctează tocmai felul în care acesta optează premeditat pentru o serie de descentrări asumate, în fapt, exemplificând de la fața locului/locurilor, actul *de a se considera străin* în raport cu propria cultură.

Se impune – aici – o mențiune-avertisment necesară, punctată de către John Rajchman, prin insistența asupra opiniei potrivit căreia, Foucault a recurs extrem de rar la termenul „Asia”, ofertând în schimb vocabularul tributar relației/raportului Occident – Orient, parte a unui angajament intelectual al momentului, de implicare intelectuală și de interes critic în chiar reperele acționale ale Vestului și ale Estului, demarcări tensionale ale Războiului Rece, amplasate acutiza(n)t în anul 1956 [anul se cere a fi extins inclusiv la Praga '68 sau la mișcarea *Solidaritatea* din Polonia – s.n.], atunci când „s-a întâmplat ceva ce cred că a fost crucial și decisiv: odată cu dispariția fascismului ca formă instituțională în Europa, cu moartea lui Stalin și cu stalinismul șters (...), maghiarii s-au revoltat la Budapesta, au intervenit rușii, iar puterea sovietică care, de fapt, nu mai era presată de necesități economice, a reacționat așa cum am văzut. În același timp, în Franța, am avut Războiul din Algeria, și acesta a fost foarte important, pentru că și acolo am văzut că, în pofida tuturor problemelor economice, capitalismul francez a arătat că se putea descurca ușor fără Algeria, fără colonizarea Algeriei – aveam de-a face cu mecanisme de putere care se lăsau cumva duse de la sine, dincolo de presiunile economice fundamentale. De aici și necesitatea de a ne gândi la această problemă a puterii, dar și lipsa instrumentelor conceptuale pentru a face acest lucru. Cred că practic, și puțin inconștient, oamenii din generația mea, și eu sunt doar unul dintre aceștia, au ajuns să încerce să înțeleagă acest fenomen al puterii. În acest moment, mi-aș reconstrui retrospectiv munca, în esență, în funcție de această problemă”[6].

Conservând perechea duală de termeni – Occident – Orient –, Foucault identifică, deopotrivă, „universalitatea speculativă a modurilor occidentale moderne de gândire”, dar și „specificitatea critică a gândirii

[1] *Ibidem.*

[2] Sandro Mezzadra, „En Voyage. Michel Foucault et La Critique Postcoloniale", în Philippe Artières, Jean-François Bert, Frédéric Gros, Judith Revel (eds.), *Cahier Foucault* (Éditions de l'Herne, Paris, 2011), 352-357.

[3] John Rajchman, „Foucault in Asia: an Introduction”, 7.

[4] *Ibidem*.

[5] *Ibidem*.

[6] Michel Foucault, „Kenryoku to chi” („Pouvoir et savoir”), interviu cu S. Hasumi, Paris, 13 Octombrie 1977, în *Umi* (Decembrie 1977), 240–256, în Michel Foucault, *The Japan Lectures.*

extraeuropene"[1], relansând însăși formula operațională de *filosofie occidentală,* prin chiar eludarea rolului formelor de gândire „non-occidentale", drept acte cu rol critic.

Japonia (prin aducerea împreună a unui triplu demers conjugat, recunoscut în/prin *călătorie/vizitare/prelegere – critică postcolonială – transnaționalitate*) îi facilitează lui Foucault un (ex)curs punctual/punctat cu privire nu doar la reperele care îi fundamentează teoria – *teoria puterii* –, ci și la modul în care relația *cunoaștere – putere*, abordată de către Foucault într-o manieră radical-critică, poate fi justificată prin chiar statutul mișcării – a ajunge în Japonia ca delegat cultural al guvernului francez. Tocmai în acest sens, dialogul/prelegerea *La société disciplinaire en crise*[2] dispune de un statut [aici] privilegiat în clarificarea unei poziții singulare atât în ceea ce privește propria teorie sau propriul sistem, cât și rațiunile de a ajunge în Japonia.

Foucault se desparte-prin-depășire de teoria puterii, aceea care validează și recurge la putere în termeni de drepturi, limite, origine și legitimitate, prin interesul direcționat, explicit, înspre tehnicile și tehnologia puterii, domeniu care a eludat în cercetare secolele al XVII-lea și al XVIII-lea, preocupându-se, însă, predominant de noile forme și manifestări de avangardă și/sau de rezistență (cu referire explicită la feminism sau la mișcările studențești). De la Franța la/în Japonia, problema universalizării cercetării este plasată, de către Foucault, în proximitatea determinărilor marcate de timp și de spațiu, cu toate diferențele specifice, dar și cu mecanismele comune care facilitează eficiența puterii. Franța este învestită, de către Foucault, cu valențele de exemplaritate europeană, relevantă fiind supremația disciplinarității în relație cu ritmul dezvoltării societății industriale și cu procentul de creștere a populației. Avertismentul foucault-ian care afirma că „în țările industrializate, disciplina este în criză" nu este altceva decât produsul inerent al schimbărilor identificabile, specifice unei *societăți fără disciplină,* reafirmând, în fapt, trei dimensiuni directoare: cumulul formelor de putere fundamentează și garantează existența puterii de stat; relațiile de putere funcționează independent de indivizii care au puterea în stat și dezvoltarea cunoașterii științifice nu poate fi înțeleasă la distanță de schimbările mecanismelor puterii. În chiar acest interval, propune Foucault formula de departajare Orient – Occident: „Franța este pasionată de exportul culturii sale (...). Japonia este o țară relativ liberă, și lucrările mele sunt traduse; este inutil să mi se interzică să merg în Japonia. În întreaga lume, schimburile culturale au devenit frecvente și importante și este imposibil să se interzică difuzarea ideilor în străinătate, cu excepția cazului în care un regim este absolut dictatorial. Nu cred deloc că guvernul francez este un guvern complet liberal, dar s-ar putea spune că recunoaște realitatea așa cum este și nu o interzice"[3].

Foucault în Japonia

Călătoriile lui Foucault în Japonia, din septembrie 1970 și din martie 1978, dispun de un context diferit. Prima reprezentând ruta Tokyo – Osaka – Kyoto, la invitația lui Maurice Pinguet, era parte componentă a unui demers oficial, repercusiune a intenției guvernului francez de a trimite în Japonia un profesor agregat cu o calificare superioară, așa cum insista Yoishi Maeda, acela pentru care Foucault era mai mult decât cunoscut, și atât de familiar datorită traducerilor pe care sora-psihiatru a acestuia, Miyeko Kamiya, le făcuse operelor *Naissance de la Clinique* (1969) și *Maladie Mentale et Psychologie* (1970).

Profesorul Moriaki Watanabe, care a facilitat turneul lui Foucault, insista asupra faptului că atunci când Foucault a sosit la Tokyo, *Les mots et les choses* nu fusese încă tradusă în Japonia, urmând traducerii operei *L'Archéologie du savoir,* aceea pe care Moriaki Watanabe o considera o traducere japoneză deficitară. Nedumerirea lui Foucault, din anul 1970, susținută, inclusiv, de un mediu intelectual japonez refractar (tributar gândirii lui Sartre care vizitase Japonia, în anul 1966, împreună cu Simone de Beauvoir) sau de ecourile minime ale conservaților întreținute, va fi una completată, ulterior, prin călătoria din anul 1978 (demers concretizat de către Thierry de Beaucé, consilier cultural la Ambasada Franței, cu ajutorul lui Christian Polak, interpret) reprezentând o parte a unei „misiuni culturale oficiale a guvernului francez". Ruta va fi una extinsă, concretizată și în vizitarea a două închisori din regiunea Fukuoka și a unei secții de psihiatrie, în întâlniri cu intelectualii de prim rang ai momentului (inclusiv cu liderul Partidului Socialist din Japonia), în discursuri rostite la universități și în

[1] John Rajchman, „Foucault in Asia: an Introduction".

[2] Michel Foucault, „La société disciplinaire en crise", Conference at the Franco Japanese Institute of Kansai in Kyoto, April 18, 1978, in *AsahiJānaru*, v. 20 no. 19, May 12, 1978, *Dits et écrits* III, no. 231.

[3] *Ibidem*.

interviuri mediatizate, în contactul directă cu oponenții construirii aeroportului din Narita, sau cu pulsul cluburilor de noapte, exclusiv masculine, dar și în experiența retragerii într-un templu zen[1].

Se impun, în acest context introductiv, trei clarificări imperioase.

Prima vizează – la momentul anului 1978 – un interes crescut („considerabil") al spațiului japonez pentru opera lui Foucault, care ar întreține o matrice/un mit trifazic de receptare al lui Foucault: un Foucault structuralist, care ucide Istoria și Omul; un Foucault metodic „fiu risipitor al filosofiei care, după ce a rătăcit pe câmpul îndoielnic al literaturii revenise la o reflecție serioasă asupra metodei" și un Foucault radical preocupat de problematica închisorilor și a prizonierilor[2].

A doua are în vedere autopoziționarea lui Foucault în raport cu Japonia, în general („... numele meu, Foucault, este ușor de pronunțat în japoneză, mult mai ușor, spre exemplu, decât Heidegger")[3] și cu propria operă, în general, mizând nu pe corectarea miturilor, ci pe libertatea absolută a lectorului, printr-o scriitură al cărei primat este acela de a fi utilizabilă.

A treia precizare se poziționează pe chiar axa unei perspective meditativ-futurologice[4], considerând că Japonia are nevoie de intelectuali cu o menire exactă, independent de rolul de profeți sau de legislatori solicitați, și că viitorul acesteia consistă în chiar aprofundarea unei filosofii a *acum*-ului.

Un dialog între două Prefețe: înainte și după enigma Japoniei

Reflecțiile lui M. Foucault, dedicate Orientului, parte a prefeței ediției din anul 1961 a lucrării *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge Classique*[5], sintetizează o perspectivă atitudinală referitoare la alteritatea culturală, filtrată filosofic prin chiar revederea dispunerii conceptual-totalizante a Orientului și Occidentului, partaj care, pe lângă menirea de a problematiza subiectul partajului, divide ireconciliabil. În sine, nebunia este inserată, de către M. Foucault, în corpus-ul unei istorii-truc de claustrare a celuilalt/aproapelui în gestul rațiunii suverane, expulzare care repoziționează experiența-limită în chiar esența de receptare/ înțelegere a identității occidentale. Societățile și-ar fundamenta modul de funcționare pe principiul includere/excludere-respingere, izolând, astfel, cultura din exterior, de cea din interior, cultura occidentală (de)marcându-și două limite tari, una în interior, între nebunie și rațiune (devenite străine și surde una în raport cu cealaltă) și o alta exterioară, între Orient și Occident, ambele sinonime fiind expresia unei rupturi decisive („A interoga o cultură despre experiențele sale-limită înseamnă a o chestiona la limitele istoriei despre o ruptură care este ceva asemănător cu însăși nașterea istoriei sale"[6]), dar, mai ales, un *spațiu alb* de izolare, „operând diviziunea care dă unei culturi fața pozitivității sale: aceasta este grosimea originară în care o cultură prinde contur"[7].

În raportul și relația Orient – Occident, elementul *originar* fundamentează diviziunea culturală, prin chiar actul de delimitare al cunoașterii inerente oricărei culturi, Orientul fiind diviziunea, „gândit ca origine, visat ca punctul vertiginos din care se nasc nostalgia și promisiunile de întoarcere, Orientul oferit rațiunii colonizatoare a Occidentului, dar indefinit, inaccesibil, căci rămâne întotdeauna limita: noaptea începutului, în care Occidentul s-a format, dar în care a trasat o linie de demarcație"[8]. Experiența-limită Orient – Occident își extrage substanța din alegerea originară a filosofiei occidentale, recalculând, filosofic, diviziunile operabile în registrul *oniric* al *interdicțiilor sexuale* și ale *dorinței*, demers subsumat de către Foucault confruntării între/dintre dialectica istoriei și structurile imobile ale tragicului.

Întreaga dezbatere este concepută, de către Marnia Lazreg, sub semnul unei interogații elucida(n)te pentru contextul prezentului demers: „De ce a ales Foucault diviziunea Orient – Occident și nu o alta, cum ar fi Occident – non-Occident? (...) Omiterea prefeței din 1961, din edițiile ulterioare ale cărții, sugerează că Foucault a avut ocazia să se gândească la acest lucru după ce a întreprins călătoriile în Japonia în 1970 și 1978 (...). Cu toate acestea, diversele declarații ulterioare despre cultura japoneză nu se îndepărtează, în esență, de punctul de

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[1] *Ibidem*, 198.

[2] „Kenryoku to chi" („Pouvoir et savoir"), interviu cu S. Hasumi înregistrat la Paris în 13 octombrie 1977, în *Umi* (Decembrie 1977), 240–256, în Michel Foucault, *The Japan Lectures.*

[3] *Ibidem.*

[4] A se vedea, în acest sens, „M. Foucault to zen: zendera taiza-ki" („Michel Foucault et le zen: un séjour dans un temple zen"), interviu cu C. Polak, în *Umi* (August – Septembrie 1978), 1-6, în Michel Foucault, *The Japan Lectures.*

[5] Michel Foucault, „Preface to the 1961 Edition", în *History of Madness* (Routledge, 2006).

[6] *Ibidem*, xxix.

[7] *Ibidem*.

[8] *Ibidem*, xxx.

vedere exprimat. Într-o mare măsură, acestea îl completează”[1], întrevăzând, astfel, perpetuarea a trei direcții de orientare.

Pe de o parte, receptarea Orientului drept zonă a *visurilor* Occidentului, semnifică simptomul nostalgiei originii, imposibil de stăpânit, cu o „noapte a începutului”, la care aspiră să se întoarcă.

Pe de altă parte, la limita psihologic – emoțional – ontologică, decretarea Orientului drept limită, punct „indefinit inaccesibil” și acceptarea acestuia drept „tot ceea ce nu este Occidentul”, implică în doze recalibrate, *diferența* și *puterea*.

„Citatul nu are nicio legătură directă cu obiectul cărții (nebunia) în a cărui prefață a apărut. În fapt, face trimitere la incongruența locului privind enciclopedia chineză din prefața la *Les mots et les choses*”[2], care reprezintă aserțiunea emisă de către Marnia Lazreg, și care stabilește, explicit, interferența între/dintre cele două spații ideatice prefațatoare. Perspectivele de receptare dinspre spațiul intelighenției japoneze întrevăd în/printr-un astfel de context, fie o diviziune echivalentă doar unui imperativ metodologic, de ordin vag și constrâns să presupună *un Orient în afara Occidentului*, fie o perpetuare a etapei fenomenologice a operei lui Foucault, referirea la Orient, considerat laitmotiv episodic, care subliniază atât „universalitatea occidentală”, cât și opoziția binară prin „experiența-limită” între culturi, având menirea de a consolida identitatea culturală occidentală.

„Odată ce Foucault a eliminat citatul din edițiile ulterioare, acesta nu a mai făcut referire la aspectul numit și, în esență, l-a abandonat”[3], devenind afirmația pe care Marnia Lazreg o inter-relaționează explicit cu experiența/*enigma Japoniei*, în sensul în care „călătoriile lui Foucault în Japonia dispun de o importanță deosebită în înțelegerea motivației și a felului în care acesta a perceput cultura japoneză ca pe o limită, fiind constrâns să abandoneze cu adevărat punctul de vedere exprimat în prefață. În Japonia, Foucault se va confrunta cu-mai-mult decât provocarea empirică a procesării familiarului din exterior, în raport cu ceea ce este diferit din punct de vedere experiențial”[4].

Validând, **concluziv,** această cheie de lectură, *după* devine, în acest context particular de receptare, un demers-în-mișcare, *în Japonia* semnifică capacitatea de a intra în contact tocmai cu ideile occidentale integrate în locurile japoneze pe care le-a vizitat, prin îmblânzirea întâlnirii dintre/între tradiții și rezistențele manifeste ale acestora.

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[1] Marnia Lazreg, *Foucault's Orient: the conundrum of cultural difference, from Tunisia to Japan*, 195.

[2] *Ibidem.*

[3] *Ibidem*, 196.

[4] *Ibidem*, 197.

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From Philosophy to Method: A Historical Epistemology of the Notion of Individuality in Boasian Anthropology

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Abstract: Through the interdisciplinary lens of historical epistemology, the present work aims to show that individuality is not only a cultural value but also a veritable epistemic operator. The Boasian concept of culture represents much more than a reaction against evolutionism. In his fieldworks, Boas effectively operationalised Herder's arguments about historicism and cultural particularity. Under these circumstances, their theoretical models require a detailed analysis. Historical epistemology shows how specific conceptual commitments determine the criteria for valid anthropological evidence. By tracing the epistemic use of individuality back to nineteenth-century German historicism, the present work illustrates significant continuities and discontinuities. From Herder, Boas inherited not only a solid concept of culture but also his epistemic values. The Boasians successfully employed the epistemic notion of individuality to limit imprudent explanatory ambitions while enabling a sustainable historical intelligibility. Individuality shifts from a theoretical construct in Herder's philosophical anthropology to a methodological frame in Boasian anthropology.
Keywords: Boas, Herder, individuality, culture, historical epistemology.

Titlu: „De la filosofie la metodă: o epistemologie istorică a noțiunii de individualitate în antropologia boasiană”
Rezumat: Prin prisma interdisciplinară a epistemologiei istorice, lucrarea de față își propune să demonstreze că individualitatea nu este doar o valoare culturală, ci și un veritabil operator epistemic. Conceptul boasian de cultură reprezintă mult mai mult decât o reacție împotriva evoluționismului. În lucrările sale de teren, Boas a operaționalizat eficient argumentele lui Herder despre istoricism și particularitate culturală. În aceste circumstanțe, modelele lor teoretice necesită o analiză detaliată. Epistemologia istorică arată cum angajamentele conceptuale specifice determină criteriile pentru dovezi antropologice valide. Urmărind utilizarea epistemică a individualității până la istorismul german din secolul al XIX-lea, lucrarea de față ilustrează continuități și discontinuități semnificative. De la Herder, Boas a moștenit nu numai un concept solid de cultură, ci și valorile sale epistemice. Cercetătorii boasieni au folosit cu succes noțiunea epistemică de individualitate pentru a limita ambițiile explicative imprudente, permițând în același timp o inteligibilitate istorică sustenabilă. Individualitatea se transformă dintr-o construcție teoretică în antropologia filosofică a lui Herder într-un cadru metodologic în antropologia boasiană.
Cuvinte-cheie: Boas, Herder, individualitate, cultură, epistemologie istorică.

Introduction

In contemporary academic discourses, the notion of individuality holds as special importance (Kipke 2025). The problem of universality *versus* individuality is a key question of anthropology. One of the main founders of American anthropology, Franz Boas, could not avoid this dilemma. "Boas remains an intellectual giant and is among the very few figures who can without a doubt be described as a founding figure for a whole academic tradition" (Porr 2023, 2). Through the lens of historical epistemology, the present work aims to show that individuality is not only a cultural value but also a veritable epistemic operator. For Boas, individual dimensions are much more than a simple descriptive tool. The choice between "the individuality in the totality, or the totality in the individuality" (Boas 1887, 140) became a major methodological issue.

Historically speaking, Johann Gottfried von Herder laid the foundations for the main concepts, theories, and methods in anthropology. As a critically aware researcher of the twentieth century, Boas did not blindly follow the Herderian postulates. He combined previous legacies with new contents (Eller 1988). On the whole, Boas made a massive shift in anthropological research and its institutional settings. He created new theoretical and methodological tools to help researchers get out their conventional laboratories and to gain new perspectives of cultural phenomena (Jacknis 2002)

The present study provides an in-depth analysis of Boasian anthropology through Herderian lenses in order to understand the numerous continuities and discontinuities in the idea of individuality. Boas's most prominent book *The Mind of Primitive Man* (Porr 2023) plays a central role because it showcases many of these metamorphoses. Since individuality is often defined in terms of relativist or ethical interpretations, its epistemic functions in Boasian epistemology appear obscured and unreadable. The main goal is to show that individuality performs as an epistemic principle that structures scientific explanations and comparisons. Instead of offering a traditional intellectual biography, this analysis reconstructs the epistemic role of individuality in the context of Boasian anthropology by tracing its ties to German historicism.

Literature Review

Williams (2005) defines individuality as a right and capacity of effecting one's will on the world. There are strong intersections with the idea of self and society. Kipke (2025) establishes major theoretical links with meaning in life. Although individuality does not represent a meaning-making factor in itself, it seems essential to properly study it. This topic does not receive enough attention in philosophical literature.

As a major theoretical construct, the notion of individuality plays a central role in anthropology and its epistemological history which includes a wide range of orientations and influences. Eller (1988) placed the Herderian and Boasian traditions at the core of his analysis of anthropological research. The Herderian-Boasian inclinations challenged the dominance of evolutionism (Kyslan 2024). From this perspective, the notion of individuality had an instrumental role in the transition from biological considerations to cultural insights. Even today this intricate notion remains at the crossroad of numerous disciplines. For instance, individuality is a major research topic in biological literature (Kranke 2024).

According to Giladi (2017), the notion of individuality has an instrumental function in Western philosophy. Major intellectuals, such as Hegel and Adorno, brought an essential contribution to the development of this intricate theoretical construct. Often dismissed or misunderstood, the Herderian idea of individuality acquired a powerful configuration that determined the scientific and cultural representations of human beings and their environments. Throughout history, the spirit of Herder’s style entered many new routes. More particularly, it determined the fundamental values of contemporary American anthropology. Herder's influence on Franz Boas raises many deep historical and epistemological questions. The fact that there are tight connections between Boas and Herder is widely accepted in the academic community (Davis 2008, Bräunlein 2014, Scupin 2019). However, these links lack proper examination and subsequently lose their configurational meanings. It seems essential to emphasise that Boas not only inherited the Herderian philosophical dilemmas but also transformed them within empirical science.

Inspired by Herder, Boas promoted the idea of equality of cultures. He and his followers rejected cultural hierarchisations and developed a distinctive anthropological tradition (Kyslan 2024). Most of the times, great intellectual endeavours assume contradictory configurations. This fate did not weaken Boasian anthropology but rather acted as a strengthening factor. Numerous authors have recently drawn attention to major contradictions within Boas’s oeuvre (Porr 2023). By nature extremely controversial, the concept of individuality occupies a central place in American science. Unfortunately, academic literature tends to classify it as a merely normative commitment. Its association with ethical pluralism or cultural relativism translates important features of Boasian anthropology but does not fully display the epistemic significance behind this construction.

Methodology

According to Zheng (2021), historical epistemology can be useful to examine the contextual conditions that gave rise to the current rationalisations of the studied concepts. The historical and epistemological perspectives grant the researcher a wide latitude to apply both concept-focused and method-oriented approaches. This methodological choice improves the understanding of conceptual change in the human sciences. Developed by eminent scholars, such as Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, François Dagognet and Lorraine Daston, historical epistemology examines academic concepts and methods as historically constructed practices of knowledge.

In the contemporary era of simultaneous cultural homogenisation and fragmentation, the idea of individuality needs to be analysed from an interdisciplinary perspective. Interestingly, Franz Boas admitted that knowledge institutions and mechanism "might seem to encroach too much upon the individuality of each society" (Boas 1902, 807). Historical epistemology has the potential to trace these subtle yet powerful conceptual shifts. Boas himself was aware of the importance of apparently insignificant mutations. "The history of the progress of science yields example after example of the power of resistance belonging to old ideas, even after increasing knowledge of the world has undermined the ground on which they were erected" (Boas 1938, 250). As an interdisciplinary methodology, historical epistemology shows how specific conceptual commitments determine the criteria for valid anthropological evidence. In other words, concepts are not simple descriptive tools. They organise knowledge and research initiatives by determining the object of study, by shaping explanations and by delimiting generalisations. As a matter of fact, there are tight connections between historical epistemology and constructivism (Rieznik 2025). Since Boasian anthropology does not apply only purely theoretical abstractions, the analysis of its context becomes a priority. Historical epistemology opens a new critical perspective of the history and philosophy of science through the examination of major intellectual positions. By using this methodological tool, scholars become equipped to recover, detect and contrast often overlooked essential contingencies that inform and sometimes distort the most influential trends in philosophy (Burnett 2025).

The application of the chosen method involved three key steps. First, the Boasian concept of individuality was situated within the intellectual movements of its time, such as evolutionism and diffusionism. Second, the epistemological analysis established links between the notions of culture and individuality. Third, historical epistemology depicted the operational role of individuality in Boas's *oeuvre*. The present study puts a special emphasis on the book *The Mind of Primitive Man*. However, other major monographs and academic articles were also analysed. By focusing on the intersection between theoretical concepts and scientific practices, historical epistemology reveals both the diversity and the coherence of the methodological approaches developed by Boas and his students. This work combines comprehensive textual analysis with intellectual and historical interpretations to provide a nuanced reconstruction of the Boasian epistemic schemes.

Analysis

Instead of building a simple overlook of American anthropology and its concept of individuality, this analysis illustrates how Boas reorganised the conditions of knowledge production. His intellectual formation was marked by a wide range of thinkers, including the father of the plural concept of culture. Boas was inspired by Herder's thesis of cultural pluralism and relativism according to which each culture has a unique contribution for humanity (Thomas 2025). In Boasian anthropology, individuality represents much more than a normative or relativistic value. Through an in-depth analysis of prominent texts, including *The Mind of Primitive Man* and *Anthropology and Modern Life*, the present study showcases the operationalisation of individuality in the restructuration of anthropological knowledge. These two books exemplify a smooth transition from racial to cultural determinism in which psychological elements play a determinant role. Other academic articles and books from Boas's *oeuvre* were also included in the current study. In fact, Boas often assembled his most popular monographs from distinct fragments of other publications (Porr 2023).

Boas (1938) attempted to analyse "our tendency to evaluate an individual according to the picture that we form of the class to which we assign him" (272). The critique of universal history played an essential role on Boas's notion of individuality. This critique emerged in German philosophy during the late eighteenth century and denied linear historical schemes. By refusing to apply universal laws or abstract generalisations, Boas reinforced the epistemic significance of individuality. His German training planted in him the idea of irreducibility of historical individualities. Boas argued for the equality between "primitive" and "civilised" cultures by pointing out our lack of perplexity about evidently unfamiliar cultural phenomena. Following an implicitly Herderian tone, he often manifested his disillusionment with modernity and its values. Like Herder, Boas rejected rationalist and universalist premises to affirm the equality and authenticity of cultures (Kyslan 2024). The emphasis on the contextual nature of cultural meanings reoriented the epistemic frameworks of Boas's formation in history, geography and philosophy. It seems worth mentioning that the originality of Boasian anthropology does not consist in replicating German philosophical models. What Boas did was to transform them into methodological principles suited to empirical studies.

From Evolutionism to Diffusionism and Historical Particularism

According to Eller (1988), Franz Boas saw anthropology as an indispensable contributor to scientific, social and political debates. His sociocultural analyses questioned the notion of race and fiercely criticised the idea of unilinear evolution. Instead of searching for general laws, he put emphasis on historical particularism. Traditional framed as a reaction against evolutionism, his redefinition of culture achieved a new level of epistemic robustness. Boas used the notion of individuality as a tool against evolutionist stages and hierarchies. In his hands, individuality became not only a value but also a powerful epistemic veto. By dismissing evolutionary explanations and universal laws, Boas re-conceptualised cultures as historically distinctive formations. It should be pointed out that he developed most of his work in a complex scientific, social and political environment with a numerous incoherencies and conflicts (Porr 2023). Often going against his personal and professional interests, Boas paid great personal and professional costs for faithfully following his beliefs (Lewis 2002).

The book *The Mind of Primitive Man* represented a key weapon in the fight against evolutionism. This ambitious and courageous work rejects the idea of unilinear evolution, racial determinism and universal psychological stage. "The claim that achievement and aptitude go hand in hand is not convincing. It must be subjected to an exhaustive analysis (Boas 1938, 10). The application of the notion of individuality limited extravagant explanatory narratives by examining the conditions of knowledge production and the premises of cultural analysis. In *The Mind of Primitive Man*, Boas did not question the division of humanity into races. What he did was to put under deep scrutiny all criteria for this division. He insisted that biological, linguistic and cultural categories cannot be applied interchangeably. By laying the basis for diffusionism, Boas argued for the vital importance of rituals and habits. It seems worth mentioning that the diffusionist definition of culture closely matches with the Herderian paradigm. The diffusionists paid great attention not only to conscious activities but also to unconscious processes. Through a romantic vision of culture, anthropologists reformulated the study of cultural practices and social habits (Kyslan 2024).

In addition to openly criticising racist ideas in anthropological research, Boas supported African American students and activists. As an engaged public intellectual, he was against all forms of totalising or essentialist approaches (Porr 2023). Boas not only challenged the validity of discriminatory policies but also replaced them with other alternatives resulting from a more liberal political agenda. He and his followers publicly denounced discriminatory practices. The colonial past of the United States and the large number of immigrants in American society stimulated new scientific endeavours because the differences between cultures needed to be carefully analysed and explained (Greenfield 2001). From the beginning, Boas's critique of evolutionary anthropology had its epistemic foundations on the idea of individuality. *The Mind of Primitive Man* can be seen as epistemological manifest. "Both, new approaches to truth, and a more systematic development of knowledge represent a gain" (Boas 1938, 202). In this book, Boas critically questions the unilinear models of cultural evolutionism by pointing at the scientific illegitimacy of its generalisations. Since cultures do not pass through the same developmental stages, similar cultural traits may result from a wide range of historical conditions. "The validity of the general sameness of the evolution of mankind is based on the assumption that the same cultural features must always have developed from the same, single causes" (Boas 1938, 184). The explanatory failure of evolutionary classifications stresses the need for historical reconstructions. Instead of denying the importance of anthropological comparisons, Boas redefined the conditions for their application. The main condition became the generation of historically grounded explanations. Read in this light, similarities are not proof of identical evolutionary stages or origins. The emphasis on individual cultural contexts significantly weakened the dominance of deterministic models. Without abolishing anthropological comparisons, Boas used the epistemic principle of individuality to methodologically constrain their scope.

The Boasian Concept of Culture

"Franz Boas, perhaps the first professional modern anthropologist, both followed previous intellectual trends and set new ones" (Eller 1988, 4). Generally speaking, the concept of culture was "imported via Franz Boas from German Romanticism" (Hodges 2012, 40). Cultural transfers have a powerful and pervasive influence. As a matter of fact, Herder's concept of culture played an essential role in the creation of not only German but also British and American anthropologies (Kyslan 2024).

Franz Boas brought a fresh breath to anthropological research. Edward Sapir, Alfred Kroeber and Margaret Mead reproduced numerous postulates that their teacher established. Before Boas, most intellectuals conceptualised biology and race as the main determinants of human behaviour. Eugenic models contaminated many disciplines with theoretically weak statements on the alleged links between race and psychological structures

(Scupin 2018). To question these tendencies, Boas used the notion of individuality. "The range of individual differences that occur within a race has never been investigated in a satisfactory manner" (Boas 1938, 196).

The Boasian concept of culture mirrors an innovative mix of individualistic and collective orientations. "Culture may be defined as the totality of the mental and physical reactions and activities that characterize the behavior of the individuals composing a social group collectively and individually" (Boas 1938, 159). At early stages of his career, Franz Boas understood that general laws were epistemologically fragile. He was continuously searching for new alternatives. "Between the time of his arrival in the United States and his death in 1942, Boas reoriented American anthropology around a broad, pluralistic, relativistic, and holistic conception of culture" (Gilkeson 2010, 1). The explicit links between Boas's and Herder's plural conceptions do not seem to lose out over time. The recognition of the uniqueness of cultures forms the foundations of the Herderian motive of cultural relativism (Kyslan 2024). Just like Herder, Boas was fascinated by "the development of individuality in nations" (Boas 1928, 103). The article *The History of Anthropology* published by Boas in 1904 is one of the few of his works that includes direct references to Herder. It was in this article that Boas credited Herder with creating the idea of culture (Koerner 1992, Davis 2008). A pertinent question that emerges is the following: Was Boas influenced only by Herder? Gilkeson (2010) notes the connotations of holism, relativism and pluralism were not present in the dominant conceptions of culture. Mattew Arnold's humanistic insights and E. B. Tylor's technical and anthropological definitions did not respond to the complex needs of American anthropology. The German connotations of pluralism and relativism, on the other hand, always had a solid epistemological position. With time, they became extremely popular in the United States. The insistence on the plurality and individuality of cultures reconfigured the entire knowledge base in anthropology at the turn of the twentieth century.

Only through a full and equal participation of all individuals and societal groups will essential insights come to light. The idea of human behaviour as a learned rather than inherently biological phenomenon forms the basis of Boasian anthropology. Little by little, the notion of culture came to denote a specific behaviour that chronically varies from place to place or from group to group. This notion changed the whole course of anthropological research. Boas and his students transformed anthropology into one of the main social sciences. They actively contributed to the development of new study programs and departments as part of an unprecedented growth of universities. An increasing number of scholars joined the battle against racism by building the innovative academic frames of anthropology. The Boasian notion of culture encourages an equal and full participation of individuals in learning practices (Greenfield 2001).

The Boasian Concept of Individual

Individuality represents an essential component of Boasian anthropology. Franz Boas went as far as conceiving the particularity of cultures as a crucial mechanism for social stability. Overall, each society develops a unique set of cultural practices and rituals that individuals use to integrate themselves into social networks and interact with the surrounding world (Kyslan 2024). Boas's individual inherited many characteristics from the Herderian models of culture. American anthropology transformed Herder's notion of *Einfühlung* into ethnography to fuse the objective demands of mainstream sciences with relativist analyses of cultures and individuals (Edwards 2013). Since "we cannot say what the specific characteristics of any one individual may be" (Boas 1938, 55), subjective differences add another layer of complexity. Boas and his students inspired other scholars around the world to analyse individual and collective behaviours. They stressed the role of individual creativity as a source of cultural change and innovation (Amit and Dyck 2006).

Boas applied the Herderian idea of individuality to improve cultural analyses. In other words, he transformed individuality from an abstract philosophical concept into a rule governing anthropological interpretations and explanations. This intricate construct evolved in a tight connection with German historicism. Individuality progressively emerged as a historical singularity that limits the scope of universal laws. Herder's cultural dynamics imply the process of self-discovery, the construction of identity and the perception of originality. For this reason, Charles Taylor gives a special importance to the romantic idea of authenticity in Herder. From this perspective, human beings have an impressive power to create images and incorporate them into the symbolic texture of different cultures. The interaction of different forces generates new cultural expressions through the development of cosmopolitan worldviews. Instead of promoting nationalistic values, Herder dedicated his plural notion of culture to the humanity (Czobor-Lupp 2013). In tune with Herder's views, Boasian anthropology developed a new approach based on a deep understanding of cultural and individual differences. "We may say that the nervous condition of an individual tends to make him stable or unstable, slow to act or of rapid decision, but we can infer this only through his reaction to given cultural conditions" (Boas 1938, 141). For this reason, as an anthropologist, teacher and activist, Boas supported less formal educational systems, intercultural experiences, critical awareness, independent learning and more academic individuality (Porr 2023).

Individuality vs Cultural Relativism

Boasian cultural relativism includes important political and social components. According to the premises of relativism, each culture is the product of its own history and traditions. Therefore, individual behaviours should be analysed exclusively in terms of the cultural standards prevailing in a determined context. The Boasians conceived human behaviour as a learned repertoire of different components rather than a biological or climatic product. Their ethnographic studies were based on large collections of data (Greenfield 2001). By applying the lens of historical particularism, Boas was able to conceive cultures as distinctive historical formations without establishing hierarchies. Despite its great academic importance, Boasian cultural relativism contains many unsolved tensions (Porr 2023). It seems important to state that the concept of individuality and the idea of relativism are related but do not represent the same construct.

Cultural relativism has an implicit social dimension, but Boas was not the first scholar to fuse scientific and social approaches. Fashioning scientific theories for the purpose of achieving specific socio-political goals has always been a common practice. By the twentieth century, many scholars started to chase the artificial and unrealistic vision of a “pure science”. Fortunately, Boas did not follow this trend (Greenfield 2001). Scientific practices depend on a wide array of social, political and even emotional factors. The implicit Herderian legacy can be found in the conceptualisation of culture and in the use of individuality as a powerful epistemic operator. Herder believed that feelings and imagination have the potential to connect individuals across nations by enlarging their cosmopolitan capacities and their affective solidarity. He aimed to attach different cultures and languages to each other. The plural interpretations of the meanings of humanity across different cultural contexts became an essential philosophical instrument. Herder gave a special importance to the human imaginative power and the representations of culture as an irreplaceable part of global narratives of humanity. The cultivation of cultural skills assumes a vital function. By encouraging cross-cultural understandings and by recognising the locality of our own values, we become open to meaningful learning. Herder argued for the plurality of humankind and its deep psychological networks. He conceived humanity as a cultural and historical construction (Czobor-Lupp 2013). His semantic legacy in culture determined the development of social sciences and influenced the emergence of Boasian anthropology through historical particularism and cultural relativism (Kyslan 2024).

Boas described and analysed cultures according to their internal development rather than to external classificatory schemes. "A knowledge of the categories under which in various cultures experience is classified will, therefore, help to an understanding of early psychological processes" (Boas 1938, 209). Inspired by the models of German historicism, Boas converted a philosophical critique of universal history into a methodological principle of empirical research. The Herderian-Boasian notion of culture as heritage allowed the penetration of past into present. Scholars became more aware of the great influence of tradition and history on individual behaviour (Kyslan 2024). The epistemic role of the notion of individuality in American anthropology should be distinguished from cultural relativism. While the premises of relativism imply the idea that the validity of knowledge depends on its cultural frames, Boas and his construction of individuality redefined objectivity without undermining it. He applied this notion at multiple levels, from the rejection of racial typologies to the conduction of linguistic and cultural analyses where grammatical structures or customs received a historically sensitive and holistic consideration. "The historic view contains a strong, esthetic element, which finds its satisfaction in the clear conception of the individual event" (Boas 1904, 516). From an epistemological perspective, individuality restructures the realm of anthropological knowledge and delimitates the possibilities of acceptable explanations through historically situated accounts. Largely surpassing its descriptive proprieties, this complex philosophical notion flourished into a lively rule of scientific practice.

Individuality as Method

After his field trips to Baffin Island, Boas developed a great respect and admiration for the Inuit people by participating in their everyday lives. He became aware of the limited knowledge that the academic community had on indigenous populations. The study of these cultures resulted in a critical examination of evolutionary theories and rigid categories. Boas actively fostered the importance of ethnographic studies and advocated the freedom to participate in cultural dynamics (Greenfield 2001). "Ever since the time when the study of human cultures was recognized as a problem, attempts have been made to interpret it as a unit phenomenon even before anything like a fair amount of material had been collected" (Boas 1938, 175). One of the main components of Boasian methodological approaches is intensive fieldwork and linguistics. Based on a solid ethnographic particularism, the father of American anthropology promoted case-based reasoning and skilfully used the idea of individuality to structure the process of knowledge production. For instance, his groundbreaking studies on bodily types of European immigrants in the United States empirically proved the instability of racial classifications (Porr 2023).

Boasian anthropology echoes the interdisciplinary alliances advanced by German intellectuals. For instance, Herder argued that sciences, more particularly literature, history and rhetoric, develop our feeling of humanity. Herder's philosophical anthropology brought a meaningful contribution to the understanding of cultural pluralism. His conception of imagination emerges as a creative act of storytelling and story-sharing that accentuates the intersubjective nature of identity (Czobor-Lupp 2013). By combining a deistically oriented romanticism with empiricism, he had a long-standing impact on Western intellectual history and irreversibly changed the study of culture (Niezen 2009). Herderian philosophical anthropology inspired not only the development of cultural relativism but also the American concept of culture. Boas transformed Herder's philosophical insights into methodological principles of empirical research. In his rich empirical studies, he aimed to understand "the individuality of each region" (Boas 1938, 171). While in Herderian anthropology, individuality functioned as an epistemic operator, Boas employed it as a general principle for structuring research methods.

The intellectual debt to Herder's historicist concept of culture explains the Boasian epistemic commitment in contextualist interpretations. Just like Herder who started the tradition of collecting folktales and songs, Boas used the same units to formulate his studies. "A perusal of the available collections makes it quite clear that in this sense the expression of the cultural life of the people contained in their tales gives to them a marked individuality" (Boas 1940, 493). Scepticism about universal laws and the innovative idea of linguistic centrality reduces the distance between these two scholars from different historical periods. In his fieldworks, Boas effectively operationalised the Herderian arguments about historicism and cultural particularity. His comparative studies became historically grounded. In fact, he applied the principle of cultural and historical individuality to limit the scope of generalisations in anthropology. "The new historical view also came into conflict with the generalizing method of science. It was imposed upon that older view of nature in which the discovery of general laws was considered the ultimate aim of investigation" (Boas 1904, 515).

For centuries, scholars have accumulated large amounts of information describing different cultural phenomena. This growing body of knowledge needed deep analyses and coherent explanations. Since the implementation of new approaches became urgent, Boas replaced the dominant evolutionary and ethnocentric theories with his humanistic and individualistic models. From this perspective, humanity is a diverse formation of morally equivalent cultural groups. Boas was not a multiculturalist and did not openly support identity politics. However, he recognised and studied small-scale cultural phenomena and local cultures (Greenfield 2001). The book *Race, Language and Culture* illustrates well the methodological implications of the notion of individuality. "For each individual case we can arrive at an understanding of its determination by inner and outer forces, but we cannot explain its individuality in the form of laws" (Boas 1940, 274). Cultural phenomena emerge as autonomous and historically contingent realities with their own conditions of scientific intelligibility. Through intensive ethnographic fieldworks and exhaustive linguistic studies, Boas accumulated a large amount of scientific data to generate a legitimate basis for anthropological knowledge and to justify his methodological principle of individuality. He successfully deconstructed concepts such as race and nation through scientific and political narratives (Eller 1988). His fieldwork on indigenous populations accentuated a strong conviction of the uniqueness and diversity of cultures (Kyslan 2024). The vast academic portfolio, developed by Boas, shows how individuality emerges as a major guiding vector for empirical observations, comparative analyses, complex data collection and interdisciplinary fieldwork.

The methodological consequences of the epistemic notion of individuality can be found in Boasian historical particularism. His cautious comparisons took into consideration a wide range of biological, linguistic, cultural and historical dimensions to form solid interdisciplinary alliances. "The student of the history of philosophy is well aware how strongly the mind of the greatest genius is influenced by the current thought of his time" (Boas 1938, 136). In this light, culture does not represent a law-governed construction but a historically conditioned dynamic process. Even the teaching methods of anthropology, Boas (1919) left up to "the individuality of the instructor and to the availability of material" (45). Undoubtedly, the individuality of students and instructors deserves a special attention. Throughout his long career, Boas diligently followed this principle. He had a very humble pedagogical approach towards his faithful academic team. Jacknis (2002) notes that Boas respected the individuality of each student. As it is possible to observe, the notion of individuality makes the core of Boasian anthropology, its intricate conceptual frameworks, its diverse methods and its mechanisms of knowledge transmission.

Individuality: Epistemic Break or Transformation?

According to Boas, the value of science and the application of knowledge improve the human condition through individual self-improvement and social advancement. Each person should have the freedom to fully and equally participate in cultural dynamics and learning processes. Boas defied scientific categories by insisting on the importance of individuality. He was actually able to produce a very balanced approach. On one hand, human behaviour is not determined solely by culture. On the other hand, studies based on ethnocentric worldviews or exclusively biological research do not provide the necessary data on cultural variation. America's entry into Second World War shifted the priorities of academic, social and political debates. To achieve a maximum level of internal cooperation, to reduce the influence of separatist ideologies and to boost the war effort, the population needed to be unified by shared values and goals. For this reason, the new liberal philosophy put a special of emphasis on citizens as individuals (Greenfield 2001).

Boas had a massive effect on anthropology, both institutionally and epistemologically (Porr 2023). There was a reformulation of anthropological research by providing a new metaphor of humanity in which "culture, the term he used to refer to the total way of life of each population, became in a sense like the individuals Boas so greatly admired, each unique and distinctive with its own practices, values and worth" (Greenfield 2001, 43). In the light of the central importance of individuality in American academia, the key question that emerges is the following: is it an epistemic break or a logical transformation? Of courses, Boas distanced himself from the universalism of the Enlightenment. At the same, he did not follow the exact path of other philosophers. There was a veritable epistemic transformation. His commitment to scientific rigour dictated the rejection of excessive generalisations. "We have pointed out before that knowledge alone does not constitute richness of culture, but that the coordination of knowledge determines our judgment" (Boas 1938, 205). While actively applying the Herderian conception of individuality, Boas took it the next level by firmly integrating it into anthropological methodological processes. In other words, the idea of individuality came to shape the production of scientific evidence and the norms of explanation or classification. For instance, in his analyses of the stylistic aspects of primitive literature, Boas (1925) argued that "the raven tales of Siberia and Alaska are on the whole connected only by the individuality of the raven and by his voracity" (338). The example of folktales captures the power of cultural representations. This may seem obvious now, but there happened a major change in thinking. It was Herder who transformed anthropology from a study of anatomy to a study of culture. He played an instrumental role in the shift of the concept of culture from biological determinants to empirical-ethnographic variables. Research in anthropological sciences started to include the notions of soul, body, language, art, history, nation and politics (Kyslan 2024).

The concept of individuality unleashes powerful images that touch the idea of meaning of life (Kipke 2025). According to Herder, in contrast to animals, human beings create themselves and their own worlds. Through language, individuals are able to understand their inner selves and their social interactions. The diversity of experiences functions as a catalyst for linguistic creativity. The power to generate images, representations or symbols is in fact the power to transform oneself. Human beings interact with each other and share these images in order to create a collective sense of sympathy and solidarity. As a consequence, reflective imagination becomes a veritable social, cultural, political and philosophical instrument in Herder's models. While vivid sensations and motions engage human beings in an active interaction with the surrounding world, imagination provides the creative force for learning and transformation processes. Put simply, imagination makes us receptive, creative, flexible and adaptable (Czobor-Lupp 2013). The notions of imagination and individuality are in fact inseparable. The Boasians religiously followed this premise. Boas (1914) wrote that "the individuality of each folkloristic area is such, that we must count the imaginative productiveness of each tribe as an important element in the development of the present situation" (404).

Boas continued and improved the Herderian vision. He used individuality as a negative epistemic operator that constraints excessive generalisations. "Freedom of judgment can be attained only when we learn to estimate an individual according to his own ability and character" (Boas 1938, 272). Individuality became much more that an abstract value or a theoretical component of relativism. Methodologically speaking, it affected anthropological comparisons, casual explanations and scientific classifications. "A serious objection to the reasoning of those who try to establish lines of evolution of cultures lies in the frequent lack of comparability of the data with which we are dealing" (Boas 1938, 186). The transformation from philosophy to method was fluid. Boasian anthropology operationalised the epistemic notion of individuality to limit immoderate explanatory ambitions while enabling a sustainable historical intelligibility.

Conclusions

The present study improves the understanding of the epistemological foundations of contemporary anthropology. The analysis shows that Franz Boas solidified the central position of the notion of individuality as a major epistemic operator and made it part of his signature style. American anthropology became a field of innovative research on human diversity. Herder's concept of culture and fervent desire to understand other nations theoretically determined the emergence of Boasian thought (Kyslan 2024). From Herder, the father of American anthropology inherited not only a solid conception of culture but also a powerful epistemic principle. In Boasian theory, individuality surpassed its status of cultural value or relativistic mechanism. Boas transformed it into a reliable principle that limits the scope of excessively broad anthropological generalisations, comparisons and explanations. "The phenomena of our science are so individualized, so exposed to outer accident that no set of laws could explain them" (Boas 1940, 274). Individuality shifts from a theoretical construct in Herder's philosophical anthropology to an interdisciplinary methodological frame in Boasian cultural anthropology.

"Boas was neither a great innovator nor an original thinker. However, he was a brilliant implementer who brought to America the German traditions of idealist philosophy, particularist ethnography, and professional education – the main principles of Herder's philosophy" (Kyslan 2024, 12). By demonstrating that the concept of individuality can operate as an analytical tool and as a major mechanism for knowledge production, this study illuminates broader issues in human sciences. Boas's vision of anthropology as a public space for free speech, critical inquiry, diversity of ways of life and richness of cultural expressions (Porr 2023) was crystallised in a new conceptual and methodological model. Boas did not simply inherit Herder's philosophical anthropology. He operationalised it by undertaking a dynamic epistemic reconfiguration. While reducing the role of teleology and theoretical speculations, he reinforced the importance of empirical data, fieldwork and linguistics. The epistemic principle of individuality restructured the methods, comparisons and explanations of Boasian anthropology. By converting German philosophical constructs of historical particularism into a methodological tool, Boas redefined the conditions for the scientific description and interpretation of cultural phenomena. The present work expands our understanding of his legacy beyond the conventional views on cultural pluralism and relativism. Read from the perspective of historical epistemology, individuality comes up as a central epistemic operator of contemporary anthropology that materialises the power of conceptual dynamics on scientific practices and explanatory efforts.

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BIONOTE:

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A Potential Transformer. The Uncanny Book of Taking the Liberty of Thought and Difference. A Discussion: Uncanny Soulscapes in Uncustomary Dreamscope. Collected Philosophical Fragments by Giorgio Baruchello

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Abstract: This discussion brings to the fore a philosophy of humour incursion into its philosophical and literary articulations, into the insights about the human beings and into their contemporary overall weary relation to humour. Humour is difficult to pursue nowadays as the times are particularly prone to a self-defensive and quasi-propagandistic type of reflection (or, lack of reflection). The new book of Giorgio Baruchello, titled *Uncanny Soulscapes in Uncustomary Dreamscope. Collected Philosophical Fragments*, engages the reader in a very surprising journey visiting as well the ontic and the oneiric realms, a book about us all and possibly about none of us with complete exactness; yet, we have here a book which is about our vulnerability, inertia and backwardness, as well as about the transforming powers of sincere humorous introspection and extrospection. We are conducting a discussion that follows such aspects and which does not quite resume the book. It is more than a review, emphasizing the Geist of the work, its meaning and importance in an evaluative essay. Along this discussion, a few other articles and books investigating humour and the philosophy of humour provide welcome referential points for a discussion that has nevertheless a philosophical character, although it is not intended as a pretentious exegesis. The book may seem to some readers pretentious, while it is just an incentive for a more complex and more qualitative vision of the world. However, as one of the well-established theories in the philosophy of humour is "superiority theory" (as found in Plato and Hobbes) and as this theory is so present in our day-to-day experiences it is pretty unavoidable that some sense of superiority in the situation of this author against his characters and readers transpires in-between the lines. But it is rather laughing at ourselves that is beneficial and it has transforming virtues as the reader should come to admit and hopefully, even rejoice.

Keywords: philosophy of humour, superiority, vulnerability, introspection, a new Enlightenment.

Titlu: „Un potential (agent) transformator. O carte stranie despre asumarea libertății de gândire și de a fi diferit. O discuție: *Neobișnuite peisaje sufletești într-un caleidoscop de vise. O colecție de fragmente filosofice*, de Giorgio Baruchello"

Rezumat: Această discuție aduce în prim-plan o incursiune în filosofia umorului, în articulațiile sale filosofice și literare, în perspectivele despre ființele umane și în relația lor obositoare contemporană cu umorul. Umorul este dificil de urmărit în zilele noastre, deoarece aceste vremuri sunt deosebit de predispuse la un tip de reflecție autodefensiv și cvasi-propagandistic (sau la lipsă de reflecție). Noua carte a lui Giorgio Baruchello, intitulată *Neobișnuite peisaje sufletești într-un caleidoscop de vise. O colecție de fragmente filosofice*, angajează cititorul într-o călătorie foarte surprinzătoare vizitând, de asemenea, tărâmurile ontice și onirice, fiind o carte despre noi toți și posibil despre niciunul dintre noi cu deplină exactitate; totuși, avem aici o carte care abordează vulnerabilitatea noastră, inerția și înapoierea noastră, precum și puterile transformatoare ale introspecției și extrospecției umoristice sincere. Purtăm o discuție care urmărește astfel de aspecte și care nu este tocmai o recenzie a cărții. Este mai mult decât o recenzie, subliniind spiritul lucrării, semnificația și importanța ei într-un eseu evaluativ. De-a lungul acestei discuții, alte câteva articole și cărți care investighează umorul și filosofia umorului oferă puncte de referință binevenite pentru o discuție care are totuși un caracter filosofic, deși nu este intenționată ca o exegeză pretențioasă. Cartea poate părea unor cititori astfel (pretențioasă), deși este doar un stimulent pentru o viziune mai complexă și mai calitativă asupra lumii. Cu toate acestea, deoarece una dintre teoriile bine stabilite în filosofia umorului este „teoria superiorității" (așa cum se întâlnește la Platon și Hobbes) și deoarece această teorie este atât de prezentă în experiențele noastre de zi cu zi, este destul de greu de evitat ca printre rânduri să nu transpară un sentiment de superioritate în situarea acestui autor față de personajele cărții și cititorii săi. Dar a râde de noi înșine este mai degrabă benefic și are virtuți transformatoare, așa cum cititorul ar trebui să recunoască și, sperăm, de care chiar să se bucure.

Cuvinte-cheie: filosofia umorului, superioritate, vulnerabilitate, introspecție, un nou Iluminism.

An extraordinary intellectual incursion brings the reader into a humorous tarantella with archetypes, misconceptions, shortcomings, intrinsic ridiculousness perceptions and presentations, and illusions, too. Announced as a philosophical satire standing on the shoulders of Thomas More, Voltaire, and Admiral General Haffaz Aladeen (the main character in *The Dictator*, a 2012 satirical film), we are faced with this fictional exercise of the freedom of thought and expression successfully relevant. It is also a courageous endeavour: nowadays, a meaningful work needs various disclaimers for it sends to real-life albeit it is a fictional narrative and to real-life institutions, individuals and behaviors tending to secure themselves in spheres of power and hegemony outside any possibility of criticism and even against any shadow of negative allusion. The powers of inertia and backwardness are particularly squeamish and delicate these times. To a significant extent, we have to acknowledge that we are living in anti-philosophical times, which are in dare need of perspective and infused meaning (conceived as the bearer of value and purpose).

The Latin etymology of humor emphasizes that jocular disposition makes things more fluid, less stuck, less static, more intelligent, transforming ourselves and the world. The problem is that the joker-philosopher cannot escape a sort of elitist superiority aura sending the others, their vulnerabilities and imperfections, on the one hand into an ontological sphere of the derisory, on the other hand, cynically-obscenely shedding light on the vulnerabilities that are not to be generalized and eternized as perpetual deficiencies, which is (would be) repugnant for the most. This book does not escape the approach of the superiority theory in the philosophy of humor and it may be understood as a veritable arrogant exercise of superiority, while this is not our *holzwege*.

A brief theoretical perspective is necessary. Fact is that the superiority theory in the philosophy of humor represents the most offering theoretical background and famous theoretical landmarks underscored it. Mordechai Gordon warn about not taking ourselves too seriously, this implying to laugh at others, but also at ourselves. Laughing at another, the consequence and indicator of humor, is described by the Superiority theory of humor: Plato remarked in *Philebus* that "we [maliciously] laugh at what is ridiculous in our friends" (48-50), in ignorance of their virtues, losing face. Thomas Hobbes approached in *Leviathan* a complete type of Superiority theory showing that laughter is caused either by acknowledging sudden personal glory (when people "applaud themselves") or by sanctioning something "deformed" in another, in contrast with something that pleases them very much in themselves. Humor is predicated on looking down on others, which is something that the (intellectual) elites do. In contrast to the Superiority effect, three things capture a reflective attention: first, the international quasi-Stoic proverbial remarks about minding your own defects and deformities and not others', second, that it is widely recognized in the ranks of intellectual elites that the superior one laughs when recalls her or his own weaknesses (especially Nietzsche, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and Freud, in *Humor*, who set most of the purpose of the super-ego becomes laughing at ourselves, with scolding and comforting adjustment virtues) and, third, that the simple fact of using your mind may attract some humorous or violent repercussions, too.

Nietzsche ironizes the Spirit of Gravity emerging from blind attachments to conventions and traditions, Simon Critchley (*On Humor*) capitalized on the ideas of Freud to talk about a mature function of humor in super-ego, of comforting and appeasing nature, as the stern super-ego is associated with pathological conditions.

Fact is that, as John Morreall stated building on the idea of Pascal, we have patterns and expectations of the world and we laugh also at the disproportionate results against the expectations. “The mountains strained and they produced a pocket mouse”: this captures the Incongruity Theory of Humor. The lesson is that precisely not taking oneself so seriously one can become finally serious enough in a rightly way. The becoming nature of the self is comprehended and developed via humor. The Incongruence Theory captures as well the humorous absurdity of the human condition. Thomas Nagel interprets the observation of Albert Camus that “aspiration and reality inevitably clash for everybody,” as Mordechai Gordon rightly emphasized, too. It is a stupid thing to do not to take our lives seriously, but in order to be able to do just that, we need to paradoxically embrace the perplexingly paradoxical human condition imposing to comprehend uncertainty, absurdity, precarity and doubt by changing ourselves via humor, by changing aspirations, by educating ourselves, by taking on better jobs, by changing friends, by changing our environments, by writing and creating and what not. In fact, all of the above. As Nagel noticed, the solution of defiance of absurdity as undertaken by Camus and the existentialists is the opposite of a solution. Gloom and despair are actually pretty useless for the human existence, anyway, only humor opens the avenues of maturity and progress and it proves to be an educational tool when used well (being critical and self-critical are to become self-employed props, not destructive bombs, and Mordechai Gordon makes a valuable reference to John Ohliger, who mentions in “Forum: You Shall Know the Truth and the Truth Shall Make you Laugh,” in other terms, that the only way to manage our unimportant importance is humor. Laughing at ourselves “can be seen as the mood where we’re conscious at the same time of our importance and of our insignificance”, but in psycho-social note it is also a mark of the open, generous and profoundly cultural personality. Only this type of personality capitalizes the situations suitable to laugh at oneself (when we make a foolish mistake or when we sanction our own shortcomings). This is the person who would be easily embracing the spirit of light-heartedness that Nietzsche advocated, since it can liberate us from the weight of dead tradition, by castigating first our own rigid and self-absorbed tendencies.

Peter Rickman emphasizes the joker facet of the philosopher: for the average human being, say, a traveller in the bus, the thought that the bus she or he takes daily to work is, according to Plato, not real, but only an appearance or imitation of the idea of a bus (adding or not “which most-likely God made for it is perfect”) or that it exists because it is perceived as Berkeley would argue, or that one who doesn’t believe in the existence of God cannot trust having a body, as Descartes, is to make jokes (if not to talk crazy). Lucian Blaga also underlines the parting of the ways between philosophy and common sense, but the philosopher intervenes “into the serene waves landscape” of the common sense even “more radically and devastatingly than the scientist”. For instance, Blaga shows, the scientist removes the prejudice of the senses that air would have no “weight,” while the philosopher rationalizes to the extreme this attitude by mocking common sense. There is no philosophy that does not get to this mockery, through any of its statements in serious adversity to common sense, not so much in terms of the knowledge and beliefs inventoried by the exponent of the common sense, as in terms of his equipment, sarcastically or drastically contradicting not only the “prejudices” held, but his constitutional prejudices. This is how philosophy creates its own “space” to “make room” for the philosophical foundational reconstructions. Common sense is guided by a (comfortable and naïve) realism that gives senses infinite credit, Blaga says. Philosophy enhances the reflective not the receptive subject. A good example for the uncomfortable and philosophical approach of the world is found at the Eleatic pre-Socratic School masters, such as Parmenides and Zenon, who choose to understand thing challenging the role of senses and the limits of uncontradictory logic. For Parmenides existence is singular, indivisible, finite, spherical, full, solid, unchanging and unmoved. But he is in the wrong, too, for we cannot identify existence with fullness, Blaga notes, contradicting the one he considers the first great rationalist. Heraclitus, on the contrary, rejects any static attribute of existence, so that immobility was declared a simple delusion, either of the mind or of the senses. Only becoming is real for Heraclitus (with its corollary of flow and instability). Leibniz rejects the principle of causality describing a world of monads in pre-established harmony. Thus, Blaga exemplifies that, in a Leibnizian perspective, the one who falls to the ground, shot, does this because this is his role (distributed by the supreme and universal director), not because he was shot.

In the light of the philosophical Geist, we cannot succumb to uniformity of thought and being, or to the uniformity of perspective, no matter how prestigious, we should not impose uniformity, we should not take it to be a value and, paradoxically, difference infuses sameness indifferent manners even when it does not. At the same time, in this spiritual philosophical light, our times are perfectly described in their worse than modest intellectual possibilities and appetites via these „Warnings", termed by the Giorgio Baruchello in a manner that reminds more of the cynics than of philosophical criticism, but which are sensed as almost true and necessary, becoming thus modestly funny. This philosopher captures present-day Weltanschauung when he coins these warnings, e.g., the Impact Hazard (for „philosophical books are deep and heavy"; they „impact with traditions, expectations, habituations, or other tacit givens and presuppositions", with consequences in fits of tantrum or „expressive feats of communication unsuitable for prim professional environments"). There is also the "Gravity Risk". We are prevented that **„**Philosophical books are subject to gravitational forces at all times. Never place philosophical books in elevated positions where they may later remember gravity and attempt to emulate the legendary apple which fell onto Newton's head". And there are others, too, in a quite long series, which is both saddening and amusing.

The *Uncanny Soulscapes…* is a surprising book of philosophy done with the means of humour, at times, tough, critical and pleasantly informal using everything – „like in sausage-making", as the author says about literature in a footnote -, to deal with our world times, experiences and existence. It is another type of Socratic exercise that provocatively exposes that would be fun to think about this and that, to confront this or that worth of hilarious vestment and amused attention without suggesting what to think. Here is not exactly *Castigat ridendo mores*, as in the motto of comedy given by the French poet J. de Santeul, for it really has expectations nor pretensions of moral instrument, while entertaining secret hopes for „serious side effects that may include bruised egos, mental collapse, sudden appreciation for interminable dialogue, acoustic disturbance caused by loud exclamations following new thoughts".

There is a technical brainteasers' aerobics, with "distraught sighs", "burning tears", "screams of outright pain and sorrow", "gasps of alarm", disgust, "irked disapproval", or "fits of boiling rage" that come and go, throughout a series of *sixty* short stories, brief sketches, and two-person mini-dialogues in a kaleidoscopic adventure that emphasizes from various standpoints our still strong engagement with *humor* via fictional characters aiming to representatively cover the human spectrum and the possible mixtures of distinguishable positive and negative human traits, believable persons, so Jungian archetypes that seem to be lively and fully-fledged, who sometimes evoke humor and cruelty ideas and suggestions echoing Blaise Pascal, the Marquis de Sade, Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, G.K. Chesterton, Luigi Pirandello, Philip Hallie, Richard Rorty, or Anita Phillips and Giorgio Baruchello's previous works.

Finding Richard Rorty in this aspirational and affiliation list is quite a surprise and probably Rorty himself would be a bit shaken to find his name in an enumeration that includes the Marquis de Sade, given his open admission that his thought is *liberal* much in the sense that, as Judith Sklar, he rejects cruelty and he is nonetheless a *postliberal* in the sense that he deconstructs and reconstructs liberalism to admit solidarity, which has no place for cruelty and laughing at others. Indeed, it is misleading that Rorty talks about the philosophical attitude of irony. Especially him who advocated at least social philosophy as a type of literary criticism, does not think much of irony as a literary device. However, he addresses a first type of irony which is rather "dissolving" and not beneficial for democracy and a second type that is eventually something else, namely a commitment to minimize cruelty which leads to a different concept, major in the economy of his social philosophy, "ironism", a very intellectualized sort of self-irony about which we have to note here that implies very little humor. We have recently developed this observation into an argument for the paradoxical un-Kantian Kantianism in Rorty, enrooted in Enlightenment thought insinuated into the Rortian concept of ironism.

In Judith Sklar's "Putting Cruelty first" cruelty is casted away as garbage-behavior that we have to get rid of in a liberal society or, at least, repeatedly and (in a quite paideutic manner) place it among the vices, where it belongs. We are still in dare need of culture and education to accomplish this aim. And here is not much amusement for the intended aim is of utmost importance for the continued existence of the social fabric and hopefully for the quality of our togetherness.

More amusing is the capitalization of Judith Sklar's work *Ordinary Vices* in the comedy series "The Good Place". The good place is actually not the Good Place as much as the people getting there hope for it, to the point that they believe it and not question much of anything for a while. It is a merciful temporary in-between, a kind and nice purgatory, which much closer to Giorgio Baruchello's book which creates also a fathom purgatory occasioning the reflection upon the "hopeful humanism of failure", as someone has put it. The capital lesson is that cruelty is the capital sin and to willfully inflict any kind of pain and fear on another (weaker) being is to be described as supreme evil by human awareness, out of devotion to the attribute of being human and not out of observance of higher (theological) norms preserving the actuality of a human society, for humans. There is no room for sadistic practices and the fascination with killers and psychopaths such as Hannibal Lecter, the anti-hero hero, is not a liberal choice. The idea that we are all equal in front of cruelty and fear may be disputed by certain liberal intellectuals, but this is not the place for this however interesting debate and it is not a topic that either Judith Shklar or Richard Rorty would enjoy.

Thus, Giorgio Baruchello's book is a misleading Good Place, misleading because it is so uncomfortable at times that gets ridiculous; so, at some point one either get lighter on her feet, or smarter, or more sophisticate to the point that she is transformed to be able to see that all enjoyment comes from a seemingly surprising experience of the bad, the ugliness and inhumanity found in relationing as much of it is besmirched by offence, insult, anger, belittle, denigration, enragement, disrespect, exclusion, rudeness, brutality, derision, fault, harm, oppression, ridicule, incense, vexation etc.

These persons, the characters in the book might speak about the author's alter-ego or, at occasions, scaringly suggesting things as our alter-ego. Many times, humor succumbs to the bleak absurdity of the Real in a Lacanian confirmation of human psychological existence. Cruelty often devours humor and, at best, the spiritual, self-critical and reflective being, enjoys the spiritual tension of this enduring correlation (humor-cruelty) laughing at our un edulcorated immoral and amoral instantiations as well as at the all-too-aware confrontation of our physical miserable embodiment we work so hard to correct and/or forget. Our, to put it nicely, "shadow" made present with such talent is quite shocking and humbling, nevertheless funny, though. "*Meeting all of these uncouth and sometimes biting 'bits' is part of the dire price that must be paid for the sake of pursuing a candid and comprehensive intellectual engagement with humor and cruelty qua legitimate theoretical-philosophical, socio-cultural, and lyric-literary matters*", Baruchello explains.

The book offers immersive virtual contexts supplied by *oneiric* experiences, *i.e.*, dreams *et similia*, explaining the *Uncustomary Dreamscope* in the title. The theoretical glimpses interweaved with subtility send to *philosophical* concepts, names, attitudes, or schools of thought, which you may or may not recognize and, in general, the form reflects the content, and the content reflects the intent. Theoretical of philosophical insights are either illuminating to the exposure intended or just a scenery set the author enjoys. As well, the presence of Geist is vital for the author and it is summoned via impressive and numerous cultural and artistic references central to the texts, others are minor or tangential.

The work is a cultural creation as much as it is a philosophical one. It speaks to readers' emphatic organ and to the imaginative one. Redemption and damnation are paradoxically not so far apart, neither are amusement and despair. The readers shall find themselves immersed in both.

Bottom-line, we are reminded how much we sweep under the rug in a heart-breaking childish hope it will disappear. There is no free laugh here, unfortunately. So wet weekends, in the damps of hell! The book is rather a complete Jungian therapeutical stage training not only the awareness, but also the imagination for our human bestiary of evils with the promise that knowing our own darkness shall equip us for dealing with darkness in others and this is the role of this sort of "spiritual colonoscopy". The author takes great pleasure in the turmoil of lucidity. This is acquired taste, for sure, a sort of rather unfortunate professional philosophical hazard. Why couldn't he catch on hedonism instead? If the readers do not share this kind of taste, then they should better keep their safe distance. The book is just an incentive for a more complex and more qualitative vision of the world and, possibly, for another Enlightenment that has to do with the transformative powers of lucidly starting with the acknowledgement of the various self-limitations and of their "roots".

Anyway, as Giorgio Baruchello's book self-ironically admits that "Everything has already been thought, said, and written, more or less" and only our ignorance makes that some things still ring as novel to us. Just go and read and re-read Dante, Blaga, Dostoyevsky, Cicero, Seneca, George Santayana, Tolstoy, Cioran, Shakespeare (plus a myriad others, obviously) and you'll grasp "everything". Or, be brave and let yourself enjoy this dreamscope, too: non-conformity is very entertaining albeit not comforting at all. Anyway, as argues also Simon Critchley throughout an entire chapter in his book *On Humor*, „The joke is on all of us" regardless of how you choose to see things and what you choose to lay out as a theoretical foundation. This is a book that just might make or break your day, while transforming your humorous and existential situation in the world. Hopefully, the first option.

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Parataxa în limba română contemporană – raport sintactic între coordonare și subordonare?

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Title: "Parataxis in contemporary Romanian language – syntactic relation between coordination and subordination?"

Abstract: Juxtaposition or parataxis represents a phenomenon characterized by the lack of the interpropositional connective (its zero expression), an insignificant accident in the positive realization of relations, because the relational interpretation is made by analogy with certain positive models as the realization of connectives and taking into account grammatical logic. Through this article, we propose to present several arguments that can be the basis for considering juxtaposition as a distinct syntactic-semantic relation in contemporary Romanian, because to coordinate implies ordering, arranging the elements of a statement according to certain relations, and for reasons of grammatical precision it is considered that the coordination relation should be distinguished from the juxtaposition relation, because to enumerate is different from to coordinate.

Keywords: parataxis, coordination, subordination, syntactic relations, statement.

Rezumat: Juxtapunere sau parataxă reprezintă un fenomen caracterizat prin lipsa conectivului interpropoziţional (*expresia zero a acestuia*), un accident nesemnificativ în realizarea pozitivă a relaţiilor, deoarece interpretarea relaţională se face prin analogie cu anumite modele pozitive ca realizare a conectivelor şi ţinând cont de logica gramaticală. Prin articolul de față, ne propunem să prezentăm câteva argumente care pot sta la baza considerării juxtapunerii ca raport sintactico-semantic distinct în limba română contemporană, deoarece a coordona presupune a ordona, a dispune elementele unui enunț conform anumitor raporturi, iar din raţiuni de precizie gramaticală se consideră că ar trebui să se distingă raportul de coordonare de raportul de juxtapunere, deoarece *a enumera* este diferit de *a coordona*.

Cuvinte-cheie: parataxă, coordonare, subordonare, relații sintactice, enunț.

Juxtapunerea – tipologie sintactico-semantică a raportului de coordonare

Relaţia de coordonare, acea relaţie din cadrul enunţului în care oricare dintre componenţi poate fi substituit cu *zero* fără ca enunţul să se dezorganizeze, se remarcă prin neomogenitate încă de la nivelul terminologiei utilizate de către autori, unii preferând sintagma *raporturi sintactice de coordonare*, alţii sintagma *relaţii sintactice de coordonare*, precum și relaţii *structurale/de solidaritate* şi relaţii *nonstructurale/de nonsolidaritate*. În cadrul relaţiilor sintactice *structurale / de solidaritate* este inclusă relaţia de *nondependenţă*, care poate fi definită drept „o expansiune plurimembră de unităţi aflate pe poziţii sintactice asemănătoare şi constă în repetarea poziţiei date prin unităţi care trimit la denotaţii diferite sau la acelaşi denotat, având deci referinţe diferite sau aceeaşi referinţă extralingvistică" (Iordan, Robu, 1978, 554). *Coordonarea* se consideră a fi relaţia specifică părţilor de propoziţie plurimembre, având valoarea unei solidarităţi nondependente între unităţile legate în sintagmă. Deşi este vorba de o relaţie structurală, coordonarea este „o implicaţie sintactică non-necesară şi permite omisiunea, în anumite limite, a unora dintre unităţile repetate" (Iordan, Robu 1978, 554).

Raportul de coordonare poate să unească şi unităţi sintactice care nu aparţin aceluiaşi nivel, dar care actualizează, la nivel sintagmatic sau la nivel frastic, aceeaşi funcţie de determinare (de exemplu: nume predicativ

- predicativă: *Ea este serioasă, harnică şi* ***cum îi stă bine unei fete de vârsta ei***). Fenomenul este explicabil în virtutea corespondenţei existente între părţile de propoziţie şi propoziţiile subordonate, care îndeplinesc în frază rolul de părţi de propoziţie ale regentei. Acesta este un tip de relaționare în cadrul frazei în care nu se manifestă o coordonare între propoziţii, ci între două elemente cu rol de părţi de propoziţie care sunt legate în aceeaşi măsură de unul şi același cuvânt. Împrejurarea că, dintre cele două elemente, unul este o parte de propoziţie în care se găseşte şi cuvântul la care se referă, pe când celălalt constituie o propoziţie aparte, face ca raportul de coordonare dintre aceste elemente să se stabilească în cadrul sintactic al frazei, dar, prin natura legăturii dintre ele, acest tip special de coordonare se apropie mai degrabă de coordonarea existentă în cadrul propoziţiei între elementele componente ale uneia şi aceleiaşi propoziţii (Avram 2007, 45-46).

În cadrul raportului sintactic de coordonare, taxonomizarea trebuie etapizată, în sensul că raportul sintactic de coordonare poate avea o omogenitate relativă, sporirea omogenităţii realizându-se la nivelul tipurilor de coordonare şi, unde este cazul, la subtipurile de coordonare. În prima etapă ar trebui să se individualizeze tipurile de coordonare, şi anume *coordonarea adversativă*, *coordonarea concluzivă*, *coordonarea copulativă* şi *coordonarea disjunctivă*, iar, în a doua etapă, în cadrul fiecărui tip să se identifice un număr mai mare sau mai mic de subtipuri de coordonare, de genul: coordonare opozitivă, coordonare apozitivă, coordonare cauzală, coordonare alternativă. Având în vedere că, prin concepţie, raportul sintactic de coordonare este posibil între două sau mai multe unităţi sintactice de aceeaşi importanţă sau aceeaşi funcţie sintactică sau funcţii sintactice diferite, rezultă că raportul sintactic de coordonare nu generează nicio funcţie sintactică (Dimitriu 2002, 1175-1184).

Un caz particular, emfatic al coordonării, îl reprezintă *relaţia de coordonare alternativă*, unde în fiecare poziţie repetată este selectat în mod necesar şi corelativ un element adverbial din seria *nici... nici*, *şi ...şi*, *când...când*, *acum... acum*, *aci...aci*, *sau...sau*, *ori...ori*, *fie (că)... fie (că)*, formând un context de distribuţie cu aceeaşi valoare sintactico-semantică pentru unităţi variabile aflate într-un anumit contrast semantic, de obicei, o polarizare: *este şi frumos, şi cuminte, şi inteligent, şi muncitor.* Prezenţa în structura relaţională a elementelor adverbiale determină implicaţia sintactică necesară şi corelativitatea lor obligatorie. Se consideră că unele elemente adverbiale aflate în această structură devin morfeme de modalitate prin însuşi faptul corelativităţii. Astfel, *când* şi *acum* îşi pierd calitatea de substitute temporale, *aci* îşi pierde calitatea de substitut spaţial, „actualizându-se ca morfeme ale alternanţei imediate pe o axă temporală, alternanţă care are valoare de punere în evidenţă emfatică” (Iordan, Robu 1978, 553-558).

În ceea ce ne priveşte, ne alăturăm concepției potrivit căreia în relaţia de coordonare asocierea se poate realiza prin **adiţiune**, **prin opoziţie sau adversitate** (cu opoziţie slabă: *iar*, cu opoziţie medie: *dar, însă*, cu opoziţie forte: *ci*) şi prin **opoziţie cu excludere reciprocă – disjunctivă**. În legătură cu relaţia de coordonare concluzivă suntem şi noi de acord că este o relaţie discutabilă, deoarece conjuncţiile conclusive admit în faţa lor un ***şi*** care este prin excelenţă conjuncţie coordonatoare copulativă. Ar însemna că avem două tipuri de raporturi de coordonare simultană, unul prin ***şi***, iar celălalt prin conjuncţia conclusivă, ceea ce reprezintă o imposibilitate logică (Neamțu 1999, 469-474).

În ceea ce priveşte numitele conjuncţii corelative cu valoare adverbială *şi…, şi* ; *nici…, nici*, ele nu sunt conjuncţii coordonatoare copulative, generând așa-nuumita coordonare copulativă întărită pozitivă, ci sunt cupluri adverbiale, conjuncţia coordonatoare fiind un ***şi*** copulativ exprimat sau exprimabil. În plus, cuplurile *sau... sau; ori..., ori; fie..., fie* sunt tot adverbiale, coordonarea fiind una de tip disjunctiv şi realizându-se printr-o juxtapunere de tip special în vecinătatea aderenţei (Neamțu 1999, 471). În cazul cuplurilor *când... când; ba... ba*, coordonarea se realizează prin juxtapunere, care nu poate fi considerată o excludere reciprocă, astfel încât se poate accepta că este o coordonare alternativă ca o subspecie a celei disjunctive. În prezenţa cuplurilor adverbiale *atât... cât şi*, coordonarea este de tip copulativ şi se realizează prin juxtapunere de tip special. O interpretare dificilă are coordonarea în modelul *nu numai ... ci şi* cu o dublă corelaţie *nu* – adverb - , *ci* – conjuncţie adversativă -, *numai* – adverb - , *şi* – adverb. Deşi ***ci*** este o conjuncţie adversativă tipică, şi în acest caz ne aflăm în prezenţa unei asocieri de tip copulativ (Neamțu 1999, 470-474).

Elementul constant vizează mediul în care se manifestă coordonarea, și anume între părţi de propoziţie, la nivel intrapropozițional și între propoziţiile principale sau subordonate, la niver interpropozițional. Fiind posibil în limitele părţii de propoziţie, ale propoziţiei, ale frazei şi ale enunțului, se poate spune că raportul de coordonare are o frecvenţă mare. Unităţile sintactice coordonate pot fi două sau mai multe şi pot apărea la nivelul majorităţii unităţilor sintactice. Astfel, putem conchide că este relaţia care se stabileşte între două sau mai multe unităţi care se află pe acelaşi plan, operează cu unităţi homofuncţionale, reprezentând totdeauna o expansiune poziţională, şi nu structurală. Ea nu este generatoare de funcţii sintactice, rolul ei fiind de a repoziţiona funcţia exprimată de unitatea antecedentă.

În coordonare termenii care depind nici semantic, nici funcţional, nici structural unul de celălalt, dar, odată intraţi în aceeaşi sintagmă, stabilesc între ei un anumit raport semantic. Deși în planul expresiei termenii nu-şi impun nici reciproc, nici unilateral restricţii, totuși, sub aspectul structurii enunţului sintactic, prezenţa unuia dintre termeni nu e condiţionată de prezenţa celuilalt (Irimia 2008, 383).

Raportul de coordonare se realizează prin juxtapunere (parataxa, asindetul), adică prin alăturarea unităţilor sintactice de acelaşi fel sau diferite cu despărţirea lor prin virgulă, respectiv prin joncțiune. Juxtapunerea se bazează pe o intonaţie specifică, pe o enumerare, cu ridicări şi coborâri de ton, care revin cu regularitate şi care sunt marcate în scris cu ajutorul virgulei sau prin punct-și-virgulă. În acest raport se pot afla două sau mai multe propoziţii principale, două sau mai multe propoziţii principale sau secundare, o parte de propoziţie secundară sau principală şi o propoziţie cu valoare corespunzătoare, două sau mai multe propoziţii apozitive. Joncțiunea presupune contact între unităţile sintactice sau componentele acestora, omogene sau eterogene, și se realizează cu ajutorul conjuncţiilor şi al locuţiunilor conjuncţionale coordonatoare copulative, adversative, opozitive, disjunctive sau conclusive (Constantinescu-Dobridor 1998, 313)

În *Gramatica de bază a limbii române*, relaţia de coordonare este definită ca fiind acea relaţie care se stabileşte, în mod prototipic, între unităţi sintactice aflate la acelaşi nivel ierarhic – fie între unităţi sintactice nesubordonate (propoziţii principale), fie între unităţi sintactice similare subordonate faţă de acelaşi grup (GBLR 2010: 347).

Se remarcă faptul că raportul de coordonare prin juxtapunere este documentat și acceptat în toate toată literatura de specialitate românească. Aici, unitățile sintactice (propoziții sau părți de propoziție) se află pe un plan de egalitate, fără dependență ierarhică. Relațiile exprimate sunt, de obicei, copulative (adunare, succesiune), adversative (opoziție), disjunctive (alternanță) sau conclusive (deducție implicită). De cele mai multe ori, juxtapunerea se marchează prin virgulă, care înlocuiește conjuncțiile coordonatoare, cu precădere conjuncția coordonatoare copulativă ***și***.

Astfel, într-un exemplu de tipul***: Soarele răsare, păsările cântă, lumea se trezește.***, cele trei propoziții descriu acțiuni simultane sau succesive. Peste tot virgula poate fi înlocuită cu conjuncția coordonatoare ***și***: ***Soarele răsare și păsările cântă și lumea se trezește.*** Prin urmare, sub aspect stilistic, virgula marchează pauza intonațională, esențială în oralitate, iar în corpusuri contemporane, astfel de construcții apar frecvent în descrieri narative.

Pe de altă parte, în enunțul: ***Am vrut să plec, am rămas totuși***., se remarcă o opoziție implicită între intenție și realitate. În acest caz, echivalentul joncțional este conjuncția coordonatoare adversativă ***dar***: ***Am vrut să plec, dar am rămas totuși***. Inversarea ordinii este posibilă fără pierderea sensului principal, ceea ce confirmă egalitatea atât în plan sintactic, cât și în plan semantic.

Frecventă în dialoguri este alternanța sugerată care se realizează, de asemenea, prin juxtapunere. În limba română vorbită, intonația ascendentă pe a doua propoziție accentuează interogativul implicit. Astfel, în enunțul: ***Mergi pe jos, iei autobuzul?,*** virgula înlocuiește conjuncția coordonatoare disjunctivă ***sau: Mergi pe jos sau iei autobuzul?***

Există enunțuri în care, prin juxtapunere, se marchează relația cauză-efect implicită, dar care este tratată drept coordonare, deoarece propozițiile pot fi independente. În stilul jurnalistic, astfel de juxtapuneri economisesc spațiu și cresc caracterul persuasiv, conturând aspectul narativ al celor relatate: ***A plouat toată noaptea, drumurile sunt inundate***.

Prin urmare, este fără echivoc faptul că, în ceea ce privește criteriile de identificare a coordonării prin juxtapunere, acestea includ substituibilitatea cu conjuncții coordonatoare, posibilitatea de inversare a ordinii și absența dependenței gramaticale.

Juxtapunerea în raportul de subordonare: controverse și perspective

Fraza complexă structurată prin coordonare este o construcţie sintactică formată din cel puţin două nuclee predicative ataşate printr-un conector care coordonează două propoziţii independente şi/sau principale. Conectorul este elementul coeziv al frazei complexe, asigurându-i acesteia coerenţă logică (cu condiţia ca această coerenţă să existe, el neavând capacitatea de a crea coerenţa frazei, ci putând doar să o asigure!), precum şi coerenţă sintactică. Din punctul de vedere al structurii, frazele complexe sunt clasificate în fraze **juxtapuse**, structurate prin parataxă, adică fără conectori, relaţia logico-semantică dintre aceste fraze fiind implicită, respectiv fraze cu conectori, în care relaţia logico-semantică care le leagă este explicitată prin unul sau mai mulţi conectori. Frazele cu conectori se disting între ele prin tipul de relaţie exprimată de conector şi se clasifică în fraze **coordonate,** în care relaţia este de non-depenedenţă, respectiv fraze **subordonate**, în care relaţia este de dependenţă (Comes 2007, 15).

Raportul de coordonare este un raport sintactic în care constituenții macro-structurali ai frazei se află în raport de non-dependenţă. Acest raport se distinge de raportul de subordonare mai ales prin tipologia conectorilor şi, mai puţin, prin diferenţe structurale sau gramaticale. Spre deosebire de frazele subordonate, cele coordonate se caracterizează, preponderent, prin autonomia sintactică, cu alte cuvinte, prin independenţa acestora faţă de un alt constituent al frazei. **Juxtapunerea** (sau parataxa asindetică) este unul dintre cele trei moduri de construire a frazei complexe, alături de coordonare (sau parataxă conjuncţională) şi subordonare (sau hipotaxă). Aceasta este un procedeu secvenţial care are rolul de a lega două sau mai multe unităţi fără a marca prin vreun conector gramatical relaţia semantică care le uneşte. Unităţile frastice în vorbire sunt delimitate prin pauze, iar în scris, prin virgule, punct-și-virgulă sau punct. O propoziţie subordonată poate fi legată de regenta ei şi prin juxtapunere, în acest caz fiind vorba mai ales de propoziţiile participiale și infinitivale. În absenţa conectorului vorbim despre subordonate juxtapuse. Acestea sunt subordonate care nu au element introductor şi care sunt juxtapuse cu propoziţia principală. În acest caz, juxtapunerea se află în serviciul hipotaxei. Tipurile de subordonate cel mai bine reprezentate în această clasă sunt concesivele, condiţionalele şi temporalele.

Ambivalenţa noţiunii de parataxă ar putea avea ca rezultat considerarea juxtapunerii ca fiind un raport sintactic separat. Astfel, coordonarea ar putea fi privită ca o juxtapunere marcată, iar juxtapunerea, ca o o coordonare implicită, având la bază atât gradul de autonomie gramaticală, cât și criteriul autonomiei semantice. Există propoziţii juxtapuse a căror structură le dezvăluie întreaga autonomie gramaticală, motiv pentru care juxtapunerea ar trebui să fie considerată ca o a treia dimensiune a structurii frastice, alături de coordonare şi de subordonare, iar propoziţiile incidente ar putea fi considerate ca un caz particular de juxtapunere.

Prin urmare, fraza complexă construită prin juxtapunere se bazează pe coerenţa cauzală implicită dintre frazele care o alcătuiesc, adică pe legătura de natură referenţială de necontradicţie fondată pe o interferenţă, spre deosebire de situaţia frazei complexe care este construită prin hipotaxă, unde corenţa cauzală este de natură explicită, datorită prezenţei conectorilor (Comes 2007, 17).

În cazul juxtapunerii, coerenţa cauzală implicită are mai multe grade, gradul cel mai ridicat al coerenţei fiind perceput atunci când frazele se află în relaţie de cauzalitate. Gradul coerenţei cauzale implicite scade atunci când faptele se succedă fāra a implica niciun raport cauzal, situaţie în care există un simplu raport temporal de succesiune între fraze, putând ajunge până în faza în care să nu existe nicio legătură referenţială între fapte. Deseori o succesiune temporală exprimă o relaţie cauzală între faptele prezentate prin simpla juxtapunere, un prim fapt fiind perceput ca fiind cauza celui care urmează şi exprimă efectul. În exemplul *S-a înnorat. Va ploua.*, succesiunea temporală este un prim fapt, care este cauza celui de-al doilea, acesta din urmă reprezentând efectul, astfel încât ordinea faptelor prezentate nu impune nicio schimbare în ceea ce priveşte relaţia de cauzalitate dintre aceste fapte, faptul-cauză fiind întotdeauna cel care indică faptul-efect. O situație diferită se poate remarca în enunțul: *Fetița a început să plângă. Băiatul a ieșit, trântind ușa.*, unde faptul-efect precedă faptul-cauză, ceea ce are un rol definitoriu în interpretare, schimbarea ordinii faptelor instituind o altă cauză şi o altă consecinţă, în virtutea unei alte interferenţe fondate pe un anumit *topos* care explică ieşirea violentă a băiatului, prin plânsul fetiței. Toposul poate fi în acest caz diferit, putându-se considera că reacţia violentă a băiatului generează plânsul fetiței și, nu în ultimul rând, ipoteza că un baiat părăseşte o fetiță, plânsul ei fiind urmarea acestui fapt. Prin urmare, în exemplele de mai sus se identifică raportul cauzal dintre faptele sau evenimentele prezentate prin cele două enunțuri juxtapuse. În toate cazurile, succesiunea temporală este un prim fapt, care este cauza celui de-al doilea, ceea ce indică faptul că ordinea faptelor este esenţială în interferenţa raportului de cauzalitateși duce la concluzia că în anumite cazuri raportul dintre efect şi cauză este diferit. Astfel, și în limba română, asemeni altor limbi romanice (franceza fiind un exemplu în acest sens), juxtapunerea ar putea fi privită ca un raport sintactico-semantic, alături de coordonare şi de subordonare, aceasta situându-se la limita dintre celalalte două.

Deși controversat, rolul juxtapunerii în exprimarea subordonării, unde o propoziție depinde sintactic și semantic de alta, nu poate fi negat. Astfel, în gramatica tradițională românească, subordonarea implică joncțiune obligatorie (*că, să, dacă, unde* etc.). Totuși, în limba română contemporană, anumite construcții sugerează o subordonare implicită prin juxtapunere, ridicând întrebări despre granița dintre sintaxă și pragmatică. Completiva directă implicită reprezintă un exemplu relevant în acest sens. Astfel, enunțul: *Știu, va reuși.* este echivalent frazei: *Știu că va reuși.* Elipsa conjuncției *că* este comună în cadrul discursului oral, care acceptă, în anumite limite, lipsa rigurozității semantico-sintactice. Cu toate acestea, aplicând testul dependenței, este evident că a doua propoziție nu are statut independent fără pierderea sensului, iar inversarea topicii distruge logica.

Atât în ceea ce privește propozițiile cauzale, cât și cele consecutive, relația cauză-efect exprimată în lipsa conectorilor *deoarece, fiindcă*, respectiv *încât* constituie un element care reflectă, de asemenea, o subordonare implicită prin juxtapunere, care, în perspectivă pragmatică, îi permite contextulului să determine interpretarea, pe când, în texte literare, permite ambiguitatea artistică. Astfel, enunțul: *A alergat repede, a ajuns la timp.* reflectă o cauzală implicită, iar enunțul: *Vorbește încet, nu te aude nimeni.*, o consecutivă cu negație.

Intonația și contextul pragmatic pot să facă din prima propoziție o condiție implicită. Un exemplu în acest sens este reflectat de enunțul: *Plouă, rămânem acasă.*, care are ca echivalent fraza: *Dacă plouă, rămânem acasă.*

Construcțiile complexe, în stilul publicistic, oferă exemple de subordonare implicită prin juxtapunere. De exemplu: *Criza economică lovește, șomajul crește, guvernele promit soluții*. ilustrează un amestec de coordonare și subordonare implicită, ultimele două propoziții putând fi văzute ca efecte ale primei propoziții.

În literatura de specialitate, aceste situații sunt interpretate în mod diferit. Perspectiva conservatoare le analizează ca fiind cazuri de coordonare cu valoare semantică subordonatoare, nu de subordonare autentică. Argumentul îl constituie lipsa elementului subordonator, care ar face imposibilă integrarea în structura ierarhică (GALR 2008, Pană Dindelegan 2016). Pe de altă parte, adepții perspectivei progresive reflectate în studiile despre parataxă și raporturi sintactice în româna actuală, publicate după anul 2000 în *Diacronia* și *Limba Romana.md*, acceptă subordonarea paratactică, bazată pe dependența semantică și intonație.

Influențată de Coșeriu și reflectată în concepția lui Grice, perspectiva pragmatică consideră că juxtapunerea transcende sintaxa pură, integrând factori discursivi. În teoria actelor de vorbire, astfel de construcții exprimă implicare afectivă și o tonalitate familiară structurilor discursive (Grice 1975, adaptat la limba română).

Chiar dacă, comparativ cu alte limbi romanice, limba română este moderat permisivă, din ce în ce mai mult se remarcă influențe contrastive și tendințe actuale de adaptare atât la limba franceză, care folosește virgula pentru coordonare, dar și pentru subordonare, cât mai ales la limba engleză, care permite *run-on sentences* cu subordonare implicită.

Concluzii

Din perspectivă pragmatică, se observă că juxtapunerea permite flexibilitate, deoarece reduce redundanța, crește viteza comunicării și permite interpretări multiple. În discursuri politice sau publicitare, ea creează impresia de spontaneitate, iar, în jurnalism, economisește cuvinte. Stilistic, parataxa este un instrument al modernismului lingvistic, favorizând concizia față de explicitate și creând efecte poetice.

În limba română contemporană, există situații în care juxtapunerea reprezintă o punte între coordonare (egalitate sintactică) și subordonare (dependență implicită), ilustrând dinamismul limbii. Deși predominant coordonatoare, ea capătă tot mai mult nuanțe subordonatoare în contexte orale și digitale, reflectând evoluția spre o sintaxă mai flexibilă. Viitoarele gramatici ar putea integra aceste hibride, recunoscând influențele globale. Cu toate acestea, deși juxtapunerea nu este doar o tehnică, ci un indicator al vitalității lingvistice românești, abuzul poate duce la ambiguitate, criticată în normele academice, motiv pentru care se recomandă echilibru: juxtapunere pentru dinamism, joncțiune pentru claritate.

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Sociolinguistic Dogma, Literary Discourse and Target Culture Acquisition

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Abstract: The English School of literary criticism has a reputation for close textual scrutiny. It is characterized by a particular interest in the relations of literature and society together with literary sensitivity. Within this context, rhetorical expressions in literary discourse play a significant role in reflecting the sociocultural manifestations in the speech community. The present research work hypothesizes that a careful analysis of such expressions would be able to explain and, probably, justify the sociolinguistic dogma which accompany rhetorical expressions in the English literature. As far as Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) settings are concerned, a better understanding of English rhetoric is expected to develop learners' tolerance, acceptance and target culture awareness. A qualitative research methodology has been adopted in this investigation and, accordingly, a questionnaire has been submitted to students enrolled in English Studies with a view to enquire about their attitudes, responses and impact of rhetoric on the language teaching/learning operation. The preliminary outcomes that have been obtained indicate an improvement of students' proficiency in Literary Discourse interpretation and, eventually, an increase of learners' cultural awareness along with a better mastery of the English language.
Keywords: sociolinguistic dogma; literary discourse; target culture, TEFL.

Titlu: „Dogmă sociolingvistică, discurs literar și achiziția culturii-țintă"
Rezumat: Școala engleză de critică literară are o reputație solidă în ceea ce privește analiza atentă a textului. Aceasta este caracterizată printr-un interes deosebit pentru relațiile dintre literatură și societate, coroborat cu sensibilitatea literară. În acest context, expresiile retorice din discursul literar joacă un rol semnificativ în reflectarea manifestărilor socioculturale din cadrul comunității lingvistice. Prezenta cercetare pornește de la ipoteza că o analiză atentă a acestor expresii ar putea explica și, probabil, justifica dogmele sociolingvistice care însoțesc expresiile retorice în literatura engleză. În ceea ce privește contextul predării limbii engleze ca limbă străină (TEFL), o mai bună înțelegere a retoricii limbii engleze poate contribui la dezvoltarea toleranței, a acceptării și a conștientizării culturii-țintă în rândul cursanților. În cadrul acestei investigații a fost adoptată o metodologie de cercetare calitativă și, în consecință, a fost aplicat un chestionar studenților înscriși la programele de studii de limba engleză, cu scopul de a explora atitudinile, răspunsurile acestora și impactul retoricii asupra procesului de predare/învățare a limbii. Rezultatele preliminare obținute indică o îmbunătățire a competenței studenților în interpretarea discursului literar și, în final, o creștere a conștientizării culturale a cursanților, împreună cu o mai bună stăpânire a limbii engleze.
Cuvinte-cheie: dogma sociolingvistică, discurs literar, cultură țintă, TEFL.

1. Introduction

Foreign language proficiency, from the very beginning, should include and cover up all the basics that make possible both acquiring the five main language skills- writing, speaking, listening, reading, culture- and also attaining communicative competence. This belief has been manifested to the extent that literary discourse will hopefully serve as a describer and definer of the most important sociocultural manifestations and, at the same time, stretch forward to tackle the complex features in grammar as well as in vocabulary, style and writing activity.

Within this context, rhetorical expressions in literary discourse represent a challenging and interesting material in target culture acquisition through the inculcation and practice of classroom tasks such as, reading passages, vocabulary development, interaction activities, grammar close-ups and language practice that provides innovative methods of foreign language teaching. The use of literary discourse can significantly contribute in intercultural teaching curricula. In fact, the constitution of cultural identity, and the contribution of such factors as ethnicity, class and gender are constantly under discussion in current debates, particularly the role these parameters can play in foreign language acquisition.

For example, race, ethnicity or culture are not universal or fixed, they are concepts that have variable definitions, and are not necessarily in contradiction with those that exist in other speech communities. Indeed, one can presuppose that the harmonious co-existence of both cultural identity and cultural pluralism within the same society can not only develop and enrich the native language(s) but it is highly probable that it would have a positive influence on the learning of foreign languages. The complementary intertwinement of cultural identity and cultural pluralism within the same nation demonstrates the spontaneous and natural predisposition of peoples to accept and tolerate cultures and languages that are inherent in different communities. As a matter of fact, it has been proved that this trait of cultural inheritance does constitute an improving factor of foreign language learning. In this perspective, literary discourse, especially rhetorical language, can contribute in the elaboration and expansion of intra/inter cultural foreign language teaching programmes.

On the other hand, the use of language in real life situations is directly impacted by sociocultural conventions that constitute a complex whole which comprises knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs, and many other capabilities and habits acquired by the individual as a member of a society. However, anthropologists frequently make the point that peoples sharing substantially the same culture may speak languages belonging to disparate origins and families, contrariwise, that peoples whose languages are related may have very different cultures.

In consequence, the combination of cultural identity and cultural pluralism within the same speech community constitutes an alleviative factor of sociocultural dogma. Moreover, intercultural communication teaching programmes may lead to some significant contribution in the betterment of foreign language mastery and, therefore, would result with a higher awareness and tolerance of others speech communities' cultures.

2. Literary Review

2.1. Intercultural Foreign Language Instruction

The advocates for intercultural foreign language education develop a chain of argumentation that can be concisely summarized in two major elements:

(a) Cultural Pluralism is an inherent trait of natural human language: the case of Regional and Social Varieties

The fact that people who speak the same language often do not speak the same way is obvious to us all, but how many of us can identify different language types? As an example, let us consider regional and social varieties of languages. People from different regions within an area that share a common language have different accents, and they often use different vocabulary and slang. These differences are known as regional varieties because they are based solely on geographical distinctions. Furthermore, since people expect regional variations within a country, this language variation usually does not lead to social discrimination.

(b) Cultural Pluralism constitutes an enhancing factor in foreign language learning.

Indeed, many research investigations indicate that learners with a Cultural Pluralism background display more developed capabilities in acquiring foreign languages. The links, if any, which should exist between mother tongue provision and foreign language provision generally. In addition, the scope for making ethnic community languages available as a curriculum option. Lastly, one should signal the respective roles of schools and the ethnic minorities themselves in the provision of teaching in ethnic minority languages.

2.2. The Role of Literary Discourse in a TEFL Context

Discourse studies have already demonstrated the utility of literary discourse in foreign language teaching/learning. The argumentation of the proponents of the utilization of this genre in FLT advocates the intrinsic linguistic and sociocultural traits that characterize Literary Discourse.

First, on the grammatical level, literary discourse embeds all the common and complex structures and features of the language including tenses, reported speech, passive voice, mechanics of the language, and so forth. In this kind of discourse, such features are tackled through an advanced, more complex angle. For example, the tenses are conceived in a subtler prism of time, not on the basis of form or linguistic structure. Besides, logical relationships between sentences, useful to enrich one's grammar build-up and help develop one's writing can be found in various samples of rhetorical expressions in English literature. Such samples can be presented to FL learners in a practical, easy-to-use and understand manner. These exemplars of literary discourse with their peculiar constructions and uses can be explained and dealt with by the discourse analyst to the full satisfaction of both teachers and students.

Second, on the thematic level, literary discourse puts learners face to face with pressing issues that are striking to humanity at large. Such issues broaden students' awareness of life and its complexities. For instance, literary discourse raises the issue of human wealth and misery, exposes racial prejudices in all kinds and dangers, reveals the increasing problem of cultural intolerance, puts on the table the sociological and psychological facts about interaction, and last but not least, attempts to familiarize students with new expressions that derive from the sociocultural heritage of the British anthropology.

Third, on the stylistic level, the language instructor should attach full importance to the English idiom with its complex meaning and precise usage. A good number of idiomatic expressions are introduced in rhetorical discourse with specific meaning and, most importantly, the teacher should ensure learners' comprehension and mastery of these idioms through usage and practice.

On the whole, the utmost objective of the introduction of rhetorical expressions in the teaching/learning process is the development of communicative competence- this genre of discourse does not just enable learners to master the English complex linguistic patterns but also moves a step forward ahead to focus on the language as a means of communication. To this effect, a broader scope is provided to embrace chances for intercultural free self-expression, peer discussion (e.g. comparison of native culture and target culture), student-teacher interaction, and class teamwork. Additionally, both oral fluency- the use of such expressions in genuine discussions and mastery of their appropriate use in written English, coupled with improving students' critical thinking- should be given full attention.

Lastly, the FL teacher should include in the course detailed notes to make the intention of the activities clear and to guide students. Experienced teachers should provide material that is flexible and can be readily adapted to accommodate their individual teaching styles but also students' learning strategies.

2.3. Sociocultural Manifestations and Rhetorical Expressions

Rhetoric has been a central component of discourse theory since classical antiquity. The foundations of rhetorical thought can be traced back to Aristotle's Rhetoric, where persuasion is conceptualized through three interrelated appeals: ethos (credibility), pathos (emotional engagement), and logos (logical reasoning) (Aristotle 2007). Aristotle's framework remains fundamental in contemporary discourse studies, as it provides a systematic understanding of how language functions not merely to transmit information but to influence attitudes, beliefs, and actions. In modern sociolinguistic inquiry, rhetoric is examined as a strategic and context-dependent use of language that constructs meaning within specific social and cultural environments.

Additionally, rhetoric in discourse refers to the intentional use of language to persuade, influence, or shape meaning in context. It goes beyond simply delivering information- it involves selecting linguistic and stylistic strategies (like metaphors, repetition, appeals to logic or emotion) to produce an effect on the audience (Martin 2022). The author explains that rhetoric operated as a hermeneutic tool orients discourse toward ethical responsibility and future possibilities. It is a dynamic force in shaping public understanding, mobilizing social action, and constructing identities within a communicative act.

Rhetoric is often needed because language is rarely adequate for expressing emotion. It is noticeable that numerous forms of language such as, metaphor, simile, association, personification and analogy can indeed mislead when used dishonestly, but they can also be used honestly in an attempt to communicate. In fact, one of the criteria of good rhetoric is that it should be sincere; inflated rhetoric is essentially insincere Strong emotions frequently generate rhetorical language, even among speakers who do not possess literary pretensions. The struggle to articulate intense affective states often leads individuals to rely on figurative expressions such as metaphor or hyperbole, particularly when literal language proves insufficient (Martin 2022). In this sense, rhetoric emerges not merely as ornamentation but as a communicative necessity that attempts to render subjective experience intelligible to others.

2. 4. The Functions of Rhetorical Expressions

2.4.1. Communication of Emotion

Rhetorical expressions are used to communicate emotion and other experiences that cannot be transmitted by means of factual and literal language. Interlocutors must accept the communication of emotion as a reasonable human desire, and if we also acquiesce, that our greatest satisfactions are found in our emotional lives, it is very important for our happiness and evolution that we should talk about emotions. Thus, the legitimacy of rhetoric in this field, then seeks really to share emotions, however, it becomes illegitimate when it falls into sentimentality. In literary discourse, rhetorical expressions can take various figures of speech particularly in poetry, for example emotion may be communicated by hyperbole- discourse that contains an exaggeration for emphasis- which is meant to convince people of the violence of the emotion. Additionally, in prose or speech there is also hyperbole: ‘The next wave caught me unawares and I swallowed a gallon of sea-water.’ There are everyday instances such as, ‘I haven’t seen you for ages.’; ‘as old as the hills.’; ‘terrible weather.’, and so on.

Within the same context emotion may be shared by metaphor which implies a comparison of two things. The language is full of metaphors in current use, e.g. bed of roses; crocodile tears; too many irons in the fire, etc. Besides, an analogy can be used to convey to the audience a psychological experience for which we have no suitable vocabulary; in this case the discourse is drastic, adventurous, and unexpected. Its function is not only to transmit emotion by analogy, but also, as it were, to wake up us, to startle us into noticing by some unusual stimulus. In fact, analogy usually refers to a certain likeness in two things that are different in other ways, a similarity in function but not in origin. For example, there is an analogy between the wings of a butterfly and those of a bird, an analogy between the branches of a family and those of a tree (Ridout and Witting 1976).

Whereas it is very difficult to assess the sincerity of an emotional statement, most of us do so by methods which we could not ourselves fully explain. These expressions are often more intuitive than intellectual, they depend very much upon the indefinable quality we often call the tone of speech, personal conversation and so on. One of the serious difficulties in this context is that what is a mark of hypocrisy in one person, may be perfectly authentic in another person. For example, it is generally more likely that rhetorical language which is an imitation of someone else’s language will be insincere, than that something original will be. Therefore, the acquisition and, eventually, use of rhetorical expressions depend to a large extent on the social status, psychological state of mind, and affective factors of each FL learner. Hence, the language teacher should be slow to suspect real absence of motivation or inability to comprehend, and should judge students’ progression through the relationships of learners’ deeds to their classroom interaction, rather than by the nature of the expressions themselves.

2.4.2. Moral and Action Inducement

Rhetorical expressions are equally employed as incentives of emotion in other people. In this case, rhetoric is used with the aim that its forcefulness or unusual quality will startle the audience. For example, political discourse frequently illustrates the persuasive power of rhetorical appeals. For instance, a speaker may invoke personal identification ("Think of your own children") in order to mobilize emotional engagement while simultaneously presenting logical reasoning against a proposed policy. In such contexts, rhetorical strategy operates through the Aristotelian triad of ethos, pathos, and logos (Aristotle 2007; Wornyo 2023). The effectiveness of such discourse depends largely on the perceived sincerity and ethical grounding of the speaker. The objective of the orator is three-dimensional: Ethos- persuasion; Pathos- appeal to emotions; and Logos- construct logical arguments (Wornyo, 2023; Wang et al.2025). Additionally, it may be supposed that earlier in the speech the speaker's appeal was objective, explanatory and factual, but now he is trying to arouse emotion, by appealing to personal experience and likewise make matters more real.

Within this perspective, the impact of rhetorical expressions on interlocutors is entirely determined by the context and motive. This is pertinent rhetoric which aims at skilfully applying psychological and verbal techniques in order to arouse emotions in others, without any deliberate deceit and for a good motive. It is necessary that the sincerity-character should be definitely found in these rhetorical expressions, otherwise, it would be a demagogic speech in which words are used with accomplishment. Yet, this is only the use of a formula that is deliberate and cunning in order to work upon other people's feelings.

Rhetorical expressions along with their utility in foreign language learning, they equally offer meaningful insights into critical thinking and schemata of thoughts in communication. The opinions expressed through rhetorical discourse are such as we fell a rational well-meaning person might hold; the rhetorical devices make the expounding of thoughts more forceful. In fact, the power over an audience depends on eloquent words not a matter of endless reiteration in a hysterical manner. Foreign language speakers should show a careful concern about the risk of sounding insincere which can occur only when orators try to induce other people emotions that they do not themselves feel, largely by pretending to be overwhelmed by them.

The objectives of rhetorical expressions should strictly depend on moral criteria that we should apply, we must consider whether the emotions may lead to a good action. In sum, rhetorical expressions are conditioned by a process of framing and metaphor. Language can structure how audiences understand an issue, for instance to 'immigration' as a 'flood' vs 'a journey' (Martin 2022; Wang et al, 2025).

2.4.3. Adornment of Speech and Writing

Figures of speech may not be necessary to clarify or to stimulate emotion, but may still be part of human acts of communication for the sheer pleasure they give to interlocutors. Talks, if they were simply straightforward accounts of the everyday and valueless subjects would be of no interest and would make conversations dreary dull. The whole point of a humorous classroom interaction in FL instruction is the way stories are told. Certain characteristics of discourse exchanges such as, irony, comical exaggeration, climaxes, sudden anti-climaxes, surprises of every kind, puns, odd comparisons and ludicrous understatements, create comic situations that motivate learners.

Contemporary rhetorical scholarship further demonstrates that rhetoric plays a decisive role in framing public issues, structuring ideological positions, and shaping collective identities with discourse communities (Wang, Yu, and He 2025). From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, rhetorical strategies may also reveal underlying power relations and socio-political intentions embedded in language use (Ryan 2012).

On the other hand, the interpretation of rhetorical expressions by the foreign language learner is based upon his own sociocultural characteristics. This process of cognitive comparison allows comprehension of the target culture and, unexpectedly, countries which are geographically far from each other (they are situated on different continents and they do not really have in common important and long historical heritage), share a large number of cultural traits and events. This process of discourse interpretation is called 'figured word' and has been defined as follows: "A socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others (Holland et al. 1998,52).

The determination of the meaning of rhetorical expressions is ‘carved up’ by the FL learner who uses numerous parameters such as the large context, ethnographic information and, if possible, intercultural elements (Gee 2013). Moreover, rhetorical expressions play a significant role in structuring coherence and discourse moves. This function is particularly determinant in academic and institutional discourse. Rhetoric organizes ideas logically, facilitates transitions, and aligns to disciplinary expectations (Gajewska et al. 2024).

The linguistic structures of rhetorical expressions are defined by a number of features that separate it from other types of discourse such as, the use of metaphor, idioms and fixed expressions or what is referred to as ‘the dialect of people or part of a country’. In addition, range is employed to give rhetoric a broad semantic dimension, because it represents a set of collocates that associate with the subject word. Lastly, collocation is often present in rhetoric, its function is to indicate a situation where words co-occur regularly in a given language.

2.4.4. Rhetoric and Social World Relationship

In a speech event where the speaker focuses on the message for its own sake, rhetoric in a form of poetic function is put to use. This function involves play with form like rhyme, repetition, alliteration, assonance, juxtaposition. Additionally, it involves play with meaning: ‘you cannot feature in a future you cannot picture’, unexpected juxtaposition of words that are quite unlike each other, artful exploitation of synonyms, and all forms of ambiguity. Besides, poetic function involves the ability to manipulate language in a creative way, for example the use of proverbs, symbolism, parallelism, innuendoes in African oral communication:

> „- Now, if the Whiteman still determines to enter Benin, well restless feet they say, will one day walk into a snakes’ pit. But because a fierce snake sleeps, does not mean it has lost the power to kill if rudely vexed! Let the Whiteman rudely prod us further, in spite of caution, then he will know that the way a cat walks is not the same way it catches a rat!
> - The earthworm tried to hurt you now it has no legs; and the crab one time tried to bite you has now lost its head. What about the snake that tried to kill you? Today it crawls in the dust” (Adeyanju 2008).

It is neatly noticeable that the African ‘Oral Tradition’ is largely characterized by the use of rhetorical expressions in social relations and political militancy. In fact, prominent trait singles out the African rhetoric which is its close connection to the natural environment and cultural traditions of the speech community. The sociocultural and political dimensions of rhetorical expressions require that this kind of discourse should be more expressive, decorated and sophisticated. Moreover, the presence of imagery is an important trait of rhetoric as well as the tropes of semantic transfer, repetition or parallelism, personification and irony. Therefore, rhetoric is permitted the rearrangement of words to produce an effect of sound and meaning (Nofal 2011).

On the whole, rhetoric is a multifaceted form of discourse in view of the linguistic (semantic, phonological and syntactic) constructions, along with the different and effective communicative functions (sociocultural, political, academic) that it can realize. The following summary table displays a simple and concise representation of the above features:

Aspect	**Details**
Definition	Rhetoric is the use of language to persuade, influence, and construct meaning in discourse.
Nature	Strategic, context-dependent, ethical, and audience-oriented.
Why it is needed?	To persuade, reveal ideology, create identity, organize ideas, and foster ethical communication: Ethos (credibility), Pathos (emotion), Logos (logic) (Bartlett and Behnegar 2023).
Main Functions	Framing identity, Discourse Coherence.

Aspect	Details
Applications	Political speeches, Academic writing, Social media, Public debate, Journalism.
Contemporary Relevance	Used in critical discourse analysis, Media studies, Academic research (FL learning/teaching), and Civic engagement.

In summary, rhetorical expressions are derived from interactional sociolinguistics and incorporate insights from other studies of discourse in both friendship contexts and institutional situations. It is sensitive to the social and interactional context because human communication is dialogically constructed between participants (Swann 2012). Norms can be universal or they can be local and specific to a region or to a particular group (e.g. respect of elders, take your hat off, think communally rather than individualistically). Nevertheless, the FL learner should be aware that within a society, nationally or universally, certain groups can seek to impose norms on everyone else that serve their interest (Ryan 2012).

2.4.5. Some Teaching Strategies of Literary Discourse

Teaching literary discourse in a TEFL context requires a number of practical strategies as English language instruction continues to evolve in response to global communicative demands, particularly this genre of discourse which has regained attention as an effective tool within FL classrooms. The claim that literature should be regarded as a 'luxury' or an advanced-level supplement in FL education would be foundered on a basic lack of argumentation and substantiation. The main reason is that literature is increasingly recognized as a catalyst and educational prompter for developing linguistic, intercultural, and cognitive competencies among EFL learners (Green and Bihan 2002).

The rationale behind the utilization of literary discourse in FL instruction is organized by its advocators around three major arguments. First, literary discourse develops interpretative, emphatic, stylistic and cultural-discursive competencies, which are central to both communicative and academic success in English (Surenhagen, Pieper, and Surkamp 2024). Second, literary discourse promotes language awareness, creativity, and aesthetic appreciation, particularly when poetry is included in the curriculum (Efendi et al, 2024). Third, literary discourse enhances cultural awareness and engagement, especially in multilingual contexts, where learners benefit from global literary voices (Isariyawat, Yenphech, and Inatoo 2020). Lastly, many studies have tangibly demonstrated that EFL students displayed significant gains in learners' cultural sensitivity and vocabulary expansion after structured exposure to literary texts.

In an attempt to effectively put into practice, the use of literary discourse in FL classes, some workable strategies have been suggested for integrative literary classroom activities. Indeed, it is highly recommended to use short, diverse texts with rich discourse, the FL teacher is advised to opt for short stories, flash fiction, and contemporary poetry, and to select texts that reflect multiple cultures and perspectives. In addition, the FL teacher should instruct literary discourse explicitly. It is necessary to introduce and analyse literary features such as metaphor, irony, symbolism, repetition, and imagery. However, the effectiveness of these literary features in FL programmes would significantly increase in a situation where the FL instructor helps students relate these literary components to everyday language and emotional expression.

As far as cross-cultural communication is concerned, pedagogical gains can be obtained when the FL educator links literary themes to intercultural learning. It is quite beneficiary and motivating to use texts as springboards for discussing identity, justice, empathy, or cultural practices. This kind of discussions clearly fosters deeper language use and critical thinking. Finally, the use of modern technology has become an indispensable tool in intercultural FL teaching, such a procedure requires the blending of literature with digital tools. A number of effective techniques is available and easily accessible like the use of Padlet or Jamboard for collaborative responses. The FL teacher can possibly record voiceovers for poetry readings to practise the English language intonation patterns, this is a much more sophisticated activity than the traditional 'Listen and Repeat' of pre-recorded audio-material. Moreover, the FL educator can incorporate ChatGPT to generate text variations or compare literary and non-literary registers, in reality, artificial intelligence (AI) has manifestly become an inherent component of FL instruction.

In conclusion, teaching literary discourse in TEFL is not merely a stylistic or aesthetic choice; it is a pedagogical strategy grounded in recent research. It enhances learners' ability to interpret nuanced texts, express complex ideas, and engage emphatically with others. When guided effectively, literature can serve as a linguistic bridge and cultural mirror, empowering EFL learners with critical tools for global communication.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The methodology that has been adopted in the present research work is descriptive in view of the perspectives of its objectives. In fact, the process put into application is an attempt to describe and analyse a pedagogical issue within a TEFL context. The method that has been utilized in this descriptive research is the survey method in which the participants were required to answer a number of carefully conceived questions. Besides, a mixed quantitative-qualitative approach has been selected due to the nature of scientific requirements in relationship to the sample study.

3.2. Research Instruments, Sampling and Data Collection

The population whom the study is about consists of students enrolled in an MA degree in Applied Language Studies. The researcher has opted for a simple random sampling of 24 fist-year Master enrolees in a Discourse Analysis course. The research tool that has been chosen is a survey questionnaire in line with the type of inquiry employed in this investigation. The survey questionnaire consists of 10 close-ended and open-ended questions together with some scale items. It has been kept as short as possible for two main reasons: first, to encourage students to answer all the questions (it has been observed that the longer the survey, the less likely that students will answer thoroughly). The limitations of the study are centred around the type of the population (university students within an academic context) coupled with the relative short time allotted to the whole inquiry process because of the students' very heavy timetable.

4. Results and Discussion

Students' Questionnaire. Section One: Literary Discourse

Question One: What is your understanding of literary discourse?

The researcher in reality did not expect students of Applied Language Studies to have much information about literary discourse, yet the principal answer was beyond expectations. Indeed, 18/24 and other 4/24 students recognized that they had simply 'a vague idea' or 'nothing' about literary discourse. These two responses are quite significant they indicate that 22/24 students have scarcely or even never been introduced to literary discourse throughout their BA curricula! Solely 2/24 students replied with positive answers: 1/24 'very familiar' and 1/24 'familiar' not because of the offerings of educational programmes but simply due to their personal appreciation of this type of discourse (outdoors readings). As a result, one can draw an elementary and logical observation: the curricula of the BA degree in English Studies do not incorporate (or very rarely) literary discourse as a genre of the English language in the different instructional programmes. The advantages of teaching this kind of discourse at tertiary level have already been analysed and explained throughout the development of the present research, and professionals are strongly advised not to neglect or dismiss this natural component of the English language in the different projects of syllabus design.

Number of Students	Type of Answers
1	Very familiar.
1	Familiar.
18	A vague idea.
4	Nothing.

Table 4.1 Students' Understanding of Literary Discourse

Question Two: Do you have any theoretical information about literary discourse?

As far as the second question is concerned, it has been clarified to the students that the question refers to outdoors educational activities: reading material, videos, programmes on Internet, etc. The three major types of answers that have been provided by the students are quite significant: first, 22/24 students did not take any initiative (or just a little) in relationship to any form of outdoors investigation (research paper, or play-role in Oral Expression classes- the speaking skill- or even the curiosity of discovering something new). The causes of such regretful situation can be divided into two categories: first, the lack of encouragement and motivating incitements on the part of foreign language teachers, and the second is due to the students themselves who did not show any curiosity or interest in this kind of discourse. The second category of answers is that 2/24 students indicated that they had some outdoors readings and watched on Internet some programmes that dealt with (educationally or for entertainment) literary discourse. Lastly, the third type of answers which is positive in itself despite the very small number of students 2/24 indicated that they had a fair amount of information of literary discourse.

Number of Students	Type of Answers
20	No.
2	A little.
2	Yes.

Table 4.2 Students' Academic Knowledge of Literary Discourse

Questions Three and Four: Do you put in practice (writing or speaking skills) any forms of literary discourse? How often if your answer is positive?

Unfortunately, 22/24 students gave a negative answer and recognized that they 'never' use literary discourse in their foreign language speech or writing, and solely 2/24 students 'timidly' provided a positive answer, nevertheless, they indicated that they do it 'rarely'. Within this perspective, on should continuously insist on the utility of using literary discourse by FL learners because the benefits which they can obtain are numerous and multifaceted. The principal gain is that students better express themselves in the English language. Creative speech or writing includes respectively, role-play, oral presentation (research work, viva, etc.), and personal essays, journals and diaries. Likewise, students display their mastery of words and even to enliven their prose (whatever the kind of activities in any course) with vivid images and fresh turns of phrase.

Number of Students	Type of Answers
22	No, never.
2	Yes, rarely.

Table 4.3 Students' Practice and Frequency of Literary Discourse

Question Five: How effective do you think literary discourse can be in FL learning?

One can be surprised by the types of answers that have been obtained because a close comparison of the students' answers to questions 3, 4, and 5 seem to be contradictory. On one hand, they openly recognize that they do not usually use literary discourse or rhetoric in their speech and writing, yet their answers to question 5- a number of 16/24 students- do believe that this kind of discourse can be very effective in enhancing FL proficiency on the other. Additionally, 6/24 students think it is relatively effective (such an answer can be possibly regarded as reflecting a positive attitude), and only 2/24 students assert that rhetoric is not effective in the foreign language teaching/learning operation. In line with these answers, one can presuppose that students' attitudes towards the incorporation of literary discourse in the FL curricula could be advantageous and could possibly contribute in various ways and in a fruitful manner in the betterment of FL instruction such as, to higher learners' motivation, to expand their vocabulary, and to increase target culture awareness.

Number of Students	Type of Answers
16	Very effective.
6	Relatively effective.
2	Not effective.

Table 4.4 Students' Perception of the Effectiveness of Literary Discourse in FL Instruction

Question Six: What type of activities do you think are suitable for literary discourse?

The selected classroom activities and tasks in relationship to literary discourse that have been proposed by the students in an order of preferences are summarized in the following classification. The number of students that has chosen Reading Comprehension is 14/24. In consequence, a majority of learners prefers to read carefully chosen materials of literary discourse in class, accomplish some reading comprehension tasks and, finally proceed with a general classroom discussion about the different issues or topics that have been dealt with in the pedagogical material. However, 8/24 students are motivated by essentially Role Play activities and, their recurrent justification is that literary discourse in this manner enhances their speaking skills and makes their oral delivery more eloquent and sophisticated. Lastly, only 2/24 students have opted for Writing Literary Discourse activities, thus, they assign their priorities to the writing skill because they believe that literary discourse, due to its inherent characteristics, is able to improve and enrich the quality of their writing in the English language. In sum, all the respondents, with a minor disparity between one group and the other, agree that literary discourse can constitute an efficient learning tool in developing the capacity and quality of their foreign language proficiency.

Number of Students	Type of Answers
14	Reading comprehension.
8	Role play- Speaking.
2	Writing literary discourse.

Table 4.5. Students' Preferred Classroom Activities in Literary Discourse Practices

Students' Questionnaire. Section Two: Cultural Awareness

Question Seven: How would you define Cultural Awareness?

The analysis of the students' answers to this question are displayed into three categories. The first group of students' answers 15/24 show positive and tolerant attitudes on the part of the majority of learners. As a matter of fact, they think that cultural awareness in FL learning represents a 'knowledge' of FL culture and, consequently, this type of information should be grasped due to many reasons. The principal students' justifications are essentially related to proficiency, motivation, tolerance and understanding that should characterize target culture acquisition. Nevertheless, a small number of students 5/24 has adopted a negative attitude, they justified their position by the risks which can be encountered like the negative impact on the native culture or the acquisition of an 'artificial' verbal behaviour that can alter or even deteriorate their authenticity and genuine character. Lastly, only 4/24 students responded that they 'do not know' anything about the concept of cultural awareness.

Number of Students	Type of Answers
15	A necessary 'knowledge'.
5	A 'risk' for native culture.
4	Do not know.

Table 4.6. Students' Definitions of Cultural Awareness

Question Eight: Do you think that cultural awareness should constitute a part of FL instruction?

A striking number of students 20/24 agrees that the concept of cultural awareness should be totally integrated and should become an inherent component of FL education. The justifications they put forward are sensitive and informative because they can serve as indicators of students' concern with the important place that target culture should occupy in the FL curriculum. Moreover, one can positively interpret such situation because students demonstrate a high level of motivation and preparedness to be involved or to be 'partners' in an intercultural approach to FL teaching/learning. Yet, a small number of students 2/24 believes that cultural awareness should be partially introduced in FL education, and other 2/24 learners think that cultural awareness should not be a part of the instructional programmes because priority should be given to the native culture.

Number of Students	Type of Answers
20	Yes, totally.
2	Yes, partially.
2	No, priority to native culture.

Table 4.7. Students' Views about the Incorporation of Cultural Awareness into FL Instruction

Question Nine: What sort of classroom activities that you think would enhance cultural awareness?

The classroom activities which have been chosen by FL students were varied and multiple, and one can suppose that students' selection would represent a serious repair of their interest and motivation. In accordance with the respondents' preferences 10/24, the most cited activity which is ranked in the first place consists of watching videos or films of festivals or ceremonies of the target culture, which should be followed by a general classroom discussion. For example, a quite interesting task has been proposed which is the creation of an 'Intercultural Film Club'. Concisely, FL learners watch films from different cultures and share their observations and opinions of those films, ideally online, with people from those cultures (Corbett, 2010). The second preferred classroom activity 6/24 is reading-comprehension texts. In this respect, the choice of material should be left to the students (the majority choses the most interesting text among others) in order to higher their motivation and, in consequence, obtain a better classroom interaction in terms of participation and 'heated' debate. The third 4/24 and fourth 4/24 activities are respectively chat-rooms with native speakers of English, and the least cited activity is Comparative Scales of the native and target cultures (probably because of the lack of information in relationship to the cultural manifestations of the foreign speech community). On the whole, the FL teacher has at his disposal a spectrum of attractive activities such as, 'Explain the Situation', The Most Important Qualities', 'Presentations', 'Planning a Project', 'Publicity Campaigns; all of these activities include the cultural traits of the native culture and other foreign cultures (Ur, 2015). In sum, the FL teacher may use some very interesting classroom activities which have been already suggested and put into application in the past around various themes with a large success like: 'Exploring and Extending Cultural Experiences', Examining Patterns of Communication', Examining Cultural Behaviour', 'Exploring Values and Attitudes, etc. (Tomalin et al, 1993.

Number of Students	Type of Answers
10	Videos, Films, Festivals+ Classroom Discussion.
6	Chat-rooms with Native Speakers of English.
4	Reading-Comprehension Texts.
4	Comparative Scales of Native Culture and Target Culture.

Table 4.8. Students' Selected Classroom Activities for Enhancing Cultural Awareness

Question Ten: Do you see any correlation between literary discourse and cultural awareness?

To the real satisfaction of the researcher, the students' answer which has been ranked in the first place with an interesting score 11/24 and which indicates the reasonable thinking and degree of maturity of students, is their assertion that literary discourse and cultural awareness are doubtless 'complementary'. However, some students 8/24 believe that the two elements are not actually related, one might suppose that fortunately only a small number of students still looks at the language teaching operation in its traditional form which limits it to solely the linguistic level in the primary place. The rest of the scores are 3/24 students think that cultural awareness could be introduced through other means instead of literary discourse due to the difficulty that they can face with literary materials. This opinion might be quite acceptable, yet the question actually was limited to the variables of the research work. Lastly, only 2/24 students asserted that literary discourse is not necessary and its impact on cultural awareness is really not influential, obviously, this opinion is open to discussion and necessary argumentation should be presented.

In summary, the integration of literary discourse is continuously and increasingly supported by a great number of specialists as it is asserted by Valdes (2001, p.145): "It is clear, then, that all genres of literature lend themselves to study by advanced second language students, giving them much greater insights into the culture and leading to greater understanding- and therefore appreciation- of literature, possibly of their own as well as that of the second language."

Number of Students	Type of Answers
11	Literary discourse and cultural awareness are complementary in FL teaching.
8	Literary discourse and cultural awareness are not related in FL teaching.
3	Cultural awareness is better instructed through other educational material.
2	Literary discourse constitutes a drawback to cultural awareness teaching.

Table 4.9. Students' Opinions about the correlation between literary discourse and cultural awareness

Recommendations

The outcomes of the present research work can serve as trustworthy repairs for future initiatives or projects with a view of the betterment of intercultural foreign language teaching. The most important useful and practical suggestions are summarized in the following:

1. The presentation of cultures and languages in their authentic form must essentially come from within. In fact, cultural values and foreign languages must be interpreted and brought up to date by the people who are actually living them.
2. Within educational perspectives, it is necessary to increase the number of research institutions and cultural centres, encourage first-hand studies that might constitute the foundation of FL curricula design.
3. It is primordial to augment sociocultural awareness, first on the regional and national level and, eventually, global cultural tolerance in line with a truer appreciation of the foreign cultures and languages.
4. Intra-cultural authenticity must necessarily be supplemented by intercultural dialogue. In consequence, it is essential to ensure that culture and language are open to the influence of all the others within a broad international framework.
5. The development of foreign language acquisition and cultural awareness requires the promotion of cultural identity and also cultural pluralism in FL curricula.

Conclusion

The affirmation of cultural identity remains a decisive factor in both national cohesion and international dialogue. Within the context of foreign language education, the promotion of cultural awareness does not imply cultural replacement but rather intercultural enrichment. Literary discourse, particularly through rhetorical expressions, provides learners with access to the symbolic and sociocultural dimensions of the target language. The findings of this study suggest that incorporating rhetorical analysis into TEFL contexts enhances interpretative competence, linguistic sophistication, and intercultural sensitivity. Ultimately, effective foreign language instruction should aim not at assimilation but at informed and critical engagement with linguistic and cultural diversity.

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Mediated Intimacy in Immersive Journalism. Experience, Emotion and Proximity

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Abstract: Immersive journalism is often discussed as technological innovation meant to bring audiences closer to news and promote empathy though emotional first-person experience. This article proposes an alternative perspective focusing on intimacy as a mediated relationship rather than as emotional intensity or personal exposure. Following existing research on emotion, digital intimacy and empathy, the paper argues that immersive journalism continues a long journalistic effort to reduce distance between lived realities and audiences. This article shows that emotional responses in this type of journalism are not automatic effects of technology, but results of a mixture of factors such as narrative choices, spatial positioning and ethical considerations. While immersive formats can create a strong sense of proximity and being there this closeness may sometimes produce discomfort or resistance. By connecting theories of intimacy with studies on immersive media, the paper proposes the concept of mediated intimacy as a useful framework for understanding how this type of journalism creates, negotiates and limits closeness. Understanding immersive journalism through this lens can open the space for a more careful discussion and future research on its emotional impact and ethical responsibilities.
Keywords: immersive journalism, mediated intimacy, emotion and empathy, digital storytelling, presence and proximity.

Titlu: „Intimitatea mediată din jurnalismul imersiv. Experiență, emoție și proximitate”
Rezumat: Jurnalismul imersiv este adesea considerat drept o inovație tehnologică menită să apropie publicul de evenimentele relatate și să stimuleze empatia prin experiențe emoționale la persoana I. Acest articol propune o perspectivă alternativă, concentrată asupra intimității văzută ca relație mediată, mai degrabă decât o intensitate emoțională dintr-o expunere personală la subiect. Pornind de la cercetările existente privind emoția, intimitatea digitală și empatia, lucrarea argumentează că jurnalismul imersiv continuă un efort mai vechi al practicilor jurnalistice de a reduce distanța dintre realitățile trăite și public. Articolul arată că reacțiile emoționale generate de acest tip de jurnalism nu sunt niște efecte automate ale tehnologiei, ci rezultatul unei combinații de factori, precum alegerile narative, poziționarea spațială și considerentele etice. Deși formatele imersive pot crea un puternic sentiment de proximitate, prin senzația de „a fi acolo”, această apropiere poate genera uneori disconfort sau rezistență. Prin corelarea teoriilor despre intimitate cu studiile despre media imersive, lucrarea propune conceptul de intimitate mediată, ca un cadru util pentru înțelegerea modului în care jurnalismul imersiv creează, negociază și limitează proximitatea. Înțelegerea jurnalismului imersiv din această perspectivă poate deschide spațiul pentru o discuție aprofundată și pentru cercetări viitoare privind impactul său emoțional și responsabilitățile etice.
Cuvinte-cheie: jurnalism imersiv, intimitate mediată, emoție și empatiel, narațiune digitală, prezență și proximitate.

Introduction

Immersive journalism developed as an umbrella term for news formats that offer audiences first person experiences of events or situations happening in the present, building vivid narrative environments in which users are encouraged to take an active role.

While de la Pena et al.[1] define this type of journalism primarily through the first-person experience enabled by immersive technologies, earlier authors offer different views on the format, framing it as an experimental information space defined by embodiment presence[2]. In immersive media, bodily presence refers to the sensation of being inside the represented space, experiencing it through sensory and emotional response that simulate the physical presence in that environment. Later authors see it as a narrative practice that transforms news into an emotionally engaging experience that is spatially navigable[3]. Other scholars[4] emphasise on the role of VR, AR or 360-degree video in defining immersive journalism as a technologically driven genre.

Although the term itself was coined by journalist and documentary filmmaker Nonny de la Peña and her collaborators in 2010[5], the storytelling tools that reduced the distance between audience and reported realities have a beginning way long back, in another century. Early forms of immersion in journalism can be traced in nineteenth-century reporting practiced that used the journalist's direct involvement, as Fitzgerald[6] demonstrates in his analysis of women literary journalist writing against mainstream conventions. An example is Elizabeth Jane Cochran knows as Nellie Bly and her famous undercover work called *Ten Days in a Madhouse*, where she uses her body and emotional responses to document the story and describe the space. Bly transformed lived, first person experience into a primary source of journalistic knowledge, giving narrative authority of the text through physical and emotional sensations rather than from detached observation[7]. These early practices anticipate later conceptualization of immersive journalism, but rather than connecting it only to technological innovation, it makes it more of a journalistic strategy aiming to produce experiential closeness and emotional credibility[8]. In this sense, immersive journalism can be understood as a continuation of an older journalistic impulse of bringing audience closer to the story, through mediated experience.

The rise of this type of journalism as a recognizable genre took place around 2015-2016 when technology advanced and editorial interest in experimental visual formats grew[9]. In the research conducted for Reuters Institute, Kangasniemi suggests that immersive journalism was more likely to become more established when it was incorporated into everyday editorial workflow rather than isolated technological experiments. The author mentions New York Times, USA Today, CNN, Guardian and the BBC among the forerunners in the field and El País (Spain) or Aftonbladet (Sweden) as examples of non-English speaking media that embraced the format. In 2016, a 360-degree VR video called *Surviving Aleppo* was broadcasted by CNN in order to provide viewers with a deeper understanding of the devastation of Aleppo. The video had over 2.8 millions views on Facebook, which made the channel launch the following year a dedicated VR journalism unit that covered major news. A similar action was taken by ARTE channel in the same period[10].

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[1] Nonny de la Peña, Peggy Weil, Joan Llobera, Elias Giannopoulos, Ausiàs Pomés, Bernhard Spanlang, Doron Friedman, Maria V Sanchez-Vives, Mel Slater, "Immersive journalism: Immersive virtual reality for the first-person experience of news," *Presence* 19, no 4 (2010): 291-301. https://doi.org/10.1162/PRES_a_00005.

[2] Frank Biocca and Mark R. Levy, eds. *Communication in the Age of Virtual Reality*. (L. Erlbaum, 1995).

[3] Angelina Toursel and Useille Philippe. "Immersive Journalism, a 'New Frontier' of Information Experience?," *Brazilian Journalism Research* 15, no. 2 (2019): 336–57. https://doi.org/10.25200/BJR.v15n2.2019.1230

[4] Esa Sirkkunen et al. "Journalism in Virtual Reality: Opportunities and Future Research Challenges." *Proceedings of the 20th International Academic Mindtrek Conference* [Tampere Finland] (2016): 297–303, https://doi.org/10.1145/2994310.2994353; Radwa Mabrook and Jane B. Singer. "Virtual Reality, 360° Video, and Journalism Studies: Conceptual Approaches to Immersive Technologies," *Journalism Studies* 20, no. 14 (2019): 2096–112, https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2019.1568203 .

[5] Nonny de la Peña et al. "Immersive journalism", 291-301.

[6] Jonathan D. Fitzgerald, "Setting the Record Straight: Women Literary Journalists Writing Against the Mainstream" (PhD diss., Northeastern University, 2018). https://doi.org/10.17760/D20289783.

[7] Jean Marie Lutes, "Into the Madhouse with Nellie Bly: Girl Stunt Reporting in Late Nineteenth-Century America," *American Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (2002): 217–53.

[8] Frank Biocca and Mark R. Levy, eds. *Communication in the*.

[9] Jenni Kangasniemi, "What we can learn from the best examples of immersive journalism", accesed March 8, 2026. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/what-we-can-learn-best-examples-immersive-journalism.

[10] Toursel and Philippe. "Immersive Journalism," 336–57.

Immersive journalism gained wider recognition in 2018 when few VR stories, coming from USA Today and Arizona Republic received the Pulitzer Prize for Explanatory Reporting. The jury honoured the vivid and timely reporting that combined text, video, podcast and virtual reality to examine from multiple perspectives the reported major events[11].

Emotion and Empathy

Among researchers on immersive journalism, emotion appears in the picture. It is often identified as a central dimension of immersive experience rather that a secondary or incidental result Toursel and Useille argue that this type of journalism is explicitly designed to intensify affective engagement by placing users in the space of the story that they can explore as if it's their own experience. This possibility transforms news into an experiential form of storytelling. In this way, the authors believe, emotions emerge from the user's perceptual and spatial act of immersion in mediated environments, where the possibility of close navigation produces stronger emotional responses than those associated with traditional news formats. This view resonates with earlier theoretical work on presence and embodiment. Biocca[12] conceptualize presence as a communicative tool for mediated environments to be perceived as immediate and embodied. Even if their framework was not developed in relation to journalism, it still provides a strong explanation for why immersive formats tend to amplify emotional responses: when one feels physically situated in a space, although mediated, emotions arise faster and bigger than positioned as a distant observer. This logic has been adopted by others scholars in order to explain how first-person perspective and sensory cure function as mechanism to enhance affective involvement, as in the case of Toursel & Useille.

While there is agreement on centrality of emotions, other scholars warn against viewing immersive journalism as a producer of uniform or automatic emotional effects. Kukkakorpi and Patti[13] argue that emotional engagement in this type of journalism is not produced by immersion alone but with a mix of aesthetic design and specific configuration of spatial narrative. They show that emotional response in immersive journalism depends on how users are placed within meaningful location that are associated with loss, suffering or vulnerability intensifying emotional engagement accordingly by induced proximity. These emotions are carefully guided though deliberate choices of sound design, camera placement, framing and so on. They all influence how users perceive and emotionally process the environment they are led, indicating that mediated narrative arrangements are the key to emotional trigger rather that spontaneous simple act of immersion. At the same time, Kukkakorpi & Pantti warn that intensified emotional proximity may carry ethical risks, as some immersion cand bring the user too close to the story that cand lead to discomfort, intrusion or affective overload. The researchers are thus discussing the notion of *proper distance* that immersive journalism editors should have in mind and continuously negotiate a balance between emotional closeness and moral distance to avoid emotional exploitation. This critical view is further reinforced by empirical findings from Greber et al.[14] who question the idea that immersive journalism is a universal generator of emotional responses. Their study demonstrates that those responses vary significantly depending on specific immersive characteristics such as narrative perspective, inclusion and interaction possibilities and that are unevenly distributed across audiences. They show that people who are more empathic do not always have stronger or more positive emotional reaction and that their emotional responses depend on both how stories are designed and who the audience members are.

Immersive journalism is often described as a medium that generates empathy, but there are scholars, like Sánchez Laws[15] who note that empathy is frequently mistaken for intense emotional engagement. She argues that the emotional response this type of journalism might produce does not automatically translate into empathy as its unclear if the person having it is more focused on own sensations or on understanding others. So, for empathy to

[11] Turo Uskali, Astrid Gynnild, Sarah Jones and Esa Sirkkunen, eds. *Immersive Journalism as Storytelling: Ethics, Production, and Design* (Routledge, 2021).

[12] Frank Biocca and Mark R. Levy, eds. *Communication in the*.

[13] Mariia Kukkakorpi and Mervi Pantti. "A Sense of Place: VR Journalism and Emotional Engagement," *Journalism Practice* 15, no. 6 (2021): 785–802. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2020.1799237.

[14] Hannah Greber, Sophie Lecheler, Loes Aaldering, Yael De Haan, Sanne Kruikemeier, Nele Goutier și Kiki De Bruin. "Feeling the News? The Differential Effects of Immersive Journalism on Emotional Response," *Digital Journalism* 11, no. 1 (2023): 39–60. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2022.2155205.

[15] Ana Luisa Sánchez Laws, "Can Immersive Journalism Enhance Empathy?," *Digital Journalism* 8, no 2 (2020): 213–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1389286.

occur, a clear distinction between self and the represented subject has to be maintained in a clear cognitive framing, Sánchez Laws concludes. While Laws focuses on clarifying the conceptual limits of empathy, the book *Immersive Journalism as Storytelling*[16] change the discussion toward the normative and professional implications of empathy as a journalistic goal. Contributors to the volume argue that empathy has become a desirable outcome in immersive journalism not because of the audience engagement but because it's linked to expectation on journalism social roles such as promoting understanding, morality and civic awareness. At the same time, the book points out that making empathy the central goal of immersive journalism can create tensions with journalistic responsibility and may rise concerns about emotional manipulation and ethical representation. From this point of view, empathy is not seen as an automatic outcome of immersion tactics, but as a deliberate and sometimes problematic professional choice.

Ethical concerns related to immersive journalism resonate with broader debates on the psychological and moral risks of immersive and VR environments. Madary and Metzinger[17] argue that immersive technologies are capable of inducing strong illusions of embodiment and presence that can have lasting effects on user mind after the moment of exposure. From this perspective, the authors consider that immersion is not ethically neutral since it can intensify emotional responses that might challenge users' autonomy, consent and the choice of critical distance. Rather that assuming that stronger emotional impact is positive, immersive journalism has to be more transparent and must negotiate the boundaries between meaningful affective engagement and the risk of emotional harm or manipulation, researchers conclude.

Intimacy in journalism

What do we refer when we speak about intimacy? "The state of being intimate which is marked by the consensual sharing of deeply personal information. It has cognitive affective, and behavioral components. Intimate reveal themselves to one another, care deeply about one another, and are comfortable in close. proximity. Self-disclosure, the sharing of private thoughts, dreams, beliefs, and emotionally meaningful experiences, is often viewed as synonymous with intimacy […]an intimate experience has not taken place until there is empathic feedback—until acceptance and acknowledgment are communicated verbally or nonverbally as an indication that trust is justified".[18]

Intimacy is commonly understood as a quality of a relationship[19] that plays a significant role in the validation of personal worth, as individuals feel understood and accepted for who they are within that relationship[20]. Intimacy is conceptualized as a sense of closeness that is not dependent on physical proximity. Individuals may feel deeply connected to others who are geographically distant just as they may experience loneliness in the presence of people who share the same physical space[21]. From this perspective intimacy represents a relational feeling of closeness that is particularly meaningful when it is mutual, offering individuals comfort and a sense of belonging. Wong[22] approaches intimacy as a relational process rather than a fixed trait that is negotiated through communication, mutual recognition and shared understanding. He suggests that intimacy varies along several dimensions including situational scope, duration and intensity and talks about a typology. Situational intimacy deals with specific context or domains (politics, religion) and is limited in time and in space, while generalized intimacy extends across multiple areas of life. Intimate relationships may also vary in duration, ranging from short term encounters to long term bond, but the duration does not necessarily determine their quality. Wong believes intensity is the key dimension of intimacy shaped by emotional exclusivity and spontaneity and emphasize that intimacy depends on negotiated expectation and cultural norms about self-disclosure. A similar view can be found

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16 Turo et al. , *Immersive Journalism..*

17 Michael Madary and Thomas K. Metzinger. "Real Virtuality: A Code of Ethical Conduct. Recommendations for Good Scientific Practice and the Consumers of VR-Technology," *Frontiers in Robotics and AI* 3, art. 3 (2016). https://doi.org/10.3389/frobt.2016.00003.

18 Britannica, accessed March 10, 2026, https://www.britannica.com/topic/intimacy.

19 E M.Waring, "Measurement of intimacy: conceptual and methodological issues of studying close relationships," *Psychological medicine* 15, no 1 (1985): 9-14. . https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291700020882.

20 Harry Stack Sullivan, *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1968).

21 Kym Maclaren, "Intimacy and Embodiment: An Introduction," *Emotion, Space and Society* 13 (2014): 55–64. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2014.09.002.

22 Herbert Wong, "Typologies of Intimacy," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (1981):435–443. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1981.tb00584.x.

in the work of Oswin and Olund[23] who conceptualize intimacy not as a private or purely interpersonal phenomenon, but as a relational and political process shaped by power, norms and regulation. They argue that intimacy operates across scales and distances, producing forms of closeness and belonging that are not tied to physical proximity or domestic space. Intimacy is thus understood as a socially governed relation attached to broader cultural institutional and media-based frameworks of recognition and legitimacy.

In scholar literature there are identified between five and twelve types of intimacy, the most frequently discussed being physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and social intimacy. Some authors also refer to aesthetic intimacy, which happens when individuals share an appreciation for beauty, such as a landscape, a work of art, a book, or an elegantly presented meal.[24] Physical intimacy refers to closeness created through bodily presence and physical proximity. It involves sensory forms of connection that express care, comfort or attachment and is usually linked to direct physical interaction between people. Emotional intimacy[25] is defined as the sharing of personal feelings, vulnerabilities and emotionally meaningful experiences within a relationship. It relies on mutual self-disclosure and empathic responsiveness, making individuals to feel they are understood, accepted and emotionally supported. Intellectual intimacy[26] refers to the sharing of ideas and perspectives in meaningful conversation. It is grounded in curiosity and dialogue and involves mutual respect for cognitive differences offering intellectual recognition to each-other. Spiritual intimacy[27] involves a sense of closeness based on shared values, beliefs or existential meanings that sometimes can materialize in common practices or moral commitments providing a deep sense of alignment beyond everyday interaction. Social intimacy[28] means a feeling of closeness and belonging that develop through shared social roles, group membership or collective shared experiences. It is often expressed through social activities in a shared social context

During the pandemic and post Covid period, debates on intimacy focused on *digital intimacy* for obvious reasons. The concept starts from earlier discussions of *networked intimacy* introduced by Deborah Chambers[29] in relation to the forms of social connection facilitated by platforms such as Facebook, where relationships are algorithmically structured through notions of “friendships” that are simultaneously private and public. Digital intimacy refers to the various ways in which individuals use digital media platforms to share personal details, thoughts and emotions with others forming connections that transcends spatial limitation[30].

Mediated Intimacy in immersion

Digital intimacy refers to forms of closeness and relational attachment that are produced, maintained and negotiated through digital media environments. Rather than being limited to physical presence, digital intimacy operated though mediated interactions that enable emotional exchange, mutual recognition and a sense of a relational proximity across distance. Scholars on digital intimacy emphasizes that such relationship are not fundamentally different from offline forms or intimacy but they are shaped by constraints and social norms of digital platforms[31]. In this sense, digital intimacy is understood as a relational process that reconfigures established types of intimacy – emotional, social, intellectual or aesthetic – with technologically mediated contexts, rather than

[23] Natalie Oswin and Eric Olund, "Governing intimacy," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28, no.1 (2010): 60-67. https://doi.org/10.1068/d2801ed.

[24] Nicole K. McNichols, “7 Types of Intimacy That Deepen a Relationship,” *Psychology Today,* 16 july 2024, accessed on March 15, 2026. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/everyone-on-top/202407/7-types-of-intimacy-to-deepen-your-relationship.

[25] Harry T Reis and Phillip Shaver. “Intimacy as an Interpersonal Process,” in *Handbook of Personal Relationships*, eds. S. Duck, D. F. Hay, S. E. Hobfoll, W. Ickes, and B. M. Montgomery (John Wiley & Sons, 1988), 367–389.

[26] Susmita Halder, “Rôle of Intellectual Intimacy in Psychological Well-being: The Cognitive Connection,” *Taiwanese Journal of Psychiatry* 38, no 4 (2024): 157-60. DOI: 10.4103/TPSY.TPSY_37_24.

[27] Annette Mahoney, "Religion in families, 1999–2009: A relational spirituality framework," *Journal of marriage and family* 72, no 4 (2010): 805-827. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00732.x.

[28] Oswin and Olund. "Governing intimacy," 60-67.

[29] Deborah Chambers, "Networked intimacy: Algorithmic friendship and scalable sociality," *European Journal of Communication* 32, no 1 (2017): 26-36. https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323116682792.

[30] Kamdin Parsakia and Mehdi Rostami, “Digital Intimacy: How Technology Shapes Friendships and Romantic Relationships,” *AI and Tech in Behavioral and Social Sciences* 1, no 1 (2023): 27–34. https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.aitech.1.1.5.

[31] *Ibidem,* 30.

replacing or diminishing them. Other scholars[32] argue that rather than treating digitally mediated intimacy as detached from everyday reality, intimacy should be seen as a negotiated practice shaped by connection, vulnerability, pleasure and responsibility. This perspective conceptualizes intimacy less as personal disclosure and more as a mediated relational condition marked by affective proximity and mutual recognition, while remaining ethically ambivalent and context-dependent.

While intimacy is usually discussed as a quality of interpersonal relationships, in journalism it appears in mediated and asymmetrical forms. Intimacy does not rely on mutual disclosure or direct interaction, but it is shaped by unequal positions between journalists, subjects and audiences. As Waring argues, intimacy in public contexts is governed and regulated. In mediated communication, closeness is therefore selective and carefully managed rather than reciprocal or spontaneous.

Immersive journalism places users at the center of the scene, allowing visual exploration while limiting any form of intervention[33]. What happens is that users experience events from inside the scene, through a virtualized body, which creates a strong sense of bodily and perceptual closeness. This for pf proximity can be understood as embodied intimacy, linked to presence rather that interaction. At the same time, authors argue that users remain observers rather than participants. Although they are spatially close to the events, they cannot influence or alter its course. The result is an asymmetrical relationship without reciprocity. The researchers show that realism in space and sound, gained through authentic locations, ambient audio and testimonies, plays an important role in producing presence. In this context, intimacy emerges through mediated access to private and or vulnerable spaces rather than through direct interpersonal relationship.

Experimental research on 360° video journalism suggests that immersive proximity can generate experiences that resemble forms of mediated intimacy, exposing their limits in the same time. Van Damme et al.[34] conducted such a study of 360° video on news by the Belgian public broadcaster on social and humanitarian context comparing user's responses to immersive and non-immersive news formats. Their results shows that higher levels of immersion increase users' sense of presence and the feeling of *being there* in the reported environment. Same results have been found by Sundar et al.[35] study that discuss forms or relational proximity through senses of togetherness and co-presence with story characters produced by immersion news tools.

At the same time, both studies show that immersion and sensory proximity does not automatically result in moral or relational closeness. This suggest that immersive journalism can create a strong feeling of *being there* but spatial and sensory proximity can also generate discomfort when users perceive close-ups or bodily closeness as intrusive. It does not support lasting forms of relational engagement, pointing that intimacy through immersion is fragile and depends on the effect shaped by narrative framing and user interpretation rather than immersion alone.

Conclusions

Looking at immersive journalism through the idea of mediated intimacy helps explain why immersive proximity can feel powerful, uncomfortable and ethically difficult at the same time. Closeness does not automatically lead to empathy or understanding. Instead, intimacy is shaped by narrative decisions, the design of the space where the story happens and professional judgement. Immersion on its own does not define the quality of the relationship created between audiences and the realities being reported.

Seeing intimacy as mediated and negotiated also helps make sense of mixed audiences reactions found in previous studies. Feelings of presence and being together can appear alongside discomfort or emotional

[32] Rachel H. Scott, Clarissa Smith, Eleanor Formby, Alison Hadley, Lisa Hallgarten, Alice Hoyle, Cicely Marston, Alan McKee, and Dimitrios Tourountsis, "What and How: Doing Good Research with Young People, Digital Intimacies, and Relationships and Sex Education," *Sex Education* 20, no 6 (2020): 675–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2020.1732337.

[33] Jorge Vázquez-Herrero and Xosé López-García. "Immersive Journalism Through Mobile Devices: How Virtual Reality Apps Are Changing News Consumption," In *6th International Conference on Software Process Improvement (CIMPS 2017)*, eds. Ricardo Colomo-Palacios, Jose Antonio Calvo-Manzano, Vladimir Afanasyev, and Gerardo Matturro, 3–12 (Cham: Springer, 2017).

[34] Kristin Van Damme, Anissa All, Lieven De Marez and Sarah Van Leuven. "360° Video Journalism: Experimental Study on the Effect of Immersion on News Experience and Distant Suffering," *Journalism Studies* 20, no 14 (2019): 2053–76. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2018.1561208.

[35] S. Shyam Sundar, Jin Kang & Danielle Oprean, "Being There in the Midst of the Story: How Immersive Journalism Affects Our Perceptions and Cognitions," *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* 20, no 11 (2017): 672–82. https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2017.0271.

overload. This shows that intimacy in this type of journalism is unstable. That does not necessarily mean it is a flaw, but this instability points out the need for ethical attention and narrative restraint.

By focusing on relationship rather than technological storytelling, mediated intimacy offers a way to evaluate immersive journalism beyond questions of innovation or emotional intensity. It is about encouraging researchers but also practitioners to think about how closeness is created, when it becomes meaningful and where the limits should be set.

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