

STYLISTICS OF ADVERTISING

In a preliminary *Argument*, the author of this thesis states several opinions on the place and role of advertising in contemporary world and justifies the scientific approach of this topic. Advertising stylistics involves the axiology of image civilization in post-modern society, where reality is not true, but hypothetical. Advertising stylistics means the essentialization of human civilization, a certain existence which does not happen nowadays, when advertising desacralization is related to the “fragment of modernity”.

Costin Popescu (*Advertising: Aesthetics of Persuasion*) states that the advertising world as well as the world of fairy tales is another imaginary world, it borrows a series of features from the real world, it “grows” according to such features to which it adds new ones, all ordered differently. Yet, the advertising world has strange substantiality: one can see its determinations, one reaches them not by means of imagination, but through one’s instincts. It can be qualified as compensatory. The coherence of the advertising world which is brought to light by the field’s rhetoric at every step and which makes the difference between this particular world and the “real” world is thorough and ensues from general and absolute functionalism.

Culture including stylistics is an argument that generates meaning. Advertising should produce an impact upon a communication partner, turning the latter into a co-transmitter. The stylistics of advertising liaises the depth structure and persuasion, the receiver – classical, modern, or post-modern – actually being the focus objective beyond potential theories. The stylistics of advertising means re-instrumentalising the rhetoric of persuasion.

In the first chapter of the thesis, “*Conjecturing the Concepts of Style and Stylistics*”, the author specifies that his endeavour aims at being a polytropic attempt, defining the polytropic lexeme according to Gabriel Liiceanu (*Attempt in Human and Cultural Polytropes*) and understanding that trying to comment upon a text, just like the text itself, can be polytropic. Among the numerous prospective approximations of a text, the one belonging to Ronald Barthes is chosen (*Sociological Venture*). It is still to Ronald Barthes that the author owes his definition of the style concept, relating it to the two fundamental entities – language and literature – and interpreting it as a specific speech bearing the author’s hall-mark.

The author briefly assesses the conceptual and methodological contribution of the Romanian science in the development of stylistics in its diverse orientations – linguistic (B.P. Haşdeu, Al. Philippide, Ovid Densusianu, Sextil Puşcariu, Iorgu Jordan, Ion Coteanu), aesthetic (G. Ibrăileanu, M. Dragomirescu, D. Caracostea, Tudor Vianu), or philosophic (Lucian Blaga, Constantin Noica), emphasizing the autochthon contributions' synchronization with the opinion trend in the field and towards such directions at European level: Bally, respectively Croce, Vossler, Leo Spitzer.

The following includes a description and comment of the main **stylistic categories** as they took shape in the context of the European stylistics', poetics' and semantics' progress in the 20th century, with special focus upon the disclosure of interpretations made by L. Spitzer, T. Vianu, E. Auerbach, R. Wellek and A. Warren, D. Alonso, Ion Coteanu, Eugen Negrici. Here are some “dialectic antinomies”, definitive correlations to the stylistic phenomenon: **denotation and connotation; occurrence and variability; unity and context; synchrony and diachrony; stylistic range and significance nuclei; plasticizing energy and contact energy.**

The second chapter of the thesis (*“Prolegomena to the Concepts of Speech and Poetics”*) is structured upon the two levels - linguistic and poetic – as theoretical bases which are necessary to define and understand stylistics. In the first sub-chapter (*“Speech Paradigm”*), there is a foray into the history of speech conceptions whose dynamics starts from the theses stated by Herder and improved by other coryphaei of the German Illuminism, outlining a major thinking trend in the evolution of the German stylistics, from Vossler to Auerbach, Curtius etc., namely the assertion under various exegetical forms of the multiple reciprocal, dialectic connections by means of which an **individual style** (individuality's expression itself) is related to **language styles** which, in their turn, grow and become more diverse within certain **national styles** or – even a more important phenomenon emphasized by the modern (especially from Vorringer onwards) – within the milieu of certain **culture languages (and speeches)**. Such cultural speeches bear the sign of the great period stylistic syntheses or even “diachronic” syntheses – the different style structures: Baroque (with its multiple versions); Mannerist exorbitances; “golden age” Classicism and “late” Classicism; direct Realism (or, as in Auerbach's terminology, “represented truth” – the traditional *mimesis*) and thesis Realism; Romanticism; Naturalism etc. The same set of conceptual meanings also comprises the connotations of Modernism – from its

versions in arts and literature to the results of a standardized style such as “modern style” – meanings analyzed by Adrian Marino (*Modern, Modernism, Modernity*).

The innovative thinking of modern stylistics’ predecessors – Herder, Shelling, Hölderlin, J.-J. Rousseau, Coleridge etc. – is still characterized by the **normative ideal**, as an impediment to the upward development of poetics studies, and as a generator of constraints and prejudices. The scientific conception about the interdependence of cultural sets is to be theorized by structuralists not before there is a clear delimitation of the need to study poetic speech in itself, as a well-outlined, cognitive domain rather than a mere literary form. Nevertheless, even Russian formalists, theoreticians of poetic speech, realized the danger of a detrimental dissociation in literary theory studies seized upon by R. Jakobson and I. Tânianov.

In the progress of linguistic thinking and literary stylistics, the neo-humanistic approach means a stage where there is no distinction between the speech in its generality (“*langage*”) and the singular structures of the linguistic code (“*langue*”). During the first quarter of the 19th century, the sensitivity of early Romanticism intermingled with the illuminist mentality of Herderian origin. Subsequently, the style analysis and rhetoric are to increasingly give up to the predominantly historical trends and then to Positivism towards late century. All throughout the 19th century, linguistics ranked among historical sciences, becoming available to understand the correlations with cultural phenomena. The ethnographic expertise acquired while doing research of “primitive” populations and sustained by vast anthropologic information led Humboldt to understanding that such populations’ “personality” notion reflected in their language requires the notion known as **language spirit** (“*Sprachgeist*”) assimilated to **peoples’ spirit** (“*Geist der Völker*”). Connecting the peculiarities of a language to the “spirit” and the “life” of a people remains one of the indissoluble postulates of general stylistics. Only in the second quarter of the 20th century did this core of formative speech conceived as a matrix of a people’s mentality and thinking system become intensively exploited by Whorf and Frobenius and then by the French School of cultural anthropology.

During almost half a century, the European positive-historical thinking eloigned from the scientific platform of language philosophy. The realism of positive-historical consciousness manifested itself in order to analyze the literary-stylistic phenomenon only in late 19th century and in the first decades of the 20th century. A series of continuously restated undisputable truths from the legacy of neo-grammars

were incorporated into the scientific patrimony by Saussure, Meillet, then Benveniste. The neo-positive theory of speech is stated in its clearest form by Bloomfield. Neo-positivists essentially believed that grammar rules and functioning are entirely independent from utterances' meanings. According to Sapir, a speech as an expression way used by literature, too combines a latent contents (the intuitive product of one's expertise) with the features of a given speech (the particular way of one's expression). Thanks to some contemporary linguists such as Jakobson, Martinet, Halliday, Riffaterre, Chomsky, Philmore, Structuralism managed to surpass the cul-de-sac of the descriptive, Neo-Positivism school. During the 20th century, it is such agreement that several famous researchers of the comparative school such as Antoine Meillet, Sommerfelt, Vendryes, Benveniste, and Romanians such as Hasdeu, Phillippide, Pușcariu, Jordan, Rosetti, Graur and others tended to.

The emergence of the generative-transformational trend during the late 20th century, although sometimes exaggerating aprioristic points of view, contributed in the re-establishment of a necessary balance: Chomsky raised the issue of grammar in terms of a code having a finite number of rules which allow the building of an infinite amount of utterances-sentences, obeying correctness requirements. This code involves two operation categories: the former, somehow automatic, belonging to the **shallow structure** allows one to formulate transformation rules; the latter, more enigmatic, belonging to the **in-depth structure** is meant to reason the transformations in the shallow one. Yet, both generativists and new semanticists could not entirely get over Neo-Positivism. A beginning in the re-instaurations of the synthesis spirit in speech research took place along with Karl Vossler's works who stated that language from Humboldt's perspective is a spiritual activity and not only a mental-physical product in a restricted acceptance. The ratio between **creation** time and **development** or **progress** time is found in languages everywhere. Vossler mentioned the **creative change** and started from the idea that style is indissoluble from expression reasoning, reaching the **style concept** (= intention + creative emotional behaviour) understood as a language modelling element, thus concluding that "*stylistics is fixed grammar*". Vossler took from Herder, Humboldt, Schlegel the cardinal concept of **language spirit** and enriched it with two sets of components: a properly linguistic one, and a cultural-aesthetic one (*National Languages as Styles*). However, Vossler's linguistic theory lacked a clear conception about the linguistic phenomenon's tripartition, acquisitions of Saussure-related thinking: (1) **language** as a somehow ideal system

and range to apply the grammatical rules its functioning generates; (2) **speech** or writer's idiom; (3) **discourse** ("parole"), a speaker's language performance.

Continuing and improving Vossler's orientation, the creator of literary stylistics, Leo Spitzer, stated the characteristic notion of a literary work and writer and laid the foundation of an intuitionistic analysis still anchored in the reality of language facts. According to Spitzer, style reveals a **spiritual etymon**, a work's psychological-aesthetic justification. This spiritual etymon is generated both by relations with the outside world, with the work's historical time, and by comparison with the usual resources of the language in use. Spitzer's method is a step typical of modern stylistics. **Style** is – according to its current sense – the conscious use of certain linguistic means with a view to attaining certain expression goals. Yet, this "common" definition must be supplemented by the two criteria accomplished by both a common speaker and a famous writer, the two style determinations within the speech scope – (more or less conscious) **intentional selection** and **divergence from norms**.

This is the very context where the Romanian pioneering in the field of literary stylistics studies is placed due to D. Caracostea, Tudor Vianu, Vladimir Streinu, Al. Rosetti and B. Cazacu, continued by applied studies and text analyses – signed by Gh. Tohăneanu, Sanda Golopenția, Sorin Alexandrescu, Mihai Zamfir, Virgil Nemoianu, Mihail Nasta, Toma Pavel, Solomon Marcus, Liliana Ionescu, Radu Niculescu, Mioara Brătulescu and others. Iorgu Iordan's decisive infusion in the growth of the Romanian stylistics is highlighted (*Romanian Language Stylistics*) who, sharing Charles Bally's opinion, blends the two theories – of affectivity and intentionality.

The second sub-chapter of conceptual and methodological preliminaries (*Structures within Poetics*) debates the issue of poetics' progress towards semiotics, starting from the premise that poetics is a new type of *critical discourse* within metalanguage's general framework which has always been literary criticism, in order to be able to define such discourse's lexique, syntax and semantics. The closest terms in this delimitation are: **object-speech** (= literary speech) and the two **metalanguages** defined according to their orientation towards the former term ("speech") or the latter ("literary") of the syntagm, namely: **linguistics**, and **literary criticism** respectively. In accordance with tradition, since the 18th-century "disappearance" of classical rhetoric until early 20th century, the two disciplines kept a constant distance between them – the distance between verbal *signifier* (the "object" of linguistics undistinguished from any other kind of verbal sign) and largely non-verbal or extra-

linguistic *signified* (the "object" of literary criticism differentiated from other "contents" within the limits of general aesthetics). In early 20th century, the relations between the two metalanguages evolved from parallelism to interference: either "term" became concerned with the other literary speech facet; therefore, an interdisciplinary area emerged which is *poetics*. It was concerned with the entire literary text from a simultaneously linguistic and critical perspective.

Saussure-related linguistic thinking has provided literary theory with three prospective "interference areas" where the new interdisciplinary study object is made up at three distinct levels: the literary speech as a **set of significant "divergences"**; the literary speech as a **verbal system in itself**; the verbal speech as a particular case within **sign systems**. The literary text is thought of as **speech** in all the three cases, but speech definition is always different according to the level where terminal unities and the relations among them are. In relation with such structuring, the three interdisciplinary steps have been called as follows: **stylistics, poetics, literary semiotics**. **Stylistics** is seen as the science of expressiveness and signals in a literary text the points where (expressive) divergences from the linguistic form occur, and explains the way in which they produce a certain emotional effect upon the reader. **Poetics** is a description of the literary verbal structures which function independently from external norms, from the writer's expressive intentions or from the reader's potential reactions, although these are implicit. Yet, poetics does not deal with verbal micro-unities (word, sentence) such as stylistics does, but with macro-unities (contexts, unabridged works) whose structure it determines. Poetics developed right after the First World War, but it became well-known after the Second World War according to the general progress of Structuralism in human sciences. **Literary semiotics** as a branch of general semiotics was also little known between the two wars, as some important yet scanty works entered scientific actuality not before the 50's and especially in the 60's, along with the progress of communication theory and semiotics in general. Valorizing Formalism and Structuralism acquisitions, **semiotics** asserted itself as a general epistemological and methodological framework of literary exegesis, making up the third and last stage of the literary criticism type taken into consideration, that is a **work's criticism as speech**.

In the third chapter (*Communication Strategies*), the author goes into the essential theme of this work, systematically tackling the topic's structural components: **the communication concept's diachrony and synchrony; the**

advertising image's stylistics and rhetoric. Resorting to in-field authorities, the author comprehends the image concept, summarizing and commenting upon the term's main senses and its contextual states, according to the **semiotic and semiological theory** which no longer handles the image's ontological status, but the ways in which the image generates meaning. Peirce believes that an **icon** corresponds to the category of signs where the signifier is in an analogical position in relation to what it represents, he ushers in the image as icon sub-category and discovers three types in the analogy relation: **image, diagram and metaphor**: the **image itself** translates the qualitative analogy between the signifier and the referent by taking over some formal qualities of the latter: forms, colours, proportions; the **diagram** relies upon functional analogy and reproduces internal organizations; the **metaphor** is a rhetorical figure which departs from qualitative parallelism and involves a significance transfer.

Advertising image has become due to its complexity a touch stone to the specialists in various fields: aesthetics, semiology, hermeneutics. Being persuasive communication, an advertising image is loaded with complex meanings which after the structuralist revolution has generated numerous interpretation and theory models. The first analysis methodology of advertising image was drawn up by Roland Barthes (*Image Rhetoric*) starting from the idea that significance is produced by the conjunction of three types of signifiers: **iconic** signifiers; **linguistic** signifiers; **plastic** signifiers. Moreover, Roland Barthes demonstrated that advertising image is a system made up of two sub-systems that one perceives simultaneously: **denotation** level and **connotation** level. **Denotation** furnishes the uncoded message, registers the reference elements typical of the object described. The **connotative** level refers to the **code** and means filling up with social, cultural senses. According to Roland Barthes, these connotating elements make up the assembly of image rhetoric, whereas the assembly of connotated senses remake certain ideological ranges of contemporaneity as far as advertising image is concerned.

Another already classicized analysis model of the advertising image is the one launched by Umberto Eco (*Absent Structure*). Rejecting the analogies and similitudes understood mechanistically, the Italian semiotician asserted that visual symbols are part of a coded, cultural speech, transcribing certain expertise conditions according to a certain code. In his "*Research on General Semiotics*", Eco singularized four types of codes: **proper iconic codes** (divided in three sub-categories: figures, signs,

utterances); **iconographic codes; stylistic codes; unconsciousness codes**. Eco developed an interpretative model for the advertising image adjusted to this communication form, leading to five coding levels: three levels focused on the image itself and two levels related to advertising argumentation. The three levels focused on the image itself are: **iconic** level; **iconographic** level; **tropological** level. The two analysis categories of the image applied to the field of advertising argumentation are: the **topics** level of the general argumentation frameworks; the **enthymeme** level that develops reasonings triggered by advertising image.

Other image analysis patterns in the specialized literature are summarized and commented upon, too. In compliance with these conceptual dissociations and methodological options, the compositional analysis includes the three levels, messages, respectively: **linguistic** message, **iconic** message and **plastic** message. Each level is analyzed from the structural and functional perspective. An entire subchapter is dedicated to the complex issue of the **message** concept as a set of signs, pursuing the two complementary processes: its production and reception from the semiotics' and communication theory's perspective. Starting from the idea that communication purpose is the transmission of messages and that any message is made up of signs, Jakobson states that there is a general science of communication within which three increasing generality levels can be set out: the study of verbal messages or **linguistics**; the study of any type of messages or **semiotics**; the study of communication or **anthropology**. The already classical Jakobson-related model of the communication act is contextually analyzed along with its definitive factors and functions: communication factors (sender, message, receiver, context, code, contact); and corresponding functions (referential, emotive, conative, poetical or aesthetical, phatic, metalinguistic/metacommunicational).

The seven postulates of communication are also stated in Barnlund's conception: **communication describes the evolution of meaning; communication is dynamic; communication is ongoing; communication is circular; communication is non-recurring; communication is irreversible; communication is complex**.

The communication phenomenon is studied by semiology. According to the approached field, Prieto believes there are three semiologies: **communication semiology** as an extension of linguistics in the range of "speech" manifestation; **sense semiology** which studies both the facts studied by communication semiology, namely

signals, and conventional indices and behavioural manifestations; **artistic communication semiology**, an area situated between the two semiologies above.

The last sub-chapter is dedicated to the double setting (and reference) of the **message between language and discourse**, an issue tackled in accordance with Émile Benveniste who enhanced the Saussure counter-paradigm **language/discourse** and accredited the **discourse instance** and **signification** concepts, and also in accordance with Paul Ricoeur who, having started from Benveniste, set up the **speech/discourse** antithesis. Julia Kristeva who tackled semiotics from the linguistic perspective took the **signification** concept from Benveniste and launched the concept of **signifying practice**. The issue of linguistic message situated between language and discourse is priority in the work of Roland Barthes who equally orients one in linguistics, semiology and speech philosophy.

The fourth chapter of this work (*Stylistics of Advertising Rhetoric*) approaches the specific issues of the topic: the **advertising title** (with its multiple levels: phonetic, semantical-lexical, syntactical etc.); the **advertising image** (with its six legibility levels); the **advertising linguistic text; the stylistics of advertising texts**.

The *Conclusions* in the end of the paper essentially furnish the issues and the research solutions of the topic approached, focusing on defining the structural elements of advertising rhetoric in all its functional components: speech, image, style – all centred on message communication.