

## ARGUMENTUM

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When I participated to a presentation of a Ph.D. thesis, I told the student that she would still work in 2050, underlining that she would do many things in her starting career! What I didn't say then was that no one could know how the students and the Ph.D. thesis would be in the future. I accepted the idea that I have warned the auditorium about the unexpected and unforeseeable evolution of our past student. After that I remembered the process of writing of my first Ph.D. thesis, with an army of typists who were very astonished by the fact that I was capable of dictating words like *meaning, sense, semantics* and *semasiologic*, when they knew others, real and tangible ones. Meantime much more appreciated machines have been invented, with independent memory – my second Ph.D. thesis had the support of the computer with discs, something different from the future floppy discs! The correction was made on each word, letter and syllable – there was no need to modify the whole page! The professor who coordinated my first Ph.D. thesis could be astonished by what happened in just 15 years. Even the fatal fatigue of my first thesis coordinator was determined by the correction of one volume written by the old machine.

How will we write – if such an operation is still going to exist – after fifteen, twenty five, thirty or fifty years? Who will write? The typist is gone, even the author became lazy – he or she has different instruments to record his/her voice. A professor said with irony that it was better if the school taught us just to read. In this case many works had not been published. The time will come when the incapacity to write will be a reality. The writing will be performed by the technologies waiting to be discovered! The only thing they still need is a soft for copy/plagiarism, capable to erase all which is not worth to be remembered!

Such a *program for erasing* extended to all new and old media could liberate us from the electronic and physical *waste*. I have already a feeling of liberation, brought by all the free spaces in which the great works could easily travel in their full beauty. In this space every one could enjoy the purity of the thought, without the weight and the danger of easily assuming the work of others! Of course I'm found of Noica<sup>2</sup> who said that no matter how many things have been said about something, everyone has the chance to say something *a little different* if this something is really his/her.

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<sup>2</sup> Constantin Noica, 1973, *Creație și frumos în rostirea românească*, Editura Eminescu, București.

In the field of practical occupations, as they were named, it is also difficult to say how things will be in the future. About ten years ago a lathe man still needed a good physical condition to work and many of the people who worked in this field couldn't imagine their activities in the present conditions.

So, returning to professions, I discovered how astonished I was when I read an essay about the present-day role of the school, in which the author revealed his scepticism about the capacity of an old institution to address the needs of the students. The idea that students need a good qualification is continued with the question "what for?" and we discover that answering "to be better than the others" is not good because the employer doesn't look for something like that. The employee is "accredited" for a specific function at the level of the firm. This is why he/she is requested to know to use a computer, to be willing to be assisted and even lead in the management of his activities.

Nevertheless they will be those who will create the new computers, their programs, they will be the creators of the new great inventions... They will create the new reality... they will give the new meanings to the being and the act of being... Of course we are capable of recognizing our wishes and our dreams as well as those pointed to the others. But, one day<sup>3</sup>, almost ten years ago, a group of students were presented in a movie, all standing in the face of the computer, capable of discussing about everything, even about a beautiful woman who was not present, sending messages to one another. It didn't matter that only one of them saw the woman, even seeing her was irrelevant, they continued to chat about her, lacking the enthusiasm for the actual presence of their subject of admiration.

I was very surprised when I discovered in René Berger<sup>4</sup> the importance of the photo, considered by the parents even more important than the real image of the child. The photos were always in the possession of the adults, next to the pocket money and credit cards. In the meantime, the presentation of the child to the group of friends<sup>5</sup> and acquaintances becomes more and more rare, the simple image on a piece of photograph paper being enough. The evolution was from paper support to film, than to the digital, which made possible to compose a film with the same length as the time spend with the interlocutor. The passage to the *Second Life* was almost natural. If anyone could take anywhere anybody's image, then why not take any appearance we

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<sup>3</sup> 2003, Romania, Agigea, European Summer Academy, *Metamorphoses* – after Ovidiu's poem title.

<sup>4</sup> René Berger, 1978, *Mutăția semnelor*, Editura Meridiane, București.

<sup>5</sup> It is a clear sign of the separation between parents and children, leaving the world of children being considered mandatory for their free manifestation. In a further step in *Second Life* the spaces reserved to children and teenagers would be completely forbidden to the adults.

want, why not use known *avatars*, having the maximum liberty to choose a star – regardless its sex – an animal, a bird, a plant or any combination between the existing or the imaginary ones. The ostrich-camel of Dimitrie Cantemir<sup>6</sup> is an innocent construction compared to what can be now designed or accepted!

The avatars<sup>7</sup> are not unwanted or unexpected anymore; they are searched, selected, constructed and reconstructed based on some established objectives, subordinated to some precise goals with strategies that are centred on the relationship between the (auto) creator and the public. In this way, the predominance of the avatars in the companies, embassies, museums, libraries, churches, universities<sup>8</sup>, hospitals and supermarkets can be explained. *Second Life* has newspapers, television and fashion magazines which characterize a world that respects itself in its tri-dimensional virtuality. A virtual world constructed on wishes, ephemeral fantasies of the human being who escapes from itself, voluntarily participating and abandoning itself to this alienation process from which we don't know how it will escape.

Avoiding any comments about this strange field for the adult generation, we'll come back to the avatar of the companies, capable and even more interested in the virtual space than in the real one. The reason is simple: from an economic perspective it is better to offer the ideas/projects to the potential beneficiaries first, than to invest and at the end find out what they desired. In this way we can explain why there are virtual projects first and only later they become real, why the idea to simultaneously develop some economic actions in both spaces is not abandoned, why the virtual space itself brings profit after everybody finds out about its benefits.

And still, the child from mother's photo is coming back! In a certain context, a television manager doesn't assume the effects of his shows, considering that every spectator can choose from different media offers. The business man forgets that all the other shows are made respecting the same rules and format, that he is just doing the same thing like all the others. On the other hand, the choice is made by the one who can, who chose in the past and who has criteria for his options! The child, the teenager or the adult who was not educated to analyze, to differentiate and to succeed in using rules and criteria, is not capable to make value judgements. Defending the right to choose of the child, we cannot forget the right to learn and to offer values. The boundaries imposed by parents believing that in this way they will have

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<sup>6</sup> Dimitrie Cantemir, *Istoria ieroglifică*, Editura Gramar, Bucuresti, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> a. Name given by the Hindu to successive reincarnations; b. transformation, unpredicted and painful metamorphosis, in the evolution of a being.

<sup>8</sup> During CIEA the HOF symposium will take place, where Gary Miller, Marcie Boucouvalas and Carol Kasworm will debate the possibilities, roles and effects of the universities in the new stage of the informational society.

more liberty were doubled by those capable to obtain profit from using the lack of parents' attention, and tripled by the children themselves encouraged and even forced by the adults' indifference that created the *Second Life*, in which each generation, group of interest and individual can isolate itself.

We cannot forget that in the same time with Rene Berger's work, Alvin Tofler's<sup>9</sup> *The Third Wave* appeared. The latter warns us that in the post-industrial society something from the organizational structure of the industrial one is kept – everybody has a chief! – the difference being that everyone is capable to become chief for the others too! Now every one of us can listen, follow, execute commands, make suggestions and recommendations, and even can report what he/she understood and realised to someone he/she never met in reality.

Alvin Tofler had the intuition of future development tendencies, even if at that moment he didn't know about that space in which the human being could manifest. If the author had no reason to be afraid that somebody could become his own chief, now the situation is different. The new chief can be anybody, can come from anywhere, can be born suddenly from a previously nonexistent motivation and from somebody's bet who decided to invest in some gifted minds. The task of the chief doesn't require any remarkable qualification, any special responsibility<sup>10</sup>. How is the new chief's responsibility obtained? What is this responsibility? Is it the economic one? The technological performance one<sup>11</sup>? The persuasive, manipulative one?

The artists' shouts, saying something that remained unnoticed or passed right next to us, accompanied the history. The playwright Victor Ion Popa<sup>12</sup> discovered in the typing machine a way in which people could address to more than a single person. The saddest and most profound fragment of the play is when the two parents confronted the letters received from their children after believing that each of them was receiving the most beautiful one only to find out that they were identical! Great was their suffering when they understood that the message of their correspondents was lacking the strictly personalized element, being replaced by one suitable for both fathers.

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<sup>9</sup> Alvin Tofler, *Al treilea Val*, Editura Politică, Bucureşti.

<sup>10</sup> The question about the power of the school is of more and more actuality because in our society we witness the generalisation of promotions made by those having the power, thinking that any chief will be helped, on one hand by all the others, and on the other hand by the entire new technology dominated by pre-established programs.

<sup>11</sup> In the day of the first Moon landing mission UNESCO sent a telegram to NASA, congratulating them and addressing the subject of *education*, of how this achievement should be presented. It was important to know who could travel through spaces that were to that day reserved to God! If we speak of rights without norms, without laws, than no one can guarantee about the future behaviors and attitudes!

<sup>12</sup> Victor Ion Popa, *Tache, Ianche și Cadăr*, Editura Univers, 1972.

How do messages, send almost simultaneously to large groups of people, look now? Even waiting for a personal message, written especially for us or a specific person – parent, lover or friend, seems pointless.

Orson Wels<sup>13</sup>, terrified by what radio could make of Hitler, who created his political image of a man capable of manipulating the present or even absent crowds, put into scene the radio scenario transmitted on October 31, 1938. His message wasn't understood and it created a disaster among the listeners incapable to discern between real and fiction. This new instrument continued to be used in propaganda since then. The television on its turn showed its power and effects in 1989, when it became an instrument that helped the Central and Eastern Europe to modify its political structure and its boundaries. The demolition of the Berlin Wall, the revolution from Romania and the other countries, the recent history of Yugoslavia, couldn't be possible without the presence of the television capable to transmit live images from all around the world.

We now have another proof: the *Avatar*<sup>14</sup> movie. This can be another signal, a hopeless call of the human being who wants to escape from his real world. The new technologies allowed the construction of this alarm signal. The psychologists discovered an accentuated depressive state of the people who have just left from the show; not even they could explain their feelings! The movie shows what humans can destroy and how good can be another world, one unimaginable, constructed from the wishes of some beings that have feelings and reactions we lost.

Regarding the creation of human beings, it is well known that from the religious point of view they were created after the image of God – and so an obligation not to imagine other past or future beings was imposed! Once that axiom was established, it remains the question of the resemblance with God! The answer is: the resemblance is obtained with a lot of work and zeal! So, the perfection is a gift for humans but it can be obtain only by those who will not despair in a world governed by limited time. Of course abandoning the god image we can forget and definitely abandon *the need of resemblance!* After changing the image, anyone can wish everything without being responsible in the face of others, without privately or publically recognising his/her desires.

When Constantin Noica<sup>15</sup> lectured at our university he was asked how his belief in the meaning of the human being can resist when there are so many predictions about the end of the world. Free of any polemic, the philosopher

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<sup>13</sup> The radio scenery *The War of the Worlds*, that became the movie *The Night America Trembled*.

<sup>14</sup> *Avatar* is the first film for the big screen of James Cameron after the most profitable movie of all times, *Titanic*.

<sup>15</sup> In a 70's conference, Aula Magna, „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Iași.

discovered the great pride of those who, even in such situation, as last survivors, could say *we lived as humans!*

The technologies don't necessary bring the alienation, but can generate the oblivion of self – no matter the place in which the human being is: at home, at work, in the nature that he/she doesn't understand.

The producer of a (still) SF movie presents the struggle and the insubordination of a intelligent robot, capable to have self will, in its desire to have a human child. The robot understood that the immortality is just for the human being and not for the machine, no matter how complex it is. We still desire the instance performance of the robot. We build close systems, standards; we refuse the long periods and we accept and serve the moment no matter what. We speak about maximum efficiency obtained with minimal efforts, about business results and we obsessively refer to personal and group objectives, we concern about everything and forget about all! But we are all ONE, the human being!

Plato, Parmenides and Christian philosophy, monotheist philosophies, constructivism and positive conceptions, all are reunited in the CIEA papers. They include subjects from activity restructuration projects at any level and field, to interrogations about the place of the human being in the world of new technologies.

We thank you for your contributions to the conference volume.