

SOME NOTES ON THE CONCEPT OF ANARCHETYPE

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Abstract. *Being written for the first issue of this new journal, my article takes into account Annales Philosophici's declared mission, that of closing the gap between the Western and the Romanian approaches in doing philosophy. Thinking of this, I have decided to make a rather short presentation of an almost exclusively Romanian philosophical and philological concept proposed by Corin Braga. Without necessarily being one of the most popular thinkers in today's Romania, the professor from Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca is trying (and has been for some time now) to use the concept of anarchetype in order to describe some features of the postmodern literature and, at a larger scale, of the postmodern world. Using some of his work on this subject, I will try in the following pages to bring my own perspective on this subject, combining it with some reflections on the postmodern epistemological paradigm.*

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The term "anarchetype" has a relatively short history in the contemporary cultural landscape; in addition, we are talking here of a concept that, a thing not very common in the recent decades, is proposed to the world from within the literary and philosophical Romanian theory. Used for the first time by a Bulgarian philosopher (Boyan Manchev) the anarchetype entered our specialty's vocabulary through the contribution of Corin Braga, who gave a different meaning of the original word; if for Manchev the anarchetype is an attribute of the mimesis being opposed to the art objects that reflect archetypes (the archetypes referring to Plato's ideas), Braga retains the original form only as an etymological derivation, opting for the noun form of the word in order to determine an antonym of the archetype as a focal point of literary creation. First the "10 studies archetypology (Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1999) and in two articles published in Cultural Observatory (no. 165-166 and 167/2003 – articles that come after the debate organized by Phantasma - The Research Center for the Imaginary in Cluj-Napoca in 2002) and, finally, in the volume *From Archetype to Anarchetype* (Polirom, Iasi, 2006), the comparatist of Cluj proposes increasingly clearer and more systematically a theory of the anarchetype which would be "a broken archetype, an archetype in which the center of meaning, the Logos of the work was pulverized, like a supernova (the visible or invisible sun) that explodes in a galactic cloud of senses [...] a poetic refusing the Logos" (Braga 2003a).

What are Braga's prerequisites of Braga, what does the notion of anarchetype mean and, in particular, which are neuralgic points of his theory? First, since the beginning of his incursion, the Romanian philologist states explicitly that there is a new paradigm about to be set up "once postmodernity is over". This puts us on a road less consolidated, likely to lead towards invalidating the whole theory. To detail: postmodernism is not a paradigm but is

strictly a cultural representation of a confrontation of paradigms (ie Enlightenment and postmodernity, to be precise). One cultural bias is common in intellectual circles (especially in academia): to believe that a cultural trend that can give rise to a general episteme (ie that it can be passed on the full spectrum of human activities in the sense of the preceding or even generating it); instead, the laws of sociology and psychology teach us that a cultural trend is the utmost (leaving aside, the same as in genetics, the mutations, the "exceptional situations") generated by a certain zeitgeist. Basically, exegetes whom we look upon commit what in logic is called the post hoc ergo propter hoc error, that is they deduce from the chronological sequence of historical events a direct causal link between a cultural trend and the change of society. More specifically, it is wrong to assume that the works of the Enlightenment gave birth to an era of industrial transformation or that deconstructivists are the authors of postmodernity's mutations; on the contrary, the Enlightened and postmodernism's precursors (even postmodernists themselves, but on this we shall return later) are only heralds of social metamorphosis and not of those who produce them directly.

One of the most easily accepted explanations for this claim derives from the eternal status of the intellectuals, the condition of being, somehow, the vanguard of social change in general. In the light of this explanation we can understand many of the contradictions that may be addressed in a careful analysis of the reference texts for major changes of paradigm; in this respect we recall here one of the most common accusations against postmodernism: postmodernists counter Enlightenment ideals precisely with his weapons (logics, systematic argument, criticism etc..) thus do nothing to replace a given model with their own, remaining in fact within the same paradigm. The charge is indeed reasonable: when Lyotard, for example, announces the death of the grand narratives that legitimize the metaphysical discourse of modernity he is in fact proposing a new meta-narrative or, rather, a meta-meta-narrative (that of the end of stories). In other words, he is using the same modern process, the only difference being that of the content and not of a radical change of paradigm as it would have been correct in the terms of his own theories. However, despite its quartering within the species of the real, we cannot deny the accuracy of Lyotard's point of view.

We avoid this aporia using the simple solution proposed to solve the liar's paradox (this reference is correct not only for the present situation but for all the postmodernists of the first wave of the 60s and 80s): meta-sentences cannot be judged by the values of the reference system. In other words, it is necessary for Lyotard to use the method of modernity because he has no alternative: he is within the full boundaries of modernity. The same as one communicates with a stranger at first in the stranger's language, postmodernists "speak" the language of modernity because it is the only one accessible to them. Great confusion in this field comes from the fact that more than any other current before them, postmodernists have very soon began to ponder in self-reflective way to their nature in order to define their own position and identity. The fact that they themselves have used the terms "postmodernism" and "postmodernity" while they were actually still in modernity puts us in the face of language difficulties (and not epistemological difficulties as some late moderns, like Habermas for instance, argued). Clearly (and much faster than with modernity because of an acceleration of the personal and collective time experience), the paradigm shift announced by those that we call postmodernists began to be felt gradually in different parts of the daily life; without being definitive and monopolistic, the new episteme received the name of postmodernity. In few words, postmodernity is these days what the postmodernists argued about themselves in the '70s: a change of perspective, the overcoming of the Enlightenment's ideals of a "hard", rational truth, of the infallibility of science, the surpassing of the idea that there can be some evidence to argue the superiority of one particular political theory, social, aesthetic, etc. Eventually, postmodernity should give rise to its own artistic and cultural current. This tends to happen gradually, but, and this is where the mentioned language difficulties come, it cannot

bear the name of postmodernism because this name was given a different significance by the first generation theorists, those who actually were living in the interference of the two paradigms. Also fatally, given the mentioned acceleration of experiencing time, there are already obvious differences between the areas of cultural activity: so, if architecture, fine arts, music or literature (in the creative rather than in literary theory) have received increased malleability and materialized as almost purely postmodern even before the actual rise of postmodernity, philosophy, aesthetics (as a theory), literary criticism, human sciences (psychology, sociology, political science etc.) are still in an area interference between the modern and postmodern episteme, perhaps because of the clear fact that the interpretative and theoretical work is inertial, difficult in comparison with the act of pure artistic creation which is impulsive and does not require a conscious epistemological foundation.

As a first conclusion we therefore retain the idea that postmodernism is not equivalent to postmodernity: postmodernism is a (theoretical) cultural current which lies at the chronological and ideational junction of the modern and postmodern episteme. The cultural and artistic movement specific to postmodernity bears, from a regrettable confusion explained above, also the name of postmodernism and thus we explain the many paradoxes that arise when discussing this concept unilaterally, without taking into account its two obvious sides. Perhaps, from an etymological point of view, it would have been more correct to use a different term to nominate the first postmodernists, but it is understandable why a barbarism as "pre-postmodernist" was avoided. Equally, it would be desirable to avoid appointing contemporary artistic works with the title of "postmodernist"; the attribute that, in terms of the lexicon, should be to given to them is that of "postmodern". Course, it remains a task for the future to clarify the murky waters of this semantic area.

To return now to the original discussion, we notice that Braga talks from the very beginning of the postmodernity's death; after our previous detour we understand that what the Romanian philologist observes (like others before him) is in fact the death of the first postmodernist theories. Overcoming the '70s paradigm, i.e. taking the lesson taught by deconstructivists, structuralists and those like them, practically means the end of the theoretical phase called postmodernism and the beginning of postmodernity. The most logical explanation for Braga's statements appears to be the confusion he makes (innocent in its way because of the, as noted above, ambiguities and inaccuracies in this area) between postmodernism and postmodernity. But, based purely on this confusion, can we reject the premise of Braga, namely that according to which "the anarchetype could prove to be a concept exportable to other fields such as politics and the ideological, the media and the social"? Even more, can we reject his idea that the anarchetype is a somewhat of a defining notion for the nature of the new paradigm?

In the hidden layers of the anarchetype theory proposed by Corin Braga, we constantly find the idea that artistic representations (literature in our case) are not parallel worlds to reality that generates them; on the contrary, the substance and spirit of the age (the *zeitgeist*) find their fulfillment in the literary character. Therefore, to ascertain the correctness of the archetype-anarchetype dichotomy will need to examine finally the relationship between the modern and postmodern individual. Can there be such a categorization? The opinions on this matter will inevitably be divided into two parallel lines: conservatives, defenders of the ideals of modernity will not ever accept that the human individual fund can differentiate from one era to another. Whether they are francophile socialists (those who see in man a constant expression of a universal and a vague variation of the same contextual background), up to anglophile liberals (who will see the man as a perpetual potentiality, a pure personal expression of the same common substance), all moderns will agree that humanity is always and always the bearer of the same values and that claimed changes in the abysmal structure of the human beings are in fact just some contextual alterations, but not deny human's

ontological consistency. On the other hand, as early as Nietzsche or Pannwitz (the one who first uses the concept of "postmodern individual" in *Der Krisis der europäischen Kultur* – cited in Best and Kellner 1991) and J. M. Thompson (in the article entitled *Post-modernism* in *The Hibbert Journal* – vol. XII, no. 4, July 1914), the precursors of postmodernism and postmodernity have emphasized the idea of a radical metamorphosis in the background of humanity itself. The postmodern individual (even though some authors before the 60 and 70s call it "modern individual" they are referring to the contemporary individual as opposed to the Renaissance or the Enlightenment individuals, thus postmodern in our terms) is valued positively or negatively, but always different of what was his predecessor. For example: "*man at the beach, for instance, who tans his back, while his eyes are looking through a glossy magazine, ears listening the game, his jaws chewing gum - this figure of a passive simultaneous player and of the inactivated active is an international daily phenomenon... This phenomenon is considered understood and accepted as normal; its explanation is horror vacui, the fear of having to articulate for himself the free space provided by the comforts, the leisure ... Any leisure today has a hidden similarity hidden to the unemployment*" (Anders 2002, 128) is the contemporary individual's characterization made by Gunther Anders, incorporating one of the most common allegations relating to the mechanistic alienation and passivity specific to the postmoderns. With vague roots in Nietzsche, many contemporary philosophers have marched on this idea; from Heidegger or Husserl, via Lyotard, Rorty or Jameson to the more recent Baudrillard or Bruckner (or Patapievici if we refer to the Romanian culture) we will find such portraits of alienation, the loss of an indescribable *something* from the ideal of the Enlightenment man. The quotation above was chosen, despite the fact that Anders is not what one would call a well-known figure in the Romanian landscape (except for being Hannah Arendt's husband, of course), for its similarity to what Braga writes at one moment in his study: "modern man must learn to cope with a more accelerated polychronia and polytopia. To manage the increased speed of existence, he needs to create more simultaneous figures, to build himself as an opened and decentered subject, a truly schizomorph subject, with multiple personalities" (Braga 2006, 13). Eventually, this is the idea that leads Braga to deduct the need for alternatives to the modern idea of a central, unique subject. Such a central subject was in fact the ideal of an entire aeon; modernity (totalizing, standardized, progressive, scientific in method, monadic, Aristotelic) cannot find another adequate representation than this kind of subject. Liviu Petrescu, in *The Poetics of Postmodernism*, argues that we have here a scientific principle (supported by one of the exponents of the modern scientific method, Claude Bernard), namely that the laws of determinism do act absolutely identical on both inert objects and living organisms, which comes to cancel their specificity. "Assumed by the poetics of the novel debates, this principle will result in a recommendation to find within the literary character the natural man, an object of the universal laws of nature" (Petrescu 1998, 35).

As easily one can speculate about the motivations or consecutions that led to the establishment of the single central subject paradigm during modernity, as hard it is to find an explanation to this that satisfies the exigencies of scientificity. Despite the obvious lack of completeness of theories on the subject, they still occur, each of them marching one a certain key element that comprises modernity in its essence. Many of them are plausible and somewhat spectacular due to the interdisciplinary connections they make. No doubt, the idea of the subject or of the character of the narrative (and here we mean both literary fiction and the concept of narrative as it was interpreted by Lyotard) is closely related to the representation of the world, and metamorphoses in representing the world are visible especially in the natural sciences over the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. When Nietzsche states his famous theory of perspectivism (prefaced in a way by Kirkegaard) it was nothing more than a philosophical fantasy, to the horror of the 19th century's scientists. Things will rapidly

change in the early 20th century; beyond biology or chemistry (somewhat speculative, despite the application of scientific methods) physics and even mathematics have an enormous role in changing the representation of the world. If we were to apply, for example, Godel's incompleteness theorem to the poetics of the novel, we would understand in a more clear fashion the rejection of a central topic and moralizing tendencies specific to previous centuries. In short, Godel's theorem shows that within a system S, if it is complete, there will be at least one sentence P to be undecidable. In other words, moving this to the field of literary creation, the making of a decision (the establishment by the author of clear axiological criteria and the passing of ethical judgments) will automatically mean that the system he created is not complete. Obviously, we will not assume that the authors of novels specifically aimed at complying the mathematic requirements established in the beginning of the 20th century; but still, we can agree that by comparison with mathematical and physical representations, we can make a more accurate picture of the change of episteme (which implies, obviously, and literary creation) means in the 20th century.

Similar to the things mentioned above, we can put the same model of a fractured subject from the novel of late modernism in relation with the equivalent physical theories; thus we will consider the development of quantum physics as a way of exacerbating the otherness. Put together and simplified, the theories of Heisenberg, Planck, Schrodinger, Bohr, von Neumann, Einstein and so will give the picture of a pluriverse and not a universe like before; the world's elementary particle (be it electron or photon) will appear to be not fixed in time and space. Rather, according to Heisenberg, the more we will know about one of coordinates (time or space) the less we can know about the other. In other words, the knowing subject cannot claim a universal and omniscient deepening of the object of his research. Moreover, quantum mechanics will not "disenchant" the world, but will lead it in an area that until two hundred years ago would have been considered a heresy: the matter cannot be known, Schrodinger will say. The act of observing modifies the observed subject itself and thus all knowledge is finally subjective; matter is in a state of plurivalency (more specifically, electrons can be in several places at the same time – hence the schizophrenia of the postmodern subject – their reality being in fact a continuous overlap of each of these places or states). What Braga defines as a function of the imagination will seem very similar to the act of observation (and of knowledge) in quantum physics: "maybe imagination is not only an instrument for the deconstruction of a single subject, but a tool for the reconstruction of a metasubject, a multiple, unexploded and functional subject" (Braga 2006, 35).

Under the subtitle "The Anarchetype", Braga dedicates himself exclusively to the particularities of the subject represented in postmodern creation (referring mainly to the literary creation, but not disregarding other forms of narrative like the film). We find here references to what are, according to him, the main differences between archetype and anarchetype: archetypal works go hand in hand with the ideal of a single centered subject; the modern novel, as an archetypal creation, has found its identity by following a narrative thread that involved the becoming of a representative to a final, conclusive point. There is a supreme principle in this kind of creations which orders all the narrative, a sense which is revealed in the end and a Logos that, once discovered by the reader/viewer, will lead towards self-enlightenment. On the other hand, there is an art in which "the prototypical model is suspended, thrown into nothingness" (Braga 2006, 46); there are stories that produce perplexity when told or when you try subsuming them to a supreme sense, "books that you cannot summarize in a sentence because their substance refuses the Logos". The logic of an anarchetypal creation, Braga says, is a non-aristotelic logic, a logic of mnemotyc, synesthesic, mythical associations (not following a myth in its entirety but scattered fragments of myths, which make no sense when trying to bring them together). In short, anarchetypal art is the art that seeks (programmatically, we would say, if this term would not contravene to its anarcho-principles)

to surprise, not following any direction at all. Feeling the weak points of this argument, Braga immediately states the difference between this and the art of the Avantgarde that, as said above, could be definitely regarded as anarchetypal: the genuine logic of contemporary anarchetypal art is different from the reasons of the Avantgarde art which aimed at causing surprise for its own sake, without internalizing or theorizing the running away from any sense; contemporary anarchetypal artists, after the lesson of postmodernism, dismiss any kind of sense voluntarily and, in a way, philosophically. Finally, a second weak point is that, ultimately, placing a work in the category of the anarchetypism is, after all, dependent on the skills of the categorizer in the detection of "archetype copies" that may or may not be obvious to other commentators. Without detailing the subject, Braga admits the truth of this potential accusation, but believes that "there still remain enough creations as to form a class of their own, in which juxtaposed fragments of meaning give no global sense" (ibid.).

How can we speak of a hermeneutics of the anarchetype as long as it this not subjected to the rules of the modern method and hermeneutics is a modern approach by excellence? Obviously, we need a shift in the interpretation, believes the author, to be able to operate in some kind of way with the concept of anarchetype. Specifically, we need what he calls "a sub-hermeneutic" and for its definition he resorts to the experience of psychologists. Psychoanalysis (and all therapies generated by it) relies on its Freudian side on a typically modern approach; the psychoanalyst plays exactly the role that a modern author plays in all the universe of creation: a supra-individual position, absolutely omniscient. At the same time, a classical psychoanalyst has a well-established role of hermeneut regarding the object of knowledge (the individual). Therefore we cannot use classical psychoanalytic procedures for analyzing a subject that is deeply discentered, illogical and fractured, but on the other hand, psychoanalysis did not remain stationed in the specific understanding of the early 20th century. The alternative side to this Freudian direction (originally represented by Jung) focuses on the subject rather than to integrate it within certain predefined standards; this way, it is recognized that myths and archetypes do not have a generic, normative and immutable nature but rather, they are transferred from the collective unconscious at the individual level. This transfer is not being done in a classic, unimodal manner but through the personal contribution of the subject which means calling in the subject's own view of the world. In other words, each individual is a unique collection of fractured invariables. To try interpreting such an individual in a pure modern manner is not only unnecessary but impossible. As a consequence, the role of the therapist (or the hermeneut in our case) will not be to "cure" the subject by reordering the archetypal fragments which compose him, but instead to bring the individual to what in therapeutic terms is called the insight: the self-knowledge followed by revelation. Using the model of Wilfred Bion, an English Kleinian psychoanalyst, Braga sates that the meaning of the hermeneut (or the analyst) is not that of interpreting the subject as filtered through the prism of his own subjectivity because, after all, we are convinced of the impossibility of a "hard" and infallible knowledge and it is clear that any endeavor of this kind will eventually end in a subjective interpretation. Rather, like a postmodern psychoanalyst, a sub-hermeneut which recognizes anarchetypes will not classify them as anomalies and errors that need to be corrected, but will try to bring them closer, to assume them, seeking to gain a perspective close to the author's. "My assumption is that fantasies should not be interpreted, but amplified. They mustn't be translated from the imaginary register to the conceptual one, but must be helped to express themselves fully, until all symbolic meanings latent in them irradiate. Rather than to fix the images and pin them with a notional needle in theoretical insectarium, the researcher would do better to offer an active environment, enabling their development and evolution" Braga argues (2002).

The end of postmodernity is self-understood from the references made by the Romanian critic to "the age that is just beginning", although he has his doubts concerning this linguistic

barbarism. The end of postmodernity is derived by Braga from the fact that postmodernism (we insist again on the error, from our point of view, to confuse an aesthetic movement with the cultural and social age related somehow to it) does nothing more than to deontologize the great –explanatory-narrative systems of modernity, losing itself "in the thin air of theory, without any grip to reality". If we make the necessary corrections in the author's argument (following the mechanism described in the first pages of this paper), we see that what Braga calls post-postmodernity is essentially the postmodernity. Therefore the anarchetype becomes representation of the individual living in postmodernity.

Braga's theory is at the same time a theory on postmodernism's aesthetics and, at a larger scale, a theory on postmodernity. In order to summarize this side of the Romanian critic's ideas, we find three main aspects:

1. The contemporary world (postmodernity or post-postmodernity as the author names it) is clearly distinguishable from the modern world
2. The contemporary individual is illogical, fractured, uncentered, not being subsumed to the idea of a single truth; he is a collage of private truths, often contradictory
3. To know or interpret such an individual requires a different method than that of the moderns, a sub-hermeneutics which means placing the interpreter within the subject and not above it and treating the contradictions and the lack of meaning as normal.

No doubt, we can submit Corin Braga's remarks to an interpretative endeavor (inevitably modern); thus, we find a Gnostic substrate in the archetype-anarchetype dichotomy. The construction of two opposites is clearly a Manichean or Gnostic syzygy, as are Jung's pairs. The comparison with Jung will make us cast a final question that interviews the nature of the anarchetype: isn't the anarchetype, after all, still an archetype, but reversed? Can we so easily accept the explanation according to which the anarchetype is an ekstastic surpassing of a finite model represented by the archetype? An interpretation at least as legitimate as this could suggest that the archetype-anarchetype syzygy is nothing more than a universal constant of history and it is not an invention of the postmodern world but is latent from the very beginning in the notion of archetype. From this point of view, any anti-hero, any revolt against a particular style or form, any protest against a cultural fashion (be it a local fashion and set in a specific historical context or a more durable fashion like modernity is) is nothing else than a manifestation of the anarchetype. In this interpretation, such fundamental antinomies avoid the chronological contextualization as they are in fact an innate principle for the world's structure (thus the problem of their "invention" or "obsolescence" is inexistent). Being in the camp which will support the existence of such eternal principles or, conversely, in the camp which sees a particular social and historical explanation to each episteme remains ultimately a matter which falls within the boundaries of subjectivity (as none of the theories can raise the claim of carrying out a "hard" demonstration, impenetrable to the counter-arguments) which lets us again facing a postmodern, subjective gnosiology.

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