

Erotism and intimacy as invisible territories in literary text

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***Abstract:** Often, the literary text gives the reader the promise of a full understanding of the significant intention of the author. Such as a guarantee that in the end everything will be clear and comprehended, the literary text engages the reader in an authentic quête that alternates on its journey the real and fantastical, the night and the day, the fake and the truth, the normality with the unusual. The relation between the reader and the text becomes familiar as the adventure of reading flows into the amalgam of terminology, storytelling and situations that are revealed in an organized or reversed way. But the lecturer feels at one point that he has strayed the path, and this wandering can be grafted on the reading that juggles in the textural significance, reducing to a slip in the invisible territories of the text, where the meaning is veiled, profound and even ambiguous. In our opinion, eroticism and intimacy can be thought of as invisible territories in literary textuality, in the conditions of a single and insufficient reception, or in the case of literary insularity that the two conceives claim. In this article we are expressing a double intent. On the one hand, we will try to ensure a conceptual determination of eroticism and intimacy, in a philosophical and philological recovery under the sign of hermeneutics, and on the other hand we will semiotically analyze the two concepts to overcome the symbolic function articulated in the subtlety that The two concepts generate it in the literary text.*

***Key-words:** eroticism; intimacy; exteriority; irreversibility; love; transgression.*

Talking about eroticism and intimacy and giving them satisfactory definitions is almost impossible. We can search for certain meanings, contextualizing meanings, but the closeness to their full meaning is difficult. We will start from the simple question - what is eroticism / what is intimacy, a question that claims a necessarily answer revealed with the help of a philosophical and hermeneutical instrumentary. But any interrogation, once launched, delimits an explanatory perimeter, a limit beyond which, our question can no longer be asked, is no longer relevant. In this perimeter, we find the auxiliary working tools, the concepts we will balance in our research to provide depth to the meanings of the concept. Erotism and intimacy are sensitive subjects and their approach from the perspective of interdisciplinary fields (psychology, anthropology, literature, visual arts) can provide a favorable narrowing of an acceptable meaning.

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To open up a brief analysis of eroticism, we will begin our research from Greek antiquity and we will refer to the terminology of *érōs*² as it is expressed in particular in Plato's dialogues. But not only philosophy is the territory in which we find references to the meanings of *érōs*, we must not forget that for the ancient Greeks the myth becomes one of the places where the terms are instrumentalised with great delight³.

It must be noted from the very beginning that the Plato's *érōs* is a double activity: on the one hand it is a communication with the transcendent world of *eide* and a link to it and at the same time it is an outpouring in the soul of the loved one, whose beauty (as masculine gender) is a picture of the God, of those "springs of Zeus" that flow into the heart of the loved one. In the Plato's dialogue, the *Banquet*, we find the portrait of the loved one (upon whom eroticism has occurred) that does not disappear in the mist of sublimation, instead it remains a necessary partner in aspiration to *eide*.

In other part, the *érōs* is also defined as an irrational hope for pleasure felt in the relation with beauty. There are passages in which the *érōs* juxtaposes a comprehensive act assimilated to the feeling of love, in this case the concept acquiring aesthetic valences. In Plato's *Banquet*, the philosopher speaks about love in association with an anamnestic phase of the soul: "... when we love, we feel the wings of the soul grow, and as we move into a world in which we feel that we have lived, and in which we have the conviction that we will return after we leave this world⁴."

The *Banquet* dialogue points particularly to the two points of view of Aristophanes and Socrates. According to Socrates, who in turn turns to Diotima, Plato places love at the opposite of sexual desire. According to Plato, physical desire, far from being an extension of

² We will enumerate the references made by PETERS, Francis in the *Terms of Greek Philosophy*, translated by Dragan Stoianovici, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001 to the theoretical situations of the eros in Greek philosophy. Eros is one of the many personalities that appear in pre-philosophical cosmogonies. Unlike most of the others, which represent states, such as Night, Chaos, Earth, Heaven (see the remarks of Aristotle in *Metaphysics* 1071b), Eros is a force. In Orthodox cosmogonies he unites them all and these unions are born the family of immortal gods (see Aristophanes, *Birds*, 700-702); At Hesiod, he is among the first to break out of Haos and gather them together (*Theog.* 116-120); Ferekyde says (according to Proclus in *Tim II*, 54) that Zeus, when he wants to create (*demiourgein*), takes the face of Eros. Therefore, Eros is a motorized force based on a sexual pattern used to explain the "accompaniments" and "birth" of the mythological elements, a sort of "First Mover" from the cosmogony, and was recognized as such by Aristotle (*Meta*-984b) Even when the mythological scaffold begins to fall into the speculations of the physicists philosophers, Eros, his agonist now, more frequently, Aphrodite, continued to play unrolling in opposing powers. Thus, for example, Empedocle where Love (*Philia*) Aphrodite are those who unite the elements (*fr.* 17, rows 20-26, Diels 31A28, Aristotle, *Meta* 985a, 1075b, they also take care of the action of the moral forces.) At Parmenide, Eros is the " (See Euripide, *Hipp.*, 447-450, 1278-1281), and still manifests itself in Lucretius's invocation to Venus, "which nature alone Ruler" (*I*, 21). (PETERS, Francis in the *Terms of Greek Philosophy*, translated by Dragan Stoianovici, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, p.45 sqq)

³ *Ibidem*, p. 46. The concept of *érōs* is still apparent in Lucretius's initial invocation to Venus, "which nature alone rules" (*I*, 21) .2 All these cases of love use have to do with The occurrence of a human emotion at the rank of cosmological force, a very clearly visible operation at Edomedocle (*fr.* 17, rows 22-24). The same approach is still present in Plato's *Banquet*, one of the most extensive eros developments made by A philosopher Eryximachos' speech (185e-188e) reveals the magnitude of the "attraction" principle in nature, and this idea and the like, familiar both to mythographers and physicists, fill most of the other speeches. Instead, Socrate's speech opens A new direction, where human love is used as an important moral and epistemological concept.

⁴ Plato, *Banquet*, in Plato, *Works*, vol. V, Greek translation by Ion Bianu, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1981

love, only hinders the fulfillment of love, distracts us from the real purpose of the *érōs*, which is impersonal and unpassional: the love of Beauty, Truth and Good.

As a general note we can see that in the theoretical determinations that it imparts, the *érōs* concept in Greek philosophy is defined in relation to other concepts, being assimilated to a dual sense. Thus, we can not say that *érōs* is desire, love, sentiment, friendship, but we can not even say that it can not signify all these things. Starting from the Plato's ideas associated with the summarized excursion set out above, we can say that the significance of the *érōs* consists in producing a reality in the sense of a participation, an act made together, or an possibility to be known in relation to the other.

Just this alterity, the possibility of meeting with the other, even if the other is absent in this report, is significant for the eroticism and intimacy both concepts placed into a definition. The temptation to define eroticism through love and sexuality leads to a diminution and ambiguity in the essence or the substance of the concept. Intimacy, on the other hand, favors erotisation and configures the perimeter of the game of the erotical, under the conditions of self-involvement in relation to the other, or at least adds the self to a relationship.

Georges Bataille in *L'Erotisme*⁵ introduces the concept of transgression into the reading vocabulary of eroticism. Used in particular by Bataille, but also by Roger Dadoun and Julius Evola, transgression is understood in terms of exceeding the limit or, in the words of Bataille - *transgression is not the denial of interdiction, but its overcoming and completing*⁶.

Eroticism and intimacy go beyond the *self* (as an ego), complementing it and assigning it a secondary limit that sums up the reflections and options of an unfulfilled, incomplete *self*. That is why talking about intimacy in terms of a self-restraint with yourself, excludes the most attractive part of this discussion, in other words it closes the discussion before it begins.

Returning to the theoretical determinations of the eroticism pointed by Bataille, we will say, using the words of the French philosopher, that the *implementation of eroticism* is entirely aimed to reach the *being* in what it has most intimately, almost to the breathtaking level. That is why, says Bataille, the transition from normal to erotical desire supposes the relative disintegration within us of the constituted being in a discontinuous order⁷. Bataille claims that: "*In the disintegration movement of the beings, the male partner basically plays an active role, and the female part is passive. It is precisely the passive, feminine part that is essentially broken down as a constituted being. But for a male partner the disintegration of the passive side has one meaning: it prepares a fusion in which two beings mingle and finally end up together in the same degree of disintegration. The implementation of eroticism has as a whole the principle of destroying the structure of the closed being, which is a normal game partner.*"⁸

By keeping an intimate tension of self in the erotical action produces the reflection of an irreversibility of the experience, of the pre-existing situation. In this matter, Jean-Luc Marion's hypotheses are considered in our opinion to be very subtle on the aspects of

⁵ We will refer to the quotes that follow in Bataille, Georges, *Eroticism*, French translation by Dan Petrescu, Nemira Publishing House, Bucharest, 2005

⁶ Bataille, Georges, *Eroticism*, Translation into Romanian from French by Dan Petrescu, Nemira Publishing House, Bucharest, 2005, p.74

⁷ Ibidem, p. 29

⁸ Ibidem, p. 29

eroticism. The French philosopher treats the eros subject in a meditative perspective associated with a consistent philosophical reflection. Eroticism can be understood, says Marion in terms of an erotical reduction.

Jean Luc Marion⁹ captures very well the essence of eroticism, or, rather, of an eroticism in acting when he postulates the gap between body and body. "Even without erotisation in fact, I keep a body, more than that a body that loves. The distance between the body and erotised *body* repeats the distance between the body and body-soul, and these two distances trace a third one; those distances consecrate the independence of my body which is neither body or flesh; Just in this posture I feel (I can feel myself) without knowing from where I get this body that certainly comes from elsewhere; my body enjoys and suffers, without seeing the gift itself that allows this to happen. "

Intimacy, in relation to the literary text, claims its territory first of all in a relationship of *stealing* the lecturer from the pages of the book that he reads. To the intimacy of the lecturer opposes it the exteriorization of the actions revealed in the literary text. The senses are reversed, the characters produces the noise that disturbs this self-retreat in the back of its own island. Any *there* can become *here*, proximity and distance are abandoned in the favor of a nostalgic moment that has just been passed.

First of all, as Simona Sora remarked, the intimacy is an intimacy with oneself¹⁰. The Romanian writer bring into discussion Jean Baudrillard's remark that intimacy refers to the imaginary, not to the truth or reality, to a certain symbolic order, to the elaboration, representation and writing of the secret of intimacy¹¹. Intimacy, in a geography linked to the literary text, is the order of beauty, of the aesthetic, and so becoming a notion "burdened by life" or, as Simona Sora asserts, a privileged encounter area, first with oneself, then with the other, from which have previously eliminated the violence of externality, objectivity and truth¹².

Perhaps this zone of alterity, the possibility of (still uncertain) meeting with the other, in the sense of an ineffable rapprochement following self-departure, is the territory in which eroticism and subtlety of the intimate become identifiable. The literary text emphasizes the possibility of elimination the exteriority and sexuality, both understood as proximate meanings for the intimacy and eroticism. In other words, what for the author represents the substance of his intentionality, for the reader this is the level placed at the surface of this meaning of his intentionality. Sexuality approaches eroticism, but it still remains in the conceptual departure that breaks down with the instruments of hermeneutics and philosophy. Innerness is offering the intimacy, and to eroticism it is given a possibility of sense dominated by the meaning offered by the reader.

But the reflection on eroticism opposes an authentic experience and creates what can be called *existential panic*. The elements of decoration designed to produce the erotical effect, as it might be in the literary text, disappear under this fragility of a sense of meaning. Corporality with a whole "arsenal" connected - sensuality, beauty - can not stand as the foundation of a practical eroticism. Disengaged from this baggage, the interval of expression

⁹ Marion, Jean-Luc, *The Eros Phenomenon. Six meditations*. Translated from French into Romanian by Maria Cornelia Ica jr, Deisis publishing house, Sibiu, 2004, p. 47 sqq

¹⁰ Sora, Simona, *The Recovery of Intimacy*, Cartea Românească Publishing House, 2008, p. 24

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 189

¹² Ibidem, p. 24

and individualization of eroticism remains empty, such as a void in which the character gets a kind of emotional outrage.

In the end we can point a indescribable phase of meaning for the eroticism and intimacy in the literary text, and this phase stands in the relation of the text with the reader. Intimacy is something that is always in a disappearing moment, but eroticism is something that is always in the definitive beginning of the meaning of some other related aspects of it, such as beauty, sexuality, pornography.

Michel Tournier once said: *write a few rows every day in a thick notebook. Do not be an intimate diary devoted to your mood, but a diary towards the outside world, people, animals, things. And you will see that, from day to day, not only will you write better and easier, but, above all, you will have a richer predilection. Because your eye and ear will learn to cut and reject from the immense and inform the magnitude of everyday perceptions of what can pass in your writing. Just as the look of a great photographer surrounds and frames the scene that can become an image.*

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