Babeș-Bolyai University

Faculty of Letters

Doctoral School of Linguistic and Literary Studies

Resume

Forgetting, residue and lacunae: perspectives upon the function of empty spaces in memory and the *literature of ruins*

Scientific coordinator:
Prof. univ. dr. Ruxandra Cesereanu

PhD student:
Călina Părău

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This research deals with the concept of absence and tries to explore the cultural and subjective implications of this concept in relation to the possibilities of remembering and representation. The interest for the negative, lack, forgetting, residue comes from the attempt to understand the discontinuity and fragmentation of our universe of significances. The negotiation of these cultural empty spaces continuously reorganizes our possibilities of creating meaning. The undefined and uncertain zones are related to an imaginary of the incomplete which shelters the idea of pure experience. We have analyzed experiences of empty spaces and of the incomplete as they appear in historical and subjective narratives. The experience of the unknown no longer has mythological dimensions and it becomes in modernity the experience of the residue of „grand narratives" and of the excluded zones of significance. We have not chosen to place the subject inside a scheme of controllable and fixed representations, but to address the idea of an incomplete subject for whom residues and absences are ways of knowing and experiencing the world. The splits inside memory gave us the opportunity to talk about a phenomenology of absence inside which our identities and symbolic structures are based on loss, distance and scarcity. Forgetting and empty spaces are generating a certain becoming of the subject inside which all foundations become unstable. Absences are also negotiated by the „literature of ruins," which addresses the memory of the 20th century. Authors like Andreï Makine, W. G. Sebald, Herta Müller, Patrick Modiano, Günter Grass deal with the intervals of remembering, with the indeterminacy of our own identities and the blank pages of history which generate different modes of subjectivity. The „literature of ruins" explores the places where the past ends as representation and the ruin of consciousness leads us towards an impossible truth which is always projected beyond discourse. The reliability of memory changes in the 21st century and subjectivity and identity construction no longer rely on narratives of the self, but on our relation with the residues of representations.

In the first chapter we discussed about the idea of a forgotten meaning in philosophy. In order to investigate this scheme of erasure and coming back we investigated some systems of thought which are based on the idea of the return. For instance Derrida's hauntology (the presence of disappearance in the appearance itself) or Gianni Vattimo's "pesiero debole" (which tries to talk about being as trace).

In the second chapter we talked about the memorable and the non-memorable trying to see how

the non-memorable and the non-representable could generate a different discourse which is no longer based on the reliability of memory.

In the third chapter we dealt with the imaginary of disruption related to modernity where forgetting becomes the privilege of those who can reinvent themselves by breaking with the past. Today, our relation with forgetting is different, because we are dealing with an infinite space of the archive inside which we are continuously projected.

In the fourth chapter, we tried to analyze Zygmunt Bauman's *culture of waste.* We used the metaphor of memory as a garbage bin from Borges' short story in order to debate about an internal crisis of the idea of subjective memory.

In the fifth chapter we talked about confession and the way in which it expresses certain limits of the memorable. The language of testimony is based on the distance between experience and representation.

In the sixth chapter we discussed about spaces of memory which are no longer mirrors of eternity but separate temporal capsules which reflect the disjunctions between temporality and eternity.

In the seventh chapter we argued that zones of indeterminacy are also places for revelation, modes of non-inscription being also a way out of the realm of symbols and cultural codification.

In the eighth chapter we asked ourselves what is the function of blind spots in historical representations. We developed the concept of silent body proving that historical discourse relies on the missing feature.

In the ninth chapter we talked about forgetting as being one of the first functions of transmission, erasure and ruination being the first dimension of each historical relation.

In the tenth chapter we dealt with the in-between of perceptions and with the residue of consciousness. We argued that our relation with the imperceptible, the invisible or with silence makes us rethink the space of individuality in contrast with an open space beyond the real.

In the eleventh chapter we developed the concept of microhistory based on the discontinuity and heterogeneity of reality. Microhistory is opposed to voluntary memory elaborating the persistent coming-back of a certain gesture or image. The literature of ruins is a sort of microhistory because it encompasses the secret amnesia and the discontinuous memory.

In the twelfth chapter we talked about an overturned historical imaginary which has do deal with a time that cannot be annexed or represented. Thus we defined antimemory in relation to some novels about the memory of the 20th century.

In the chapter dedicated to Andreï Makine we discussed about a subjective truth opposed to the historical truth which can be discovered in the way in which the characters deal with the past events.

In the chapter dedicated to Sebald we addressed the idea of the archive, the post-culture and the feeling of incertitude and degradation that accompanies our relation to the historical past which is no longer based on reverential values.

In the chapter about Patrick Modiano we analyzed the feeling of the unreal created around post-memory.

In relation to Saul Bellow we discussed about the empty spaces between historical constructs and reality.

In the seventeenth chapter we analyzed details in relation to the way in which they construct residues, abundance, multiple temporalities and a certain disquiet of small infinity.

In the eighteenth chapter we saw a type of memory constructed around the missing feature in discourse. Hertei Müller creates a space of division in writing between remembrance and the negation of that remembrance.

In the nineteenth chapter we talked about the limits of the language of testimony showing how the narrative in two Irish novels is built around doubt and the unreliability of memory. Truth can no longer exist inside the language of testimony, but only beyond it.

In the last chapter we saw that there is a relation between nihilism, melancholy and the impossibility of stable ground in discourses of memory.