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***THE ASYSTEMIC MAN AS PORTRAYED IN MODERN AND
POSTMODERN UNIVERSAL LITERATURE AND CULTURE***

ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

System theory covers a plurality of theoretical notions and opposing meanings that gravitate towards the concepts of *system* and *systemicity*, counterpointedly and interdisciplinary irradiating antagonistic relations in the field of *antisystemicity*, but also transgressive atypical reflections of *asystemicity*, coagulated in particular paradigms disposed on an axis of independent networking.

The research approach consists in exploring the valencies of *asystemicity* as a concept, methodologically unfounded, which exists as an interruption or suspension of the laws of *systemicity*, by placing itself out of their incidence or in the liminality area by adopting some options that are circumscribed in a horizon of potentiality, called by the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann, the founder of an important direction at the level of system theory, *unmarked space*. Situated in a contrasting relation and, in principle, unopposable to the *systemicity* paradigm, *the asystemic* may circumstantially have a convergent direction with *antisystemicity*, without the existence of a conditioning.

The variability of the distance which the *asystemic* man interposes to *systemic* structural and comportamental forms is determined by subjective contextualisations of the irruption from contingency, featuring proteic occurrences among the cultural syntaxes of modernism and postmodernism. *The asystemic* represents an individuality which legitimizes itself by referring to the principle of the preeminence of freedom, combined with the assuming of the feeling of identity, the authenticity of knowledge experiences, transgressing the *systemic* reality towards the potentiality of subjectively mapping the meanings of life. From the dialectic perspective of the issue of freedom, as it is revealed in psychological, psychoanalytical, sociological studies, such as the ones belonging to Erich Fromm and Jordan B. Peterson, as well as in the artistic visions of Goethe, F.M. Dostoievski, Thomas Mann, Robert Musil, Franz Kafka, Matei Vişniec, Veronica Roth, the *asystemic* man assumes the act of being as his identity and, implicitly, “the burden of freedom”, together with all its traps and risks of transgressing limits.

Referring to the “antinomic faces of freedom”, as analysed by Erich Fromm in his *Fear of Freedom*, correlated with the general tendency of the obedience of the human being to the systems, but also its capacity to resist, by anchoring the moral values to the inner forum of subjective conscience, we have made the distinction between the *intrasystemic* attitude, understood as

“escaping freedom” and the *extrasystemic* one, corresponding to the “freedom from” (*antisystemicity*) and “freedom to” (*asystemicity*), respectively.

(*Intra*)*systemicity* presupposes a vanishing point when discussing the matter of freedom, accepting authoritarianism and, implicitly, renouncing the autonomy of the individual ego, thus resulting in an alienation of the human being. On the opposition level, this expresses the „freedom from” the system, but escaping exterior authorities can generate, through deepening in an opposing sense, the tendency of subordinating to anonymous authorities, prefiguring new traps of *systemicity*. The axis of *asystemicity* particularises itself by detaching the gregarious, conformist spirit, by the “freedom to” keep a subjective reference centre, as a possibility of inscribing your own answers and meanings when confronted with the interrogations of life and lucidly assuming “the burden of freedom” with all its risks, valuing the uniqueness of the existential path.

We consider the counter-reply offered by Erich Fromm to the unmitigated skepticism in the study *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* as a reification of *asystemicity*, through the revaluing of some famous experiments initiated by S. Milgram and P. G. Zimbardo, and the valuing of a different perspective as compared to their thesis. If the authors of the experiment considered results as validations of activating human destructiveness spirit, in relation to an oppressive system, quantifying the obedient reactions of the majority of subjects, Fromm reveals the existence of human resistance formulas at the conscience level, manifested by strong emotional disorders experienced by most of the participants. Their suffering, irrespective of whether they had been tortionars or victims or if they had been subjected or not to the scenario of the experiment that turned into a halucinant reality, indicates the incompatibility of individual values and aspirations with *sistemic* repressive structures, the activation of the *antisystemic* spirit and the attitude of the *asystemic* man, who claims freedom as a state of necessity.

The symptoms of social pathology are recognizable not only among totalitarian systems, but also the democratic ones, those belonging to the capitalist society, which make abstract and reduce the human being to an object nature. As a reaction to an industrialised society which depersonates the individual, the declared *antisystemic* nonconformism of the American Counter - culture is emphasized by the appearance of the utopic micro-communities, centred on originality, creativity, excentric character, connection to the plurivalent energies of nature, thus promoting atypical, *asystemic* formulas.

Ștefan Borbély includes in his work, *Symmetries and discrepancies*, the analysis of the transition from these de-centred micro-societies, similar to the floating islands of an archipelago, to the “global village” (a syntagm belonging to Marshall McLuhan), promoting the idea of plural difference, which finds its continuity at the level of postmodernism through the internautic exploring of virtualities. In this context, Ștefan Borbély considers “deinstitutionalised journalism” a getaway from the sphere of redaction imposed journalism, by means of the internet, at the level of an *experimental asystemicity*, which relies on hybridisation, in an “anthill”- like informatics system. The *asystemic* formula of the diffuse journalism is complex and creative, but it also develops an anarchic and intrusive side in the absence of limits imposed by state, social or political organisation, having as a principle the freedom of speech and the uncensorship. “Journalist citizens” belong to the Counter-culture due to their functioning “outside the power relations”, due to their status of “inhabitants of the Net”, defined by transparency, being impersonal, auctorially nullified.

Multiple forms of alienation present at the level of the 20th century generate imprevisible mutations and a scenario of interchangeable faces, both at the level of the individual and at that of the authority, which becomes concealed and impersonal in a society of simulacra, actioning the mechanisms of uniformisation and restating the laws of crowd psychology, formulated by Gustave Le Bon. The *asystemic* man is characterised by the tendency of preserving an irreducible ego, desiring “to be himself”, not “the others”, perceived from outside as strange, mad. In this context, we associate to the *asystemic* man the concept of *Homo demens*, as rendered in Constantin Enăchescu’s attempt to redefining madness. Compared to the model of normality, of restating order, as represented by *Homo sapiens*, *Homo demens* defines “another way-of-being”, a symbolic principle, thus advancing the idea of madness as a dynamic, progressive force.

Literature and culture, in general, assume the role of seismographic registering the dangers with which humanity confronts, signaling the dangers of *systemicity* and the traps of technological progress, which menace the fundamental values of the human being. The *asystemic* man prefigures the tendency of preserving the autonomy of the self, detaching from the depersonalising forces, manifesting openness towards the dimension of potentiality, by means of existential equations that represent subjective meanings connected to the conscience proper and the avatars of (self)knowledge, assuming the aspirations and, implicitly, the risks.

We circumscribe to the areal of *asystemicity*, represented in literature, “the tentation of limit” and “the limit of tentation”, in the terms used by Vasile Voia in the modern phenomenology study of the faustian myth, by spectacular paradigms of interrupting current order, which attempt to resignify existence by surmounting the limits of knowledge. The *asystemicity* of doctor Faustus, associated to witchcraft, mystery and demonologic pact, is configured by Goethe in the field of geniality, of unbounding tentation, towards a superhuman dimension. The duality of the modern man is represented by the couple Faust – Mefisto, the demonic being perceived as a latency of the protagonist, activated in the sense of the self – transcendence, tireless creative aspiration and the aspiration towards the absolute.

The inner faustian dynamics is rendered by means of the demonologic axis of Dostoievsky’s novels, which follow a halucinant choreography of paroxistic experiences projected by the *asystemicity* of some characters. The strange and maleficent aura of Stavroghin, the protagonist of *The Demons*, belong to the paradygm of ambiguity and discontinuity, thus revealing a zigzagged existential itinerary and the split between the superhuman and the subhuman dimensions. *Asystemically* situated in a horizon of non-materialised latencies, due to a permanent mechanism of contradictions, Stavroghin experiences the feeling of the existential void trough a complete disruption from Good and Evil. The demonic need of absolute knowledge belongs to the field of exceptionality and *asystemicity*, the character being a Faust forever condemned to an eternal unrest, who assumes “the freedom to” kill himself, as a instance of the “sovereign will” of the superior man, as well as of the ontological failure. The utopic philosophy of *the man – God*, who defeats his fear of death trough the sovereignty of will and spirit constitutes the stake of Kirillov’s theory, which echoes Stavroghin’s ideas, enhanced by the scaffold of nihilism. The programmatic suicide of Kirillov will bring about, to the antipode, a reversal from “sovereignty” to vasality, the pact with his own demon being undermined by the pact with the other “demons” of the socialist movement, lead by Verhovenski, and will translate the degeneration of the *superhuman* into *subhuman*.

The protagonist of the novel *The Brothers Karamazov* characterizes himself by *asystemic* suspensivity and tragical oscillation between the revolt against Divinity and the necessity of its existence, placing it under the shadow of a doubt, negating God and the Devil, respectively, both being understood in an equal manner as representations of recognition and afirmation, thus revealing an imperious need for certainties and the absence of some immutable answers. The

freedom of conscience, the possibility to choose between Good and Evil turns from a gift to a burden, though a burden consciously assumed by Ivan Karamazov, however, without crystallising a final conception of the world, with him representing a potency which reifies by means of the ideas he experiments due to the characters that gravitate around him. His poems, *The Grand Inquisitor* and *The Geological Cataclysm*, theoretically anticipate the consequences of adopting the formula “everything is permitted” in the name of intellectual superiority, through the image of anarchic individualism, but also of theocracy and the philosophy of *the man – God*, respectively. Looking for a solution to ontological dilemmas, he belongs to *asystemicity* due to his *un-finite* character, as a potentiality of criminality and redemption, the loss of reason and the unending of the character’s destiny.

In Thomas Mann’s novel, *Doctor Faustus: The life of the German Composer, Adrian Leverkühn, As Told by a Friend*, the protagonist becomes the writer’s voice and also of the national critical spirit, *the man – God* who will sign the pact with Mefisto, thus becoming, in mannean vision, an exponent of the moral guilt of Germanism. *Adrian Leverkühn*’s portrait reunites multiple *asystemic* valencies due the condition of artistry, born out of his passion for scientific thinking and the rigour of mathematics, out of the demonic coronation of his genius, the temptation of limit and the demonic pact, interdiction of love. The ambivalence of *asystemicity* derives from the discovery, on the level of studies, of a negative theology, which renders God close to Satan and from the revelation of music as a synthesis of discipline and anarchic, creative chaos. The fulfillment of creatural destiny takes the form of apostasy, being the reification of the artistic dream of ‘piercing’, reaching perfection through the osmose of glaciation and incandescence. The masterpiece *The Lamentation of Doctor Faustus* is a double negation of God and the Devil, a synthesis between a profound religiosity and its damnation, thus anticipating nonreason and nothingness.

The inhumanity with which the character is endowed by the author is placed next to the expression of a true suffering, profoundly human, while the transgressing of the individual towards the generic destiny confronts him with a double “moral guilt”, but also with the dramatic condition of *the guilty without a guilt*. Being an exponential figure of Germanism, he is implicitly guilty in the face of history and he also makes himself guilty of (unconsciously) theorising fascist extremism from the perception proper of a Jew. Continuous oscillations and reconversions of the

antipodes reveal his *asystemicity*, his *inhumanity* and his *superhumanity*, as a materialisation out of the un-finite character of potentiality, of a soluble – insoluble option.

Multiple coordinates of *asystemicity* can be traced in *The Man without Qualities*, the protagonist having the symbolic function of representing the musilean "inner ground", in Ion Biberi's terms, crossed by metaphysical unrest, labyrinthic existential and artistic quests, reiterating the refusal of determination and the opening towards potentialities, towards the space of plurivalent meanings. The complexity and the thirst for knowledge, the moral and artistic intransigence of the author are transferred to the type of introspective character, who possesses an "extra-sense" of "possibility", thus facilitating transgressions of the inner and outer worlds and also the capacity of exploring the potential valencies of existence. Törless – Ulrich represents a voice by means of which the author communicates himself, the protagonist of the debut novel *The Confusions of Young Törless* anticipating, through the mirage of the inner world, the *asystemic* oscillation between the two worlds and the transgression of limits, each of them representing features of the man without qualities.

Built out of imprevisible and irreducible antagonisms, Ulrich is the exponent of *asystemic* indetermination, thus creating the impression of total abstraction from reality, without being however in a non-relation with the outer world, but remaining on a level of "discordant concordances", as Ion Ianoși puts it. He preserves his "freedom to" consider the present a sole hypothesis, looking also beyond the borders of reality in order to find "the liberty from" the world, forever hesitating to become something, being a character without having one in an order of exteriority. Ulrich finds himself in a contrasting relation with Kakania's falsity and the desiderata of *Parallel Action*, his opposition happening only on an ideatic level, promoting truth and remaining consequent to his own code of values. He also finds himself in a relation of contrast, but also of correspondence with Arnheim, the first being a *man without qualities*, the other a *man possessing every quality*. The two characters have as common point a suspensive *asystemicity*, being manifestations of the same indetermination: a potential man circumscribed to the world of thoughts and a multilateral one, dedicated to the world of facts. The resorts of *asystemicity* are different, but the pluridimensionality manifested on the inner and outer levels brings them together through the refusal of unilaterality, of being comprised in a formula.

The thinking of the *man without qualities* can be associated to a certain "essay-ism", opposed to the exactly directed impulses of ambition and to the puppet show that belongs to a

universe of appearances. *The potential man* suspended in the inner floating of his life opposes the *man-as-a-copy* and the *man – reality*. His intended decision of being a *man without qualities* turns himself into a receptacle of all traits, *asystemically* situated in the chimerical vision of the possible, of the "not-yet-happened", as an image of a suspended flight between the two worlds and, at the same time, a geometrical place of convergence of all antinomies. Non - adherent to actions and inassimilable to norms, the protagonist expresses the traits of *asystemicity* by means of suspensivity and the refuse of one-dimensionality, through the *insoluble solution* of construction and deconstruction, having an open character (exactly like the work), conferred by indetermination and non-conclusion.

Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* reflects the same contradictory relation between the worlds, sustained, on the one hand, by the author's inner fracture between the subjective dimension, that of looking for the meanings, and the exterior one, that of their dissipation. On the other hand, the two existential hypostases of Gregor Samsa – insignificant salesman and bug – a dual *asystemic* experimentation is configured, that of knowing the outer world, which translates a non-representation of the self and of liberty, a descendent direction, perceived as an impossibility of full right of being. From the perspective of a potential condition of artistry (Ion Ianoși), Kafka's character does no longer associates with *the superhuman*, but with *the subhuman*. His condition of *man – bug*, *man – amphibian* connotes a *subhuman*, which experiments deep human suffering and, in relation to him, the world reveals its whole monstrosity and *subhumanity*. Gregor Samsa preserves his identity of a "guilty without a guilt" in the process of *de-composition* and the attempt of *re-composing* a *split self*, belonging to *asystemicity* due to a *different way* of being, to the paradox of the simultaneity of the remote and the near to the performance of transgressings and world masks.

Within the cultural paradigm of postmodernism we witness a deconstruction of identities by means of a protean form fracture, existential masks and interchangeable nets. In front of the void of a "vague world", Matei Vișniec promotes the role of culture as a form of protection, by writing some pieces of unsettling literature, an interrogative theatre and an assumed journalism and he *asystemically* proposes the return to value, in the context of postmodernism and actuality. Matei Vișniec's literature is a representation of some efforts of revaluing the human being, both by condemning communism and by signalling the dangers of a dehumanising globalisation, opening, due to the significance of his work, the potentiality of an alternative in his readers/

spectators' consciousness, a "sense of the possible", which would *asystemically* lead towards the (re)construction of a humanist message.

The theatrical works depict the signs of an alienated world, the dissipation of identities, expectation states and hypostases stunned under the force of the void, voluntary reclusion by tracing a *circle* as an illusion of security, which suspends life, turning it to a vegetative state, prefiguring territories of absolute solitude and the annihilation of the human being. The absence of Logos mutilates normality, people turned into bins place the value of human dignity under the sign of decomposition, humanity being on the verge of a cataclysm and of some induced dangers. The opening of the "door" towards the allegorical significance of Matei Vişniec's work means evading *the circle*, in order to learn the *seeable* and to *travel* outside appearances, discussing the issue of founding some personal formulas, of preserving verticality and freedom, re-learning how to fly by *the people– birds*, the necessity of an *asystemic* solution, in the sense of coagulating the existential matrix through *re-creation, re – composition* out of their own "living fragments".

The portrait of the *dishevelled-man*, i.e. of writer M., from *The Merchant of Novel Beginnings*, reunites the features of *asystemicity*, by unifying the disorganised lines of personality inside the act of creation, writing a novel that fuses "novel beginnings". He reinstates the belief in art, love, at the same time preserving his right to dream and he also builds out of the pieces of a *puzzle* a message of re-authenticating humanism. Reflecting "troubling realities" both at the level of his fictional work and in journalism, Vişniec opens mentalities towards a *new way of being* in the world, towards an *asystemic* direction of reconstructing values in the ascendant direction of a humanist ethics.

Present psychological contextualisations reiterate the same need of stating individuality, Jordan B. Peterson suggesting the *asystematic* way of placing between *order* and *chaos*, i.e. of harmonising the two dimensions by adhering to principiality and responsibility. He formulates certain rules, as an antidote to all – governing chaos and also to the stiffening produced by excessive order, thus remaining in the sphere of full individual freedom the option of his experimenting or rejection and that of assuming the way towards the mapping of some subjective meanings of life. This is also the modality of constructing *The Divergents* in Veronica Roth's view, *asystemically* reuniting the features of post- apocalyptic humanity and the "freedom to" choose one's destiny, doubled by the "the freedom from" irrational authorities, which consider life a "simulation" of which they can dispose experimentally.

Consequently, the formula of *asystemicity*, correlated with assuming liberty never represents the easy way, following an analytical path that goes from *superhuman* to *subhuman* and further on to the *vague man* and the *recent man*, inscribing its value in the preservation of a subjective self, inside a world of existential simulacra. The presence of Evil in the world triggers the perception of reality as an immense burden, prefiguring the difficulty of distinguishing the moral from the immoral, thus conferring the *asystemic* man tragic connotations and determining him to doubt everything, including himself. Social, political and economic systems deepen the inner fracture of man, individual options marking a different situating within *systemicity*, *antisystemicity* and *asystemicity*. From all of these, *asystemicity* tends towards situating outside the systems, through a voluntary detachment of a depersonalised world, a world of objects in an effort of re-founding/ reconstructing values through the harmonisation with the self. *Asystemicity* refuses uniformity, coercive authority or the authority of an impersonal “self”, endowing man with unique and irreplaceable value and connotes the assumption of inner freedom as a necessity state, of identity and of a moral code, looking for a solution by distancing from *systemicity*. Thus, *asystemicity* reveals itself as a state of (dis)order or situates itself between *order* and *chaos*, being placed under the sign of destruction and reconstruction, assuming the preeminence of freedom and of a subjective option while inscribing the meanings of existence within the horizon of potentialities.

Key - words: asystemicity, systemicity, antisystemicity, freedom, potentiality, order, chaos.