THE RHETORIC IMAGINARY OF THE POSTMODERN DISCURSIVENESS[1]

Camelia Gradinaru[2]

ABSTRACT: This paper underlines the relationship between rhetoric and postmodernism. In lack of (and in spite of) a unique definition, postmodernism is seldom described as a non-centred set of rhetorical, critical and discursive practices; rhetoric offers a fertile frame for the interpretation of postmodernism. In my approach, I analyze both the type of rhetoric through which we can grasp the current of postmodernism (the rhetoric of postmodernism) and the use of rhetoric inside the postmodern discursiveness (postmodern rhetoric). The former was born out of its relationship with modernism and from this standpoint I am interested in investigating the rhetorical relevance of themes such as rupture, continuity, palimpsest, anamnesis, incompleteness. The latter is discussed mainly by focusing on the effects of the repositioning of rhetoric in postmodernism. These analyses create a cluster of motifs that constitute the nucleus of the contemporary rhetoric imaginary.

KEYWORDS: Postmodern rhetoric. Modernism. Rhetoric of rupture. Rhetoric of continuity. Rhetoric of incompleteness.

1 INTRODUCTION

Rhetoric is a discipline whose instruments and strategies have been heavily used in the development of postmodernism, and more than that, the latter built its own rhetoric, one that proved sensitive to its own traits. Rhetoric had a sinuous voyage, with moments of glory, but also with moments of silent marginalization. From classical rhetoric to rhetoric as the design of the social world (KAUFER; BUTLER, 1996) or to the digital rhetoric, its destiny has been marked by extremely diverse interpretations and contextualization. Inside this kaleidoscope, the time of reactivating the importance of the rhetorical and oratorical strategies – a moment synchronous with the postmodern movement – is a crucial one and deserves our attention even after postmodernism itself seems to have lost some of its vitality or, like others believe, after having been completely outdated. The rhetoric of spectrum remains an option

even in the latter case, whatever remained active in postmodernism being important at least in creating a "[…] spectroanalysis of the contemporary" (TOTH, 2010). No matter if we are after, beyond or in a phase of post-post-modernism, we have to focus on the mutations, the deconstructions and the textual strategies that were developed in postmodernism, as Linda Hutcheon (2002, p. 181) pointed out: "[…] the postmodern moment has passed, even if its discursive strategies and its ideological critique continue to live on – as do those of modernism – in our contemporary twenty-first century world." The epistemological reconfigurations initiated by postmodern authors were not accomplished without "rhetorical compulsions" (TOTH, 2010); this rhetorical effort was especially focused on the identity of the postmodern discursive formations, which turned out to be mixed entities. Moreover, after "the linguistic turn", marked by the Anglo-Saxon philosophy from the beginning of the twentieth century (Russell, Wittgenstein), we also talk about a "rhetorical turn" (CARRILHO, 1999, p. 8). The work done by Habermas, Perelman, Eco or Gadamer is a proof for the idea that we witness a considerable rhetorical "come-back" and revitalization (MEYER, 1999, p. 249). Even if the majority of the contemporary rhetorical projects privileges *logos* to the detriment of *ethos* and *pathos,* or make no difference from the art of argumentation (MEYER, 1999, p. 251, p. 287), "[…] the theoretical situation after the end of philosophy is constitutively opened toward rhetoric – since viewing language as action is characteristic of the rhetorical tradition." (ANGUS, 1993, p. 178). The passing from a paradigm of language as representation to a paradigm of language as action is a trait of the postmodern condition, so that postmodernism itself had an enormous influence on rhetorical theories (FOSS,S.K.; FOSS, K.A.; TRAP, 2001), and the postmodern authors constituted "[…] a dominant force in their view of the contemporary rhetorical period." (BROCK; SCOTT; CHESEBO, 1990, p. 430).

One way through which scholars can identify the specific rhetorical type of postmodernism is by observing its positioning towards modernism, from which it separates, only to come back many times and share some of its characteristics. The strained and ambiguous relationship that postmodernism has with modernism represents a good opportunity for us to capture the dominant tonality of the postmodern philosophical discourse. Of course, this tonality has to be nuanced in each specific case, for each philosophical approach. From this quarrel of theorizing, of concepts and of values we can extract a fruitful typology of modern and postmodern rhetoric. Rhetorical

plurality and hybridity can thus be easier grasped, and the back and forth movement from continuity to discontinuity seems to create a new rhetoric of irony and parody, or even a "rhetoric of the interval". Generally, the critics of postmodernism considered that the relationship between modernism and postmodernism is depicted within two main paradigms: the *paradigm of rupture* and the *paradigm of continuity*. Using this idea as a landmark, I shall try to present a few types of rhetoric that are suggestive for each paradigm, and also some types that are "suspended" between those two grand perspectives, or even surpass them or amass them into an ironic "meta-rhetoric". I am also interested in identifying some key rhetorical themes and motifs that are recurrent in the postmodern discursiveness, creating the present rhetoric imaginary. The common places of interpretation will be briefly discussed, the accent being put on proposing new perspectives that are also more nuanced.

2 THE RHETORIC OF RUPTURE

The term "postmodernism" provided a lot of reasons for a strong debate, especially because, beyond the suggestion – harshly criticized – of periodization, its history seems to be, to a certain extent, also the history of the prefix "post-", a mark of the break from modernism, for some authors, a decisive cue for continuity, for others (GRADINARU, 2010). For the former, the hermeneutic of "post-" created a revolutionary rhetoric, a remarkable "rhetoric of negation", that led to constant comparisons with avant-gardism, a situation especially met in literature or art. A reason for this comparison is the "semantic instability" of postmodernism, which becomes thus related to other terms, manifesting the same instability (HASSAN, 1987, p. 87). The discontinuity, the indetermination and the dislocation permeate postmodernism, and the latter "[…] is sometimes connected with an apocalyptic sense of rupture, of the passing of the old and the advent of the new." (BEST; KELLNER, 1997, p. 3). The rhetoric of rupture is not cleared of ambiguity – even though it firmly distances itself from modernism –, and Compagnon (1994) reminds us that, in fact, the concept of rupture is essentially modern, so that when we try to use the strategy of rupture the only thing that we realise is, in fact, a culmination of modernism. Between the postmodern seen as the cutting edge of the modern and the postmodern seen as the radical break from the modern, the struggle for demarcations remains essential.

The "quarrel" between moderns and postmoderns is easily seen in the theme of paradox that is central to the whole postmodern approach. Even if the conflict was a fundamental force in every accomplishment of the postmodern authors, the total exile of the modernist ideas resembles to "exorcism without end" (TOTH, 2010, p. 1). The fundamental question remains: how can modernism be overtaken? Between the risk of total relativism and the risk of the deconstruction of modernism (with the intent of re-writing it), we witness the birth of a "postmodernism of resistance" and of a "postmodernism of reaction" (FOSTER, 1983). Even though both forms maintain certain relationships with modernism, the postmodernism of resistance is more creative and more productive, keeping a distance that ensures the necessary theoretical "comfort":

> A postmodernism of resistance, then, arises as a counter-practice not only to the official culture of modernism but also to the "false normativity" of a reactionary postmodernism. In opposition (but not *only* in opposition), a resistant postmodernism is concerned with a critical deconstruction of tradition, not an instrumental pastiche of pop- or pseudo-historical forms, with a critique of origins, not a return to them. (FOSTER, 1983, p. X).

The theme of obsolescence is tightly linked with the rhetoric of rupture, with the idea that modernism is outdated, and the postmodernism represents, naturally, the current that comes to overpass the limitations of modernism: "Postmodernism is founded in the very concept of obsolescence – obsolescence of the modern, of the individual, of the History with a capital H, of   Truth with a capital T." (FITZPATRICK, 2006, p. 11). The obsolescence, on the other hand, leads, almost every time, to anxiety, so that postmodernism can be read as "cultural criticism's expression of the anxiety of obsolescence." (FITZPATRICK, 2006, p. 46). A complete break with the modern metanarratives imposes crisis, relativism, disintegration of paradigms, and a lot of criticism and ambiguities. The discontinuity became a familiar phenomenon that can be identified in a lot of disciplines (FOUCAULT, 1972, p. 4), indicating the general orientation toward micro practices and the dissolution of history into historicity.

3 The rhetoric of continuity

The postmodern philosophers are characterized by the lack of a unique view about the concept of postmodernism itself. Lyotard is one of the representative cases; the change in the terminology, from postmodernity to modernity (even if we are talking about a re-evaluated or radically revised modernity) is very frequent. "The break from modernity" is not assumed in a programmatic way by Lyotard, so that from this delicate conceptual swing a promising *rhetoric of the interval* is born, that can be grasped at the level of an author's work. The expression "rewriting modernity" (LYOTARD, 1991) looks like an attempt to escape the traps that had been opened by the difficult problem of the periodization of cultural history and the abusive use of the prefixes "pre-" or "post-". What meaning is left for postmodernism, then? The ideas of re-writing, of re-interpretation, and of re-evaluation of modernity constitute a possible answer, Lyotard thinks, because "[…] the postmodern is always implied in the modern", and "[…] modernity is constitutionally and ceaselessly pregnant with its postmodernity." (LYOTARD, 1991, p. 25). The modern temporality includes traits such as extenuation and overtaking, thus containing postmodernism, seen as an exacerbation of a set of characteristics that belong to modernism (especially the idea of founding legitimacy on the basis of the project of emancipation through science and technology). Moreover, being postmodern indicates rather "[…] a mood, or better a state of mind" (LYOTARD, 1986/1987) than a current or an "epoch", a situation that seems to encourage a terminological equivocation. In this context, we can speak of a *rhetoric of palimpsest*, that arises from this vision of the postmodern that it is "written" on the same texture (that of the modern) – the "old" text (the modern ideas) is visible and still perceivable in its Derridean traces, its background is identical, the only difference being that a new writing is added.

A complement of the idea of rhetoric of palimpsest is the rhetoric of anamnesis, which starts off with the premise that "[…] postmodern would be understood according to the paradox of the future (post) anterior (modo)." (LYOTARD, 1992, p. 15). Lyotard makes three remarks about the meanings of "post-". The first one makes reference to the architectural discursiveness, where we can notice the presence of the *bricolage*, of citations from anterior epochs or styles (diachrony). The second remark interprets the prefix "post-" along the lines of the failure of the modern project and of the rupture from the principle of the general progress of humanity, with the special mention of Auschwitz:

> I would argue that the project of modernity (the realization of universality) has not been forsaken or forgotten but destroyed, "liquidated". There are several modes of destruction, several names that are symbols for them. "Auschwitz" can be taken as a paradigmatic name for the tragic "incompletion" of modernity. (LYOTARD, 1992, p. 18).

The third remark that is of special interest for me substitutes the prefix "post-" with "ana-", and this translated into analysis, anamnesis, anagogy etc. Thus, the rhetoric that is born out of this process can be viewed as a part of the rhetoric of palimpsest through the use of the same strategies of re-writing and re-interpretation, but in the direction of repetition or of going back to modernism, but in the terms of a nuanced hermeneutic that does not lose track of its modern antecedents. The rhetoric of anamnesis is thus a dialectical rhetoric, that implies both a move towards modernism by recognizing the ideas, the merits (and also the failures of some of its important projects), and also keeping a safe distance from its "errors", but in the sense of its re-invention, and not in the sense of destruction of modernism. Thus, the process of anamnesis involves a direct and lucid confrontation with the data that may lead to a correct "diagnosis" of the current situation. The rhetoric of anamnesis includes a significant strategy of identification and symptomatological depiction that is only achievable through the analysis, sometimes painful, of modernism.

In this context, it is necessary to look for the theme of *convalescence*, as a necessary moment of recovery after the crisis. Vattimo (1991) thus understands the prefix "post-" as a comeback, a convalescence, a liberating move from a cultural error. The term used by Vattimo – *Verwindung* – is borrowed from Heidegger and has the general meaning of recovering from a state of illness. The connections between *Verwindung* and the concept of "weak thought" (VATTIMO; ROVATTI, 2012) are multiple, and the resulting nucleus of meanings succeeds in avoiding contradiction, continuity and overtaking – the three big "paradigms" through which the relationship between modernism and postmodernism was envisaged. Nevertheless, *Verwindung* also induces incertitude and the absence of a well drawn project – traits that were attributed to postmodernism.

The denial, in practice, of the modern project led to an implosion of modernism, and this is the reason why we must not brutally reject it, but assume a detailed research as the best way of dealing with its issues, and also the best way

to revitalize it. Postmodernism may be assuming these tasks and for that it gets cues for the "purification" and recuperation of modernism. In this approach, the method of using the most difficult questions represents an essential operation used by the postmodern authors. Moreover, the postmodernism understood as radical interrogativity, used as a means for transcending the limits imposed by certain presuppositions (a process that resembles, up to a point, to the avant-garde) can be identified almost in every epoch. So, if each period of time has its own "postmodernism", and modernism contains a postmodern part, then the latter may represent its constant state. Postmodernism is seen as a set of techniques and strategies that includes a steady rhetoric of suspicion that questions the principles of modernism, but this very movement of legitimation makes it exist. Lyotard believes that the postmodern "[…] is undoubtedly part of the modern. […] A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Thus understood, postmodernism is not modernism at its end, but in a nascent state, and this state is recurrent." (LYOTARD, 1992, p. 12-13). In this interpretation, that rejects seeing the relationship between modernism and postmodernism from a periodization standpoint and suggests its understanding in the form of the relationship among different types of thinking, writing and sensibility, the rhetoric perspective easily becomes useful and applicable. The rhetoric of the palimpsest is convergent with the motif of the consequence that is typical for the paradigms that reject the conceiving of postmodernism in terms of temporal posterity, as a current that had appeared after modernism. Postmodernism is better understood as a result of modernism rather than being thought as a period of time succeeding modernism.

The rhetoric of palimpsest, in which postmodernism is neither anterior nor posterior to modernism, but rather situated in an anterior future, is based upon a process of anamnesis and a dialectical rhetoric. The increasing virulence of the critique may transform the postmodernism in an operational equivalent of the avant-garde, and from this perspective, the postmodern obeys to the logic of autopoiesis, resembling a conceptual Ouroboros that invites us to self-reflexiveness. Moreover, I think that we can identify another motif that of a *Trojan horse*, especially when the terminological problem is discussed. A prominent example is Ihab Hassan, who shows the difficulties arising from the term "postmodernism" that not only sounds weird, but also makes reference to the thing it wants to overcome, so that "[…] the term thus contains its enemy within, as the terms romanticism and classicism, baroque and rococo, do not." (HASSAN, 1987, p. 87). In this context, postmodernism will never dispense with the comparison with modern stage or with the difficult and sometimes fake

problem of periodization. In other words, postmodernism is not an autonomous concept, thus indicating its limitations, references, and theoretical vicinities.

4 The rhetoric of incompleteness

An example for this kind of rhetoric can be found when we read Jürgen Habermas' texts (1983, 1990), who developed a reconstructive theory of the modernist project, thought as being valuable, but unfinished and with an unfulfilled emancipation potential. The ideals of the social and cultural modernity, despite their proved fragility and the historical events of the twentieth century, can still be achieved in an objective science, an autonomous art and a universal morality, whose consequences can be visible in the betterment and enrichment of our daily life. From this perspective, the postmodern project represents an attack on some important traits of modernity, such as rationality, progress, democracy, the underlying rhetoric being one of strategic withdrawal, reply or counterattack. The modernity is not consumed, fulfilled, complete, so that the postmodern project is not in the right position to formulate a valuable critique. Moreover, authors like Nietzsche, Derrida or Foucault are accused of making a serious error when they deconstruct the theses of modernism using concepts and methods that belong to the modern rationality. Habermas' distinction among the anti-modernism of the "young conservatives", the pre-modernism of the "old conservatives" and the postmodernism of the "neoconservatives" (HABERMAS, 1981) provoked a series of criticism (KELLNER, 1988), (HASSAN, 1987). For the interpretation of modernity, Habermas usually examines the "progressive" and the "oppressive" elements, using a kind of argumentative rhetoric with witch "weighs" the validity of modernity. This exchange of arguments is a dialectical activity that is very relevant to Habermas and Perelman too and outlines "the model of *controversia*" (CONLEY, 1994, p. 303). This model gives the control upon the thesis that is discussed and seems to confer a degree of certainty for the conclusions revealed as a result of this process. Of course, the high appreciation of the universal principle of rationality is the general premise that underlies this model. But then this process can be interpreted as the opposite of the Habermasian desire for consensus (at this point the Habermas – Lyotard debate is the main illustration), since the exchange of arguments can be, in many cases, agonistic and polemical. Furthermore, his philosophical work calls into play dissensus and thus breaks his defended distinction between philosophy and literature:

> *Philosophical Discourse on Modernity* can be read as a grand narrative that employs literary construction, copious rhetoric, and frequent moral and political passion. While he champions consensus, his text enacts dissensus, attacking both certain forms of modern theory and its postmodern opponent. Habermas' tone is sharply polemical and he rarely searches for common ground or points of agreement, preferring instead to engage in often passionate and sometimes overstated polemics. (BEST; KELLNER, 1991, p. 250).

Thus, the similarities between Lyotard and Habermas can be more important than their declared theories. In the same time, the use of rhetorical means in the act of argumentation (even against rhetoric!) is a common inaccuracy that we can find it in many papers.

The rhetorical differences sometimes directly intervened in the discussions, and this was the case with the famous Habermas – Rorty debate, especially when the subject was the relationship between public and private. Habermas thinks that Rorty's contributions are a part of the so called philosophy of life, in the sense that his main intention would be that of "poetization" and not of rationalization. The "poeticized" culture promoted by Rorty, his aestheticizing discourse and the depiction of the "world-disclosing function of language" is opposed to by his own philosophy of problem solving within our "intramundane praxis". Rorty thinks that

> […] the difference between Habermas's attempt to reconstruct a form of rationalism and my recommendation that culture should be poeticized is not reflected in any political disagreement. […] Our differences concern *only* the self-image which a democratic society should have, the *rhetoric* which it should use to express its hopes. Unlike my political differences with Foucault, my differences with Habermas are what are often called "merely philosophical" differences. (RORTY, 1989, p. 67).

What is very interesting in the case of Habermas remains the paradox of his relationship with rhetoric. On the one hand, Habermas avoids rhetoric in his theories; Thomas Conley explained this refusal by the important role played by rhetoric in the old order of German history. The reasons of historical circumstance are seen as sufficient for this rejection of rhetoric in his critical project and his orientation towards the universal principle of rationality: "[…] there were good reasons, in post-World War II Germany, to consider rhetoric suspect." (CONLEY, 1994, p. 303). Even if those reasons can't entirely explain

Habermas's position, they can be seen as a possible starting point for it. On the other hand, Habermas was included in the list of rhetoricians, as an influential thinker for this domain, too. Conley detects the existence of a consensus between Habermas, Perelman, Burke, McKeon and interprets this theoretical convergence as a symptom for the emergence of a "new Ciceronianism" that seems to be the central key for the understanding of their most relevant contributions in the post war rhetoric. The philosophers construct "rhetorical frameworks" for addressing significant philosophical inquiries that otherwise they would not be able to put. In this context, Crosswhite (2013, p. 99) asserts that "Habermas is himself one of those late-twentieth century philosophers through whom rhetoric returns". He also considers the Habermas – Gadamer debate as a suggestive moment that illustrates exemplary the comeback of rhetoric to philosophy. In this position, the destructiveness of the European wars and the crisis of modernity aren't the premises for the abdication of rhetoric, but, on the contrary, those facts conduct to the urge of rethinking reason, and in this process rhetoric is re-appropriated and re-used.

As Habermas, Anthony Giddens thinks that the illuminist skepticism in its radicalized version is high modern, but it cannot be labelled as postmodern. For Giddens, the dissolution of the metanarratives, the obliteration of providential history or the relativity of interpretations do not represent the signs for a present postmodernity, but they nevertheless constitute some key traits of a late phase of modernity. A fresh visit to the study of modernity is mandatory, because its power is not yet exhausted. The rhetoric of the theories that are taking us "beyond modernity" is fully rejected (GIDDENS, 1990, p. 49); the superseding or the overtaking of the modern project by the postmodern perspective doesn't fit with the latest assumptions about history and coherence, because of "[…] that very thing which is declared (now) to be impossible: giving some coherence to history and pinpointing our place in it." (GIDDENS, 1990, p. 47). The internal contradiction that the above thinker pointed is the fact that the postmodern epistemological claim affects the fundament of the concept of postmodernism itself when it assumes that knowledge has no foundation anymore (how is it possible to give a fundament to a concept when the very notion of fundament is dead?).

The modern design of the world cannot be surpassed by inventing new terms, new types of rhetoric or performing a deeper reflexivity. For Giddens, modernity doesn't search the novelty for its own sake (1990, p. 39) and the "wholesale reflexivity" – a kind of meta-reflexivity – is actually its own typical

presumption. "The self-clarification of modern thought" (GIDDENS, 1990, p. 51) is an essential process of the "radicalized modernity"; this process is not a kind of therapeutic inquiry and not even just rhetoric (GIDDENS, 1991, p. 180), but a consequence of another essential trait: the crisis. This is present in every modern movement and its existence may cause the release of a radiant rhetoric. Nevertheless, the crisis and its rhetoric are insufficient reasons for the proclamation of a postmodern era; on the contrary, Giddens sees in them the universalisation and the reformation of the effects of modernity. For sociologists, Giddens's analysis is almost scholastic; it gives proof of a certain "conceptual dexterity" (WACQUANT, 1997, p. 165), but its discourse is closed and self-referential (WACQUANT, 1997, p. 163). For us, his theory is a good example for the rhetoric of incompleteness, for the great trust in the modern project and in its non-finalized, but desirable objectives. As in the case of Matei Calinescu (1977), for whom postmodernism is just a face of modernity, among other five notorious faces – modernism, avant-garde, decadence, and kitsch – Giddens remains a faithful partisan of the modern movement. Rhetoric accompanies modernism (rhetoric of progress, rhetoric of crisis, rhetoric of aesthetic conservation, etc.), as well as postmodernism, even if the last one might be conceived merely as a hypothetic theory rather than a present state of affairs.

5 Modern – postmodern: a metonymic relationship

Tackling this relationship from a rhetorical perspective, Ronald Schleifer notices that the postmodern stance, that was described

> […] as continuous with and as a break with the modern, can be understood as metonymically linked with its antecedent. It is inhabited with the same sense of negative materiality that modernist discourse presents, but its relationship to that materiality is not quite – not wholly – the "same". (SCHLEIFER, 1990, p. 15).

Of course, this relationship is extremely complex: on the one hand, the postmodernism can be seen as a culmination of modernism; on the other hand, the postmodernism is separated from modernism through a "radical negativity". Thus, the crisis of modernism is still found in postmodernism, and the latter took it to its final metaphysical consequences; this crisis accomplishment is both a culmination and a negation. The ideas of loss and

crisis, that are specific to modernism, are also found in postmodernism, but without their usual fervour; they became operational entities, tools to be used in the act of writing. The diminution of the linguistic shock can be observed in the "postmodern rhetoric of play", that both replied and continued "the modernist rhetoric of crisis". "The anaesthetic effect" produced by rhetoric can be depicted by the use of the same trope – metonymy – so that the discourse is inhabited, metonymically, by meaning as well as by nonsense. The "chilling sense" of anaesthesia, the blurred meaning of the discourse, the feeling that "things are not quite right", the contingent nature of everything are some features of the contemporary discursiveness, that is caught in an endless symbolic exchange between modernism and postmodernism. The failure of the synecdoche, which dominated the early modern period, is associated with the end of the domination of the western way of thinking and with the institution of a (new) world that is not only meaningless, but of meaningless plenty.

Being a semantic figure of speech built through contiguity, coexistence, proximity or vicinity, the metonymy itself is the subject of various efforts of differentiation from metaphor and synecdoche. For Marc Bonhomme (1998, p. 51), the metonymy is a part of the category of tropes that produce transfers between the associated terms, within the same conceptual domain. Bonhomme underlines five important metonymical effects that we can find across different discursive uses: the individualization of a notion, the devalorization of a concept, the destructuration of a description, the concretization of a process, the densification of a process. Thus, we notice that in the discursive practice, the accents may be modified, some metonymies being fit for polemical use, for the devalorization of the denotation, while others lead to descriptive amalgamations, to subjective re-compositions of the interpretive frames or to dynamic reconfigurations of an entire theoretical field. If we think about Fontanier's view on metonymy (1968) – the metonymy ensures the depiction of an object through the name of another object, different from the former, but maintaining a dependence relationship with it –, then we get an interesting angle of interpreting the dyad modernism-postmodernism. From this perspective, there is a substantial connection between modernism and postmodernism, and this is more than a simple form of continuity, coexistence or co-dependence – and this view is quite similar to some of Lyotard's interpretations. On the other hand, if we use Du Marsais's (1818, p. 76) definition of metonymy, this understanding would suggest that the above currents are rather independent, in spite of the terminological resemblances (a

break of content, but continuity of names). As it can be seen from this brief analysis of the relationship between modernism and postmodernism from the standpoint of metonymy, the complexity of this conceptual couple is self evident.

6 Concluding remarks. Effects of the repositioning of rhetoric in postmodernism

The "quarrel" between rhetoric and philosophy, that is easily observable in the history of the western culture, becomes rather dimmed within postmodernism. Traditionally, rhetoric was given the task of analyzing the ephemeral, the contingent and the persuasive issues – "fragile" objects of study in comparison with those pertaining to philosophy – truth, objectivity, knowledge. Plato described the art of rhetoric as a construction of counterfeit conceptions and as a means to creating weak, but persuasive, arguments instead of telling (or searching for) the truth. Aristotle tried to offer legitimacy to the field of rhetoric, but centuries after that it was still short of a good reputation and recognition (Kant, for instance, depicts rhetoric as an "art of illusions", that is recommended neither for the bar, for the pulpit and surely not for the philosophical discourse, because of its tendency of gaining the reader's acceptance from the very beginning, without giving them enough time for a rational analysis of the topic). Nietzsche, on the other hand, includes rhetoric in his definition of truth, which itself becomes a poetical and rhetorical construction that is gradually transformed in a canon through constant use (NIETZSCHE, 1979). It is no wonder, thus, why Nietzsche has been seen as a forerunner of postmodernism and the studies on metaphor reached such high amplitude, one that has never been encountered before.

The relationship between philosophy and rhetoric determined, as Richard Lanham (1976) puts it, the emergence of two distinct "species": *homo seriousus* and *homo rhetoricus*. The philosopher is the prototype of *homo seriousus*, owner of a central identity, irreducible to something else, while *homo rhetoricus* is rather seen as an "actor" that manipulates the reality according to his own goals, and he does not try to know it objectively. If *homo seriousus* is very suspicious about the linguistic methods used by *homo rhetoricus*, the latter undermines the claims of truth and of a neutral language within which *homo seriousus* believes that he or she develops his or her theories. The postmodernism achieved the passing from the project of "despised *doxa*"

to the project of "despised *logos*" (SCHRAG, 1992) – Derrida, Deleuze, Lyotard being just a few examples of practicing a politics of opinion, and thus a detachment from the politics of reason. The "ostracism" of logic and its dispatch towards rhetoric was deeply criticized by Habermas, especially because this re-disposition of forces affects the argumentative reason and the criteria put forward by logic. The rebuttal of the classical oppositions – on the reason of changes in the domination relationship or of generalized suspicion concerning the idea of philosophical system – is interpreted by Habermas as a form of "fanatism" with negative implications, and not a natural consequence of the deconstructionist approach. Derrida, on the other hand, maintained his idea according to which the liberation of philosophy from literature or rhetoric is simply impossible, as long as philosophy uses tropes in order to produce changes in beliefs. Derrida generally tries to set free the rhetorical energies within texts, and his research on metaphor gives an extra ubiquity to rhetoric, that becomes an all-permeating power. Moreover, Derrida's works show that rhetoric is a not an optional, but a necessary tool for deconstruction. In similar fashion, Rorty thinks that the rhetorical discourse underlines the idea of contingency, destabilizing the frames of the logical-metaphysical discourse, so that the "poeticized" culture that he advocates seems to compensate for the shortcomings of the former discourse.

The fade of the distinction between the two genres (namely, philosophy and literature) is a consequence of the inversion of the relationship between logic and rhetoric – logic loses its primacy. For Baudrillard (1993, p. 10), the talk about inversion has already become obsolete, and the French philosopher prefers to speak about the indeterminacy of all the genres, about a complete categorical *hybris* that is a source of confusion. As Rorty points out, if the nineteenth century thinkers wanted to replace philosophy with the natural sciences, the twentieth century offered a central place for literature, science and philosophy being conceived as literary genres (RORTY, 1982, p. 249). The relevance of literature when we tackle the problem of discussing the main themes of philosophical reflection gives credit to the tendency of using the term "literature" for almost any type of writing that is capable enough to modify our sensibility concerning the themes mentioned above. Thus, a discourse that facilitates the moral reflection and enlarges the capacity of analyzing matters from multiple perspectives is coined as being "literary". Paul Virilio, for instance, explicitly asserts the inclusion of philosophy in literature: "[…] it is my belief that philosophy is a mere subdivision of literature. To me, Shakespeare is really a great philosopher, perhaps above Kant and a few

others." (ARMITAGE, 1999, p. 27). The postmodern science itself becomes a species of discourse and, in Lyotard's terms, it can be understood by means of transformation of the speech in a polemics that leaves sufficient space for the enunciation moves in order to turn them into inventions within conventional rules.

The problem of the indistinction of genres has been also discussed by literary critics. Macherey thinks that there are no pure types of discourse, but a sort of discursive blend which philosophical or literary character ("degree", in his own terms) depends on the writing variables, notably definition, identity form and cultural frames (MACHEREY, 1990, p. 426). Maingueneau (2004) also rejects the idea of pure discourses, opting for a search for the dominant discursive issue that makes us include that discourse in one genre or another. Moreover, philosophy and literature are considered constituent discourses, so that this common belonging must be turned to account, and the classical criteria of interpretation (aesthetic in literature, ethical and epistemological in philosophy) should not be positioned in opposition anymore, but in conjunction.

The repositioning of rhetoric in postmodernism contributed to the reconfiguration of the philosophical space, and also to the reconfiguration of the relationships between genres and discourses. The rhetorical analyses are integrated in a wider vision about discursiveness, and this was a main preoccupation for the majority of the postmodern authors. The deep research of themes such as writing, discourse, metaphor gives us the right to assert that postmodernism had a major contribution in the development of the *metaphysical rhetoric* and of the *textualist rhetoric* (SALAVASTRU, 1996). In fact, the entire postmodern discourse is interested both in the force and the originality of the ideas (metaphysical rhetoric) and in the way texts are built, connected (intertextuality) and communicate with each other (textualist rhetoric). Thus, rhetoric is re-associated with philosophy; it is not just a resurrection of the traditional rhetoric, but a "deep rhetoric", that tries to compose a new kind of humanism (CROSSWHITE, 2013, p. 7). For Crosswhite, in the late twentieth century, rhetoric returns not only *to* philosophy, but *as* philosophy, as an enlargement of philosophy. If the modernity seemed to increase the distance between rhetoric and philosophy, this distance seems to be diminished in the contemporary works: "If modernity can be thought of as the process of the intensifying divorce of rhetoric and philosophy, the late twentieth century can be thought of as their rapprochement and remarriage" (CROSSWHITE,

2013, p. 85). Deep rhetoric emphasises the similarities between these two disciplines and one of the most valuable associations is their ability of hosting interrogations and carrying controversies. In this context, postmodernism – with its countless contradictions and questions – is a fertile ground for the development of deep rhetoric.

In conclusion, my paper pointed out several relevant traits of the interesting relationship between rhetoric and postmodernism. The postmodern rhetoric imaginary that I tried to present here reconfigures in new ways some characteristics of the cyclical declines that rhetoric and philosophy have passed through. In my approach, two simultaneous analyses – of the rhetoric of postmodernism and of the postmodern rhetoric – are able to describe the interrelation of modernism and postmodernism, as well as the effects of the repositioning of rhetoric in the postmodern movement. The reinterpretation of theoretical frameworks chosen in this article led to the identification of some rhetorical motifs that I consider significant for the understanding of postmodern discursiveness. Themes as rupture, palimpsest, continuity, incompleteness not only make some textual "psychoanalysis", but configure a meta-rhetoric that offers a consistent description of the postmodern discursiveness.

RESUMO. Este trabalho evidencia a relação entre a retórica e o pós-modernismo. Na ausência (e apesar) de uma definição única, o pós-modernismo é muitas vezes como sendo um conjunto não centrado de práticas retóricas, críticas e discursivas. Dessa maneira, a retórica oferece um ambiente fértil de uma adequada interpretação do pós-modernismo. Dentro da minha abordagem, analisei tanto o tipo de retórica através do qual podemos entender o movimento pós-moderno (a retórica pós-modernista), quanto o uso de retórica dentro da discursividade pós-moderna (a retórica pós-moderna). O primeiro tipo de retórica nasceu do relacionamento com o modernismo e, nesse contexto, é investigada a relevância retórica de alguns temas como a ruptura, continuidade, palimpsesto, anamnese, incompletude. O segundo tipo de retórica é investigado especialmente através da concentração sobre os efeitos do reposicionamento da retórica no pós-modernismo. Essas análises se amparam em um conglomerado de razões que constitui o núcleo do imaginário da retórica contemporânea.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: A retórica pós-moderna. Modernismo. A retórica da ruptura. A retórica da continuidade. A retórica da incompletitude.

REFERENCES

ANGUS, I. Learning to Stop: a critique of general rhetoric. In: ANGUS, I.; LANGSDORF, L. (Ed.). *The critical turn*: rhetoric and philosophy in postmodern discourse. Carbonale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993. p. 175-212.

ARMITAGE, J. From modernism to hypermodernism and beyond: an interview with Paul Virilio. *Theory, Culture, and* Society, v. 16, n. 5/6, p. 25-55, 1999.

BAUDRILLARD, J. *The transparency of Evil*: essays on extreme phenomena. Translated by James Benedict. London/New York: Verso, 1993.

BEST, S.; KELLNER, D. *Postmodern theory.* critical interrogations. Houndmills; Basingstoke; Hampshire; London: MacMillan Press, 1991.

_____. ; _____. *The postmodern turn*. New York; London: The Guilford Press, 1997.

BONHOMME, M. *Les figures clés du discours*. Paris: Seuil, 1998.

BROCK, B. L.; SCOTT, R. L.; CHESEBO, J. W. *Methods of rhetorical criticism*: a twentieth-century perspective. 3rd ed. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990.

CĂLINESCU, M. *Five faces of modernity*: modernism, Avant-Garde, decadence, Kitsch, postmodernism. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977.

CARRILHO, M. M. *Rhétoriques de la modernité.* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999.

COMPAGNON, A. *The five paradoxes of modernity.* Translated by Franklin Philip. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

CONLEY, T. *Rhetoric in the European tradition*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994.

CROSSWHITE, J. *Deep rhetoric*: philosophy, reason, violence, justice, Wisdom. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013.

DU MARSAIS. *Les tropes.* Paris: Imprimerie d'Ant. Beraud, 1818.

FITZPATRICK, K. *The anxiety of obsolescence*. the american novel in the age of television. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2006.

FONTANIER, P. *Les figures du discours.* Paris: Flammarion, 1968.

FOSS, S. K.; FOSS, K. A.; TRAPP, R. *Contemporary perspectives on rhetoric*. 3rd ed. Illinois: Waveland Press, 2001.

FOSTER, H. *The anti-aesthetic*: essays on postmodern culture. New York: The New Press, 1983.

FOUCAULT, M. *The archaeology of knowledge*. New York: Tavistock Publications, 1972.

GIDDENS, A. *The consequences of modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.

_____. *Modernity and self-identity*: self and society in the late modern age. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.

GRADINARU, C. *Discursul filosofic postmodern*: Cazul Baudrillard (the philosophical discourse of the postmodernism: the Baudrillard case). Iași: Institutul European, 2010.

HABERMAS, J. Modernity versus postmodernity. *New German Critique*, n. 22, p. 3-14, 1981.

_____. Modernity: an incomplete project. In: FOSTER, Hal (Ed.). *The anti-aesthetic*: essays on postmodern culture. New York: The New Press, 1983. p. 3-16.

_____. *The philosophical discourse of modernity*: twelve lectures. Translated by Frederick G. Lawrence. Massachussetts: MIT Press, 1990.

HASSAN, I. *The postmodern turn*: essays in postmodern theory and culture. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987.

HUTCHEON, L. *The politics of postmodernism.* 2nd ed. London; New York: Routledge, 2002.

KAUFER, D. S.; BUTLER, B. S. *Rhetoric and the arts of design.* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996.

KELLNER, D. Postmodernism as social theory: some challenges and problems. *Theory, Culture & Society*, v. 5, p. 262-268, 1988.

LANHAM, R. A. *The motives of eloquence*: literary rhetoric in the Renaissance. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.

LYOTARD, J-F. Rules and paradoxes or svelte appendix. *Cultural Critique*, n. 5, p. 209-219, 1986/1987.

_____. *The inhuman: r*eflections on time. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.

_____. *The postmodern explained*: correspondence 1982-1985. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.

MACHEREY, P. *A quoi pense la littérature?* Paris: PUF, 1990.

MAINGUENEAU, D. *Le discours littéraire*: paratopie et scène d'énonciation. Paris: Armand Colin, 2004.

MEYER, M. (Ed.). *Histoire de la rhétorique des Grecs à nos jours.* Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1999.

NIETZSCHE, F. On Truth and Lies in a nonmoral sense. In: BREAZEALE, D. *(Ed.). Philosophy and Truth: selections from Nietzsche's notebooks of the early 1870s.* New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979. p. 77-97.

RORTY, R. *Consequences of pragmatism*: essays: 1972-1980. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

RORTY, R. *Contingency, irony and solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

SALAVASTRU, C. *Raționalitate și discurs* (Rationality and Discourse). București: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1996.

SCHLEIFER, R. *Rhetoric and death*: the language of modernism and postmodern discourse theory. Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1990.

SCHRAG, C. *The resources of rationality*: a response to the postmodern challenge. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.

TOTH, J. *The passing of postmodernism*: a spectroanalysis of the contemporary. New York: State University of New York Press, 2010.

VATTIMO, G. *The end of modernity:* Nihilism and hermeneutics in postmodern culture. Revised edition. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

_____. ; ROVATTI, P. A. *Weak thought*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012.

WACQUANT, L. Au Chevet de la modernité : le diagnostic du Docteur Giddens. In: BRYANT, C. G. A.; JARY, D. (Ed.). *Anthony Giddens*: critical assessments. London: Routledge, 1997. p. 159-167. V. 1.

GRADINARU, C.