Abstract

It is a matter of common knowledge that the communist ideology was against any form of religious behaviour while communism itself was attempting to become some sort of religion for its followers. The most important difference between religion and ideology, communist ideology, in particular, is that one can choose to follow a certain religion and adopt certain beliefs, but most of the people are manipulated to follow a certain political ideology. Thus language becomes the main manipulating engine for ideologies and people are determined to re-learn speaking and thinking differently even if they continue using their own language. The hypothesis promoted here is that the so called “wooden language” used by the communist ideology was attempting to artificially replace forms of natural/traditional discourse and this was mostly the case of religious terms even if the results were nothing but surrogate of communication.

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Introduction

Since most of the Romanians present themselves as being religious (the latest census organized in Romania, in 2011, indicated that 85.9% of people declared themselves as Christian Orthodox, 4.6% as Roman Catholic, 3.2% as Reformed Catholic, 1.9% as Pentecostal and 0.1% said they are atheists); we must assume that their language, their way of expressing thoughts and feelings, is naturally dominated by religious terminology. Many Romanian idioms contain religious references even if their denotation is not religious at all. Taking for example just a few expressions containing the word God, we understand that such idioms turned from a specific purpose and a limited number of users (Christian people, especially), to a general use, even detached and devoid of their primarily religious connotations:

\[\text{Bătut de Dumnezeu} = \text{năpăstuit, nenorocit. / Punished by God = miserable;}\]

1 Gina Necula, Tel.: +40 723270747
Email address: gina.necula@ugal.ro
Încotro (sau unde, cum) te-a îndrepta Dumnezeu = la voia întâmplării, oriunde. / Wherever the God takes you = to chance;

(Va fi) cum va da (sau va vrea) Dumnezeu = (va fi) cum s-o întâmpla, la întâmplare, potrivit destinului. / As God wishes = to chance;

Cu Dumnezeu înainte! = noroc! succes! (la drum, într-o aciune întreprinsă etc.) / Go with God! = Good luck!

A nu avea (sau a fi fără) nici un Dumnezeu = a nu crede în nimic; a nu avea (sau a fi fără) nici un sens, nici o valoare, nici un gust. / Not having a God = senseless, worthless, tasteless;

A lasa (pe cineva) în plata (sau în țiea) lui Dumnezeu = a lasa (pe cineva) în pace sau la voia întâmplării. / To leave smb. to God’s will = not interfering with smb.‘s chance;

A (se) ruga (ca) de toți Dumnezeii = a se ruga cu insistență; a implora. / To pray every god = to implore;

Parcă (sau i se pare că) a apucat (sau a prins) pe Dumnezeu de (un) picior = a avea un mare ție a neașteptat noroc. / To catch God’s foot = to be in luck (unexpectedly);

Dumnezeule! exclamăăie de spaimă, durere, deznădejde, entuziasm, mirare. / Oh, my God! = exclamation of fear, pain, despair, excitement, wonder;

Pentru (numele lui) Dumnezeu! exclamăăie de implorare, deznădejde sau dezaprobare. / For God’s sake = exclamation of entreaty, despair or disapproval.

Ce Dumnezeu! exclamăăie de nezgură, de nemulăumire. / God! Or In the name of God! = exclamation of distress, dissatisfaction;

Să dea Dumnezeu! = (formulă de urare) să se împlinească ceea ce dorești! / May God here you! = May you have whatever you want/need (greeting words).

The main issue with expressions from this category is that they are so familiar to Romanians and so commonly used and assumed in their discourse that they do not necessarily prove the speakers’ faith in God, but, more often than not, their propensity to accept these expressions for their global meaning, thus using them automatically for persuading purposes and increasing expressiveness.

Obviously, religious terminology has known different stages during the evolution of Romanian language but the most controversial was under the communist domination. Thus, focusing on the changes of the communicating skills imposed by the communist ideology, this study aims at exploring the way that the traditional locutions are distorted or even banished by the promoters of the ideology in case. Consequently, the most frequently altered expressions are those containing religious terms as long as the communist ideology was in itself an attempt to become the only religion assumed, accepted and practised by the entire people.

As we have previously stated in an article entitled The communist wooden language against the religious linguistic imaginary in the Romanian literary discourse [1] the so called “wooden language” used by the communist ideology was a violent attempt to artificially replace forms of natural/traditional discourse and this was mostly the case of religious terms even if the results were nothing but surrogate of communication. This aspect emerges from the fact that the discourse of the officials did not contain references to religion as they did not need to evoke God for granting their message with authority because their purpose was to replace such symbolic authorities with ideological ones such as: Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin. These were the new entities that people should pray at, and thank for their pretended wellness. The journalistic discourse of the time was filled with references to the ‘new religion’ following the words of the founders of the communism: “După cum ne învăță marele Lenin” / As great Lenin teaches us …, and ‘substantiated’ with clichés like Mother Russia, Father Stalin, etc.

Defining religion as “the opium of the peoples”, considered an instrument by means of which the exploiters deceive their subjects with the reward of sufferings after death, Marx¹ [2] has stated that they foresaw atheism as an attitude naturally shared by the beneficiaries of the freedom of conscience. He was the promoter of

¹ The quotation originates from the introduction of his proposed work A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, this work was never written, but the introduction (written in 1843) was published in 1844 in Marx's own journal Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher, a collaboration with Arnold Ruge.
irreligious criticism stating that religion gives people an illusionary reliability and a futile happiness and proposes His ideas were embraced and amplified by other communist leaders who understood that, in order to impose themselves, ideology had to become a dogma for the citizens and, thus, become a substitute for any other beliefs. “Electricity will take God’s place, the peasants should go ahead and worship the god of electricity”, said Lenin in 1918 [3], expediting the issue of faith.

The Romanian communist ideology was not an exception: it could not accept the fact that religion represented an alternative for those who did not believe in the ideological dogma. The demolishing of churches, and the harassment of priests as well as their descendants (some priests asked their relatives to adopt their children so that the latter could go to college) are only the surface aspects that prove the effort of the communists authorities to impose their ideology as a unique perspective upon the world. The true fight against religion was also carried by means of language. The struggle to banish from language communication paradigms that contained religious terms and expressions in order to replace them with communist wooden language clichés can be observed in the media of that time but also in the literary discourse, a faithful witness of the transformations suffered by language due to political indoctrination. The fact that in most of the cases the phrase “wooden language” was used with reference to the communist discourse is explainable because, in this case, the phenomenon goes to extreme, becoming a weapon of manipulation and inciting. By a speech perfused with clichés, promoted by the wooden language, the speakers’ linguistic experience is limited and their access to certain ideas that might help them get a right perception of reality is also made difficult. The communist wooden language forces the speakers into an epidictic type of linguistic competence when interacting with the officials but what is even far more dangerous is the fact that by frequent use the patterns of wooden language cross the border more and more naturally to every day communication of the public life, inhabiting parasitically all communication acts.

1. Theoretical aspects

In order to substantiate the observations regarding the phenomenon of the wooden language invading regular communication, whose expressiveness is given mostly by a large number of religious terms, I started from Eugen Coșeriu’s theory on language [4]. When talking about language, Coșeriu distinguishes three levels: I. the universal level, which represents the general faculty of speaking (the elocutionary competence); II. the historic level, representing speaking in conformity with a certain technique specific to a particular language (the idiomatic competence); III. the individual level, which represents the series of linguistic acts of an individual in a certain situation (the expressive competence). It is precisely the way in which this expressive competence is limited by the wooden language that interests the present study.

The distinction among the three levels of the language is important because, at individual level, Eugen Coșeriu suggests a dichotomy between free technique and repeated discourse since language is not imposed upon the speaker but the speaker is the one who assumes it along with the assuming of his/her own historicity. “The free technique of the discourse comprises the constitutive elements of the language and the actual rules regarding their modification and combination, that is the words, the lexical and grammatical instruments and procedures; the repeated discourse, on the other hand, comprises everything that is repeated, more or less identically, in the language of a community under the shape of an already made discourse or a more or less fixed combination, a long or short fragment of what has already been said. […] from this point of view a concrete discourse may often be analogous to a painting that is partly made as a collage; within the painting, besides portions made by the painter’s technique, there might also be fragments taken from other paintings, made by other painters” [5]. In other words, the speaking individual has very few possibilities to innovate as far as language is concerned, the free technique being more obvious in the manner in which the fragments are combined rather than in innovating new ones.

In Eugen Coșeriu’s opinion, “speaking is a kind of painting with simultaneous collage, i.e. it is partly actual technique and partly chunks of speaking already existing and located by tradition into all these expressions, fixed phrases, proverbs, quotations, etc.” [6]. These chunks of speaking are called repeated discourse and, when
referring to them, we shall use the Coşerian definition which accepts as repeated discourse “everything that is repeated, more or less identically, in the language of a community under the shape of an already made discourse or a more or less fixed combination, a long or short fragment of what has already been said” [7].

The sphere of the repeated discourse also encompasses the phrases containing religious terms or terms referring to divinity which represent the object of interest of the present paper. On consulting the Stelian Dumistrăcel’s Dictionary of Romanian phrases [8], one notices that Romanian is characterized by very many expressions containing religious terms which have a considerably long history in the language; therefore, many of them have been lexicalized, becoming so common to the speakers, that they are used not necessarily for their authority but only for their expressive value, as fill-in phrases. This is the case for phrases like: Doamne, Dumnezeule! (My goodness!), Doamne, ajută! (God help!), Doamne, iartă-mă! (God forgive!), Doamne, păzește/ferește! (God forbid!), Maică, măicuța mea! (Holy Mother of God!), Sfînte Dumnezeule! (My God!), which have become mere automatic expressions for some speakers.

A different category of elements belonging to the repeated discourse which are related to the religious imaginary have didactic or affective value: a apuca/prinde pe Dumnezeu de un picior (to be in the seventh heaven), a da cu crucea peste cineva (to come across somebody by pure chance), a nu avea niciun Dumnezeu (to have neither rhyme nor reason), a-i pune Dumnezeu mâna în cap (to have the devil’s own luck), a da/lâsa dracului pomană (to throw money away/to waste money or anything else), a da la Maica Precista (to give for charity), Ducă-se dracului! (Go to hell!/The devil take him!), Dumnezeu să-l ierte! (God forgive him!), a se face frate cu dracul până trece puntea (to call the bear “uncle” till you are safe across the bridge) etc., belonging to the inventory of phrases that speakers resort to for persuasive purposes in order to obtain a certain effect through the authority of the religious term.

The fact must be mentioned that the repeated discourse does not impose itself as a particular manner of regulating speech through fixed form only, which is more or less explicit, taking into account the fact that people express their own psychic contents by means of phrases whose form has served as platform for the ideas and feelings of many generations of speakers, but, as I demonstrated above, through the obvious persuasive and didactic intention as well. The perlocutionary purpose of the repeated discourse is to help shaping convictions and skills resorting to the community’s experience and wisdom. The fixed structure delivers the certainty of the fact that what is transmitted cannot be contradicted or broken, fact which explains the frequency speakers resort to this type of communication. The reception of the repeated discourse may also be interpreted as a statement of belonging to a certain social or political group, to a certain type of culture. Certain types of repeated discourse are characteristic to certain communities, which are related to the discourse’s social dimension.

This is the level where one can identify the main difference between the repeated discourse, encountered in every day communication, and the wooden language, whose sole purpose is to manipulate through words. The wooden language does not envisage didactic purposes anymore even if it takes the shape of the repeated discourse, its expressive competence being no longer directed towards transmitting knowledge but it is restricted to monotonous repetition of certain stereotypic ideology abiding clichés. The wooden language does nothing but minimizing the freedom of combining the elements and preferring the excessive use of the repeated discourse technique although, at this level, one cannot speak of total equality between the wooden language and the repeated discourse. The repeated discourse is a natural norm of the manifestation of speech while the wooden language can be seen rather as a discursive repetition, imitation and pasting of a known procedure in order to impose the ideology of a political power. As a matter of fact, one can see that the seeds of the wooden language, as a manner of expression stuck within certain patterns, are present in the very essence of the language which has a propensity towards repetition and stereotypes, given the fact that no speech can be a complete innovation.

The wooden language is a phenomenon which grows ignoring the fundamental function of the language – that of communication; this happens because the possessors of the code specific to the wooden language stop creating utterances by means of which to communicate themselves but start generating only collages of clichés which do not adapt to the communicative situation and which, consequently, do not transmit any information. Under these circumstances, speech happens only to enlist words not to convey ideas. The political discourse reduces the particular functions of the language to the fatic one, focused on contact, with the role to maintain the
coherence of the text, and to the metalinguistic one, focused on the code while the referential function, focused on context and establishing the connection between language and the world spoken about, is most often than not ignored. Thus, this type of discourse is allowed to deviate from the reality of speech and to generate only simulacra of communication; this is the reason for which people get entangled in the jungle of ideology losing the access to information and, when they get in touch with reality, they get caught as in a trap they cannot escape unless compromising and assuming the imposed code as a natural given fact.

2. Premises of the ideological discourse. The wooden language vs. religious terminology

The present paper is mainly focused on the manner in which the wooden language is trying to eliminate from language rooted, lexicalized expressions, specific to regular communication, and replace them with a series of artificially created phrases. We aim at demonstrating that the attempt of replacing the religious linguistic imaginary with a series of clichés without any referent does nothing but hindering the communication and making it difficult for the speaker. The most difficult aspect of our research was to find a corpus of spoken language originating from the period under discussion. Unfortunately, there are no records of true, vivid language. The only records that could be subjected to our analysis are artificial discourses made up for being published or TV/radio transmitted. The pathos transpiring these discourses make us believe they are fake because the oppressive machine of the communist ideology was so much present in people’s life, that they could not normally communicate any more. The speakers were forced to adopt a predetermined ideological linguistic behaviour. There are no elements that could allow us classify the media interviews as private discourse even if those being interviewed seem to tackle private aspects describing their daily routine. Nobody can believe that a farmer wakes up early in the morning thinking of a better way to make the Communist Party “grow and flourish”, but the censure was so powerful and strict they that simply “put words into people’s mouth”.

We had also the option of analyzing the transcripts of the Party meetings but we are reserved admitting that they were using there a vivid language. We suppose that they were controlling their choice of words because they were interested in proving each other how obedient they are and how much they do work for implementing communist ideas, so they had to prove a good command of the ideological clichés.

Accordingly, we resort to samples from literary works on the basis that there were writers who, under the cover of a pretended fictitious discourse, dared to mock the ideological attempts to change nature of the natural language. There were many Romanian writers who pretended to be obedient only in order to escape censorship. The works of these writers, the ones who assumed a subversive discourse, are those meant to transmit, sometimes in the subtext, some other times in plain sight, messages of warning regarding the attempt of transforming literature from an art of the word into an instrument of spreading ideology, thus underlining the danger of the communist attempt to change reality into fiction and fiction into reality.

Selecting the literary discourse as object of analysis represented a challenge as long as the wooden language becomes subversively pernicious when it invades literature, due to the fact that the authority of the written word in this field, through the general model of projecting the discourse, tends to cancel the real differences existing between the political discourse and the literary one.

Literature creates the framework to signal the danger of the fact that speakers are given a certain status by means of which they are forced to use a surrogate of natural language and an ideological manner of speaking. Most speakers are not capable of noticing that, by doing this, communication stops having a real basis as long as a whole series of abstractions whose significance cannot be identified interfere. One can notice here without any doubt that in the case of wooden language it is not the author that composes the texts but the political system. Preda warns through these texts against the danger of the literary act becoming a mere verbal reflex. Eugen Negrici underlines the fact that this language cannot express a real passion because it is irreparably compromised, and the universe which is born through proliferation is in fact a cemetery of calcified values of expression [9].

Fixed formulae do not stir emotions but only standard reactions as these texts make use of stereotypic feelings in sclerotic expressions. It can thus be seen that, in fact, the wooden language is more of a discursive repetition of
semantically devoided phrases rather than a repeated discourse, because it abandons itself to the pleasure of copying a model without the intention of communicating something, but only of using the magic of words to hide the reality, and it limits itself at inventing artificial clichés without analysing their implications upon the content of speech. The communication that uses the wooden language is no longer about repeated discourse but long monologues of Power (“speeches”, “addresses”, “expositions”, “trainings”, etc.). the repeated discourse’s purpose is social persuasion while the wooden language’s is manipulation, the most insidious manner of influencing. Unlike persuasion through communication which represents the overt attempt of an individual to change the other’s behaviour by means of certain messages that represent the synthesis of some experience, manipulation means determining people to act in a certain way without them being aware of this and maybe even against their own wishes and interests. The action of manipulating can only give the illusion of freedom, of free choice.

There are also situations in which the repeated discourse meets patterns belonging to the wooden language, and the combination of these two emphasises the falsity of communication. In George Călinescu’s novel, *Scrinul negru*, there are characters that have to survive under the conditions of the new political regime. The fundamental condition for them to fit in the new social order is to master the mechanism of expressing through the wooden language. Hagienuș is a character that struggles to adapt but older habits betray him:

He was an adapted, harmless, likeable man who handled the most stormy situations, giving in innocently, with a vocabulary of fantasy which he thought was communist.

– Comrade Hagienuș, would reproach, for instance, his superior, you are holding the works down, you are delaying the execution of the plan.

Then, Hagienuș felt he had to resort to political professions of faith.

– I am fully aware, I am self-criticizing, my whole life I have been a materialist, I have published in socialist magazines, so help me …

Realizing that God was not a suitable word for that era, Hagienuș interrupted his defense at that moment” (Călinescu 1960: 33).

In an article published in “Jurnalul național”, Stelian Dumistrăcel makes reference to the mechanism of generating linguistic patterns: “The natural and common manner of speaking (Quintilian) created and imposed in any language an impressive number of structure reflecting lexical-semantic solidarity through a process that Eugeniu Coșeriu labelled as a true «quasi-compulsory marriage» of some words. For the speakers of Romanian (and, on their turn, for the speakers of other languages, using their own vocables), the combinations that automatically associate an adjective with a noun have become real clichés: the leaf is green, the mountain is high, the girl is beautiful, the mother is good, the elder is wise, and the snake is deceptive! However, the repetition of the simple automated qualifiers (adding the social and cultural coercion) is the first step towards the trap in which the speakers fall when, afterwards, they accept other results of the subversive coercion: using the mother tongue, they have at their disposal “ready-made” formulae which perpetuate not only convenient standardized assertions, but also real behaviour norms of total reliability; to the above-mentioned list of examples of this kind, one can add descriptions such as “good kid”, “hardworking pupil”, “valiant commander”, etc. we are in fact at the unconscious spring of generating any wooden language” [10].

Like Hagienuș, Gaittan, another character in the same novel, modifies the repeated discourse by introducing into the message some words that he knows he has to use in order to be in line with the society he lives in.

– May God help the socialist party to make as many busses as these which are a pride for our country. People in the yard laughed at the weird wish … (Călinescu 1960: 602)².

We detect here the manner in which speakers come to use a surrogate of natural and ideological language without noticing that, in doing this, communication does not have a real basis anymore as long as a whole series

¹ Original text: Era un om acomodat, înofensiv și simpatic și făcea față situațiilor celor mai furioase, capitulând innocent, cu un vocabular de fantezie pe care îl credea comunist. – Tovarășe Hagienuș, îl reproșa, de exemplu, superiorul, dumneata fii lucrările pe loc, întârzi executarea planului. Atunci Hagienuș se simțea obligat la profesii de credință politice: – Eu îmi dau foarte bine seama, îmi fac autocritica, toată viața am fost materialist, am publicat la revistele socialiste, să mă bată… Dându-și seama că Dumnezeu nu era în tonul vremii, Hagienuș își întrerupuse în momentul acela apărarea” (Călinescu 1960: 33).

² Original text: S-așute Dumnezeu statul socialist să facă cât mai multe autobuze ca asta, care sunt o mândrie pentru ţara noastră. Oamenii din curte râseră cu toți de hizara urare… (Călinescu 1960: 602).
of abstraction whose significance cannot be found interfere: “plan”, “self-criticism” are very vague elements, which do not help expression, but make it even more intricate. Gheorghe Gricurcu’s statements regarding communist dogma find their basis in situations like those mentioned above: “Ideology was as univocal, as it was intolerant, moulded in invariable formulae” [11].

The balance between ideology and natural communication skills demonstrates the speaker’s desperate attempt of not leaving the patterns, an attempt as natural as possible given the fact that Bronislaw Malinowski stated, as early as 1923, the man’s need to integrate into the community. From Malinowski’s observations it results that language is used mainly to fulfil social functions, i.e. the social relations and interactions are negotiatied by means of linguistic expression. The author calls this phenomenon “factic communion” and he describes it as: „a feeling of belonging to a community” [12]. The factic communion presupposes maintaining the feeling of belonging to a community, of solidarity among the members of the group, but also the feeling of accepting the others as well as being accepted by the others.

3. Banished metaphors

In an article entitled Forbidden words and phrases, Mioara Avram [13] mentions, among the ways of manifestation of dictatorship over Romanian language, the vocabulary interdictions, which proves the wooden language’s fear of connotations. Among the words whose use is forbidden by a presidential decree, we could mention traditional addressing formulae and polite reference to persons such as domn (Mr.), doamnă (Mrs.), domnișoară (Miss), inger (angel), Dumnezeu (God).

From the gallery of metaphors comprising religious terms, only those negatively connotated are preserved. In The violent imaginary of the Romanians by Ruxandra Cesereanu [14], the author presents an inventory of such metaphors used during the communist era to designate “the enemy”: iude (Jude), farisei (Pharisees), drăcușori (little devils), diavoli (devils), etc.

“Enemy” designating metaphors are also to be found in Marin Preda’s works. However, their use is marked by the commentator’s smooth irony:

“I know this type of intellectuals that are very proud of the little bourgeois devil that lies in them and grows little horns whenever serious things are at stake”. Ion Mice replied: “Anyway, I see that you too use in your thinking the system og images that belongs to the opium of the masses: little devil, little horns … We, the Marxists, on the other hand, know that there are no devils or sons of theirs, little devils …” (Preda 1980: 254)1.

In cases like this, pathos cancels judgement, its irruption preventing from checking the solidity of arguments. In cases like this, the author casts an accomplice look to the reader so that this understands that the aggressive invasion of the wooden language cannot be looked upon and accepted in resignation by the careful handlers of the language.

A distinction must be made here between the cliché as an act of style and the cliché as a mere expression stereotype. One can resort to a cliché out of imagination and verbal mobility but also for a parodical purpose. Stereotypes, through the familiarity of recognition, have the advantage of saving the investment of intellectual energy, favouring the speed of enunciation and comprehension without taking into account the contextual rules but only the co-textual ones.

The wooden language is a strategy of distorting communication by means of which the listener is not expected to reply or to interfere with the message but, as Slama-Cazacu notices, “Romanians gradually became masters of speaking relatively cryptically and of decoding the subtexts of some apparently harmless messages” [15].

The greatest danger of all is that of reproducing a single discourse already thought, already decorated with “working-class enthusiasm”, without feeling the need to express personal opinion or experience. In such cases,

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1 Original text: „Cunosc eu acest gen de intelectuali foarte mândri de drăcușoriul mic-hurghes care zace în ei și care își scoate cornițele ori de câte ori i vorba de lucruri serioase”. Ion Mice îi repledase: „În orice caz văd că și dumneavoastră gândiți prin sistemul de imagini care face parte din opiumul popoarelor: drăcușor, cornițe... Or, noi, marxiștii știm că nu există drăci și nici fii de-a îl lor, drăcușori...” (Preda 1980: 254).
authentic art has the merit of rejecting duplicitary conscience because, as Vasile Șerban put it, “the authentic artistic expression is not possible outside the freedom of artistic construction; at most, it could disguise into pseudo-works of art” [16].

Sometimes parody is made by inserting clichés in the text of some aphoristic expressions. Situations are thus created in which the repeated discourse meets patterns belonging to the wooden language, and the combination of the two accentuates the feeling of forging the communication process. Preda assigns Ion Micu’s character expressions that accentuate the gap between the repeated discourse and the wooden language in ideology’s attempt to take the place of the traditional communication:

– May Marx help you not to understand my words too late! (Preda 1980: 267)¹.

Thus, the ironic-parodic manner of “reading” an age dominated by totalitarianism becomes an amusing discursive game in which the intertextual dialogism is pampering itself generating undisputed sensitizing effects in the reading process. The intertextual ludic frenzy in some texts is a way of manifesting a certain dissidence, perhaps more effective than others, a dissidence towards an institutionalized and retarded ideology with all its disastrous effects on social, political and cultural levels.

Conclusions

We can conclude by saying that the battle for the purity of ideas is the same with the battle for the dignity of language and that demagogy, the empty phraseology represents not only a moment of unhappy existence of words, but also a grovelling manifestation towards a certain political power. One may state that the wooden language is the art of making up pretexts for ideological discourse. This language expresses, in fact, a state; it represents a label of inertia. The fact is certain that while attempting to offer speakers a substitute for the religious imaginary, one obtains only a simulacrum of communication. Literature’s merit is that of proposing, as a response, the protest against the clichés that it undermines by ridiculing them.

The words of the wooden language seem to impose themselves through spontaneous generalization creeping into communication and parasitizing the language. Like the “Trojan horse”, the words of the wooden language creep into language, spreading like a computer virus: introduced by a momentary discourse, the virus evolves and colonizes classic formulae, eradicating all the other possibilities of different formulation. As a result, a lexical conflict appears because dispersed ideas are given universal status. The discourse is an automated one, the ideological meaning taking all space, leaving none for interpretations. It is clear that what we call wooden language is not the expression of thought but rather a model offered for the speakers in order to make them unlearn to think for themselves, allowing them only to repeat ready-made formulae, destined to produce an indetermination effect.

The examples offered in this paper aimed at demonstrating the fact that the communist discourse is a case of language pathology expressing the principle of redundancy. The wooden language replaces the tropes phenomena and events, dissociating words from objects. While in natural language the tropes communicate motions, concepts, allowing for the fitting of the discourse to its object, in wooden language the purpose of the tropes is to prolongue the discourse and to hypnotize the audience. Therefore, banishing religious terms is just another attempt to manipulate people by detouring them from their natural speaking habits and making them speak an artificial, unfamiliar language meant to make people re-learn speaking and thinking differently even if they are still fed the illusion of continuing using their own language.

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