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**FROM
COINCIDENTIA OPPOSITORUM
TOWARDS
NON GENERIC UNIVERSALITY**

Résumé. *Tant coincidentia oppositorum que l'universalité non générique est des concepts disputable et disputes. On peut observer que le premier avoue une méfiance à l'égard du principe de la non contradiction, tandis que la seconde avoue une sérieuse doute sur la valeur du principe de l'identité. On peut même identifier un passage entre la contradiction et l'identité, car la contradiction n'est pas possible sans avoir déjà un l'idée d'une identité générique! On trouve q'une universalité «partielle», «insulaire», «locale», non générique [mai pas anti générique] peut mieux répondre aux multiples problèmes du monde contemporaines, à la même fois globalisée et postmoderne, comme, par exemple, dans l'appel pour l'introduction parmi les Droit Fondamentaux du l'Homme du droit d'être différent, d'un droit à la diversité. On propose la création d'un group de réflexion sur l'universalité / spécificité du l'Être (humaine ou non) sous l'appellation «Group Philo pour la diversité». On suggère que la capacité de concevoir l'universalité a la même nature que la capacité d'entendre, de concevoir l'espace et le temps. Donc, dans l'analyse de l'universalité nous sommes dans la situation de continuer tant Kant que Hegel.*

Key words (Mots clés): universality (universalité), *coincidentia oppositorum*, Being (Être), being (étant), non contradiction, identity (identité), diversity (diversité), non (= null) generic universality (universalité non générique).

Memento: The thought deployed here will be a fragmentary and a rhapsodic one, because in the search of the generic universalityⁱ grounds, the construction of a theory (obviously, having generality!) is impossibleⁱⁱ.

The history of culture has the “air of family” of a geographical exploration of the Human Being. Philosophers have often discovered different territories comparing to the map they were interested in. The search of the passage leading from the understanding *coincidentia oppositorum* to the understanding of *non generic universality* could be a story full of philosophical hypothesisⁱⁱⁱ.

First of all, we have to observe that “the doctrine of *coincidentia oppositorum*, the interpenetration, interdependence and unification of opposites has long been one of the defining characteristics of *mystical* (as opposed to philosophical) thought”^{iv}. Any review of the philosophical thought evolution will find that this event was (and is) one of the most appealing concepts, and its *presence* in philosophy was (and is) *very elusive*.

Despite this “discreetness”, it is fully analyzable^v, *rationaly analyzable*^{vi}. “Whereas mystics have often held that their experience can only be described in terms that violate the ‘principle of non-contradiction’, western philosophers have generally maintained that this fundamental logical principle is inviolable”^{vii}.

Instead, for the Oriental thought, the defense of this principle was not (and it is not) a *sine qua non* condition of the (philosophical) discourse rationality^{viii}.

As almost each religion researcher knows, based on a census of the *problems dissolved*^{ix} in his researches, Mircea Eliade has made one of the most insistent contemporary apologias of the *coincidentia oppositorum*^x concept. However, in the main time, as almost each researcher of the contemporary philosophy *knows it not*, “Eliade was educated as a philosopher” and “despite his focus on the history of religions, Eliade never relinquished his philosophical agenda. That said he never fully clarified his philosophy”^{xi}.

Starting from here and from the diversity of the theoretical contributions^{xii} of this true *uomo universale*, “there has been radical disagreement over his thought, some seeing it as a crucial contribution to the study of religion, and some seeing him as an obscurantist whose normative assumptions are unacceptable”^{xiii}. From some of his Western critics, he is neither a true scientist, nor a true philosopher. “Mircea Eliade was under the savant, the semi scientific or even opaque observation of those that had a sort of relationship with his work. Robert Baird^{xiv} or John Saliba^{xv} were considered that the

affirmations of the Romanian scholar are unacceptable for a consequent scientific study, whereas Brian Rennie^{xvi} – remembering here only a part of his critics – is contesting that the Romanian historian of religions is bringing something original in ontology. Most of all, Mircea Eliade is criticized for its methodological inconsistency, reflected in the absence of a conceptual coherence, inconsistency that is making many of his commentators to ‘scientifically’ decide that he could be considered only just a researcher and not a thinker with a system or a cultural innovator^{xvii}.

In fact, those critics could be easily expanded to the Romanian philosophy itself, proud to endless confess and defend its double tradition, both Western and Oriental. Let’s observe together the unexpected fact that, despite its favorable topology, Romanian philosophy generally continues to be ignored in the Western analysis of the philosophies of Being as not having a real originality.

This could be the situation of all the Eastern European philosophies. Obviously, anyone will find in any of them a strong identity, because there is a clear originality in them. They simply do not share the same understanding and use of universality.

In the most powerful moments of the Romanian philosophy, one could easily find clear efforts to overpass the limitations of the non contradiction – as it happens in the case of Lucian Blaga, Mircea Florian, Constantin Noica, Anton Dumitriu, Stephane Lupasco or Mircea Eliade. They insist to promote ideas such as the following ones: there is a dynamic logic of the contradictory, of the *included tertium* (Lupasco); the ultimate reality is beyond a rational analysis - it is the Big Anonymous producing the mystery of the Being (Blaga); in any binary opposition (as it is with Substance and Spirit, too), the second, the recessive component is the most important for a philosophical analysis (Florian); under the principle of the unilateral contradiction, only the being is contradicting the Being (Noica); a true philosophical analysis is beyond (or: before) the distinction conceptual – unconceptual, rational irrational (Dumitriu) etc.

Those philosophical developments were, in fact, harsh attacks on the principle of non contradiction. Their common presupposition was that all the philosophical disputations or misunderstandings come from the differences in considering and using the non-contradiction principle.

In fact, each of these attacks is already an attack on the principle of identity itself, too: *there is no contradiction without generic universality.*

In contemporary science, there are approaches seriously considering “we are not dealing with contradictory but with complementary pictures of the phenomena, which only together offer a natural generalization of the classical mode of description.”^{xxviii} From this perspective “superficial truths are those whose opposites are false, but that ‘deep truths’ are such that their opposites or apparent contradictions are true as well”^{xxix}.

One could appeal, too, Karl Gustav Jung’s position on the coincidence of the opposites, confessing his distrust in the power of the non-contradiction principle in psychological researches & explanations^{xxx}.

It was also observed that any cosmology could be practically reduced to a structure of six pairs of opposite categories, and then, we have to accept the existence of a categorical structure of the cosmology itself^{xxxi}.

On the other hand, one could demonstrate that, from a physics viewpoint, the “complex irreducible systems”, like the human brain, are also highly non-generic systems^{xxxii}. That could be understood as if the human brain is not operating in a generic universal way.

For John McCarthy the existence of the separate sciences could only be explained by “the existence of universality at many levels.”^{xxxiii}

Let’s also remember Raphael Confiant’s concept of *diversality*^{xxxiv}.

We could conclude that even in contemporary science, there is no general agreement on the inviolability of the non-contradiction principle.

Naturally, as it was already observed, “a paradox or contradiction lies hidden in every metaphysical theory”^{xxxv}. The hallmarks of philosophy presuppose making antinomy and binary oppositions^{xxxvi}.

In fact, in almost every philosophy one could find a categorical structure of pairs of opposite concepts. That is why, in philosophy, an argumentation (demonstration^{xxxvii}) is both, an exploration of our founding perplexities^{xxxviii} and a game with our limits & limitations^{xxxix}.

Obviously, the in-consistency of a theoretical vision or of a philosophical approach is not only a *sine qua non* consequence of the breaking of the non-contradiction condition. In the very Western tradition, philosophers like Heraclites, Nicholas of Cusa, Meister

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Eckhardt, Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel, Stephan Lupasco or Jacques Derrida were strongly considering otherwise.

We could and even *have* to go beyond the presentations of *coincidentia oppositorum*. For example, we could use the discussion on the varieties of dialectic presented by Nick F. Gier^{xxx}, we could use some of the contemporary essays to rethink logic, as the Graham Priest's *dialetheism*, the Gotthard Günther's *contexture*^{xxxii} or Michael Finkenthal's analysis on *Lupasco, Nishida and Matte Blanco*^{xxxiii}.

Obviously, in sciences, religions, cultural behaviors^{xxxiii}, mentalities^{xxxiv} etc., there are many different uses of the idea of universality. Or, from different perspectives on the universality, it is just one step to different perspectives on the identity and therefore, on the contradiction itself.

That is why this is the most appropriate moment to observe, agree and note that the differences between various philosophical approaches of the Being are not produced only by different perspectives and uses of contradiction, but also and moreover by different perspectives and uses of the identity (universality).

Philosophy has to be an intelligible analysis of Being itself.

The claim the non-contradiction is the principle of the rationality itself is un-defendable, because "rationality" is less than "rationalities". Moreover, it is the time to abandon "rationalities" themselves for the profit of the much more large and permissive "intelligibility". In fact, intelligibility is over passing the frames of the rationality: the most irrational human act or thought is still intelligible, even it is not rationally defendable.

From this perspective, Eliade's effort to express the specificity of *homo religiosus* as being (*human* being) is a *philosophically* highly significant one, because it opens the gates for a larger understanding of the Being itself: through *coincidentia oppositorum* we could perceive the face of *non generic universality*.

Our Western or Oriental provenience is always already a future. We could understand now, for example, why some of the most well-known thinkers from Romania (Mircea Eliade, Stephane Lupasco, Eugen Ionescu) have, through their works, pleaded for the liberation from the straight classical logic's command of non-contradiction^{xxxv}.

We do not have any idea of how is the Being like in itself, the Being as being, *ens inquantum ens*.

We are only supposing it is universal or even generic universal (all x could and should be reduced to y). The generic universality is revealing itself as a ground, basic, fundamental, transcendental *presupposition* we are making in order to secure the trust in our rational analysis of the fact of being. The source of generic universality in all the beings has to be searched outside the Being itself (because it has direction!).

If we agree that universality is a sort of presupposition we have to assume it as a presupposition. For example, accepting the relativity of our ideas of universality, we will have to accept the necessity of the introduction of a right of difference, a right of diversity, among the universal human rights, too^{xxxvi}.

On the other hand, the existence itself, the simply fact of being has already “direction” (but not “*a* direction”!), has a “toward” inside. That is why Human Being has intentionality. However, our intelligent intentionality, as power of intelligibility is going beyond (or, more exactly, *before*) any oppositions and identities.

In fact, because the being has already “direction”, we are wrongly & deeply persuaded that we could deploy from A to Z, the entire being as it we would have here a consequence of our thought. Because the human being has “direction” (intentionality), our thought has direction, too. For that reason, the true truth has to produce truth in the thinking process. This is an effect of our belief in the generic universality. Indeed, the very derivation of the truths from truths could suggest such a belief and such a presupposition.

On the other hand, if a true proposition could be also derived from a false one and if from a false proposition we could obtain any kind of proposition, then we have to search the validity criterion for our philosophical theories outside the presupposition of a generic universality of the logical thought itself.

The non-generic universality is definitely not the absence of the generality, but the presence of a partial, insular, localized generality as that one described in the expression “islands in the stream”(!) or as the Being is presented by Wittgenstein, in the metaphor of rope or in the metaphor of the plan of a city.

Anyway, let us observe that without universality, generic or non-generic, the understanding process itself becomes impossible.

From one of Mircea Eliade's most known themes, *coincidentia oppositorum*, we arrived to some rhapsodic explorations of the (*non generic* or not) *universality*.

Let's observe that *coincidentia oppositorum* has leaded us directly to the *non* (null) *generic universality*.

From (non) *contradiction* we arrived to *identity*.

Moreover, starting from the observations that the generic universality is a presupposition and a belief, we should agree that our capacity of conceiving the universality (non-generic or generic) may be even more than just a presupposition or belief: it could be a mode of apprehension.

We have to claim that the presupposition of universality is both a pure form of intuition and pure intuition, as the space and time are^{xxxvii}.

Thorough the analysis of the universality, we will, in fact, continuing Kant *and* Hegel.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Or: *null generic universality*.

ⁱⁱ In the last almost 25 years, I have defended and deployed the idea of a non (= null) generic universality in various researches:

- my graduation work: *Being and being in Heidegger, Hartmann and Lukacs* - 1982;
- my first book on it: *Un-unitary One. Stories in the non generic universality of the fact-of-being* 1984-2004;
- my doctoral thesis: *Horizons and levels in the integrator semiotic of the philosophical discourse* - 1998-1999;
- some of my studies (essays) such as:

- **L'universalité non générique et les langues – une perspective francophone**, in: *Travaux du Colloque International «La francopolyphonie comme vecteur de la communication»*, Chisinau, ULIM, 2006, pp. 33-36;

http://st.ulim.md/download/icfi/publicatii/francopolyphonie/1/v_e_g_uliciuc_univers_nongenerique.pdf

- **The non-generic universality - a paradigm of the 21st century ?**, in: *Proceedings of the International Congress of Philosophy, "Person and society. Perspectives on the 21st century"*, Universidade Catolica Portuguesa, Braga (in progress [2005]);

- **Humans: unity in diversity and/or diversity in unity? – on the philosophy of the non-generic universality**, Proceedings, ЧЕЛОВЕК В СОВРЕМЕННЫХ ФИЛОСОФСКИХ КОНЦЕПЦИЯХ / *Human Being in Contemporary Philosophical Conceptions*, ВОЛГОГРАДСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ / Volgograd State University, ООО "ПРИНТ" / ООО "Print", 2004, pp. 100-104; a variant of that paper could be found in: *Romanian Cultural Studies Internet Review* (ROCSIR), 2004, no. 4, pp. 21-32; http://www.rocsir.usv.ro/archiv/2004_4/12Viorel%20Guliciuc.pdf

- **The non-generic universality and the globalization**, in: *Ideologies, Values and Political Behaviors in Central and Eastern Europe*, in: *Romanian Cultural Studies Internet Review* (ROCSIR), 2003, no. 3-4, pp. 30-35; http://www.rocsir.usv.ro/archiv/2003_3-4/22Viorel2003.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Of course, the idea of "philosophical hypothesis" is a very disputable one.

^{iv} W.T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, London, MacMillan Press, 1960, (esp. *Mysticism and Logic*)

^v We will use the analysis made by Sanford L. Drob in: „A Rational Mystical Ascent: The Coincidence of Opposites in Kabbalistic and Hasidic Thought”; in: **The New Kabbalah**; <http://www.newkabbalah.com/coinc.pdf>

^{vi} "...the modern Neoplatonic philosopher, J. N. Findlay, has termed "rational mysticism." Rational mysticism is a method of thought and inquiry that not only articulates mystical doctrines in rational terms, but utilizes reason to arrive at insights and conclusions that are typically only arrived at through meditative and other experiential/mystical techniques. The "rational mystic," as I am using this term, endeavors to achieve a unified conception of the world by *rationally* overcoming the distinctions, oppositions and antinomies that have torn it asunder and given rise to the polarities (e.g. between words and things, mind and reality, subject and object, humanity and God, good and evil, etc.) that characterize the world for ordinary, pre-mystical consciousness and discourse." (Sanford L. Drob, op. cit., p. 2)

^{vii} W.T. Stace, *op. cit.*

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- viii Graham Priest, "Dialetheism", in: ***The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*** (Summer 2004 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.); <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2004/entries/dialetheism/>
After the analysis of dialetheism ["a di-aletheia is a two(-way) truth"] and the logical non contradiction [= LNC], his conclusion, is: "I think it fair to say that since Aristotle's defence of the LNC, consistency has been something of a shibboleth in Western philosophy. The thought that consistency is a *sine qua non* for central notions such as validity, truth, meaningfulness, rationality, is deeply ingrained into its psyche. One thing that has come out of the modern investigations into dialetheism appears to be how superficial such a thought is. If consistency is, indeed, a necessary condition for any of these notions it would seem to be for reasons much deeper than anyone has yet succeeded in articulating. And if it is not, then the way is open for the exploration of all kinds of avenues and questions in philosophy and the sciences that have traditionally been closed off."
- ix Indeed, as it was already observed, by a philosophical problem could not be resolved, but only dissolved.
- x Doina Rusti, in ***Dictionar de simboluri in opera lui Mircea Eliade*** (*Dictionary of symbols in Mircea Eliade's work*), Bucuresti, Tritonic Eds., 2005, considers that *coincidentia oppositorum* can be obsessively found in Eliade's work, as "the supreme scope of the human being". See: <http://www.doinarusti.home.ro/Dictionar.htm>
- xi "He published extensively in the history of religions and acted as editor-in-chief of Macmillan's *Encyclopedia of Religion*. The influence of his thought, through these works and through thirty years as director of History of Religions department at the University of Chicago, is considerable". See: Bryan Rennie, <http://www.westminster.edu/staff/brennie/eliade/mebio.htm>
- xii Mircea Iu is enumerating "thirty ideas-forces that are animating, valorizing and making eternal the work of the Romanian scientist"; http://www.radio3net.ro/eliade/index.php?cx=articol_vic; in: ***Idei religioase și concepții filosofice în opera științifică a lui Mircea Eliade*** (*Religious ideas and philosophical conceptions in the scientific work of Mircea Eliade*)
- xiii Bryan Rennie, *op. cit.*.
- xiv In: „Phenomenological Understanding: Mircea Eliade”, in: ***Category Formation and The History of Religion***, pp. 74–91.

^{xv} In: „The Concept of „Homo Religiosus“” in: **Works of Mircea Eliade: An Anthropological Evaluation for Religious Studies**, Catholic University, 1971.

^{xvi} Brian Rennie, **Reconsiderându-l pe Eliade** (*Reconsidering Eliade*), Editura Criterion, 1999, p. 50.

^{xvii} See: Bogdan George Silion „Mircea Eliade si dioptriile critice” (*Mircea Eliade and the critic dioptries*); in: **Ideii în dialog** [*Ideas in Dialogue*], nr. 7 / 2006,

<http://www.romaniaculturala.ro/Pages/Polemici.aspx#>

^{xviii} N. Bohr, **Atomic Theory**, p. 315

^{xix} N. Bohr, “Discussion with Einstein on Epistemological Problems in Atomic Physics. In Mortimer J. Adler, ed., *Great Books of the Western World* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. 1990), Vol. 56, pp. 337-55. Bohr wrote; “In the Institute in Copenhagen, where through these years a number of young physicists from various countries came together for discussions, we used, when in trouble, often to comfort ourselves with jokes, among them the old saying of the two kinds of truth. To the one kind belonged statements so simple and clear that the opposite assertion obviously could not be defended. The other kind, the so-called “deep truths,” are statements in which the opposite also contains deep truth” (p. 354); *apud* Sanford L. Drob, *op. cit.*, p.1.

^{xx} In **Psychology and Alchemy**, p. 186, Jung writes “The self is made manifest in the opposites and the conflicts between them; it is a *coincidentia oppositorum*.” In: *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, Vol. 12. R. F. C. Hull, trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 186). *Apud* Sanford L. Drob, *op.cit.*, p.1.

^{xxi} Viorel Guliciuc, **Modele cosmologice** (*Cosmological models*), in: *Cronica* (cultural revue), Iasi, 1982, nr. 13

^{xxii} “In fact, after millions of years of intensive selection by survival pressures, it is reasonable to assume that the system of neurons is highly non-generic, depending of all kinds of improbable accidents and therefore a totally reductionism approach to its understanding (relying on the generic properties of similar systems) might be quite ineffective.” Sorin Solomon, **Sorin’s Draft for Expert’s Complexity Road-Map**
<http://shum.huji.ac.il/~sorin/Sorin's-Complexity-Report-002.doc>

^{xxiii} John McCarthy, **Universality: or why there are separate sciences** <http://www-formal.stanford.edu/jmc/universality.html>

^{xxiv} «Nous savions enfin que nous avions deux langues - l’une légitime, le créole ; l’autre adoptive, le français - et qu’il nous faudrait composer

avec cette réalité. Sortir de la névrose linguistique qui avait poussé nos parents à idolâtrer le français et à rejeter le créole pour arriver à une situation d'équilibre entre ces deux idiomes, une relation de non-conflitualité en tout cas. Le mouvement général du monde - appelé «mondialisation» ou «globalisation» et que nous préférons appeler «créolisation» - nous aidait grandement à penser notre situation particulière sans nombrilisme et surtout dans un esprit d'ouverture à toutes les langues du monde. L'anglais, l'espagnol, le hollandais et le papiamentu, langues de l'archipel caraïbe, frappaient à nos portes à travers le disque et le CD, le cinéma, les voyages désormais facilités et l'immigration inter-insulaire. Nous étions dès lors sommés d'inventer la Diversalité.» Raphaël Confiant, **Créolité et francophonie: un éloge de la diversité**

<http://www.palli.ch/kapeskreyol/articles/diversalite.htm>

^{xxv} Morris Lazerowitz, **Philosophy and Illusion**, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1968, p. 1.

^{xxvi} “The most recent, and perhaps most radical, philosophical voices concerned with conceptual oppositions, have developed an anti-metaphysical relativism that at first blush, appears to be unrelated (and even opposed) to any form of mysticism, metaphysics and theology. Philosophers, led by Jacques Derrida (1932-2004), have argued that the entire history of western philosophy and religion is actually predicated upon radical distinctions between a wide variety of conceptual oppositions (God-world, subject-object, inside-outside, good and evil, etc.) and the *privileging* of one pole of each of these oppositions. These philosophers have called for a post-metaphysical consciousness in which traditional ideas and values become open to that which they were meant to exclude and in which we learn to embrace both poles of oppositions and all that does not fall neatly into the dichotomies that have dominated western thought for the past 2500 years.”; Sanford L. Drob, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

^{xxvii} One of the best friends of Mircea Eliade, Constantin Noica, has demonstrated that all the philosophical demonstrations could be reduced to just a few types, presenting the common characteristic that every of them is eventually blocked by the own limits of the human rationality itself.

^{xxviii} As Jorge Luis Borges has sustained

^{xxix} As the same Constantin Noica has observed, a limit can be over passed, but a limitations could not.

^{xxx} In his study published under the title ***Dialectic: East and West*** in *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* 10, 1983, pp.207-218;

<http://www.class.uidaho.edu/ngier/307/dialectic.htm>

^{xxx}***Negation and contexture;***

http://www.vordenker.de/ggphilosophy/gg_negation_and_contexture.pdf

^{xxx}***Rethinking Logic: Lupasco, Nishida and Matte Blanco;***

<http://nicol.club.fr/ciret/bulletin/b13/b13c12.htm>

^{xxx} Even for the franc-masons, that seems to be the best promoters of the generic universality, that generic universality is highly disputable.

See, for example: Eric T. Schmitz, ***Universality: Not so Universal after all?***, <http://monroe22.org/universality>

^{xxx} Sanford L. Drob, *op. cit.*, p.13: "Paradox and contradiction are more readily accepted in Eastern philosophical traditions than in west".

^{xxx} Stéphane Lupasco: "La contradiction est la sauvegarde de l'éternité".

^{xxx} We could even create a philosophical group for the study of the universality, as a particularly philosophical topic, under the name of "philosophy of diversity".

^{xxx} Paraphrasing, we could, for example, say that universality is a pure *form* of intuition because it must precede and structure all experience of individual outer objects and inner states. Our profound need of universality – *generic* universality – cannot be derived from experience of objects, because any such experience presupposes already the (generic) universality and although we can represent universality as devoid of objects, we cannot represent any objects without participating at universality (A 23-4/B 38-9; A 30-1/B 46). Universality is pure *intuition* because it represents single individuals rather than classes of things! Universality is always introducing boundaries and an infinite number of possible parts (A 24/B 39-40; A 31-2/B 47-8) into a single being. Here the paraphrase was made using Sanford L. Drob's text, *op. cit.*, p. 17.