PRECEPTS – A NEW GENRE*

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ABSTRACT • *Precepts – A New Genre.* Among the many tools available to man to mentally build up the universe, communication is, perhaps, one of the most prominent: rather conspicuously, in its language component, it provides both opportunity and means to create and shape realities. Viewed in this dynamics, language may follow reality, and thus, change and evolve along with it. The paper responds to an observation that can be easily made, that over the last years, in Romanian media, there's an increasing presence of moral pundits, most of them, understandably, orthodox priests, who offer guidance via TV or internet. What the author tries to achieve is to demonstrate that, under these rather narrow circumstances defined by social, cultural, and religious changes in recent decades, a new discursive genre seems to emerge. This new type of discourse, albeit deeply rooted in the orthodox homiletic tradition, takes quite a distance from the classical sermon in both form and wording. For the demonstration, the author chose to case-study an excerpt from a public speech of Father Constantin Necula[1], who is generally recognized as the *de facto* initiator of such genre. The paper, also, brings into mention some of the reasons that created the need for such new type of discourse, the specific elements of the genres that underlie it, along with the elements where it is innovative.

KEYWORDS • Discourse Genres; Religious Speech; Argumentative Structure; New Genre.

1. Introduction

Let us begin this section with an exercise of imagination. Choose a field of activity and analyse it briefly. Try medicine, economics, literature, or, why not, religion. What is this field? How does it work? How does it manifest? And why do we need it? Once you find the answers to these questions, do the same exercise, but go back in time. 50 years or maybe 100. And then go into the future. Are the answers the same? Probably not.

Current specialized literature, in all fields, speaks of change and evolution, which is not surprising, given the fact that you have just realized how different things were in the past and how much they have changed. The question that interests us is not when or how, but why. Why, in such a short time, have we been able to change so much? The answer probably depends on the specifics of each field, on their history, on the cultural background in which they manifest, and on many

[1] Father Constantin Necula holds a Ph.D. in Theology and he has specialized in Catechetical homily and Christian pedagogy.

other factors that we will not consider now. But, from our point of view, there is an element common to all these areas, an element strong enough to cause massive changes on all levels: technology.

What is technology? People conceptualize technology in a variety of ways, depending on how they relate to the concept and on the needs or expectations they have. Whether we view technology as a finished product that results from human activity or approach the subject more abstractly, technology is a fundamental element of the contemporary world (Rip, Kemp 1997, Van Dijk 2006).

Being initially understood as the study of arts and crafts (Singer et al. 1954) and reaching nowadays the level of creating artificial intelligence, technology is a key factor in the shaping of society[2], an equivalent of modernity and progress. According to Hughes, (Hughes 1986) technology is a web, a web that connects all spheres of human activity and brings together people, cultures, mentalities. How? Through the use of its tools, like the internet, for example. Extremely easy access to information and the opportunity to connect, in real-time, with any person are some of the engines that might underlie these transformations.

In addition to technology, another factor that sculpts society is history, especially the recent one, because, as the saying goes, the present does not want to repeat the mistakes of the past. Now we will return to the exercise with which we started this section, and we will also choose a field: contemporary Romanian Orthodoxy. Using the two axes, technology and history, we intend to show, strictly from a linguistic point of view, how the Romanian religious sphere has evolved in the last two decades.

Numerous studies have been written about Romanian communism (the most important chapter in our recent history) and about its consequences[3], which is why we will not dwell on this subject. But we will mention that communist leaders, through their actions against the Church, encouraged the enhancement of agnosticism and atheism among Romanians. Independently, technology seems to be having the same effect[4]. David J. Bosch finds the reason for the weakening of religion, in general, in the modern predominance of reason, the truth of which can no longer be accepted without conscience but must have a conscious and intellectual agreement. The role of reason in the field of religious life is not something foreign, but reason in modernism is fully committed to relativizing or asserting the exclusive rights of Christianity (Bosch 1991).

The interference of these fields has had astonishing results in linguistics. The modernization of our Church, as a result of technological expansion, and the accentuated tendency of separating the Romanians from the orthodox dogmas and norms led to the appearance of new discursive genres. The paper aims to analyze one of these phenomena. Starting from a short fragment from the

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[2] We will understand society as a group of individuals who are in a permanent interaction, sharing the same territory, respecting the same political or moral authority, acting according to the same rules, and principles and having the same fundamental cultural traits. We add to the above definition that of sociologist Peter L. Berger, according to whom society is «a human product, and nothing but a human product, that still continuously acts upon its producers» (Berger 1967: 3).

[3] Consult, for example: Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Despre comunism,* Humanitas, 2011; Paul Cernat, *Explorări în comunismul românesc. Volumul 1,* Polirom, 2004; Lucian Boia, *Strania istorie a comunismului românesc (şi nefericitele ei consecinţe),* Humanitas, 2016; Cristian Vasile, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română în primul deceniu communist,* Curtea Veche, 2013.

[4] For example, in the last decade, the Romanian media has signalled an increase in anti-Church attitudes due to problems that Church representatives have not been able to solve or have caused.

speech of Father Constantin Necula, we will highlight the characteristic features of a new genre, called *precepts*.

Our hypothesis is that the new form of discourse proves that the Romanian Church is trying to adapt to the requirements of its believers and to the cultural manifestations to which the new generation is exposed. From our point of view, the new genre moves away from the traditional sermon and comes closer to colloquial language. Having a predominantly argumentative structure, the new genre preserves the central message of Romanian Orthodoxy, but delivers it more inherently, closer to the daily life experienced by the believers.

To support our point of view, we will analyze an excerpt from a speech by Father Necula. We will address the notion of discursive gender in general terms and discuss the specifics of a traditional homily. We will also present the argumentative structure of the passage and list the elements of innovation.

2. The transcription[5]

What about self-love?

Public speech - *Precepts*

Participant: Pr. Conf. Univ. Constantin Necula [will be marked with **P**]

Place of registration: Cluj, Faculty of Orthodox Theology

Date of registration: 16 April 2013

Registration source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ezXsRTjmVo (last accessed: 11.10.2021, 18:44)

Fragment duration: about 4'

Author of the transcript: Alexandra Gabriela Olaru

Signs used for transcription[6]: ↑ (non-terminal ascending melodic contour), ↓ (non-terminal descending melodic contour), : (lengthening of a sound; the number of repetitions indicates the approximate duration of the sound), - (legato utterance), - (word unfinished), … (abandoned idea), capital letters (accented syllable)[7]

Discursul începe cu răspunsul la întrebarea "Cum este cu iubirea de sine?"

P: e si:mplă↑ adică te doare măseaua↑ te duci la dentist↓ ţi-e foame↑ mănânci↓ ţi-e sete↑ bei↓ ţi-e somnic↑ faci nănică↓ asta înseamnă să te iubeşti pe- măcar minimal aşa minimal↓ cum te duci tu cu capul gol↑ în timpul iernii↓ la minus 30 de grade *doar să le arăţi colegilor că ai o şuviţă* [tonalitate ironică] aşa [gest explicativ cu mâna]↓ pfiu:: (râs în sală) pentru că acest cap al tău va trebui să fie luci:d peste zece douăzeci de ani când vei naşte copii şi-ţi va trebui să ai o minte limpede noaptea la unu: şi tu n-o să poţi să fii limpede că te doare ca:pu↑ că ai stat cu vâ-

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în vânt↓ asta înseamnă să te iubeşti pe tine să te vezi pe tine cu finalităţile tale↓ cât sunteţi voi de diploma:te şi voi de diploma:ţi tot tătici şi mămici vor fi gradele maxime dacă n-o să fiţi maici şi taici la mănăstire↓ sau episcopi mă rog↓ nu ne băgăm că e un sector prea înalt pentru noi↓ da↑ deci nu există:… fiţi cuminţi↓ a te iubi pe sine înseamnă să te vezi↑ în dezvoltarea ta↓ nu există limită iubirii↓ nu poţi să spui că astăzi mă iubesc mai puţin decât ieri↓ a: că-s mai neatent azi decât ieri e altă mâncare de peşte dar… a te iubi de sine- pe tine înseamnă să nu mergi cu ia-mă nene acasă↓ să şti:ţi ăsta e un semn de iubire de sine↓ să nu-ţi pui viaţa în mâna primului şofer pe care-l vezi↓ nicicum↓ nici din punct de vedere fizic↓ nici din metafizic↓ îl- a te iubi pe sine însea- pe tine înseamnă să nu mergi fără bilet pe tren↓ ca să nu te simţi jignit de privirea cu:ltului care taxează biletele şi ca să se uite la tine ca la ultima râmă↓ îţi MEriţi privirea↓ a te iubi pe sine înseamnă să mănânci tot când îţi pune mama-n farfurie indiferent de vârstă↓ nu există comentariu la mamă↓ şi la tată↓ nu există↓ a o să spuneţi bineacuma mergem în post şi-o să ne pună ai noştri exact în joia mare cârnaţi↓ naşi↑ unde-i problema↑ păidada vrem să postim↓ păi cine vă opreşte↑ niciun părinte nu încalcă binele copilului↓ îi vrea binele chiar exagerează cu vrutul binelui↓ pui cârnatul deoparte şi mănânci restu↓ dacă nu mai e nimic nu mănânci↓ e atât de simplu: nu complicaţi lucrurile↓ iubirea de sine însea- te îndeamnă să NU complici lucrurile↓ *mă iubesc pe mine şi pentru că am devenit un bun ortodox îmi trebuie o coadă lu::ngă lu::ngă* [tonalitate ironică] deşi acuma de când cu Cernea ăsta cred că le-a mai tăiat cozile şi la ai noştri↓ *şi las o barbă ma::re a:şa:: şi umblu totdeauna numai în…*[tonalitate ironică] era să zic în fustă da nu merge cu balu↓ şi *umblu numai în pantaloni d-ăia să se vadă* [tonalitate ironică] că-s- fiţi cuminţi↓ demnitatea omului stă inclusiv în imaginea pe care o arată oamenilor↓ nimic nu-i mai frumos decât un tânăr care-şi caută chipul şi care încearcă să şi-l definească care vrea să se aşeze pe o- … eu nu suport de exemplu – au venit la mine la spovedit o fată care avea un cercel în nAs↓ era micuţ aşa chiar finuţ↓ şi zic băi↑ da↑ ce-ai în nas↑ îl dau jos↓ neă nă nă nă↓ îl dai jos mâine DUpă ce te împărtăşeşti ca semn că te-ai împărtăşit↓ zic dacă mâine te prind că vii fără inel fără cercel în nas la împărtăşit nu te împărtăşesc↓ dacă Asta eşti AŞA vii la Dumnezeu şi dacă vrei să-I dăruieşti o schimbare lui Dumnezeu DĂ-I-o după ce te-ai întâlnit cu El↓ a venit fata se uitau tantile în vârstă ca să nu zic babili… se uitau CA LA maşini străine↓ da arăta trăsnet↑ asta era cu geacă de-aia de piele ştiţi cu- motoRIstă d-aia rea înrăită↓ cu CAsca-n mână şi am zis bravo fată↑ păida nu-i aşa cinstit↑ dacă ea *venea cu trei batice băgate în jurul otitelor şi venea cu o fustă lu:ngă de i-o ţineau* [tonalitate ironică] călu- diaconii de la intrare să intre cu fusta (râs în sală) la CE-i folosea fetei↑ vreau să vă spun că DUpă aceia în prezenţa mea↓ şi-a scos în dreptul icoanei Maicii Domnului a- şi zice părinte: vă rog să ţineţi dumneavoastră ăsta şi să (râs în sală) mulţumesc↑ mulţumesc↓ râ:deţi↓ a venit o fetiţă căruia i-a murit tăticul la vreo jumătate de oră şi au- s-a comportat EXcepţional la înmormântare cu o DEMnitate fetiţa aia de m-a terminat↓ şi-am zis vino↓ Maica Domnului te medaliază↓ uite-ţi dă un: diamant în piept ai primit un diamant de la Maica Domnului↓ şi aşa cercelul din nasul fetei↓ (râs în sală) a deveni:t diamant în pieptul fetiţei↓ de ce râdeţi↑ Cristos transformă şi restaurează lucrurile↓ noi avem tendinţa când nu merge ceva să aruncăm↓ sta:ţi bă uşor↓ uşure:l↓ există un poet român care nu scria decât cu: creioane: aruncate de alţii↓ să:racu Nichita Stănescu↓

The talk begins with the answer to the question, «What about self-love?»

P: it's si:mple↑ I mean your tooth hurts↑ you go to the dentist↓ you are hungry↑ you eat↓ you are   1
thirsty↑ you drink↓ you want to take a little sleep[8]↑ you have a kip[9]↓ that means to love yours- at least   2
minimally say minimally↓ how do you go bare-headed↑ in winter↓ at minus 30 degrees *just to show*   3
your colleagues that you have a tuft [ironic tone] like this [explanatory gesture with your hand]↓ pfiu[10]::   4
(laughter in the room) because this head of yours will have to be luci:d in ten twenty years when you will   5
give birth to children and you will have to have a clear mind at o:ne in the morning and you will not be   6
able to be clear because your hea:d↑ hurts because you have stayed with- in the wind↓ this is what loving   7
yourself means to see yourself with your goals↓ no matter how diploma:tic you are little dads[11] and little   8
moms[12] will be your maximum ranks if you don't become mothers[13] and fathers[14] at the monastery↓ or   9
bishops whatever↓ none of our business that sector is too high for us↓ yes↑ so there is no:… be good↓ to   10
love yourself means to see yourself↑ in your full development↓ there is no limit to love↓ you can't say that   11
today I love myself less than yesterday↓ a: that I'm more careless today than yesterday this is another fish   12
dish[15] but… to love you- yourself means not to travel by take me home man[16]↓ you know: this is a sign of   13
self-love↓ not to put your life in the hands of the first driver you see↓ no way↓ neither physically↓ nor   14
metaphysically↓ it- to love yourself means not to go without a ticket on the train↓ so that you don't feel   15
offended by the look of the e:ducated[17] who checks the tickets and looks at you like you are the last   16
worm↓ you DEserve that look↓ to love yourself means to eat everything when your mother gives you   17
food on your plate regardless of age↓ there is no comment on your mother↓ or your father↓ not at all↓ a: 18
you will say well now we are fasting and ours[18] will give us sausages exactly on Good Thursday↓ so   19
what↑ where is the problem↑ well yes but we want to fast↓ well who is stopping you↑ no parent violates   20
the child's good↓ they want what's good for them they even exaggerate with wanting what's good↓ you   21
put the sausage aside and eat the rest↓ if there is nothing else you don't eat↓ it's so simple: don't   22
complicate things↓ self-love mean- urges you NOT to complicate things↓ *I love myself and because I*   23
have become a good Orthodox I need a lo::ng lo::ng tail[19] [ironic tone] although right now since this   24
Cernea[20] I think they have cut the tails of our kind too↓ *and I have a bi::g beard li:ke thi::s and I always*   25
walk only in… [ironic tone] I was about to say skirt but it doesn't go with the dance party↓ *and I only*   26
walk in those pants to see- [ironic tone] be good↓ human dignity is included in the image we show to   27
people around us↓ nothing is more beautiful than a young man looking for his face and trying to define it   28

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[8] In Romanian, *somnic*. The term is a diminutive for *somn* (*sleep*) and comes from the kids' language. It can have a very strong ironical meaning when used in other contexts.

[9] In Romanian, *nănică*. Same explanation as above.

[10] Interjection; used to show disapproval, discontent.

[11] In Romanian, *tătici*. The term is a diminutive for *tată* (*father*) and comes from the kids' language. It can either show strong feelings of love and affection, or have a comic meaning.

[12] In Romanian, *mămici*. The term is a diminutive for *mamă* (*mother*); same explanation as above.

[13] In Romanian, *maici*. The first meaning of the word *maică* is *mother*, but it is also used as *nun*.

[14] In Romanian, *taici*. The first meaning of the word *taică* is *father*, but it is also used as *monk*.

[15] In Romanian, *este altă mâncare de peşte* (*that is a different story*); slang.

[16] In Romanian, *ia-mă nene acasă* (hitch-hiking); slang.

[17] Ironic meaning; the persons checking the tickets are often considered uneducated and rude.

[18] In Romanian, *ai noştri*. The possessive is used as *our parents*.

[19] Irony to priests and monks with long hair.

[20] Remus Cernea, a Romanian politician and activist; a very controversial figure.

29   who wants to sit on a-… I cannot stand for example – they came to me for confession a girl who had an
30   earring in her nOse↓ it was so small and so refined↓ and I said yo↑ but↑ what do you have in your nose↑ I
31   am taking it off↓ no no no no↓ you will take it off tomorrow AFter the Eucharist as a sign of the
32   Eucharist↓ If I see you coming to the Eucharist without the earring in your nose I am not going to do it↓ if
33   That is who you are THAT is how you come to God and if you want to offer a change to God GIVE IT
34   after you have met Him↓ the girl came and the old aunts, not to say harridans, were watching her… they
35   were watching her LIKE they were seeing foreign cars[21]↓ but she was dope↑ she had a leather jacket you
36   know with- she was a hardcore motorCYclist↓ with the HELmet in her hand and I said bravo girl↑ well
37   isn't that fair↑ if she came *with three handkerchiefs tucked around the otitis*[22] *and with a lo:ng skirt*
38   [ironic tone] so that the monk- deacons can hold it at the entrance to enter with that skirt[23] (laughter in the
39   room) it is NO use for the girl↑ I want to tell you that After that in my presence↓ she took it off in front of
40   the Mother of God's icon and said fathe:r please keep this and (laughter in the room) thank you↑ thank
41   you↓ la:ugh↓ a little girl came to me whose father died about half an hour ago and she behaved
42   EXceptionally at the funeral with a DIGnity that little girl she killed me↓ and I said come↓ the Mother of
43   God medals you↓ look she is giving you a: diamond and puts it on your chest you have received a
44   diamond from the Mother of God↓ and so the earring from the girl's nose↓ (laughter in the room) has
45   become: a diamond on the little girl's chest↓ why are you laughing↑ Christ transforms and restores
46   things↓ we have the tendency to throw away things when they don't work anymore↓ wa:it a bit↓ easy:↓
47   there was a Romanian poet that used to write only wi:th penci:ls thrown away by others↓ po:or Nichita
48   Stănescu[24]↓

3. Context

Before the actual analysis of the fragment, some information about the context of the discourse is needed. Regarding the meetings, we can speak of an implicit dialogue between Father Necula and the audience, of a macro-dialogic structure. Parishioners, students and teenagers ask the Father (mostly via social networks) various questions. The questions are evidence of the moral and spiritual turmoil of the believers, which is why Father Necula believes it is necessary to organize meetings with them, in order to provide guidance, support and understanding. The meetings are recorded and uploaded to the Internet so that the message can be accessible to as many people as possible. The target audience is, indeed, the young one, but believers of all ages come to the Father's events.

After a short prayer, the Father is presented with a list of questions that are the subject of the event (usually, the questions are thematically grouped). The speech is spontaneous and natural; between the Father and the audience there is no actual dialogue during the meetings.

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[21] In Romanian, *a se uita ca la maşini străine* (extremely amazed); slang.
[22] Reference to the ears.
[23] Reference to women's clothing, as they cannot enter without a skirt covering their knees.
[24] He is the poet Father Necula was talking about.

4. Genre

To talk about the emergence of a new genre we need to agree upon a definition for the concept. What is genre? The notion of genre is one of the most discussed ideas in literature, each school having a certain approach to the concept. "Previous to the nineteenth century, the terms used for it were *kinds* or *species*. Genre has its source in the Latin *genus*, which refers in some cases to *kind* or *sort* or *class* or *species*" (Cohen 1986: 203). Admitting its variety of definitions and taking into consideration that each genre is composed of multiple texts, we can say that genres are open categories. Genres evolve and may disappear with the social formations with which they are associated (Adam 2001: 15). In our view, genres are changeable and alterable, each individual having the possibility to add or remove its constituents[25].

Thus, we will mention some of the most important directions in this field. In rhetoric, genres are seen as "typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations" (Miller 1984). For Gee, they are "forms of life" or "ways of being in the world" (Gee 2005), while for Seillan, genre is defined less by its intrinsic characteristics and more by the relationships established with its recipients (Seillan 2005).

In the theoretical tradition inaugurated by Mikhail Bakhtin (Bakhtin 1984), genres are not just discursive instructions, but complex rules, to be followed in their variations and possibilities of manifestation, in particular socio-discursive contexts, concerning the intentions and skills of speakers, manifested in different areas of life and knowledge. Bakhtin, whose work has influenced numerous researchers and experts, manages to situate the concept between the social and the cultural. M. A. K. Halliday also assigns genre in a social context, defining it as a "potential available in a given social context" (Halliday 1978: 111). Furthermore, the theories and methods developed by Australian researchers define genres as discursive forms used by individuals to function in the world (Martin, Rose 2008).

Another direction is that of Bauman, according to which the genre is a speech style that is oriented towards the production and reception of certain types of texts (Bauman 2000: 84). From this point of view, the genre is a set of conventional characteristics meant to cope with recurring communicative requirements. However, it cannot be said that there is a perfect correlation between genres and speech events. Although certain genres can be identified with specific contexts, they can also be recognized outside these primary contexts. Therefore, each genre will be distinguished by its thematic or referential features, as a tool for coding and expressing knowledge and experiences (*ibidem*: 85).

Our intention is not to make an exhaustive presentation of the concept, nor to adhere to any of the theories mentioned above. Thus, in order to avoid possible dissensions and to focus on what interests us, namely the emergence of a new discursive genre in the Romanian religious space, we will consider the genre a tool that helps us better understand how texts are built and also how they interact with each other.

We believe the fragment that we chose to discuss shows that the new genre combines elements of classical sermons, argumentative structures and colloquial discourses, but they transcend each one through stylistic cohesion.

In the transcribed text, the innovation stands out both at the formal level – structure and organization – and at the content level. The influences of the traditional sermons are obvious, given the professional training of the speaker. Also, the presence of specific elements of argumentation

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[25] Idea presented by Bronckart in *Activité langagière, textes et discours* (Bronckart 1997: 138).

is justifiable in the speech of Father Necula, because it derives from the main purpose of the meetings, namely the transmission of the biblical message and the persuasion of the audience in this direction. The innovation is found, especially, at the lexical level, the Father's speech being framed in a familiar register, not of a religious nature. Also, the structuring of the lecture and the nonverbal and paraverbal elements accentuate the originality of the discourse. All these aspects will be treated in the analysis of the fragment.

5. The homily

It should be noted from the outset that the speaker's intention is not to preach, explain, and comment on a text or a biblical moment.

In order to better understand the stylistic innovations of Father Necula's speech, we must present the classical structure of a homily. The homily or the sermon is the speech that the priest gives to the faithful, usually in the church, to clarify or justify various religious texts, concepts, virtues, etc. There are two types of homilies: the small homily, also called exegetical, and the large, thematic homily, the first having the role of explaining the biblical passages, and the second, of presenting and analyzing a single moral theme (Cristescu 1958: 46-58).

The thematic, moral homily aims to shape the opinion of the listeners and to encourage religious practices. Being one of the most important parts of a service and focusing on the virtues of the faithful, the sermon has a very well-defined structure, which has been pursued since the beginning of church oratory. Sermons, built on the model of Christ's speeches, are not only a way to popularize the biblical message and educate parishioners in the Christian spirit, but also a way for the preacher to present himself as a representative of the Church, as a guide.

The classical homily has 7 main moments: the text, the way of addressing, the introduction, the announcement of the theme, the prayer/the invocation, the analysis of the theme and the conclusion (Petrescu 1977). Because some of these are quite obvious, we will focus only on those we consider notable for our demonstration.

The text is the written support on which all sermons are based and it is chosen according to the event, according to the church calendar. Each text has a moral theme, which is why each major homily will focus on a single theme. The way of addressing refers to the structures that the priest uses to name the faithful (*My dear ones!*, *Beloved believers!*, *Children!*, *Brothers and sisters!*, *True Christian believers!* etc.). Through it, a relationship is established between the preacher and the audience: the priest is the moral authority, and the parishioners are the ones who receive the teachings of the priest. The announcement of the theme, as the name implies, is the moment when the speaker specifies the topic of his speech, so that people know what to refer to. The next moment, the invocation, is a short prayer addressed to God or to the saint whose remembrance is celebrated on that day. The invocation aims to create an atmosphere of peace of mind and to deepen the connection with divinity.

The three moments we have chosen to discuss separately, the introduction, the analysis of the theme and the conclusion, represent the actual discourse of the preacher.

The introduction, the first part of the homily, is when the priest prepares the parishioners for preaching. In addition to briefly presenting the theme, the priest should explain to the faithful why it is important to listen to the sermon and follow the counsel he gives. The analysis of the theme is the explanation in the true sense. Here, the priest develops his ideas, exposes his evidence, and tries to persuade the will of the hearers. It is the moment of education, of training in the religious spirit, of moral and soul transformation. Finally, the conclusion, the final part of the homily, should be a summary of the whole sermon, but with an emphasis on actual ideas, applicable in daily life.

The conclusion is a kind of guide for believers, a list of actions that will facilitate their path to an exemplary religious life.

We consider that these three moments are the most important because they allow the speaker to have an original speech, which reflects his personality. The purpose of the religious discourse, especially during the sermon, is to change and build a behaviour of confirmation and adherence to Christian ideology (Guia 2008: 124). However, the canons allow priests to adapt their discourse to the public and the actual context of the sermon. The rules that the representatives of the Church must respect are the grammatical correctness, the figurative speech and the embracing of the church style[26] (Toader 1997), but the particularities of expression cannot be normative. During these three moments, the priest manages to capture the attention and interest of the parishioners, through religious teachings, but also through the closeness of soul, through the development of the feeling of common love[27].

In other words, the sermon is the fundamental discourse in a service, both for the priest, who exercises his moral authority, and for the listeners, who become witnesses of the manifestation of the divinity. Preaching is, in fact, a synergistic act. On the one hand a divine-human act, an act of common creation, of God and the consecrated servant, on the other hand an inter-human act, as a result of the mysterious but real dialogue between the preacher and the hearers (Gordon 2001: 226). The definition that Father-Professor Gordon formulates for the concept of sermon surprises the fact that it is oriented not only to the side dominated by divinity, but also to the real interaction between the speaker and the interlocutors. The second aspect of the definition is the one exploited mainly by Father Necula in his speech, which demonstrates, from the very beginning, the distance from traditional preaching.

The first specific element of the sermon is the moralizing content. In our case, the whole speech is an answer to the question *What about self-love?*. This means that the speaker is from the beginning in a position of moral superiority over the audience. He is the one who teaches others, who advises, who provides guidelines (*there is no comment on your mother↓ and father↓ - 20*). Therefore, one cannot speak of a proper dialogue, of an exchange of remarks, because, as in the case of the sermon in the place of worship, the speaker focuses strictly on the transmission of ideas.

A second aspect that is influenced by the traditional sermon is the relationship between pathos, ethos and logos. In Father Necula's speech, the frequent appeal to emotions and personal experiences is constant (*I cannot stand for example - 32*). Oral expression abounds in elements of the speaker's affective and emotional involvement (Bochmann, Dumbrava 2002: 103). The usage of the first person singular is almost obligatory in such a framework, being imposed by the situation of oral communication and by the institutional report (Zafiu 2010: 29). In terms of ethos, the speaker knows how to adapt his speech to the audience and his personality due to his professional training – pedagogue and speaker. He manages to capture the interlocutor's attention, to impose himself as a presence and as a moralizing instance and, at the same time, to arouse curiosity and interest. It is not enough for a preacher to be well informed and to relate fluently to what he has

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[26] By church style is meant a coherent discourse, easy to understand, but not imitating secular speech.

[27] Concept used to name the relationship that is created between the priest and the believers, in order to glorify God.

to say. If his speech lacks personality and originality, he risks not being liked by the listeners (Baş-tovoi 2014: 15).

One can speak of the existence of an evaluative and emotional lexicon in this fragment (*and looks at you like you are the last worm↓ you Deserve that look↓* - 18), the two being found in the text of the traditional sermon, but the logos used by Father Necula it is not predominantly religious. On the contrary, he falls into the realm of the familiar, even the jargon (*but she was dope↑* - 38) language. Indeed, the discourse of the sermon allows and encourages freedom of expression, being recommended to get as close as possible to the current communication, but the fixed structures, with ritual character and the specific terms from the church field are missing in this case. However, the last part of the fragment reminds us of the text of the traditional sermon, so that it refers to the divine activity of two of the most representative religious images: Christ and the Mother of God.

Also specific to moral preaching is the influence of the interlocutor's opinion in order to practice Christian virtues (Gordon 2001: 254). Although the argumentative nature of the speech is obvious - an aspect that will be discussed later - one cannot speak of a complete intention to persuade the audience, because the purpose of the whole event is to respond to the call of the faithful, not to convince them.

Although it keeps the essence of the traditional sermon - the transmission of the biblical message and Christian values - Father Necula's speech cannot be included in this category of oral discourses. It lacks the ritual and solemn character of a moral sermon, as well as the content (a text from the Holy Scripture or a religious moment) and specific language. In addition, the communicative context – the appeal to social networks – directs the exposure to a new discursive genre.

6. The argumentative structure

The analyzed fragment deviates considerably from the form of the traditional sermon and approaches to a clear argumentative structure. The sermon itself, as a type of discourse, connotes argumentative sequences, although, initially, it was purely explanatory.

"Argumentation normally involves identifying relevant assumptions and conclusions for a given problem being analyzed. Argumentation may also involve chains of reasoning, where conclusions are used in the assumptions for deriving further conclusions" (Besnard, Hunter 2008: 1).

Taking into consideration that one of the purposes that argumentation has is the persuasion of the interlocutor, we can talk about two implications of the concept: the intention of the speaker to convince its audience and the effect produced on the interlocutor – effect that is anticipated, to a certain extent, by the speaker (Stati 1998: 3). Obviously, an attempt is made to influence the opinion of the audience and its vision on the religious reality, but the argumentative structure stands out through the organization of the answer.

Therefore, it appears formulated in the first line: self-love is simple. To support this, Father Necula uses four arguments. Each of these arguments becomes a sub-thesis, bringing new grounds to illustrate them. Macro-argumentation is of the deductive type, starting from a general idea and arriving at specific ideas - the simplicity of love rendered through four examples. In the case of the sub-theses, the deductive argumentation is combined with the inductive one, demonstrating the spontaneity and naturalness of the discourse.

The scheme below has the role of clarifying the argumentative stages of the fragment:

Self-love is simple (1) - THESIS

• **Argument 1:** To love yourself means to see yourself with your goals (8-9)
- you go to the dentist when you have problems (1)
- you eat when you are hungry (1)
- drink when you are thirsty (2)
- you rest when you are tired (2)
- dress appropriately, depending on the season and temperature (3)

• **Argument 2:** To love yourself means to see yourself in your full development (12)
- care for one's life (13)
- purchase of the ticket (17)

• **Argument 3:** To love yourself means to respect your parents (19)
- food offered by parents is not refused (19)
- food offered by parents is not disputed (20)

• **Argument 4:** Loving yourself means not complicating things (25)
- appearance care (30)
- young motorcyclist (32)
- the girl from the funeral (45)

In the case of this fragment, there are not many argumentative connectors, so we can talk about a rhetorical argumentation, about the verbal activity through which the one who states the hypothesis tries to convince his interlocutor to look at the problem from the same perspective; in other words, the process by which the other is determined to believe something is highlighted here (Doury, Moirand 2004: 18).

As discursive marks with an argumentative role, the following stand out: *I mean* (1) - exemplification role, announcing the arguments, *because* (5) - justifying role, explaining the argument, *so* (11) - conclusive role, *but* (14) - opposition mark, *so what* (21) - thematic change, rejection of the argument, *well* (22) - objection mark, *and so* (48) - conclusive role (Chiorean 2013: 301).

Although the argumentative structure is obvious in this case, the reason why the fragment cannot be considered an argumentative text in its entirety is deduced from the definition offered by Stati, a definition mentioned above. This speech lacks (partially) the first component of persuasion, namely the intention to persuade. There is no denying that the speaker desires to bring the audience closer to the faith and the religious sphere and to transmit Christian moral values, but the initial intention is to answer questions, to explain.

7. Adapting to the context

Probably the most interesting aspect proposed by this fragment is how the speaker adapts to the communicative context; at the same time, we consider that this is the element that determines the unusual character of the genre and that differentiates the discourse from both the traditional sermon and the argumentative text.

Language is seen by psycholinguists in its development as a process, and not as a static fact, and communication is seen as an activity molded on the evolution of reality. In the process of communication, the principle of adaptation to the context must be respected (Drăgulescu 2008: 141).

The speaker adapts his speech according to the characteristics and reactions of the audience both verbally and nonverbally/paraverbally. We have mentioned earlier that the language that predominates in this fragment is the familiar one, but there are also influences of the jargon register. We have also specified that the target audience is the young one. Therefore, the terms and examples offered for the defense of the thesis are chosen from the everyday communication sphere, accessible to young people. Thus, Father Necula manages to become credible and gain the trust of the interlocutors. The structure and forms of oral discourse are dependent on the identity and status of the interlocutors, the nature of the relationship between them, the place and the moment when it is produced (Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu 1999: 19).

The elements of lexical creativity that curl the comic (*fathers* - 8), the ironic tonality (*if she came with three handkerchiefs tucked around the otitis and with a lo:ng skirt* - 40-41), the explanatory gestures - also with ironic meanings (the modal deictic *like this* - 4) and the jargon (*and I said yo↑* - 33, *but she was dope↑* - 38) contribute to the creation of a tacit relationship of trust between the participants. Discourse is like a reservoir of communication resources that determines us to behave appropriately to the context and that, at the same time, transmit information about how to anticipate the partner's intentions (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, Traverso 2004: 46).

Also, the speaker's attitude can be deduced through discursive marks, the procedures that speakers use to construct conversation (Pavel 2013: 223). These marks, which lose their propositional content, are linguistic clues that signal the possible communicative intentions of the speaker (Fraser 1996: 323). In addition, they are a sign of orality.

Unlike argumentative connectors, whose number is quite small, numerous discursive marks are found in this fragment. Whether it is attention markers, which suggest a thematic change (Fraser 2009: 892) or comment markers, through which the speaker expresses his opinion indirectly (*ibidem:* 896), the discourse is constructed naturally, according to the communicative context. Thus, it stands out: *say* (2) - with the role of structuring the discourse and categorizing, *whatever* (11) - a mark of disagreement, *yes* (11) - a mark that ensures feedback, *you know* (15) - fixed structure through which feedback is ensured, *well* (20) - thematic change, *yo* (29) - introduces the reported discourse, *yes* (38) - conversational marker, *you know* (39) - categorizer.

Adaptation to the context is also achieved through the diversity of discourse; at the same time, it demonstrates the spontaneity and veracity of the discourse, because oral discourse is often composed of fragmented and/or incomplete verbal sequences, as the speaker relies largely on the information already held by the interlocutor (Dascălu Jinga 2002: 8).

In addition to the elements of argumentative nature and those of religious origin, the existence of micro-narratives is also noticed, with the role of sub-arguments, but also of a fictitious dialogue (20), which makes the speech more vivid.

8. Conclusions

The paper has showed our perspective on the emergence of a new genre, a discourse that moves away from the rigors of traditional sermons and adopts an argumentative structure to respond as clearly as possible to the spiritual needs of today's Romanian Orthodox society. The modern religious paradigm tends to focus on freedom of choice, on changing practice in relation to people's needs. It allows both believers and representatives to return to a natural approach to divinity, to a subjective truth in which the believer has priority.

One of the innovations was the organization of meetings - a context conducive to the emergence of a new genre - given that classical religious discourses need a formal framework (place of worship or other specially arranged places).

After presenting the specifics of a classical homily and the argumentative structure, creating the scheme of the speaker's argumentation, I mentioned the originality of Father Necula's speech through numerous discursive signs and colloquial constructions. In addition, the actual organization of the discourse (more precisely, the micro-narratives with the role of sub-arguments and fictitious dialogue), doubled by various forms of non-verbal expressions, is another innovation, as religious discourses are not based on such procedures.

Since Father Constantin Necula is the most important expert (so far) who adopts a «modern» style in organizing dialogues with believers, it remains to be seen whether the new genre will be successful and whether its model will become a source of inspiration for other representatives of the church.

The combination of pathos and logo creates a specific ethos: the image of a nonconformist and innovative speaker, open to modernity, but especially refusing common opinion and comfortable clichés to provoke paradox, to challenge (Zafiu 2010: 36).

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