

# CONSONANCE BETWEEN CREATIVITY AND EDUCATION IN ȘTEFAN ODOBLEJA *CONSONANTIST PSYCHOLOGY*

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**Abstract:** By a remarkable synthesizing capacity and a multidisciplinary thinking, the pioneer of cybernetics, Ștefan Odobleja, offered us – through its major work *Psychologie consonantiste* (1938-1939) – an outstanding vision as regards creativity and education for human beingness. In this paper, I try to emphasize the contribution of the Romanian scholar in building a theory about innovation, in the framework of a philosophy of creation on the ground of education; by priority, following the topics of the genesis of great ideas within the personality unity, together with the action of the reversibility law linked to the sentiment, desire, aspiration in the self-fulfillment of human being. I approach the problem of creativity and the plurality of education's divisions, according to Ștefan Odobleja, such as: intense, positive, total, general, etc. education, by pointing out his idea on creativity and education as the foundation of modelling future generations.

**Keywords:** creation, creativity, education, Ștefan Odobleja, orthopaedy, consonance, equilibrium

„Revealing through science and art essentially leads us to get the significant elements, behind the perception. The revelation of something eventually leads us to enlightening ourselves by a peculiar form: namely, that of finding it in its whole, of getting a glimpse of its function or its beauty”.<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel Levinas' words are eloquently to precisely detect the beauty and the plurality of the Romanian scholar Ștefan Odobleja's way to think about the openness to novelty, in general, as regards the approaching of art, innovation and creation.

Ștefan Odobleja managed to overpass the mind frontiers and to elaborate cybernetics' central ideas – an authentic great contribution, by fundamental value for the moral advancement, too. Coming from the Romanian culture, we try to understand that „one of our

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<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas (1961). *Totalité et infini*. Romanian translation: *Totalitate și infinit. Eseu despre exterioritate*. Polirom Publishing House, pp. 56-57.

responsibilities is to recognize our archetypal values and to bring them to light. They constitute the foundation for our own education and affirmation in the *moral dimension's* of our becomingness. By activating the self-conscience, by recognizing us as what we are in our own roots and with our own destiny with a sincere and self-critic valuation, we get the chance to regain the understanding of what we are able to and we have to become".<sup>2</sup>

Ștefan Odobleja was born in 1902 in Izvorul Aneștilor, Mehedinți County, as the son of some poor peasants. He followed the courses of „Traian” Highschool in Drobeta-Turnu Severin. In 1922 he became a student of the Medicine Faculty in Bucharest, enjoying a scholarship from the Medical Military Institute, and in 1928 he presented his PhD thesis *Car Accidents*, at „Mina Minovici” Medical-Legal Institute. He obtained the PhD degree at the Medicine Faculty of Bucharest, in front of a Commission presided by Professor Mina Minovici himself. Then, he worked as a doctor in different garrisons from Romania: Brăila, Turnu Severin, Lugoj, Lipcani, Dorohoi, Turda, Târgoviște, Cernavodă, Bucharest and Dej.

Though the medical military activity was taking a lot of his time, also with peregrinations from different regiments, often in some isolate unities, he never stopped to develop his original scientific preoccupations. Thus, concerning his life-work, we just mention: *La Phonoscopie*, published in Paris - that has been rewarded by the „Medicine General Papiu Alexandru” Prize (which is given once to 2-4 years for the most praiseworthy works written by military doctors). In 1937 Ștefan Odobleja attended The 9<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Military Medicine Institute from Bucharest, presenting his paper *Demonstration de phonoscopie*. His work has been highly appreciated by the foreign participants, including W. S. Bainbridge – the chief of the American delegation formed by marine physicians. In 1938-1939, he published his masterpiece in two volumes. *Psychologie consonantiste*, in the French edition at Lugoj. Unfortunately, this very important work has remained in shadow for almost 35 years, until the re-discovering it by professionals. Also, Odobleja published many scientific articles in national and international journals - most of them being at the State

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<sup>2</sup> Carmen Cozma (2008). *În deschisul filosofării morale românești / In the Opening of Romanian Moral Philosophizing*. Bucharest: Didactic and Pedagogic Publishing House, p. 39.

Archives of Mehedinți County. Ștefan Odobleja died on 4 September 1978, at Drobeta-Turnu Severin.<sup>3</sup>

As a physician, Odobleja was interested in everyone's welfare, but one of his passions remained psychology. It was a starting point for all his research, a brick on which he built his life and his work. As the top of his scientific work *Psychologie consonantiste* represents an encyclopaedic writing, a veritable treatise of psychology that lay out not only some main trends of development, but a search of a unifying principle: the *principle of consonance*. According to Ștefan Odobleja, „The consonance is a physical phenomenon characterized by similitude, selection and movement”.<sup>4</sup> By this definition, the author has emphasized a plurality of *consonance* types: the strong consonance as identity and the weak consonance as analogy. There is a weak consonance – the recognition of two identical things – and a strong consonance recognized in various sciences claiming complex research. There is, also, a perfect consonance as identity, certitude, synonymy, truth, and an imperfect consonance as resemblance, analogy, incertitude, probability, possibility, theory and hypothesis as well.<sup>5</sup>

One of the central interests of Odobleja was the problem of *creation*: „Heuristics is the science of thinking introspection [...], the science of perception or that of new consonances creation between ideas”.<sup>6</sup> We find here that, for Odobleja, creation is not a direct act; on the contrary, it implies a sum of person's qualities and positions, such as: perseverance, passion, obsession, sustainability and tenacity, patience and amplitude. For Ștefan Odobleja, the act of creation implies a hard and no less a safe pathway in human life: „Great inventions are the results of scientists-scholars. Simple peeking brings nothing. We have to keep a kind of fire line. Merely thus, an important breach of the unknowledgeable is occurring”.<sup>7</sup> If we were to put both the man and the researcher Ștefan Odobleja under x-rays, the previous remark reveals us the interdisciplinary framework of his entire enterprise.

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<sup>3</sup> Mihai Drăgănescu, Pantelimon Golu (1982). „Omul și cazul Ștefan Odobleja” / „Ștefan Odobleja: The Man and the Case”. Introductory Study to Ștefan Odobleja, *Psychologie consonantiste*. Romanian translation by P. Iacob: *Psihologia consonantistă*. Bucharest: Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, pp. 40-43.

<sup>4</sup> Ștefan Odobleja (1982). *Psychologie consonantiste*. Romanian translation, *op.cit.*, p. 183.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 554.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 556.

Human being is, by definition, a creator. At stake is even one of the basic ideas established by the contemporary phenomenologist of life, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, about the “creative human condition” within the “ontopoietic” perspective on life in its whole spread<sup>8</sup>. Over the time, human creations acquired a significant informational value that has been kept and transmitted throughout a „continuous historic thread”.<sup>9</sup> Scientifically, an integrator definition of *creation* is given us by Constantin Rădulescu-Motru: „Creation is an activity determined by nature’s finality; it is an activity of accomplishment following the human vocation. Out of vocation, creation is out of its own meaning. Actually, the spirit doesn’t enter the activity without the call of the humanity’s historic conditions”.<sup>10</sup>

In Ștefan Odobleja’s vision, *creativity* supposes the urge of aspiration, desire, and even a sort of envy for everything-is-good. At play is the following of an ideal, to hope and trust, with none present rewards; respectively, to cultivate our ideal and to look forward the future.<sup>11</sup> Any feeling can be a starting point for creation: „...we must feel it!<sup>12</sup> Are not generated the “Great ideas by the heart? Before anything, a lot hopes, ambitions and illusions come to the brain, facilitating a difficult and long term activity”.<sup>13</sup>

An important place, within the *Psychologie consonantiste*, is dedicated to *education*. Odobleja reached a holistic construction, in this regard, by „rationality and efficacy”.<sup>14</sup>

In terms of Ștefan Odobleja, *education* is the “individual’s voluntary formation; the modeling of body and soul. Education gives a meaning

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<sup>8</sup> See Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (1988-2000). *Logos and Life*. Books 1-4. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

<sup>9</sup> Traian Dinorel Stănciulescu (1983). „Postulate ale consonanței în creația umană” / „Postulates of consonance in human creation”. *Proceedings of the International Symposium „Ștefan Odobleja”: 80 Anniversary Years of the Cybernetics’ Founder*. Lugoj, 22-24 October 1982. Lugoj-Paris-Roma-Madrid-Montreal-Pelham, NY: Nagard Publishing House, p. 189.

<sup>10</sup> Constantin Rădulescu - Motru (2005). *Vocația - factor hotărâtor în cultura popoarelor / Vocation: A Decisive Factor within the Humanity Culture*. Bucharest: Albatros Publishing House, p. 63.

<sup>11</sup> Ștefan Odobleja (1982). *op. cit.*, p. 557.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>14</sup> Ion Străchinaru (1983). „Despre Consonantism și transdisciplinaritatea instrumentală în învățământ” / „On Consonance and instrumental transdisciplinarity in education”. *Proceedings of the International Symposium „Ștefan Odobleja”: 80 Anniversary Years of the Cybernetics’ Founder, op.cit.*, p. 224.

life. The act of educating is essentially that of realizing the *consonance* between one's abilities and an ideal of living".<sup>15</sup> Finally, „education means *orthopaedia and consonance*, equilibrium and adaptation".<sup>16</sup> We better understand the Herbert Spencer wording: „the function to be discharged by education is to preparing us for a full manner of living."<sup>17</sup>

Odobleja points out important ideas concerning education and pedagogy. He states the necessity of an educational system centered on pedagogical logic, on the essential of the didactic contents. Where is the novelty of his vision? Beyond the usual consideration of observation, inquiring, analogy, synthesis, representation, etc., the Romanian thinker tackles them on the ground of the laws of equivalence, reaction, alternation, train and reversibility actions.<sup>18</sup>

We notice that the author pays a special attention to the didactical and creative thinking in developing the school technology. The real creators' education represents, for Odobleja, a special education focusing on the development of intelligence.<sup>19</sup> Highlighting some educational divisions, through the critics and the mentioned laws, the author shows us a way to follow for assuring a proper form to our purposes in life; i.e. to research and unfold the truth, and finally to make our life's worthy direction.

We have to take into account the urge of Odobleja's concerning education in the way of his thesis about "doing the characters' orthopaedia".<sup>20</sup> Originated in Greek language, *orthopaedia* sends us to what rightness and growth are alike.

The physician Ștefan Odobleja was concerned by the reforming and remodeling the body. The man Ștefan Odobleja was interested in the education of character and the soul's transformation. Thus, he managed to overcome his own mind frontiers and to offer us guidelines for our human fulfillment. It is necessary that „the education and the teaching process to be harmonized both with the pupil's age and with the dominant interests of every age".<sup>21</sup> To realize the equilibrium and

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<sup>15</sup> Ștefan Odobleja (1982). *op. cit.*, p. 592

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>17</sup> Herbert Spencer (1973). *Eseuri despre educație / Essays on Education*. Bucharest: Didactic and Pedagogic Publishing House, p. 37.

<sup>18</sup> Ștefan Odobleja (1982). *op. cit.*, pp. 598-610

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 556

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 609

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

the harmony within this entire activity, the teacher has to cultivate a real love: „he must love his students, and so to spur in them an authentic devotion for their future professions”.<sup>22</sup> A kind of visionary thinking is revealing us: „The school of the future will be a fully materialized and mechanized school”.<sup>23</sup> It is more than touchingly the note of the cybernetics’ pioneer, made around eight decades ago.

By acknowledging the law of *consonance*, the Romanian scholar brings out even the nature of a real education, with the equilibrium claimed by the teaching individualization and, no less, by the fit age and character of the learning act; especially, by increasing – from the both sides – the capacities, skills and talents for a *creative*, innovative education.<sup>24</sup>

Ștefan Odobleja’s work *Psychologie consonantiste* shows us a complex example of living and learning, of (self)educating in a multidisciplinary path, of human (self)fulfillment in the horizon of an *orthopaedia* of characters; on the ground of a strong trust that human thinking, shaping and creativity are beyond any frontiers.

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<sup>22</sup> Constatntin Rădulescu – Motru (1930). „Școala nouă și dușmanii ei” / „The New School and its enemies”. *The Philosophy Magazine*, vol. XV (New Series), no. 1, January - March, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 610.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 608-610.

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