
THE EVOLUTION OF CONTROVERSY IN ROMANIAN CULTURE FROM THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT

Elena DAJU

PhD student, University of Craiova, Doctoral School of Social Sciences and Humanities

Abstract: *IN THIS ARTICLE, WE AIM TO CLARIFY THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF CONTROVERSY, ITS CLEAR DELIMITATION OF RELATED TERMS SUCH AS "DEBATE" AND "PAMPHLET" AND THE INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTIVE ROLE OF CONTROVERSY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CULTURE IN ROMANIA. WE WILL ALSO APPROACH, FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE SCIENCE OF LOGIC, THE INSTRUMENTS WITH WHICH CONTROVERSY OPERATES, CONCLUDING BY CONFRONTING THE "RULES OF CIVILIZED CONTROVERSY", ESTABLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD IN 1890, WITH THE PRACTICES OF THE LOCAL CULTURAL SPACE.*

Keywords: *CONTROVERSY, PAMPHLET, CULTURE, DEBATE, ARGUMENT*

**Contact details
of the
author(s):** Email: elena.alimona.daju@gmail.com

CONCEPTUAL DELIMITATIONS

"Polemos", which in Greek means war, introduces, unlike the unleashed pamphlet, the confrontation of ideas, the logical duel, the intellectual duel.

Through the tools with which it operates, the argumentative strategies, even the errors of relevance, through its topics and rules, controversy contributes to the development of culture.

The object of the controversy is, in essence, a controversial fact, on which different points of view are formulated, important being the correct formulation of the problem, of the questions asked to the one with whom it is argued, the presentation of one's own conclusions.

An intelligent attitude involves accepting other hypotheses, even of those considered bizarre, respecting the opponent's competence.

The controversy is "a contradictory discussion, a struggle of ideas on a literary or scientific problem", "a passionate controversy on a subject".

Argumentation and persuasion, supported by rhetoric, are the main ways of making texts that contain contradictory discussions or disputes of ideas. In order to take place, the controversy involves at least two actors, who face each other in front of an audience, their existence imposing a double goal: defeating the pre-thinker and attracting the public to his side.

In the midst of general participation in the exchange of ideas, confrontations attract attention either by number or by intensity. Differences and rivalries are not temporary; they persist over time and even amplify.

In a global sense, controversy is characterized by three ideal types of manifestation: the controversy, the dispute and the discussion. In the dispute, they fight to win, in controversy to convince, and in discussion to establish the truth.

The test, preferred by the discussion, aims to establish the truth or falsehood based on logical reasoning. The strategy, on which the dispute is based, aims to reduce the opponent to silence, its success is generally based on hiding the true goals. The argument, typical for the controversy, is intended for rational persuasion. He does not address itself to the truth with priority, but, most often, to the conviction, coming in this sense with reasons recognized and acceptable by the opponent.

THE SPECIFICITY OF CONTROVERSY IN ROMANIAN CULTURE

In its early phase, the Romanian culture registers rudimentary controversies, encountered especially in religious or historiographical works.

The Metropolitan of Moldavia, Varlaam, considers the "Catechism" of Calvinist emanation printed in Alba Iulia in 1640 to be loaded with "poison of soul death", a context in which he intends to fight it systematically, paragraph by paragraph, from the "true teaching" perspective. For this reason, it appears in 1645, in Iași, "The book called the answer against the Calvinist catechism ...". The method of "answer" is as it follows: the author confronts the perceptions of the two cults, checks their fidelity to the biblical text perspective, and the conclusion, always favorable to him, acquires a plastic formulation, saturated with biting irony. The attitude caused quite an irritation in the opposing camp, but the reply would not come until eleven years later: "The shield of the catechism, with the answer of the holy scripture, against the answer of two countries without holy scripture" (1656).

In the 17th century, from the desire to prove the common Latin origin of all Romanians, and from the grief of finding some gross errors in the works studied about the Romanian people, Miron Costin's battle cry resounds in "Of the Moldavians, from what country their ancestors came out from". He, assumed and aware of his responsibility ("I will realize mine, as much as I write"), respects certain principles of discussion, as a form of controversy: he brings evidence in support of his truths, without treating his opponents indiscriminately, and his anger does not alter his lucidity; he is not impulsive and he does not throw himself blindly into battle; he does not react emotionally to a false hypothesis.

Through objectivity and rigor, Miron Costin can be considered a worthy forerunner of Titu Maiorescu, one of the great Romanian polemicists along with Ion Barbu and Eugen Lovinescu.

The controversy of the representatives of the "Transylvanian School" should also be noted, an enlightened emanation controversy, characterized by vehemently combating the tendentious, denigrating theories of some foreign historians, such as Sulzer, Eder and Engel. Petru Maior covers up his opponents from ridicule and qualifies them by repeated appeals to popular proverbs and sayings:,, but for a while, as donkey scratches another donkey, in a similar way we borrow the defamations, without any search for the truth, of spring they make a full of themselves"(" History for the beginnings of the Romanians in Dachia "). Budai-Deleanu's "Țiganiada" brings unexpected innovations in terms of controversial "tricks" - which becomes a "warrior" species, full of spirit and intelligence, which thus steps into the nineteenth century (the century of its full crystallization) in order to meet of its classics.

In the nineteenth century, the revolution represented, for the Pasoptist writers, a burning social and political controversy, all in the name of freedom. The source of controversy, on the form theme that the modern national language must take, starts from the idea of imposing the purest form of the Latin language, idea supported by the representatives of the "Transylvanian School" (in "History for the beginning of Romanians in Dachia" -1812, by Petru Maior). On the other hand, most important writers of the time (A. Russo, Vasile Alecsandri) ridicule Latinisms and Frenchisms, carrying out a real controversy with the "makers" of the "twisted" language systems, with those who were accused of intentionally imposing artificial constructions. , bizarre, without any chance of success, on the evolved body of the Romanian language.

The controversy reaches to full self-awareness and to a supreme artistic consciousness, in the opinion of N. Baltag, together with Titu Maiorescu, considered the founder of a polemical level, capable from the intellectual and spiritual point of view, as well as from the point of view of art knowledge, to engage and fight in the perimeter of ideas. Sometimes, Maiorescu defeats his opponents by avoiding them, then postponing them.

The step from critical freedom to relativism will be taken later by Eugen Ionescu. Lacking gravity, the critic fails to argue dramatically with himself, but argues with a dogma that others care about or take it seriously. Eugen Ionescu does not believe in the "sociability" of the criticism, which he defines as a simple convention, and the critic as a jester with judicial airs.

After the crusades of ideas or words from the interwar period, follows the attitude of the proletarianists (the cult of the proletariat, a politico-ideological movement launched in the Soviet Russia immediately after the victory of the Bolshevik party), which proclaimed the eradication of the past, and which did not go unanswered.

Then the controversy is brightly reborn through the voices of lucid spirits, such as A.E. Baconsky or AL. Piru, in order to later polarize around several editorial events, such as Eugen Barbu's "The Pit".

The controversy in writing and through writing has lately become a form of struggle, in which that trust, in order that reconciliation to be possible, which Kant spoke of, has completely disappeared or is considered "past", a sign of anachronism and "old morality". The other is, most often, a totally disrespectful object. He has no value, but only possibly a negotiable price in court. He has no qualities, only monstrous defects. If we were to ask ourselves not why this phenomenon is possible and how it is morally legitimate, then it is likely that, to some extent, Max Weber's concepts of ethics of belief and ethics of responsibility can help us. It is certain that in a first instance controversy one's own opinions and beliefs are mobilized. These are unfounded, and so-called sincerity is most often used. The polemicist considers himself not only sincere, but also entitled to become an infallible judge in the name of these values. This is how the polemicist claims himself from a morality of beliefs. He is neither immoral nor amoral.

What happens when a culture does not know how to impose its values? Octavian Paler claims that Romanians had a fatal inclination to denigrate, to suspect, to minimize their own values. In this sense, he offers the following example: "While so many mediocrities, from other meridians, pamper themselves through the world dictionaries, next to Eminescu, in Larousse, I encountered this laconic and ridiculous explanation: "auteur de nouvelles et de contes populaires". We, therefore, must believe first in our own values, obviously avoiding exaggeration. Especially since evil does not stop to the offense.

Just as the sleep of reason gives birth to monsters, the sleep of dialogue gives birth to dogmas. And dogmas often end up stifling what they claim to be sacred.

The controversy is, in the end, a form of differentiation and pluralism in culture. In the absence of the controversy, literature disappears in its own ideational and aesthetic poverty. If we follow the

evolution of literary forms, we will discover that nothing important happens except the presence of the polemical spirit. The great "wars" between classicism and romanticism, between modernism and avant-garde and post-avant-garde, illustrate the permanent situation in the controversy that must accompany the existence of the literature.

Beyond the great epistemological confrontations, the controversy is usually between the exponential individualities of one direction or another.

Regardless of the sustained idea, "culture needs a fight of opinions to avoid both boredom and arrogance" and regardless of the form it can take during the development - pamphlet (characterized by sarcastic tone, virulent irony, exacerbation of the defects of the attacked person, combining humor with sarcastic irony, all aimed at annihilating the opponent by reducing it to the size of ridicule) or intellectual implication with logical argumentation - controversy is a way of dialogue that takes you out of monotony, from the naturalness of everyday life .

THE INSTRUMENTS OF CONTROVERSY

Types of arguments used in controversy. Demonstration errors

In the strict realm of the logic science, the argument is a chain of sentences that, taken together, support a certain conclusion.

According to Silvia Săvulescu in "Rhetoric and Argumentation Theory", in certain classifications, arguments are divided into three subcategories or families:

1) Ethos arguments - are emotional and moral arguments (attitudes that a speaker must take to inspire confidence in his audience). The speaker can select various strategies, such as common sense, sincerity and goodwill, etc.

2) Arguments related to pathos - are purely emotional arguments, designed to arouse emotions, passions and feelings, to be adapted to the psychological profile of the target audience.

3) Arguments related to logos are addressed to reason and can be:

- deductive, which are based on logical implication, the rule of reciprocity, cause-effect relationships;

- analogical, etymological, causal, oppositional, etc.

They are called *ignoratio elenchi* (ignoring the thesis to be proved) a varied set of errors that are committed when, instead of the sentence to be proved or invalidated, coherent arguments are put forward to support or contradict another sentence. Sophisms of this type are based on concealing the confusion between the two sentences, so that the tricked person accepts the opponent's thesis, although he has proven otherwise instead. Such *ignoratio elenchi* are also specific to the polemical discourse.

According to Silvia Săvulescu and Dan Crăciun in "Logic and the theory of argumentation", the following variants of relevance errors are frequently encountered:

1) **Argumentum ab auctoritate (the argument of the authority)** means to invoke as an argument for or against to an idea the opinions of some "authorities" officially established or being in the grace of public opinion. The maxim of this inconclusive way of arguing is the famous "Magisterdixit!". This type of argument has been called as such by John Locke, who says that we use it when we quote the opinions of people with some authority and reputation in the eyes of the others. The error is amplified when a transfer of authority is added, considering that the opinions of a brilliant scientist are unassailable not only in his field but also in others.

2) **Argumentum ab envy (the argument of hatred)** is a false demonstration which, under the pretext of defending the truth, seeks to provoke hatred against the opinions of others or to unjustly compromise them.

3) **Argumentum a contrario** - analogical argumentation mode based on the transfer from the contrary to contrary, having the scheme: if to A corresponds B, to non-A is likely to suit non-B.

4) **Argumentum ad hominem** - regarding the person being discussed with, this way of arguing consists in opposing to the opponent the consequences resulting from the least probable theses admitted by him; in a broad sense, an attack with strict, precise reference to individuality, the doctrine of the adversary. The mechanism of organizing this argument is based on shifting the focus from the problem to the person.

5) **Argumentum ad personam** (attack on the person) – it is a variant of the ad hominem argument and consists of a personal attack on the opponent (ad personam vs. ad hominem). The mechanism of this argumentation is based on the irony of the opponent in connection with aspects not related to the problem in question, the formulation of allusions in negative terms, the transfer of the discourse from the general plan of the argumentation to the personal plan. The effects of this type of argumentation can trigger a symmetrical reaction (the opponent loses his composure, also resorting to personal attack).

6) **The Insult** - Although the social interactions deontology, the rules of politeness are normative (insulting the interlocutor / opponent is forbidden), it is found that insult is often present in the public debate. The insult, which at first sight does not seem to be a matter of argument, often invalidates the interlocutor, and the attack on the person influences the debate.

7) **Argumentum ad ignorantiam** (argumentation on ignorance) - A mode of argumentation that consists of "using the evidence taken from one of the foundations of knowledge or probability" (Locke). This type of argumentation is closely related to the administration of (or demonstration by) evidence. The strategy is based on requesting that the opponent admit as evidence what is presented to him or, if not, provide in turn a (better) evidence.

8) **Argumentum ad verecundiam** (argument that appeals to respect) - A way of arguing in which the adversary is respected for the opinion of a man or people who have gained a good reputation in the eyes of the common opinion (Locke). This type of argument is organized on an inadequate argumentative scheme, which is based on claiming that a point of view is valid only because it is supported by an authority (whose reputation is not usually obtained in the field in question).

9) **Argumentum a fortiori** (for a stronger reason, all the more so) - Mode of argumentation in which what is demonstrated by one case extends to another case, which presents to the first stronger reasons to be "All the more true."

10) **Argumentum ad iudicium** (based on judgment on the nature of things) - A way of arguing consisting in "using evidence taken from one of the foundations of knowledge or probability" (Locke). This type of argument is from Locke's perspective the only valid form of argument, unlike argumentum ad hominem, argumentum ad ignorantiam and argumentum ad verecundiam, because, based on judgment on the nature of things, it is the only one that can lead to knowledge.

11) **Argumentum ad misericordiam** - A way of arguing based on the pressure exerted on the opponent by constantly appealing to his feelings and interests.

12) **Argumentum a pari** (argument for an equal reason) - A mode of argumentation based on the transfer of a case-specific demonstration to another case, for reasons of identity or analogy between the two cases.

13) **Argumentum a tuto** - Analogical mode of argumentation based on the transfer of certainty from what is certain to what does not have the same degree of certainty.

14) **Argumentum baculinum / argumentum ad baculum** (the stick sophism) - Argument based on the use of force instead of any argument; initially, it designated the possibility of proving the existence of the outside world by hitting the ground with a stick. It consists in trying to impose an idea on someone or in giving up to one's own idea, using the overt or allusive threat.



15) Argumentum ex concessis (by concession) - Indirect way of arguing by temporarily accepting the opponent's thesis in order to contradict himself or make him accept what he had initially rejected.

16) Argumentum ex silentio (by passing in silence) - Mode of argumentation based on the silence of the opponent, which does not deny the statement. A thesis can be tacitly accepted either out of the inattention of the interlocutors or out of their fear of contradicting a higher authority, or out of embarrassment or for whatever other psychological and pragmatic reasons, totally inconclusive from a logical point of view.

17) Parallogism of composition - It is based on the confusion related to the part / the whole system: the whole is attributed a property of a part.

THE RULES OF CIVILIZED CONTROVERSY

The publication “Ideas in dialogue”, published at the end of 2004 in Bucharest, advocating for the revitalization and ventilation of the local public space, under the pretext that “Romania is land where people yell, gossip or laugh out loud, but where little is been listened to, even less is understood and in which the calm sound of the discussion is rarely heard” (HR Patapievici in “Manifesto: the calm of the discussion, the serenity of values”), calls for overcoming the “communication blockade in Romanian culture” and the establishment of the reign of the so called rules of the civilized controversy, established by the University of Oxford in 1890:

1. In any scientific, social or political controversy, the discussion must be limited to the exchange of ideas and only to those ideas which relate to the matter in question.

2. The sides into the dispute must use as an argument either scientific theories or concrete facts from reality which are relevant to the issue under discussion.

3. The sides do not have the right to question the character, temperament or past of the opponent, because they neither invalidate nor confirm the validity of the ideas they support.

4. The sides do not have the right to question the reasons that determine the opponent's ideological attitude, because it diverts the discussion from the issue itself.

5. Labeling the opponent by mentioning the school of thought, the social class, the professional organization or the political party of which he is a part, constitutes a violation of the rules of controversy and reveals the weakness of the lack of argument. In a civilized controversy, only the arguments invoked by the opponent as individuals not a member of a school or any form of organization count. You are not right because you are a materialistic thinker, boss or laborer, but whether your arguments are convincing or not.

H-R Patapievici plastically presents the translation from Dâmbovița of the rules established by the prestigious academic institution in Great Britain. The result is vivid, shocking, edifying:

“As soon as our public space became truly accessible to the public again, in 1990, the fact that all, but absolutely all of our controversies turned out to be uncivilized, lacking in style and unnecessary could not be avoided. Our public spirit had certain problems: inability to obey impersonal rules, lack of discipline; the stakes of the dispute, the thirst to win has always been greater in our country than the passion to convince; the contrary will to distinguish ideas from the person who supports them, to judge ideas on the person's account, and the person against ideas; the inability to accept the power of arguments, the problem of our polemicists being that they do not believe in them. The real mobilization of the force of speech is around the pre-thinker's thirst to soak his tongue in the opponent's blood.

If the rules of civilized controversy are set out above, then the practical procedures of our unsuccessful dialogues could be the following:

1. Our controversy is not about ideas, but about status. The stake is the mastery over the opponent's position, by depriving him of the social, political or cultural status he has.



2. Arguments can be taken from anywhere, the dialogue bending to either agonistic or sophistic strategies (the purpose of the means).

3. Any reference to the person, temperament, past or defects of the opponent is mandatory. The sorry idea is, for us, man himself - and man must be turned upside down.

4. It must always be proved that the motivations of the pre-thinker are impure, low and unspeakable.

5. The opponent must be exposed as part of a weird, upturning, lonely group - so that his simple association with the identification group to play the role of a stigma."

Against the background of the three deficiencies of community structure identified by the mentioned writer, namely indolence, disregarding for the neighbor and inability to accept the rules valid for all, the dialogue in the Romanian culture can be considered absent, and the Romanian public space a drained one.

CONCLUSIONS

The current confrontations in the cultural field, made visible to the general public in real time thanks to New Media, lack the logical duel, the intellectual duel, which seem to serve, through discourse and method, interests rather than ideas.

Compared to what Patapievici concludes, the problems are not formulated correctly, questions in the interest of the controversy are not addressed to the confrontation partners. Argumentation and persuasion are in great pain, and rhetoric cannot be spoken of.

The validity of the allegations is not in question. Accepting the other hypotheses seems impossible, and the opponents congratulate each other on with all the disregard they are capable of.

In the absence of logical argumentation to absorb the accusations, the confrontation degenerates into a quarrel of words or quarrels, which exceeds the area of the controversy of ideas.



REFERENCES

- Baltag, N., (1978) .Polemos. Bucharest. Cartea Românească Publishing House
- Crăciun, D., (2000). Logic and the argumentation theory. Bucharest. Technical Publishing House Săvulescu, S., (2001). Rhetoric and the argumentation theory. Bucharest.
- Bâlbăie, Radu., Popescu, C., F. (1998). Small journalism dictionary. Bucharest. Rompres Foundation
- Cărtărescu, M., (1998). About the need for disobedience. Dilemma, no. 273, April 24, 1998
- Paleologu, A., (1998). Only the world of stupidity is homogeneous, the world of intelligence is not. Dilemma, no. 273 April 24-30, 1998
- Patapievici, H., R., (2004). The Manifest: calm of discussion, the serenity of values. "Ideas in dialogue", no.1, October 2004
- Patapievici, H., R., (2004). How we argue. Ideas in dialogue, no. 3, December 2004