THE MODERN CONCEPT OF GRAMMAR.
SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE
(NATURAL, FORMAL, MUSICAL)*

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Motto: «Essence is expressed by grammar»
(L. Wittgenstein, 1949)

«Music is ... revelation of what cannot be expressed in any other language»
(N. Hartmann, Aesthetics, 1953)

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ABSTRACT

The paper starts from the idea that thought and speech work together as a unit and that language itself is not a simple means of communication, but plays an active and generative role. Beyond the task of the grammar of a language to provide rules for the formation of meaningful expressions, there is the complex activity of the mind, which includes the creative function of the language. “Grammaticality”, therefore, is not reduced to the criterion of rule, but is also structural to the language and to the unity between language and thought. The chapters of the paper deal with aspects related to the structure of the natural, formal and

musical language from a syntactic and semantic perspective. It is in this context that the discussion about musical language unfolds, a discussion that should consider the relationships with thinking, just as the development of the musical discourse should revolve around the theory of the work of art. Thus, the essence of music resides in becoming, it is not a chain of moments or of forms of existence. In the becoming of the enduring music lies only the unique possibility of its manifestation now, here, thus and not otherwise. The spirit is present at any point in the evolution of music, pursuing the line of becoming, which is simultaneity.

Keywords: grammar, syntactic, semantic, language, text, musical discourse

It is obvious that thought and speech work together as a unit\(^1\), and that language itself is not a simple means of communication, but has an active/generative role. Beyond the task of the grammar of a language to provide rules for the formation of meaningful expressions out of basic units, there is the complex intervention of the activity of the mind, which also integrates the creative function of language. “Grammaticality”, therefore, is not reduced to the criterion of rule, but is also structural to the language and to the unity between language and thought. Wittgenstein’s words are, however, peremptory: “Das Wesen ist in der Grammatik ausgesprochen”\(^2\).

1. Nowadays it is increasingly clear that novelty in the modern theory of language is related to the construction and justification of the artificial languages. The syntax of these languages “follows simple and exact rules and is built on Leibniz’s idea of *characteristica universalis* in such a close correspondence with semantics that the syntactic form of the expressions conveys the structure of their meanings. For such artificial languages there is a grammar, a syntax and a semantics that satisfies all the requirements of exactness” [22, p. 222].

However, extensive research reveals a disagreement over the specific structure of natural languages. Given that the language of the theory of science cannot dispense with its unity with the natural languages, a double action was imposed: a) overcoming the plurivocity of the natural language by applying the logical principle of univocity, b) defending the

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\(^1\) “Language – wrote Humboldt – is the formative organ of thought. Intellectual activity, entirely mental, entirely internal, and to some extent passing without trace, becomes, through sound, externalized in speech and perceptible to the senses. Thought and language are therefore one and inseparable from one another. But the former is also intrinsically bound to the necessity of entering into a union with the verbal sound; thought cannot otherwise achieve clarity, nor the representation become a concept” [17, p. 45].

\(^2\) If “essence is expressed by grammar” (as this aphorism suggests), the assertion in aphorism 150 becomes even more enlightening (Phil. U.): “The grammar of the word «to know» (*wissen*) is obviously closely related to the grammar of the words «can» (*können*) and «to be able to» (*imstande sein*), but also closely related to that of the word «to understand» (*verstehen*) and «to master» (*beherrschen*) a technique” [37, 145].
possibility of autonomy of syntax in the formula “pure syntax”, or actually freeing it from its compliance to a given semantics (inherent to the natural language or in the form of the idea of *characteristica universalis*).

In this broad perspective, required in the construction of science (as a semantic system), neglecting what is *specific to the language* (and which comes in the natural language) leads to the difficulties of an unwanted autonomism. Even the relationship between language and logic requires, in fact, maintaining the unity with the said specificity. For “on the one hand logic is understood as being independent from the natural languages, while on the other hand there is the assertion of the existence of certain logical structures in language and reality” [16, p. 21].

Moreover, given that “our speech is most often related to determinate actions and situations”, without the knowledge of which the meaning of our expressions “is not complete, or, in general, cannot be understood”, “this vagueness of the natural language, which can be compensated by practical reference, is, in principle, not to be viewed negatively. For in the natural languages it enables greater flexibility (e.g. short albeit meaningful utterances). Only thus is it possible for language - in a Humboldtian sense – to make infinite use of finite means” [16, p. 19].

In this way, sciences, which, in their striving for the “exactness of calculation” cannot be satisfied by the plurivocity of natural languages seek, with the help of logic, to achieve “the shift of the natural language to univocity” [16, p. 19].

In other words, it is all about the construction of logical languages, with their well-determined syntax, so as to constitute the basis of the theory of meaning and interpretation, of deduction and of truth.

For example, “the construction of the logical language $L$ is carried out in two steps. First, the syntax of $L$ is defined, the main task here being to establish the concept of the well formed expression (properly formed)... Then the interpretation conditions for $L$ are established in semantics” [22, p. 261].

Carnap himself, author of the most relevant constructions of this kind, wrote: “…our explication will refer to semantical language systems, not to natural languages. It shares this character with most of the explications of philosophically important concepts given in modern logic, e.g., Tarski’s explication of truth. It seems to me that the problems of explicating concepts of this kind for natural languages are of an entirely different nature” [4, p. 286].

First, Carnap introduced:
the *L*-concepts, “meant as explicata for certain concepts which have long been used by philosophers without being defined in a satisfactory way.

Our concept of *L*-truth ... is intended as an explicatum for the familiar but vague concept of logical or necessary or analytic truth as explicandum. This explicandum has sometimes been characterized as truth based on purely logical reasons, on meaning alone, independent of the contingency of facts. The meaning of a sentence, its interpretation is determined by the semantic rules (the rules of designation and the rules of truth...)”\(^3\) [4, p. 53].

On this basis, it was further argued, mutatis mutandis, that “a logical analysis, especially a semantic-logical analysis of the natural language sentences with the help of exact logical concepts and of well-defined logical interpretations often represents a specification, and with it an original interpretation and a resignification of these sentences” [22, p. 261].

As a result, the development of a “logical grammar” leads to the construction of a functional semantic system based on a syntax. This is what Carnap himself asserted: „By a *semantical system* we understand a system of rules, formulated in a metalanguage and referring to an object language, of such a kind that the rules determine a truth-condition for every sentence of the object language... To formulate it in another way: the rules determine the *meaning* or *sense* of the sentence” [2, p. 22].

2. From a logical perspective, the discussion about *grammar* moves to the plan of semiotics, more specifically to *syntax*.

The syntax-semantics interaction in this new context exceeds their integration into a grammar (however “modern” it may be). The new form of this unity was pointed out by Wittgenstein: “We can say: grammar *explains* the meaning of the signs and thus makes the language pictorial. I can justify the choice of a word by a grammar. But that doesn’t mean that I do, or have to, use definitions to justify the words I use in a description or something similar” [36, aphorism 142].

This alludes to an entire stage of the research carried out after the 1960s, when, “in opposition to Austin’s and Chomsky’s orientations” there was a revival of interest “in the type of concept-conditioned semantics” (logical semantics – author’s note ) introduced by Frege and then developed by Wittgenstein (*Tractatus*), Tarski, Carnap, Church a.o., which seems to justify the formula *from syntax to semantics* [27, p. 41].

\(^3\) Carnap introduces the *L*-concepts “with the help of the state-description and range”: the former “represents Leibniz’s «possible worlds» or Wittgenstein’s possible states of affairs”; the latter, “the class of all those state-descriptions in which a given sentence S₁ holds” is called “the range of S₁” [4, p. 52].
Through “the two basic semantic concepts” (*sense* and *meaning*), Frege “outlined an entire theory of oblique contexts which included especially the epistemic contexts”; another “thematic circle” is “Frege’s concept of meaning, especially the interpretation he gives to it as association with “significability”, as well as the axiological understanding of the concept of truth value” [29, p. 3, 5].

It is interesting that this passage “from syntax to semantics” reinforces the idea of the privileged position of syntax. This is obviously about the context of the logical understanding of semiotics, when the autonomy of syntax takes the form of “logical syntax”. Here, the concept of rule receives a new justification (“stronger” than in the “grammatical rule”).

There is an express orientation towards the study of the sentence: “The development of logic during the past ten years has shown clearly that it can only be studied with any degree of accuracy when it is based, not on judgments (thoughts, or the content of thoughts), but rather on linguistic expressions, of which sentences are the most important, because only for them is it possible to lay down sharply defined rules” [3, p. 1].

Even more than the analytical tradition (especially Russell and Wittgenstein), Carnap formulates the idea that the logic of language (the accuracy of meaning) precedes (and conditions) the logical correctness. Hence two major consequences arise: one is the conception according to which “the task of scientific philosophy consists in building formal artificial languages suitable for the accurate reconstruction of the scientific sentences” after “syntactic rules”; the second one is the emphasis on the need “to distinguish rigorously between two levels of language: the *object language*, in which the object of study is presented and which is built through analysis, as an uninterpreted calculus; the *metalanguage*, which is an interpreted language and is used to express statements about the object language” [28, p. LV].

In fact, *The Logical Syntax of Language* (1934) is a comprehensive program of reconstruction of logic, in which certain basic concepts are more clearly defined, such as: “syntactical rules”; “transformation rules”; “logical areas of interference” a.o. Given that the work “remained unknown to linguists” and that Carnap, on the other hand, “explicitly excluded the natural languages from his considerations”, something very important was overlooked: 25 years before Chomsky, Carnap had anticipated the “transformational grammar” [28, p. LV, LVI].

Carnap also revealed the value of convention in conceiving logic by appeal to the linguistic form. This is the well-known “principle of tolerance” and the announcement of the logical pluralism: “*In logic there are no morals*. Everyone is at liberty to build up his own
logic, i.e. his own form of language, as he wishes. All that is required of him is that, if he wishes to discuss it, he must state his methods clearly, and give syntactical rules, not philosophical deductions” [3, p. 45].

In the same context comes the redefinition of syntax: “The aim of logical syntax is to provide a system of concepts, a language, by the help of which the results of logical analysis will be exactly formulable”; the “logic of science” itself is the “syntax of scientific language”[3, p. III-IV].

Meanwhile, as Carnap specified, “other areas of language analysis have also developed, treating other aspects of language. Generally, one might say today that the logic of science is the analysis and theory of the language of science and includes two more areas, i.e. semantics and pragmatics. While syntax is purely formal (our emphasis), i.e. it studies only the structure of linguistic expressions, semantics studies the semantic relationship between expressions and objects or concepts, Thus, the relationship of signification enables the definition of the concept of true sentence in semantics, too. Pragmatics also studies the psychological and sociological relations between the persons using the language and the expressions”5 [3, p. 7].

Particularly important for the purpose of the present context is to understand the unity between syntax, semantics and pragmatics in the “logical analysis of language”, i.e. in logical semiotics (the logical modeling of semiotics).

All the more relevant therefore becomes the definition of syntax:

“What is logical syntax?”, Carnap was wondering. At first, the answer comes as the definition of syntax per se. “The syntax of a language is supposed to lay down rules according to which the linguistic structures (e.g. the sentences) are to be built up from the elements (such as words or parts of words). The chief task of logic, on the other hand, is supposed to be that of formulating rules according to which judgments may be inferred from other judgments. But the development of logic during the past ten years has shown clearly that it

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4 Ibidem, p. III-IV. It is worth noting that “the logical characteristics of sentences (for instance, whether a sentence is analytic, synthetic, or contradictory; whether it is an existential sentence or not; and so on) and the logical relations between them (for instance, if two sentences contradict one another or are compatible with one another; whether one is logically deducible from the other or not; an so on) are solely dependent upon the syntactical structure of the sentences” [3, p. 2].

Therefore, logic becomes a “part of syntax”, if, of course, this is understood in a wide sense and formulated precisely: “The difference between syntactical rules in the narrow sense and the logical rules of deduction is only the difference between formation rules and transformation rules, both of which are completely formable in syntactical terms. Thus we are justified in designating as ‘logical syntax’ the system which comprises the rules of formation and transformation” [3, p. 2].

5 In the 2nd edition (1968) Carnap wrote: “This field is still in its infancy” (Ibidem). As we will see, much has changed since then, up to the recognition of a genuine "pragmatic turn" in contemporary philosophy [ 3, p. VII].
can only be studied with any degree of accuracy when it is based, not on judgments (thoughts, or the content of thoughts), but rather on linguistic expressions, of which sentences are the most important, because only for them is it possible to lay down sharply defined rules”6 [3, p. 1].

Here the emphasis is placed not only on the pre-eminence of the language level (as a prerequisite and condition for the functioning of logic), but also on the value (as a prerequisite and foundation) for syntax.

If, as Chomsky stated, “grammar basically expresses grammatical competence” [6, p. 225], this statement pleads in favour of the (structural) primacy of syntax. In this way, the rule (of grammaticality) is freed from its normative constraints (in traditional grammar) and consequently creativity is linked to the syntactic component. As Chomsky stated, “the final effect of a grammar, then, is to relate a semantic interpretation to a phonetic representation – that is, to state how a sentence is interpreted. This relation is mediated by the syntactic component of the grammar, which constitutes its sole «creative» part” [5, p. 173]

In what sense? Here we recognize the influence of R. Carnap’s “logical/philosophical system”. “Chomsky owes him the idea that the natural language must be formalized, because the formalized language exists only by means of the natural language and in so far as the former is «interrogated» in the latter through correlation rules. Carnap presented the construction of a general theory of language forms. His method in The Logical Syntax of Language (1934) left a deep mark on Chomsky’s thinking” [31, p. 57].

Hence comes the orientation towards syntax and the shift towards “general theory of linguistic structure”, in which grammar is conceived as independent of meaning, and grammaticality as observance of the syntactic rule. In this light, “the syntactic structure must be developed on an independent basis” because “in the generative configuration, syntax has the central role” [31, p. 58, 73].

The addition of the “transformational level” (Z. Harris, N. Chomsky) underlies “a common intuition: a given statement cannot be fully analyzed unless it is set in relation to other sentences”, that is, “it is possible to define significant relations between facts, between the different types of syntactic constructions” [31, p. 99].

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6 “By the logical syntax of a language we mean the formal theory of the linguistic forms of that language: the systematic statement of the formal rules which govern it together with the development of the consequences which follow from these rules” [3, p. 1].
But what does “formal” mean?: “A theory, a rule, a definition, or the like is to be called formal when no reference is made in it either to the meaning of the symbols (for example, the words) or to the sense of the expressions (e.g. the sentences), but simply and solely to the kinds and order of the symbols from which the expressions are constructed”… [3, p. 1].
Gradually, there emerged the idea of “semantic rules”, which “reflect the evolution of the relations between syntax and semantics within the generative theory”; these rules are of two types: interpretive and generative” [31, p. 136, 137]. The former are “post-syntactic” rules, having the role to “interpret, in terms of meaning, the syntactic structures”, whereas the semantic generative rules are “global rules pertaining to generative semantics” and can therefore be “syntactic, phonological, semantic (more exactly, semantic-syntactic)⁷ [31, p. 137, 141].

The idea of the creative aspect of language, derived from Chomsky's distinction between “competence-performance” sends us back in history to Descartes (and the Grammaire générale et raisonnée de Port-Royal, 1660) and especially to Humboldt (language as activity, in its reverse action upon the mind). Chomsky himself considered the “internal form of language” (Humboldt) as a “generative principle”, emphasizing the “centrality of syntax”: the syntactic component is a generative source of the language and “must assign a deep structure to each sentence, which determines its semantic interpretation, and a surface structure, which determines its phonetic interpretation” [31, p. 155].

By being included in a “generative-transformational grammar” (which can have different modelings), syntax and semantics appear in a sui generis unity called “generative semantics”. The basic thesis would be (and also occurs in Chomsky’s works after 1965 - Aspects of the Theory of Syntax): “semantics is inseparable from syntax, the distinction between syntax and semantics being illusory. Semantic structures, which take the form of semantic representations are objects of the same formal nature as the syntactic structures” [31, p. 187].

3. This reveals even more clearly the unity between thought and language and the solar position of the “rule”. Bringing semantics and syntax into a unity, along with their relation with pragmatics, leads to the “speech situation” and thus to a shift from “the grammar of the text” to a theory of the text. And nor could it be otherwise, since the study of the sentence (under the aspects analyzed above) determines the passage to different levels of structural organization of the language.

⁷ In other words, the semantic component is mainly interpretive, i.e. it associates meanings to purely formal structures generated by the syntactic component; the semantic interpretation of sentences enables the penetration of the concepts of reference and truth in the generative theory. But the semantic representations are logical structures and thus take on a generative function, for they are logical forms of sentences, only modified linguistically: the «rewriting» rules are replaced by rules that produce sentence-semantic structures, which are then mapped to syntactic structures by means of rules similar to those by which new sentences are produced (i.e.: with the transformation rules).
In fact, what has been called “the third linguistic turn” is related right to the growing importance of the theories of grammar, in linguistics, logic and philosophy. As a matter of fact, a “philosophy of linguistics” has gradually emerged, conceived “as a branch of philosophy parallel to the philosophy of mathematics, the philosophy of logic and the philosophy of physics”, whose potential derives from the fact that “it concerns the foundations of the science whose object of study, language, has been central to philosophy in this century” [19, p. 1].

The reconstruction of a theory of the text underwent several stages under the influence of the grammars. First a “linguistics of the text” emerged as a “partial discipline”, more exactly a “text-oriented process” understood as the “application of a given set of analytical instruments” to “external totalities” (“Texts”), that is “to linguistic existence with the function of text” [15, p. 9].

The fact that linguists too are concerned with “linguistic configurations as texts” [15, p. 9, 10] is not something new; what is new is the growing interest in knowledge once the linguistic analysis of the text has begun. This, however, entails problems related to interpretation, which is “a mundane-semantic operation (welt-semantische)” by which all the “intensional interpretations” are “subordinated to each semantic representation” of a text – and thus to each representation of a textualized world [15, p. 13].

As a rule, interpretation is contained in “the grammar of the text”, where the following concepts play a key role: “interpretation” and “extensional semantics”; intension, designating “the meaning of names, constants, predicates, sentences, texts”; “meaning”, which “designates the extension and the intension of an expression” [15, p. 14, 15].

In this way, the “text grammar theory” undergoes a few changes in view of the semiotic preparation of interpretation, by taking into account the syntax and pragmatics (inevitable in the communicative function of language).

The text, which “cannot be defined in syntactical terms” (here we cannot distinguish: “texts” and “non-texts”), is both a “semantic entity” and a “pragmatic entity” [33, p. 108].

With semantics, the text brings “the universe of the discourse”, “the world of the text”. Therefore, it is not confusable with the discourse. The latter pertains to performance, while the text is “a «productivity», underlying the idea of intertextuality” [35, p. 57].

The sentence is “the building block of any text”, for it has “a satisfactory degree of coherence and cohesion” [24, p. 34, 35]. Essentially, the text is “the result of two tendencies, one towards cohesion, the other towards coherence”, both of which can be considered as “types of connexity” [24, p. 39]. The thesis that “the sentence is the architectural unity of the
text” justifies “the use of the generative and transformational grammar theory in the study of textuality” [24, p. 39].

In these grammars, the prepositional structures “express the sense of the prepositions and represent the semantic structure of the prepositions” [32, p. 126].

Here the semantic component becomes generative: the fact that “the role of transformation rules is to relate these semantic structures with the sentences in their grammatical form” explains why “the semantic component (the semantic structure of the sentence) becomes, in the recent theories of transformational grammar, a generative component: sentences are obtained by explicating a set of rules of semantic structure transformation; the semantic structure «generates» sentences when a set of transformation rules is applied to it”, hence it results that the “notion of «deep structure» no longer has a place” [32, p. 126].

Here comes again this rule, which, beyond the construction rules, the transformation rules, the “rewriting” rules etc., imposes itself (not as a norm, it is true!) on anything that is transformation, “generation”, functioning and signification at the level of language and of the language-thought interaction. The “linguistic behaviour” too is governed by “norms”, even if they have only the meaning of permissibility (a concept of deontic logic).

With these considerations, the problem of text theory can be pursued also in terms of what is of greatest interest here: the status of the text per se and the specific nature of the philosophical text (in the language of the philosophical writings). It is to be noted from the beginning that this is not a descriptive language, but an interpretive one. Aiming at a comprehensive interpretation and bringing “possible worlds”, the language of philosophies requires a more complex approach: beyond semiotics and semantics, there is the need for a phenomenological and hermeneutical approach. For philosophy is not about empirical findings, designed for direct communication, but about thought and “the world’s thinking”, realized however as current thinking, starting from the situation the thinker finds himself in.

The philosophical text is a “place” (in the Greek sense of tôpos, or Latin: locus, i.e. ontological, not physical) encompassing a philosophy, and belongs to its determinate being. This is not about ordinary facts, or events etc., but about a systematic comprehensiveness, according to syntactic-semantic and later logical-methodological rules.

In this sense, then, what is a text, how is it given and how does it exist?

As seen earlier, “texts belong to the reality given to us ... they belong to a surrounding world, and we relate to them in a certain way. We turn to them in the most various ways, and with their help we also undertake something. Texts, in turn, obviously act upon us, too. We
can talk about them, and they have something to tell us. Texts belong to reality so that, in many ways, they are a reality, which we humans - and certainly philosophers - usually talk about. We talk about Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Husserl and others, and these names are somewhat metonymies for the texts of these thinkers” [18, p. 61].

Given its determinate being, the philosophical text, like any text (genuine, as opposed to the non-text) can cover almost all the ontological categories, especially: substance, essence, existence, model, form etc., but especially meaning, intentionality and transcendence. In this last sense, texts point to something beyond themselves: through the semantics of the language in which they exist, they carry “ontological commitments”.

Text formulation is never an ex nihilo creation: firstly, a work is a compositio, a structuring of a given material, a “texture”; secondly, the signs (words) are invested with determinate meanings, which differ from one period to another or from one thinker to another.

Such an example is the “Idea”, as seen by Plato and Hegel. Here a fundamental idea appears, regarding novelty and “originality”. It is true that “nobody begins with his own thinking” [14, p. 454], but everyone reconfigures another categorial perspective and introduces a new dimension. In the given example: Hegel takes the term “Idea” from Plato, the Hegelian text being impossible without Plato. However, Hegel’s concept of “Idea” not only differs from Plato’s, but offers a new perspective on the world and on knowledge. The two remain “people of crucial importance” (“massgebenden Menschen”, as Jaspers put it), who brought a distinct note of continuity and originality.

It can thus be said that “no text stands entirely for itself alone, but is always taken in a totality or in a context of signification, which gives it a meaning. Each text points “not only, but always” to other texts, by which it designates, it indicates. The intertwining (the network) of this designation is, both for the genesis and for the comprehension of the texts, a condition of possibility. The issue at hand in this context is intertextuality” [18, p. 64].

The idea of “intertextuality” occurred, through modern linguistics, in the semiotic reconstruction.

In this sense, the following formulas have become referential: from a semiotic perspective, “we define the text as a translinguistic apparatus which redistributes the order of the language, by relating a communicative utterance (parole), aiming at direct information, to different types of previous or synchronic utterances. The text is thus a productivity, which means: 1) its relation to the language in which it is situated is redistributive (destructive-constructive) and therefore the text is better approached through the logical than through the purely linguistic categories; 2) it is a permutation of the text, an inter-textuality, which is to
say, in the space of a text several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize each other” [18, p. 64].

In other words, any text always refers “to other texts, towards which it is oriented. The intertwining of these references is a condition of possibility, both for the genesis and for the comprehension of the texts. The issue under discussion in this context is intertextuality... As Kristeva wrote, “the notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity… A text is always ... incorporated in other texts” [20, p. 113]. More exactly: “There is no zero point in writing; each writing normally repeats previous texts or fragments of texts, which are absorbed and transformed in one way or another” [20, p. 113].

In this way, “intertextuality”, a term derived from linguistics and from semiotics, gains new meanings through the interaction with the terms of phenomenology, i.e. “subjectivity” and “intersubjectivity”. Therefore, the “absorption” and transformation of the previous (or contemporary) texts in relation to a given text engages an interpretation (at least as a starting point) and is not reduced to a mere repetition.

On account of this, the concept of “author” is no longer a difficulty, at least for the modern times. Nevertheless, the preoccupation with texts (whether philosophical or otherwise) raises some difficulties. For here there intervenes the “reading”, the interpretation, the hermeneutic re-exposition (from the point of view of an interpretation).

In fact, the true form of reading is hermeneutical reading, but that does not exclude other forms (e.g., rhetorical reading, focused on the argumentative structure of a text). Whatever the form, the focus is (or should be) on the meanings of the text, its truth and its contextualization from the perspective of the era to which the interpreter belongs.

Its mission was exemplarily expressed by W. Dilthey: “The ultimate goal of hermeneutics is to understand the author better than the author understood himself” [7, p. 45]. In another stage of evolution of hermeneutics, this “Besser-Verstehen” received an even more explicit formulation: “It is enough to say that we understand in a different way, if we understand at all” [11, p. 280].

4. The modern semiotic concept of language as well as the generative-transformational grammars have emphasized the (undisputed) fact that a discourse produced in a language reveals itself (phonetically) in terms of its syntactic-semantic structure and implies, through its semantic openness, an «ontological commitment», bringing a «possible world » into presence, configured according to the specific nature of the ranges of existence of the meaning.
The crucial thing here is how semantic openness is produced and, in this respect, Carnap’s words can hold true, *mutatis mutandis*, for any semantics, not only for the logical semantics: “For those who want to develop or use semantic methods, the decisive question is not the alleged ontological question of the existence of abstract entities but rather the question whether the rise of abstract linguistic forms or, in technical terms, the use of variables beyond those for things (or phenomenal data), is expedient and fruitful for the purposes for which semantic analyses are made, viz. the analysis, interpretation, clarification, or construction of languages of communication” [4, p. 275]8.

The central issue here is *interpretation*, construed as attribution of meanings according to the type of language and its determinate form: language of words, conceptual language, formalized language etc. This is the context in which Carnap resignifies Leibniz’s idea of «possible worlds» 9, integrating it in his project of modal semantics: “It was Carnap’s idea to determine the richest informational interpretations so as to establish the truth values of sentences not only in a world, i.e. in our world, the «real» world, but also in all the possible worlds. A possible world is therefore to be considered not as a distant universe, but as our world as we could see it if it were not created as it is”[21, p. 23].

In fact, a «possible world» takes us beyond the ordinary, common sense of the word «world», i.e. to: “*the universe of the discourse* (=U)”, consisting of the “totality of objects about which facts can be asserted in a language L”: “This universe of discourse is nothing but a set of individual objects (various objects, parts of these objects, beings and parts thereof, etc.)”; “in relation to certain reference points, we can speak of the *presence* of some elements from U and of the absence of others. These reference points determine in a certain sense *sets of objects* from U. By *possible worlds* we mean these sets of objects from U, determined in relation to certain reference points. It is obvious that what we commonly call the *real* or *actual world* is one of the possible worlds” 11 [34, p. 30, 40].

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8 And here, an explanation: “If someone wishes to speak in his language about a new kind of entities, he has to introduce a system of new ways of speaking, subject to new rules; we shall call this procedure the construction of a linguistic framework for the new entities in question” [4, p. 267].

9 In short: „... this existing world is contingent and an infinity of other worlds are equally possible, and hold … equal claim to existence with it…” [23, p. 100].

10 The discourse refers to the possible «states of affairs» (Sachverhalte), i.e. the “totality of existing states of affairs”, while “a possible world is nothing but a multitude of possible states of affairs” [21, p. 23].

11 These “reference points” (temporal, spatial, a certain observer etc.) enable the “objects” (in a very broad sense) that can be identified in a particular location in space (say in Romania) to be different from the “objects” that can be identified in another place (say in Egypt)” [34, p. 39].

In other words: “If the meaning of a word is the set of individual objects (from U) designated by that word, it is natural that this set should have certain elements in common with other possible worlds while having no common elements with others ... the object designated by the word “Dâmbovița” can be identified in relation to a
The introduction of the concept of «possible world» in the general theory of meaning is justified by facts: even that which we commonly call «meaning» is based on “an observational given”: “the systematic correlation of a sign-object with a number of objects that the sign-object is said to «signify»; “meaning is «something» that regulates the use of the sign in relation to the objects” and can be expressed roughly “in terms of intension / extension”12 [34, p. 41, 42].

There is no unique answer to the question: «what is meaning?»: meaning can be a set (of objects in the universe of reference), or an operation applied to certain sets which, in turn, constitute the meaning of certain vocabulary items; meaning can be a quantification on a specific set, it can also be a function which attributes certain values (in our case «true» sau «false») to the structures called «sentences» etc. [34, p. 259]

If meaning “regulates” the use of the sign, then we must take into account the specific signs of the ranges of presence of the meaning (science, art, myth etc.), which shows us that the sign is not at all easy to circumscribe, even if we operate constantly with the distinction between the linguistic sign (the word) and other types of signs, whether they pertain to the theoretical-scientific language (transitive par excellence), or to the poetic language (essentially reflexive).

Therefore, we must take into consideration “the universe of the discourse”, the place of manifestation of language. This is because the discourse is the result of a construction (based on the language elements and on the communication situation), i.e. it is that which was called a “language event”, more exactly it is “language put into action” in a historical process that turns an utterance into an event”13 [1, p. 242].

The analysis of the discourse involves “going beyond the phrastic level and considering many pragmatic, extralinguistic and situational factors, without which a thorough study of meaning would not be possible” [30, p. 25].

This is because the “discursive event” assumes the use of language in a “communication situation”, which includes: “a speaker and the reception of what he utters” by an audience, following, of course, the application of certain operations, some belonging to the knowing subject, others furnished by the discourse mechanisms. Hence the definition of

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12 In fact, “what a sign signifies, i.e. the meaning, is the referent of that sign; this referent is represented by an intension, which determines an extension”, and speaking about them “is nothing more than using two alternative modes of expression in relation to the same thing, i.e. speaking about meaning [34, p. 53].

13 le discours est «le langage mis en action» dans un processus historique qui fait du l’énoncé un événement”.
the discourse: “every utterance assuming a speaker and a hearer, and in the former, the intention of influencing the latter in some way”\textsuperscript{14} [1, p. 242].

The basic idea is that the discourse is produced by the speaker, using the elements of language and the requirements of the communication situation, and only thus does it become, as has been said, “the place of manifestation of language”, a discursive field, a significantly structured ensemble (according to Saussure’s rule: signifiant/signifié), having its own structure and a cognitive, even interpretative dimension.

From the point of view of the text (since every discourse unfolds a text), the discourse is a set of possible phrases or utterances and thus becomes a “discursive component” of a language of the text (and of its embedding within a context) with semantic openness (based on the syntactic form of the language in question) which always reveals itself in a situation.

As an “event”, a process or an ensemble of acts, the discourse leads “beyond the phrase, to the transphrastic level called text” [30, p. 147], which appears under different types (according to the field: literature, art, science etc.), narrative, descriptive, informative, discursive, argumentative etc., supporting the logical-semantic and actional dimensions of language.

The discourse is where the semiotic structure of language, the interaction between sign, meaning and significance becomes effective. The central position here is held by meaning in that it “regulates” the use of the sign. And that is by virtue of the association with the “thought” (Gedanke), which emphasizes the unity between semantic and logical, while sense (Sinn) is, as Frege puts it, “the mode of presentation of an object” (Die Art der Gegebenseins).

This means that for the analysis of an expression one must consider not only its relation to something (referent), but also the mode in which it is put in that relation. Frege's thesis remains crucial for the understanding of this semiotic-logical complex: “... we can associate to a symbol (name, compound word, written symbol), not only the referent, which we will call its meaning, but also what I understand by the sense of the symbol, i.e. the way in which the object is given to us” [10, p. 55].

For the purpose of the discussion on discourse, the following thesis is most relevant: “Without symbols we would scarcely lift ourselves to conceptual thinking. Thus in applying the same symbol to different but similar things, we actually no longer symbolize the

\textsuperscript{14} In a specific terminology: something uttered or an ensemble of utterances in a communication situation, which includes the following factors: the speaker; his addressee (the hearer); the speaker’s intention to communicate; common knowledge of certain reference data shared by both the speaker and the hearer.
individual thing, but rather what the similarities have in common: the concept. This concept is first gained by symbolizing it; for since it is, in itself, imperceptible, it requires a perceptible representative in order to appear to us. In this way, the sensible closes our world of the non-sensible” [9, p. 107, 108].

5. In Frege's formula about the place and role of the symbol in «conceptual thinking», particularly in the phrase: “since it is, in itself, imperceptible”, the concept “requires a perceptible representative in order to appear to us” and thus “the sensible closes our non-sensible world” – we find, I believe, the true gateway to the understanding of discourse as “langage mis en action” (Benveniste), as the “place” of manifestation of language.

Equally important is the fact that it enables the understanding of what was called the «layered structure» of the work of art, as a result of an “objectification”. For, as N. Hartmann wrote, “there still remains the enigma: «how» can, in fact, the modeling of a sensible thing in the foreground be the carrier of a content that has an entirely different mode of being and is given only «for» a perceptual consciousness... this content can be grasped in the sensible modeling of matter and can be regained from it every time”; “the provisional solution to this enigma is that, in fact, the spiritual content is not in the modeled either, without the contribution of a living spirit. It does not exist in it «in itself», but only «for us», those who grasp it. And it is placed there by the producing mind only «for» a subject who grasps it... On the other hand, the real form that is given to it is itself only the material one, i.e. that of the sensible foreground” [13, p. 101, 102].

Language, for example, “belongs to a certain level of the living, objective spirit. As long as this spirit is «alive», i.e. as long as it is really spoken, it is a «living language»... At this level, the word, as a term of language, plays a mediating role in understanding ... it is already objectification and comprises both layers of objectification: the real sensible layer, the tone we hear, and the spiritual content, the meaning, the «sense». Only together can they constitute the «word»; one for itself alone has no relevance at the language level” [13, p. 48].

Let us follow now, by analogy with these aesthetic and ontological considerations, the musical phenomenon after the rule: the «discourse» is «language put into action», in a perspective that turns the utterance into an event, in which “a sensible foreground exists only

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15 Sound and meaning “are largely independent from each other, inside the common wholeness of the word... Meanings are linked to sounds only conventionally”; the same also holds true, to a greater extent, for writing. Here, the disparity between the graphic and the written image, and even between the graphic image and the spoken word, is quite obvious, both in terms of structure and in terms of mode of being” [13, p. 99].
through sonorous realization, and not through a mere representation; and only thus does the musical work appeal directly to the ear, and not to a «reader’s» prolific imagination (which is barely present here). That which was merely represented is replaced by that which is perceptible” [13, p. 137, 138].

In music too, “the relation between layers, with their opposition between real and unreal, is maintained… But what it really mediates to the listener, through its foreground levels, cannot be expressed in any way through words and concepts” [13, p. 140].

The «reality» in question here “is solely the acoustic reality, that which can be heard at the sensible level. This also applies where the “visible” dynamics of the performing musician’s or even the conductor’s movement makes an essential contribution to the understanding of music” [13, p. 137].

In the musical discourse, which can be conceived as “symbols in action”, we also speak about: a transmitter (the composer), a receiver (the audience); “but what in the literary discourse depended on the era and trend to which the writer belonged or on the structural characteristics of the work, i.e. the (implicit or explicit) narrator, in music depends on the performer (the conductor and the instrument player). It is therefore no longer a matter of an abstract discursive entity, but of a «human being» involved in the musical activity” [8, p. 36, 37].

As a result, in this case we have no direct contact with the “transmitter’s work”, but with “a work that has already been sifted through the interpretive appreciative-attitudinal sieve of the conductor and (or) of the instrument player”; “entities like: nucleus, cell, motif, create a specific musical phrase, developing it successively into larger syntactic units, such as the period, the movement, or even the entire musical piece”, all having a “phrastic behaviour and revolving around one and the same signified constructed as a scheme and conveyed as a process ” [8, p. 37, 40].

It should be noted that although the semantic capacity of music cannot be denied, it is not limited to the reference to a referent, which itself is to be identified in various ways, and not at all as something in particular. For, each musical discourse “has its real time, defined by the tempo of the transmission (as quasi-temporality in music we mention the frequent inversions of themes, motifs, modulatory directions etc., suggesting the reversed time sequence used in the linear renewal of the real musical temporality) ... the predicative-referential and dynamic-dramatic evidence of the musical discourse also explains its necessarily transphrastic nature, on both a direct and indirect level” [8, p. 42].
Certain particular features of the musical discourse intervene also depending on the (musical) genre within which a musical piece falls, and on the way in which the sense refers to different realizations, creating in fact a «language event» that would be inconceivable without an interpretative horizon, observing the principles of interaction between syntax and semantics both in the conception (creation) and in the bringing into presence (in the «relationship of manifestation») of a text.

The words of speech and the tones of music have a phonic basis (albeit in a different way) and reveal themselves in a semantic structure in which the values are not “pre-given ideas”, but “emanate” from the system (Saussure), while the form of the signifier is independent from the value of the signified, which is the “signified in the sentence” (Carnap), not beyond it. What is “genuinely linguistic” and, mutatis mutandis, genuinely musical is only that which differs from one “language event” to another.

Even if in the musical language the distinction between “langue et langage” is not relevant, there still remain the categories of code and message and, especially musical dynamics makes use of the terminology derived from the study of the natural language: the musical accents are divided into: morphological accent (pertaining to the rhythmic-melodic and even harmonic structure of the musical discourse) and syntactic accent (pertaining to the elements of punctuation and phrasing of the musical discourse and realized in the performing act, not in the compositional one\textsuperscript{16} [12, p. 497].

Similarities, however, do not wipe away the differences: the language of sounds is universal, while that of speech is relative to different contexts of communication; the (spoken) language system and the musical system are two different systems both in terms of (syntactic) structure, and in terms of (semantic) interpretive horizon, as the «sound worlds» are not just «possible worlds» (of interpretation), but also real worlds (in music, in the art form).

6. A discussion about musical language should therefore be more and more related to its relationships with thinking, and the development of the musical discourse to the theory of the work of art. If the “art of sounds” is more than “the science of sounds”, we should emphasize, at a broader metaphysical aesthetic level, the discontinuity and continuity between the language of sounds and the «sound worlds» that come into presence through the musical act and give a deeper meaning to the musical language, leading, beyond the graphic level of the score, to the (musical) “text”.

\textsuperscript{16} It should also be noted that phrasing is based on the following syntactic elements: motif, phrase (sentence) and period” [13, p. 558].
Here again grammar intervenes, in a less expected manner, urging towards analogizing the areas of human creation. Perhaps it was not by accident that this idea found its highest expression in the words of a great Romantic poet (and thinker):

“Does not music have something of combinatorial analysis and conversely...

The numerators are the mathematical vowels – all numbers are numerators. Combinatorial analysis leads to improvisation in numbers – and teaches the numbers the *art of composition* – mathematical thorough-bass. *Language is a musical instrument of ideas*. The poet, rhetorician and philosopher *play* and compose grammatically. A fugue is thoroughly *logical* or scientific. It can also be treated poetically”\(^\text{17}\) [26, p. 365].

It should be however noted that it is only in the broader context of considering an artwork in terms of its “relationship of manifestation” that what is «beyond» and what is «before» becomes intelligible in any form of language and, of course, mutatis mutandis, in the musical language as well.

As Hartmann put it: “What can be purely sensibly «heard together» (Zusammenhören) is a closely limited composition of sounds and tones. A sonata, a «movement», or even a prelude is not in the least limited to that. We do hear, of course, sensibly-real (purely acoustically) together, a limited succession of sounds and a limited succession of harmonies, but only as far as retention holds them together (the prolongation of what we have just heard”...)\(^\text{18}\) [13, p. 131].

The question would then be: is there anything behind the sounds that enables the appearance of something that can be called authentic musical content? The answer can be: yes, there is, “it just must be sought where it can be found - not far away, beyond the world of sounds, but close to it and inside its genre” [13, p. 131].

The compositional unity of the construct, which is not sensibly audible, can be grasped by the auditor only in its temporal unfolding, through the mediation of the internal connection between its parts. For “it is a unity that is not given in its entirety at any stage of the acoustic effect, while constituting nevertheless the real composition” [13, p. 133].

The artistic miracle of the musical work is triggered right by this presence in a performance, during which we “participate in the building of the edifice”, in the creation of an

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\(^\text{17}\) In *Fragments* (1802), Novalis pointed to the specific character of language and its relationship to thinking: “Our language is either mechanical, atomistic or dynamic. The genuinely poetic language should however be organically living. The more the paucity of words is felt, the more ideas are to be touched upon in a *single* stroke” [25, p. 138]

\(^\text{18}\) Let us not forget that a composition is “based on invention”, so that the musical “theme” itself “is freely created, a pure product of musical imagination” [13 p. 29].
overall picture, we hear “more than is sensibly audible”, which is, in fact, “the unreal background”.

The “miracle” endures all the longer as “not even the most consummate performer can create for the listener the synthesis of hearing together in a unity; he can bring him close to it, or lead him towards it, but no power in the world can spare him the successive construction of the whole in the music listening process. One man cannot «hear» for another, any more than he can think, conceive or comprehend. But ... the unity and the wholeness of the musical object exists nowhere else but in the hearing of music”\(^\text{19}\) [13, p. 139, 140].

Thus, in a manifest way, “the only medium layer of «perceptible sonority» is realized in the unique act of execution of here and now. And this means that during execution, what is genuinely musical in music remains appearance ... appearance can itself be eminently objective, compelling and staggering, it can carry along the audience, amazingly, and merge them into one, in a «unique» artistic experience. However, it still remains appearance, and does not become reality. And only thus is the fundamental condition of the «aesthetic object» and of beauty achieved in it” [13, p. 219].

This leads us back to the question of the possibility of giving music an extra-musical “content”. And here is the finding: the element that appears along with the inner layers is different from the “purely musical modeling” (“the play of sounds and harmonies”) on the outer layers: it is the emotional element, which “never stands before us as an object, it is caught up in its own subjectivity, it is hard to grasp ... it is generally present only in the hearing it receives, beyond which it can only with difficulty be represented ... it is given only insofar as we experience it ... it can be grasped only in music”...\(^\text{20}\) [13, p. 222]

However we accept (or reject) this (perhaps “metaphysical”) “element”, we must remember that “without the spiritual background” music would be “a chess game played with sounds”; but music is “genuine revelation, namely revelation of what cannot be expressed in any other language”\(^\text{21}\) [13, p. 224].

Nothing, of course, can prevent comparative interpretations (in the hermeneutical sense). However, it cannot be denied that a work of art – such as a symphony - is unique, exemplary, irrespective of the number of times it is brought into the “relationship of

\(^{19}\) Perhaps that is why Celibidache (in his interviews) used to send us to the concert hall!

\(^{20}\) There is one more question to be answered: “how do sounds and the successions of sounds manage to let appear what is innermost and most inexpressible in spiritual life? [13, p. 223].

\(^{21}\) In other words, „music is an invitation ... to companionship, to the common vibration, to the innermost life ... And thus it creates the miracle of the listeners’ communion in the actual experiencing of music” [13, p. 224].
manifestation” by double interpretation: execution and hermeneutical resignification (of the “text”, but also of the execution).

The most difficult problem, however, is the status of the musical work in the «relationship of manifestation». For the «work of art» as such, in terms of its value, is (has a being) but does not exist as a thing; it «shows itself» in the course of execution, but always remains «in the background», a «Hintergrund», as something unreal. The difficulty increases as it is understood that the (unreal) «background» is not a given that would stand before someone who starts the execution of a musical piece, but self-builds itself, in the aforementioned relationship following the series of reconstructions through the plurality and diversity of interpretations (executions and hermeneutical-resignificative acts).

Let us consider, for example, the Symphony in C Major “Jupiter”, after the rule: «melody is the essence of music» (as Mozart put it), concentrating all the elements of composition (from the idea proper to its tonal expression), which means that in the «relationship of manifestation» (through execution or interpretation-exegesis) the «symphony» is (has a being), but does not have a sensual reality, i.e. it is something «unreal», a sensitizing existence of what comes as “foreground” (Vordergrund), i.e. the accomplishment in execution-performance.

Thus, what we «hear» here is the “Jupiter” symphony: the four movements (I. Allegro vivace; II. Andante cantabile; III. Menuet / Allegretto with Trio; IV. Finale (Allegro molto), along with the ideas, themes, motifs and musical images that Mozart invested them with, representing a reconstruction (through execution) of something «unreal» (of symphonicity) but not a «symphony» (as an a priori given, from before the execution experience).

It is true, however, that the miracle emerging as «Jupiter symphony» satisfies the listeners’ receptivity and feelings so intensely that they no longer think about the «unreal» and make no more attempts to go beyond the ineffable of the uplifting emotional experience born out of the co-participation (as listener) in the bringing into presence of the “Jupiter-symphony”.

We can ask ourselves, however, where is the “Jupiter-symphony”? In this quest for a place (somewhere), we forget that its (ontological) «place» is at the level of what Hartmann calls «objectified spirit» (of the world of artworks) underlying the “relationship of manifestation”.

A relevant and interesting explanation in this regard was given by Sergiu Celibidache (in an interview in the "Das Orchester" journal, issue no. 5, May 1976, pp. 305-317), from which we quote the following: „What is then music? ... In the beginning, music is nothing,
music does not exist as a direct, enduring, real form, present in the world – as are people, scores or violins: it becomes. It must be brought into the situation of coming into being, without ever being able to take a static, present or existent form in the material world…”

And then there is more (in the same context): “Music is not in sounds or between sounds… It is beyond time. It becomes by way of transcendence. It becomes through the transcendence of its sensorial expressions, which are its immanent carriers. Every tone contains the essence of the whole before or after its phenomenological reduction. Only by transcending the sound and abandoning it, somehow (after being perceived, internalized), can its creative function be grasped…”

And, finally, here is an even more clarifying passage: “Given that music is not being, but becoming, it is from the knowledge of what it is not that arises the possibility to intuitively sense what it can become. Phenomenology teaches us that tempo is not a reality existing in itself (which cannot be reduced in any way to the norms of measurement of the world’s time), but a vivid, incidental succession of many collaborating factors…”

Thus, the essence of music resides in becoming, it is not a chain of moments or forms of existence. In the becoming of the enduring music lies only the unique possibility of its manifestation now, here, thus and not otherwise. The spirit is present at any point in the evolution of music, pursuing the line of becoming, i.e. simultaneity.

To continue the line of the illustrious musician’s argumentation, we quote: “in music, the sound is not transcended in order for something different, higher and with a better sound to be reached: musically I do not leave Hamburg to go to Cologne, or D major to get to E minor. Only when I grasp the beginning, the path to the climax and the end of each moment of the evolution, will I be able to reach the experience of the entire process. And this can be realized only in simultaneity”.

Obviously, his vast experience (as principal conductor with an in-born talent and a comprehensive knowledge of music) is doubled here by a thorough knowledge and use of the phenomenological spirit, especially of Husserl's phenomenology of time.

 Apparently, therefore, through the fascination that it exerts, music is a beauty (something ineffable) that pertains to the acoustic reality. Beyond that, however, music preserves, in its innermost depths, its own «truth», which surfaces in the process of transcendence of the sound.

In other words, the «unreal» (or irreducible), that which, being hidden, gives the ineffable of the musical expression, has only an ontological status (it is, it has being in its
universal validity), but does not exist, it is not something real, as is the foreground level, which mediates its presence, beyond the temporary, in a musical act.

Thus, what constantly remains beyond any interpretation (in fact, a meta-language) is that which was invested with value by the composer – the work (the composition), as a prerequisite and condition of possibility of an objective approach (through rethinking and execution), according to a simple truth: the essential is not that which appears («appearance») in the «foreground», but that which is (has a being) in the «background», namely the “work” proper (in its intrinsic value), that transcends any appearance of its bringing into presence through the act of execution or interpretation.

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