



ORIGINAL PAPER

A Look at Communism and Democracy in Octavian Paler's "Question Time"

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Abstract:

This article summarizes the post-communist period after 1989 through the work *Question Time*, by Octavian Paler and his vision of the Romanian political scene after the revolution. *Question Time* is a collection of articles from "Free Romania" between 1990-1994, where you can feel the gloomy, negative attitude of Palerian journalism that has penetrated the pages of this book. In *Question Time* are true layouts of the pamphleteering spirit of Octavian Paler, who knew how to combine erudition with critical spirit in his work as a journalist. The disappointment caused by the state of the nation in the years following the revolution, when the political scene was invaded by demagogues and the same characters who had raised the dictator's oshanas is more evident in this work *Question Time* than in others. The writer also offers a look at communism and democracy by addressing topics still current in the Romanian political landscape, such as the post-communist evolution of Romania and the critique of the West as a consumerist, cynical and amoral world. The journalist Octavian Paler fully demonstrated in his articles the quality of a man of culture through firm positions and the originality of his points of view, in connection with some of the thorny issues of the Romanian political and cultural life of the last century and a half.

Keywords: *democracy; journalism; Octavian Paler; post-communism; revolution.*

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Introduction

The political article inaugurated in the evolution of the press a new type of discourse, that represents the immediate expression of the political forces and interests present within the society. The political article gives a sense to the present events, integrating them into the discourse and it has a double role: to inform and to convince the public opinion. Octavian Paler is endowed with a real polemic talent and a skilled vocation for the political journalism, directing his critical attention to: "(...) corrupt politicians belonging to various political parties, those that grew rich during the period of transition, the people of the old regime who set up in business or in the parliamentary life," (DGLR, 2006: 21) with the intention to outline a moral chronicle of the political life. Extending over more than a decade, Octavian Paler's articles offer not only a dynamic image of the social and political life, as well as of the political forces in our country and abroad, but they reflect at the same time, both by the implicit comparison that can be established and the direct comments that they comprehend, the argumentative stylistic level elaborated by the Romanian journalists and their position to the public opinion.

Octavian Paler's writings reflect the whole, leaving the impression of global continuity. Thus, the volumes published after 1989 are more and more intensely subjective, embodying a disappointed meditation on the world and life: "I only want to be a writer that comes out of his solitude, from time to time, in order to speak up his mind." The somber, negativist attitude from his published articles also penetrated into the books entitled: *Don Quixote in the East* (1994) and *Question Time* (1995), authentic writings of the pamphletary spirit.

Octavian Paler's periodical publications are characterized, in the last two years, by two central themes, also approached in this volume, namely: the total repudiation, from the perspective of an "enlightened nationalism," of the post-Communist evolution of Romania, generating the black prophecy of our imminent dissolution as a nation and the stylistically elegant, but actually nationalist criticism of the Occident as a communist, cynic, amoral world, bringing about its violent critiques against the supporters of our "synchronization" with the civilized world and those of the Euro-Atlantic integration of Romania, unmasked as "nowhere Europeans."

According to Monica Lovinescu, one of the most appreciated voices of "our frail democracy" – is Octavian Paler, who, together with such writers as Gabriela Adameşteanu, Mircea Mihăieş, Ileana Mălăncioiu, Rodica Palade, etc., converted himself to the journalism. Octavian Paler is a distinct voice of the Romanian press. Mass media represented an important chapter of his career. The regular editing of an important article, on the front page of a daily newspaper is not an easy thing to do, as it involves prompt and qualitative pieces of information, style, a certain easiness while writing, as well as a good knowledge of the political context where the events take place, capacity of synthesis and analysis, an associative power and even a certain visionary spirit. The editorials do not essentially display the concrete fact, the pieces of news exactly as they were obtained, but rather their hidden significations, the wheels within wheels, the subtext and their consequences on the civil society. The editorialist must form prognostics, make remarks upon an event, that are sometimes opposed to the common opinion, in a spontaneous phrasing, without long reflections, as after having finished an editorial, the columnist immediately starts thinking about the next.

Obeying the journalistic rigors, Octavian Paler manifests himself as an assiduous commentator of the daily facts, being a “recorder” of a certain reality. When Octavian Paler appears in the arena of journalism, he is an already shaped pen, knowing how to engage into a dialogue with the reader, with the real fact, facing history intuitively. Launched into a permanent conflict with himself, but especially with the prejudices manifested by the others, he was going to be, after December 1989, a fighter for the unmasking of the political games, of the social reality or of the cultural events. A passionate polemicist, he often argued, at the level of ideas, with his colleagues or with the political personalities of the times. Journalism is for Octavian Paler more than a *modus vivendi*, approving Camil Petrescu’s statement, that: “You write with your blood and nerves, or you do not write at all” (Popa, 2005: 12).

Thus, after 1989, the writer Octavian Paler shaped an authentic journalistic work, as important and valuable as his literary work. The essayist that put on the coat of the journalist tries to pierce the mediatic curtain, the bright interface between the real world and its image reshaped, in order to reach the primary meaning of the daily events. The attention is distributed, whereas the objective’s movement is circular, panning a reality that had broken free from the strait jacket of communism. If the Romanian world seems – and it is – after 1989 released from “prison,” then it found in Octavian Paler the ideal observer and commentator.

The disappointment generated by the state of nation during the years following the Revolution, when the political scene was invaded by demagogues and the same characters that had praised the dictator, is more evident in *Question Time* (1995), subtitled expressively *The Moral Chronicle of a Time Sick and Tired of the Morals*: “In those times, I still believed that this period that we euphemistically call «period of transition», is just «weary of» the morals. Meanwhile, the moral aspect has become not only a caprice, it is considered to be a stupidity. Who cares about the morals today? The dreamers, the idealists risk to become a sect” (Oprea, 2001: 129).

The idea of communism and democracy in the work of Octavian Paler’s “Question Time”

Similar to *Don Quixote in the East*, *Question Time* reveals especially the dubitative consistency of the spirit, the author’s inventiveness with respect to the intellectual changes. They are part of the writer’s existence, being as real and as haunting as the issues of the current circumstances, that the publicist Octavian Paler continuously tries to elucidate: in the press, on TV, on the radio called “Europa Liberă” (Ciobanu, 1999: 191). This part of the essayist’s activity has recently acquired a synthetic expression in the volume entitled *Question Time*, a selection of articles, a collage of interviews and confessions published in the press, (especially in “România liberă”). It is an atypical book for Paler, less influential, less intense for those familiarized with his essays, looking like an essay book to read, lacking profoundness and relying more on the narration of the events the author took part in. However, the book’s structure is really interesting. In *Question Time*, there are fragments from several articles published by Paler, especially in “România Liberă,” between 1990 and 1994. Each of these fragments is complemented by several comments added a few years later, when the author wrote the book, that is in 1995. We can thus easily notice the difference between the way he used to see things then, exactly after the 1989 revolution and his view in 1995, much more clear, more concrete, but hopeless.

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The merit of the polemicist condemned to cordiality consists in the sincere and responsible approach to the post-Decembrist phenomenon, when the political scene was imbued with demagogues and sycophants that had worshipped the dictator, of course, within the limits of the logical reasoning: "(...) I was convinced that I was experiencing a national revival (...) the post-revolutionary history started not only with a Stalinist process. It started with a series of lies" (Paler, 1995: 9-10). "The writer avoids to imagine that he owns the absolute truth and he contents himself with *asking questions*, shaping thus «a chronicle of the questions concerned with this period»" (Oprea, 2001: 119). Octavian Paler does not pretend to be "an analyst" with scientific presences, but only "an emotional individual" who thinks with his heart, defending himself against passionate despairs, ranging among "(...) the Romanian intellectuals that, in the absence of any qualities specific to the professional politicians, felt the need, after the Revolution, «to make» politics. We put the books aside and we broke in the field of the press. (...) My political ideas have always been and they still are approximate." (Paler, 1995: 139).

Disappointed by a Romania of transition, Paler feels like experiencing a nightmare, where "(...) nobody defends anybody and nobody accuses oneself. Everybody throws the blame on everybody" (Paler, 1995: 12) and where despair take the forms of hatred. More than a dream haunted by the ghosts of the past, these putrid times are perceived by the author as coming out of a Post-Communist box of Pandora, where discord, hatred, envy, slander, defamation, gossip, corruption, stupidity, etc. had been crowded: "(...) the 1989 Revolution broke Pandora's box. The evil inside ourselves was set free. It seems like we got out of a dictatorship to get into a multitude of dictatorships. Wherever I look, I am faced with small annoying prejudices, that run counter to one another. A stranger that does not know us and would judge us superficially, would say that a dictator was dwelling inside each victim, waiting to be set free, in order to manifest." (Paler, 1995: 15).

The fear experienced during the Communist period, is back, under another form: "Somebody writes to me, confessing that his life's obsession was fear (...) «Now, after the moments of initial euphoria, I am again seized with fear». Me, too." (Paler, 1995: 15). The writer witnesses a grotesque, post-revolutionary show, where we are confronted with a real demythization and desacralization of the public space: "It is not only vices and flaws that come out of Pandora's box, but also linguistic codes, aberrant slogans, that Octavian Paler mentions meticulously: «Death to the intellectuals!», «We work, we do not think», «We do not sell our country!»" (Paler, 1995: 29). Pandora's box turns into a kind of outlet good for everything, a blender, from which all the bad deeds come out and where negatively recycled symbols penetrate for a short period: this is the case of Timișoara, cursed by the first chosen Parliament, for its reactions against the National Salvation Front and Ion Iliescu" (Cesereanu, 1999: 68).

In a world that "is not made for the idealists" (Paler, 1995: 16), the one that has always fed on illusions, cannot perceive reality other than distortedly, whereas the intuition of truth is that of a sudden awakening from one's own sleep: "That moment, I felt like somebody lifted a veil off my eyes and I suddenly woke, deprived of the euphoria I had experienced ever since Ceaușescu's escape" (Paler, 1995: 16). Fear, infiltrated like a water infiltrated into the groundwater of my consciousness becomes a constant of the manifestations on the political stage of post-Decembrist Romania: "I fear the elections will be fraudulent, although the votes will be correctly counted. This is where the main cause of the bitterness I was seized with, lies." (Paler, 1995: 21); "(...)"

large groups of honest people feel they are in danger, without any personal reason. (...) Do the revolutions aim at instaurating fear again?” (Paler, 1995: 39); “I had been afraid of the communists’ protectors during Ceaușescu’s regime. Now I was seized with a new fear. I had come to fear some of the people I had used to feel solidarity with!” (Paler, 1995: 58); “«The political fear» had been replaced with the «economic fear»” (Paler, 1995: 233).

All the socio-political vices remain closed in the same box, that may be painted with a different colour and that may not need to be phonically isolated: “On the 22nd of December, (...) the Romanian society remained the prisoner of the mentalities, inertias, morals, inhibitions established and proliferated during the dictatorship” (Paler, 1995: 53). Still dominated by a “revolutionary romanticism,” as, “(...) the drug had long-term effects” (Paler, 1995: 11), the signs of an explicit doubt make their presence felt in the journalist’s articles, written in the middle of January 1990. *The illusions ended after a month*, for the one that transforms from the defender of the National Salvation Front into a fervent supporter of a justice that lies somewhere between the tracks of the Revolution tanks: “The current leaders of the National Salvation Front came in the void of power to make possible the annihilation of the rearguard actions, of the elements still faithful to the fallen dictatorship (...) Nobody speculated then that the national Salvation Front improvised maelstrom of events, was going to consider itself to be, after only a month, a movement (...) the organization of a big number of people in order to support an idea, a common aim. What kind of common idea could share an eclectic, hybrid formation, where former dissidents rub shoulders with former privileged individuals of the former regime?” (Paler, 1995: 18). The same initial error of perception is also demonstrated by the journalist in the outlining of several political leaders, suggesting a certain naivety grafted on a still fertile soil of ideology: “Compared to other activists, Iliescu had made an impression on me, he seemed to be an open spirit. I thought his Marxist blockage was related to epoch’s conventions. Suddenly, I discovered a totally different character, keen on power and marked by ideological obsessions” (Paler, 1995: 25).

The ambiguous time of post-Communism, when, “(...) I inevitably debated on politics with everyone I met” (Paler, 1995: 26), is a time of chaos, where the values and the nonsense, the meaningless things combine, giving shape to monstrous hybrids, unrecognizable by the one used with ancient thinking: “We live our lives in an atmosphere overflowing with political passions, that turns even the taciturn ones into jabberers, inflaming the most reasonable spirits. However, instead of setting things clear, we muddle them together, being stricken with fear, or at least this is how I feel. In my opinion, the value we need most, namely the national solidarity, crumbles, making way for a kind of war of everybody against everybody” (Paler, 1995: 27). We seem to be a nation unable to experience freedom, that is not skillful at discovering and exploiting, being maybe too familiar with the totalitarian monologue and losing our power of judging things logically: “Maybe the euphoria of freedom did not find us ready. We have suddenly penetrated from a period of silence into a chaotic, agitated one. We are still confused by this change. We have become overexcited, uncontrolled and even insupportable sometimes. (...) Nobody trusts anybody” (Paler, 1995: 27); “Freedom has become almost a risk” (Paler, 1995: 61); “For an authentic European, freedom cannot exist in the absence of the individual’s freedom, such as happiness, as an aspiration, cannot be conceived in the absence of concrete happiness. Or, what are the principles we have grown up with? We have been told that the individual is a simple screw within an

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economic system and we have been repeated over 45 years that the system is always right (...)" (Paler, 1995: 75-76).

From the antithetic, communism/post-communism presentation, made by the writer, post-Communism is severely criticized, difficult to be situated between the barriers of commonsense or those of the real values: "Communism was a time of masks. Post-Communism is a time when the masks come off. Communism was a blocked history, a kind of end of the history. Post-Communism is a history when public fuss reigns." (Paler, 1995: 289). The fall of the masks shaped under the communism, did not clean the fearful faces, but an excessive make-up, an overlap between the old and the already existing layers, bringing about "a social vulgarization: " Post-communism (...) is a time of doing away with fear, but also a time of the values' debasement; of doing away with «the law of the whip» and with the anarchical tendencies; it is a time when people no longer stand in fear of the authorities, but also a time of the authority crisis; of being alive to things again, but also of the troubled waters; of doing away with the historical blockage, but also of confusions. The feeling of having lived in fear of one's life is replaced with the anguishing feeling that you do not know what to do with your freedom. The fear of not finding anything from what you need is replaced with the fear of prices" (Paler, 1995: 288).

The misunderstood freedom becomes recognizable in the state of those who believe that they are allowed to do anything they want and they exhibit on the stands laid as in a flea market, their real characters, deprived of principles and virtues: "at the same time, post-communism is a time of overindulgences, of excesses. The louts become even more aggressive, after having given up to some mandatory hypocrisies. Those with unjustified ambitions become even more resentful, emitted. (...) The demagogues are more daring and proud than ever. Finally, they are no longer forced to take anything into account. The shy people rushed into the shops to buy pornographic magazines. The louts come on a straight shoot. (...) those good at jockeying for position strive to achieve their aims nonchalantly, without trying to have an anchor to windward" (Paler, 1995: 288-289); "«The socialism of nullities» is mixed with a kind of «capitalism of the louts»" (Paler, 1995: 207).

An article written by a French journalist Jean François Revel, where "the fall of communism was compared to an atomic catastrophe, that renders the soil uncultivable for a long time" (Paler, 1995: 248), gives the writer the feeling that that "we are rather part of an «anti-history», where everything is upside-down. The so-called «nationalists» (...) brought the national feeling into disrepute. The Ministry of Justice (...) infamized Justice, by its deeds. The anti-corruption Commission of the Parliament proved itself to be corrupt" (Paler, 1995: 248) and there, "Almost anything had become possible, with respect to perplexities." (Paler, 1995: 249). In such a country, we can explain the association of corruption with the "sacred cows" of India. Furthermore, the Romanian politician does not care at all about the Horatian *est modus in rebus* (there is a measure in everything): "In our country, «there is a measure in all things» can be translated as it follows: (...) if you steal millions, if you resort to influence peddling at Victoria Palace or in one of the Power's centers, you will obtain immunity. (...) Over «certain limits», the illegal acts do not involve any dangers anymore, as then, the principle of the «sacred cows»" steps into the picture (Paler, 1995: 239-240).

Gradually, the 1989 Revolution itself turns into a "cocotte wearing a strident make-up" (Paler, 1995: 77), being only a "a bloody show of the masks (...) *A Lie as Big as the Century*," (Paler, 1995: 69) according to the press correspondent of the Romanian

events, Michel Castex. Everything puts on the coat of charade, of clowning, leaving us the bad taste of a “missed naivety” and of a “ridiculed idealism” (Paler, 1995: 105). The phenomenon University Square disunited, embittered the population, dividing the Romanians into «rascals» and the rest, (the Power and those magnetized by it) and envenomed the human relations, leading them to paroxysm. Being among the few people that still feel the echo of fraternization experienced during the revolution, that eternal moment of solidarity, the author states: “This may be the reason why I have always remembered «the phenomenon called University Square». The reassuring solidarity that I experienced during the memorable nights in the University Square was like a beautiful wound. I missed it sometimes” (Paler, 1995: 105).

Paler’s assiduity within the political sphere is debatable, all the more so as his leftist or rightist options are not clearly rendered: “as far as I am concerned, I would paraphrase one of Petre Țuțea’s statements and I would declare that I am a monarchist out of pride. I like more to be guided by a king able to address me by the grace of God, than by a president, especially if he is a free-thinker. However, this is my option. I do not pretend anybody to judge things as myself” (Paler, 1995: 229). Beyond this permanent need of the journalist to reorder the ideas on one path or another, Octavian Paler’s polemics was indeed necessary in a period of questions and always unsatisfactory answers. Being among the intellectuals that did not want to be marginalized after the 1989 Revolution, Octavian Paler asserts his need to be listened to and to share and impose his ideas subjected to the rigorous filter of the moral: “I only want to be a writer that comes out of his solitude, from time to time, in order to speak up his mind” (Paler, 1995: 186).

The political sphere is also experienced in the street, in the dust of the suburbs, that landed on the imperceptible culture of value: “A suburbanite in a peripheral district can be picturesque. A suburbanite in the politics makes you sit up and take notice. What will happen if such essential ideas as democracy or constitutional state are introduced into the suburb? (...) Will we all turn into suburbanites? Will we live under the dictatorship of the suburb? (...) Culture is dealt with indifferently, that helps the meaningless things, tastelessness and inelegance gain momentum, annihilating, similar to a dirty tide, the values. Instead of evolving, of progressing from bad to better, from immorality to morality, from injustice to justice, we witness a dangerous ruination of hopes. We grow ever more poor, while the suburb «flourishes» freely” (Paler, 1995: 182). Wherever we look on the social or the cultural stage, “practically, everybody makes politics (...)” (Paler, 1995: 224-225), but, “in a country that seems to have grown weary of politics, intoxicated, haunted by politics, there is (...) no real political power, in the full and classical meaning of the word” (Paler, 1995: 217).

The portraits of the politicians that parade in front of the voters during the electoral campaigns, are outlined by a master in the art concerned with the encapsulation of the nuances and the final retouch of the potential inaccurate depictions. Thus, Ion Iliescu is obsessively mentioned in the author’s comments: “Iliescu has a natural advantage precisely in his affable, smiling mediocrity, not deprived of a certain amiability. He can easily find the path to the mind of the people that got familiar with the «wooden language», and that do not understand the subtle lingo of the intellectuals” (Paler, 1995: 154); “(...) Ion Iliescu remains, I would say only a consequent and ambitious Marxist that made the most of a favorable moment and that strives, alternating the blunders with the ideological obsessions, to defend the ideals of his youth against the history and interests of the Romanian nation (...)” (Paler, 1995: 175).

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Because of the ideality he cultivates, the writer refuses to be "realistic," in the official meaning of the word, he refuses to "relativize" his appreciations in relation to the situation of Romania: "I did not feel at home in the political quarreling (...) I felt journalism as a waste that kept me away from the books and other preoccupations, dear to me, for hours. However, I just did not feel able to give up (...) and I did not want to live in an ivory tower, to carry forward the tranquility displayed by some intellectuals while parading around Cotroceni palace" (Paler, 1995: 81).

Octavian Paler continues to fight tirelessly, manifesting a firm assiduity, a defiance of dangers, by the passionate support of some abstract values, without pretending anybody "to think as I think. "The elegance of Octavian Paler's style contributes to a great extent to the writer's periodical publications. An incorruptible elegance, independent of the circumstances, doubled by the intolerant, outspoken character of his opinions. However, even when he boils with rage, or when he addresses some immobile adversaries, the writer maintains the attitude of an excellent creator" (Ștefănescu, 1995: 6). We must also notice that during such moments, he becomes more elevated, as if he wanted to distance himself from those aimed at in his polemic: "One of the victories of the 1989 Revolution, that was not affected, similar to other successes, is the liberalization of stupidity. Nothing prevents stupidity from manifesting itself with all its resources, in its entire sordid splendor, as our politicians demonstrate us by means of conspicuous proofs" (Paler, 1995: 241-242).

A survey of the Romanian exile gives rise to the possibility to find a solution necessary to heal the non-cicatrizated wounds of the past: "Those who would like to resume the thread of history from where it was torn, risks not to take into account one evident thing: half a century of disgraces, does not elapse without leaving any traces. (...) Despite all of our sins, of those «under the governance of times», let us tell you that the hope of a normal Romania does not lie in your estrangement or in your resentments, but in their elimination" (Paler, 1995: 331).

Throughout this book, we witness repetitively the spectacle of a society broken down by the years of communism and destroyed from the inside by the demons of a misunderstood democracy. According to Sartre, "It is not important what history makes of us, but we make of what history makes of us!" (Paler, 1995: 269).

The journalist Octavian Paler demonstrated by the published articles his value as a scholar, by taking firm stands and by the originality of his points of view, with respect to some of the thorny issues of the Romanian political and cultural life from the past century: "My duty is to be right, but our profession relies on searching for the truth together," as: "To think freely is great thing, but to think rightly is greater." (A slogan engraved in golden letters above the entrance to the Grand Auditorium of the University Main Building in Uppsala) (Paler, 1994: 138).

Manifesting his liberal spirit in the Romanian press for more than three decades, the journalist cannot remain indifferent to what is happening around him. As he was stating in an interview, he is interested in the society's issues, taking into account the fact that: "(...) journalism is my public side that I could justify by the need to communicate, to explain myself." Octavian Paler detests the event, living rather in obsolescence, because it is here that the essential actually exists and because the contemporary world is controlled by the post-cultural evolution, of the domination of pragmatism.

His speculations and essayism are developed at a level different from the one of the concrete politics: "I have never really considered myself to be a journalist. I do

understand why Paul Valery once said: «I detest the event». As a matter of fact, I spent most of my years in the field of journalism at the cultural editorial board of the Radio (...) and then in 1970, I started to work at «România liberă». What really affected me during those years, was the deep rupture within myself. For a while, I fed on two illusions: that we can turn bad things into good things and that we must remain pure in a dirty history. Then, these illusions started to crumble. I have never written anything I am now ashamed of. There is not one single line I would like to burn (...)» (Diaconescu, 1998: 17-18).

Octavian Paler's articles are not only "cordial polemics, they are also impeccably formulated, precisely articulated, clearly elegant, in the spirit of A. E. Baconsky, the famous essayist from «Dilema». (...) Octavian Paler writes without neglecting the historical and historical aspects, manifesting a deep interest in ourselves, in himself, in what comforts or causes pain nowadays." (Raicu, 1994: 408-409).

The journalist is a refined aesthete, impressed by the tragedies of the contemporary world, his esthetic consciousness being doubled by a moral one: "I cannot get off the idea according to which the moral can still play a role, even a minor one, in the political life. This is why I did not give up on journalism, although I wanted to do that many times. (...) I would rather speak up my mind, tell what I feel and avoid thus the risk of being a party to the bad things by indifference or detachment (...) as, (...) here, in the East, everything turned into politics, including real or dissimulated disgust of politics (...)» (Stănescu, 1996: 163).

Conclusions

The polemic in his articles is characterized by a certain lucid skepticism. The obloquy is associated with a filtered expression, the discrete tone is preferred to clamor and the reflection of stupidity and immorality of the post-decembrist society is preferred to irony. We cannot analyze his post-Decembrist articles, without noticing at every turn the facets of an always lively lucidity, in different areas of journalism: art, philosophy, politics, social, moral, etc. By the approach to general issues, reflected in our common existence, Octavian Paler sets forth in a natural, "classical" voice, uncomfortable truths that deal with the incontestable guilt, the ordinary cowardice, searching thus for certain incandescent nuclei of actuality, the morally controversial toposes. "A shaper" of matters of conscience, of "issues," Octavian Paler perfectly fits an environment of violent contrasts, carrying out a systematic, penetrating analysis, without any kind of concessions, of the awkward reality. The reflection often begins in the case of Octavian Paler directly from the observation. Sometimes reflection alternates with observation, stimulating the ethical thinking and consciousness of the reader: "From now on, my destiny is only one: to say that the white colour is white, of course, if I see it white" (Iorgulescu, 1982: 13).

Octavian Paler is characterized by an impulse of communication, as well as by the trust in words. He is actually a "Don Quixote" of the need to express himself by a harsh criticism, by the oratorical eloquence and the pathos of argumentations and persuasion assumed primarily as a moral state of existence. The writer, the essayist, the journalist Octavian Paler finally remains a moralist intransigent at the social level, a skilled rhetor, doubled by a subtle stylist at the literary level, an incurable skeptic and a structural pessimist at the level of personal psychology.

Retrospectively, Octavian Paler's entire work is an uninterrupted diary, in whose mirror the writer's personality is reflected, not with a view to admiring himself narcissistically, but to getting an in-depth knowledge of himself. Octavian Paler will

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always step through the time of our memory, even if: "Time stopped to elapse through the hourglass, as the hourglass itself ceased to exist" (Paler, 1974: 113).

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Article Info

Received: April 01 2021

Accepted: May 05 2021
