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**EUROPEAN LANDMARKS OF IDENTITY**

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***LANGUE ET LITTÉRATURE***  
**REPÈRES IDENTITAIRES EN CONTEXTE EUROPÉEN**

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## CONTENTS

### KEY SPEAKERS / SESSION PLÉNIÈRE

<b>Ionel BUȘE</b> <i>Felicien Rops – de l'ironie artistique à la crise de la modernité.....</i>	<b>9</b>
--	----------

### ROMANIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE / LANGUE ET LITTÉRATURE ROUMAINE

<b>Lavinia BĂNICĂ</b> <i>Irony As The Main Instrument Of Literary Expression In The Epic Burlesque (Țiganiada by Ion Budai-Deleanu).....</i>	<b>21</b>
<b>Marilena Filofteia COSTESCU</b> <i>Gheorghe Asachi, a Pioneer of the National Theatre.....</i>	<b>25</b>
<b>Nicoleta CRÎNGANU</b> <i>The Ironic Projection of Alterity in Tthe Novel Europolis by Jean Bart.....</i>	<b>32</b>
<b>Andreea DAMIAN (ZAMFIR)</b> <i>Aspects of the Folk Influences in the Minulescian Poetry.....</i>	<b>39</b>
<b>Adina DUMITRU</b> <i>Forms of Irony in Contemporary Social Discourse .....</i>	<b>45</b>
<b>Ștefan GĂITĂNARU</b> <i>The Syntactic Code and the Structures of the Poetic Imaginary.....</i>	<b>51</b>
<b>Lavinia-Ileana GEAMBEI</b> <i>Aspects de l'ironie dans le roman Întâlnirea de Gabriela Adameșteanu.....</i>	<b>62</b>
<b>Sorin IAGĂRU-DINA</b> <i>Revisiting the Past, Rethinking the Present: Ironical Aspects of Rereading „Minor” Forerunners in Marin Sorescu and Mircea Cărtărescu’s Theoretical, Critical and Literary Texts.....</i>	<b>70</b>
<b>Olga IRIMCIUC</b> <i>Valenze semantico-simboliche dell'ironia nel romanzo Compito per domani (Temă pentru acasă) di Nicolae Dabija.....</i>	<b>77</b>

<b>Andreea Gabriela IVAȘCU (ANDREI)</b>	
<i>Stylistic Dimensions of The Teachings Of Neagoe Basarab to his Son</i>	
<i>Theodosius</i> .....	<b>83</b>
<b>Valentin-Julian MAZILU</b>	
<i>"Pavel Anicet. The Hypostasis of the Brutalized Young Man or the Irony of</i>	
<i>Fate"</i> .....	<b>94</b>
<b>Lili MOCANU (VÂRTOPEANU)</b>	
<i>George Coșbuc - Theses and Antitheses in the Folklor Research</i> .....	<b>103</b>
<b>Marius Romulus SĂLĂGEAN</b>	
<i>Myth and Symbol in the Writing of Mihail Sadoveanu</i> .....	<b>109</b>
<b>Alina-Mariana STÎNGĂ (ZARIA)</b>	
<i>The Absurd of Max Blecher's Imaginary</i> .....	<b>115</b>

**COMPARATIVE LITERATURE. COMMUNICATION AND CULTURAL  
STUDIES / LITTÉRATURE COMPAREE. COMMUNICATION ET  
ETUDES CULTURELLES**

<b>Pompiliu ALEXANDRU, Cristina Daniela ALEXANDRU</b>	
<i>Du sourire de Mona Lise au sourire de Bouddha</i> .....	<b>121</b>
<b>Odette ARHIP, Cristian ARHIP</b>	
<i>Humor and the Narrative Structure of Advertising</i> .....	<b>128</b>
<b>Carmen DOMINTE</b>	
<i>Syllepsis – an Instrument for Comic and Irony</i> .....	<b>137</b>
<b>Horia DUMITRESCU</b>	
<i>About The Laughter of Joy and the Laughter of Mockery in the Holy</i>	
<i>Scripture of The Old Testament</i> .....	<b>145</b>
<b>Gheorghe GÎRBEA</b>	
<i>Irony and Humour in The Biblical Canon</i> .....	<b>154</b>
<b>Ana-Maria IONESCU</b>	
<i>Irony in Contemporary Romanian and British Media Discourses – a</i>	
<i>Socio-Cultural and Linguistic Approach</i> .....	<b>165</b>
<b>Ion ISAROIU</b>	
<i>Musical Culture of Byzantine Origin in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and the First Half</i>	
<i>of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century</i> .....	<b>173</b>

<b>Valentina MARINESCU</b>	
<i>Humor in Medical Advertising</i> .....	189
<b>Carmen-Andreea ONEAȚĂ</b>	
<i>The Bourgeois Drama. The Importance of George Lillo's Drama for Denis Diderot's Writings</i> .....	194
<b>Dan-Niculae PODARU</b>	
<i>The Importance of Iconicity in the Luxury Watches Industry</i> .....	202
<b>Simona RODAT</b>	
<i>Socio-Cultural Dimensions of Laughter and Smile as Ways of Nonverbal Communication</i> .....	210
<b>Anda-Anca RODIDEAL</b>	
<i>Use and Consequences of Humour and Irony in the Online Activities of Digital Native Children</i> .....	220
<b>Mihai-Ionuț RUSEN</b>	
<i>The Sculptural Language in the Context of Contemporary Visual Arts - Imaginary and Irony in Artistic Research. Irony as a Means of Translating the Imaginary</i> .....	228
<b>Roger Cristian SAFTA</b>	
<i>The Laughter of Abraham and of Sarah</i> .....	241
<b>Ioana SILISTRARU</b>	
<i>Surgical Patients' Narratives Research Hypothesis Testing In Narrative Medicine</i> .....	253
<b>Dragos Ciprian VIRSESCU</b>	
<i>The Representation of Women in Ideology</i> .....	263
<b>Caroline ZIOLKO</b>	
<i>Affiche, humour et francite : Savignac (1907-2002)</i> .....	272

**SPANISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE AND PERFORMING ARTS /  
LANGUE ET LITTÉRATURE ESPAGNOLES ET ARTS DU SPECTACLE**

<b>Bogdan CIOABĂ</b>	
<i>Quelques considérations sur la mise en scène du Don Juan de Molière</i> .....	280
<b>Diana-Adriana LEFTER</b>	
<i>Ironie de l'histoire et auto-ironie de l'écriture dans Yo, el supremo de Augusto Roa Bastos</i> .....	292

<b>Lavinia SIMILARU</b>	
<i>Conservar la ironía en la lengua meta, ¿una misión imposible para el traductor?.....</i>	<b>298</b>
<b>Sorina Dora SIMION</b>	
<i>Documenta y literatura.....</i>	<b>305</b>
<b>Andreea Daniela ȚACU</b>	
<i>Aspectos éticos y estéticos de la sátira.....</i>	<b>315</b>



## **FELICIEN ROPS – DE L'IRONIE ARTISTIQUE A LA CRISE DE LA MODERNITE**

**Ionel BUȘE\***

*Ce tant folâtre Monsieur Rops,  
Qui n'est pas un grand prix de Rome,  
Mais dont le talent est haut comme  
La pyramide de Chéops !*

Baudelaire

***Abstract:** The Belgian illustrator, engraver and painter Félicien Rops is an ironic, destructive and evil spirit. His irony is a double irony: an irony of the decadence of a century and at the sametime an author's self-irony. Our study tries to highlight that his works are creations which hide in their ironic humour a tragic imperceptible which sends to the greatness but especially to the decadence of his century.*

***Keywords:** Félicien Rops; engraver; painter; irony; decadence; modernity.*

L'histoire de l'ironie (du grecque *eirōneia*) commence par les penseurs antiques et elle est liée à la rhétorique et à la philosophie. Il y a des multiples manières d'ironiser. Tout au long des siècles l'ironie a connue de diverses interprétations. Les études contemporaines sur l'ironie prennent en général deux aspects essentiels : a. un aspect rhétorique-linguistique et b. un aspect philosophique-sociologique.

L'ironie souligne l'idée de contradiction indirecte et subversive du discours ou de la pensée. Loin d'être une simple contradiction entre deux interlocuteurs, l'ironie met en valeur la façon d'exprimer un désaccord avec un interlocuteur par la subtilité indirecte de l'argumentation. L'ironie socratique est une dissimulation de la critique à l'adresse des sophistes, par exemple. Après l'éloge qu'il fait à ses interlocuteurs considérés des « maîtres » par les citoyens, Socrate les met dans une position contraire, inconfortable, à travers leurs propres arguments. Ces genres de situations peuvent provoquer au moins le sourire de la part d'une assistance quelconque, mais aussi une réaction négative de l'interlocuteur. Voir ses accusateurs et son procès.

Parmi la multitude des définitions générales de l'« ironie » on peut choisir l'une qui contient l'idée de contrariété, par laquelle, par exemple, « l'ironie est perçue si et seulement si l'interlocuteur de l'ironiste infère, à partir d'une singularité quelconque de l'énoncé, une contrariété significative entre ce que dit l'ironiste et ce qu'il s'attendait à entendre, quels que

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soient le point d'application et le mode de manifestation de cette singularité. Autrement dit, il assimile cette inadéquation de surface à une antiphrase implicite, qu'il entreprend de décrypter à partir des indices que lui fournissent l'énoncé et son contexte ».<sup>1</sup>

L'ironie s'habille dans les vêtements de son siècle. Elle peut mettre aussi sa marque sur l'époque qui l'a cultivée. Dans ce sens, l'époque moderne peut être considérée une époque de l'ironie. La modernité qui ouvre largement les portes de l'affirmation de l'homme sur l'échelle de l'histoire apporte elle-même les subversions critiques de ses propres exaltations, utopies, décadences. Les plus représentatifs philosophes, écrivains modernes du XIXe siècle, Voltaire, Hegel, Marx, Kirkegaard, Nietzsche, V. Hugo, Balzac, Flaubert, Baudelaire, etc., sont aussi des grands ironistes. Mais la philosophie et la littérature ne sont pas les seuls domaines de l'esprit qui cultivent l'ironie. Tout l'art moderne concurrent à forger les profondeurs de cette pratique ancienne à laquelle Aristote lui accorde une place important dans sa Poétique.

Parmi les artistes du XIX siècle on a choisi l'illustrateur, le graveur et le peintre belge Félicien Rops. Pourquoi Rops? Peut-être qu'il est bizarre et provocateur. En tout cas il est un esprit ironique, destructeur et diabolique. Son ironie est une double ironie : une ironie de la décadence d'un siècle et en même temps une auto-ironie d'auteur. Ses ouvrages sont des créations qui cachent dans leur humeur ironique un tragique imperceptible de la fin du siècle.

#### *Les commencements bruxellois : le caricaturiste et l'illustrateur*

Félicien Rops (1833-1898), né à Namur en Wallonie est l'enfant unique d'une famille catholique bourgeoise. Dans une monographie de 1905, une collection d'études sur quelques artistes originaux du XIXème siècle, l'artiste est présenté Flamand (tout comme Rubens) par ses ancêtres de la part de son père (Nicolas-Joseph Rops) et Espagnol (tout comme Goya) par sa mère (Sophie Maubille).<sup>2</sup> La mythologie de ses origines soutenue parfois avec subtile ironie par Rops-même monte jusqu'aux tziganes (après une lettre d'Alphonse Daudet qui l'a nommé « tzigane belge qui satanise »). Mais avec certitude Félicien Rops est un wallon de culture française, un artiste original, même s'il y a des parrainages hétérogènes et multiples des dessinateurs de presse de l'époque, des illustrateurs des livres et bien sur des grands peintres du siècle.

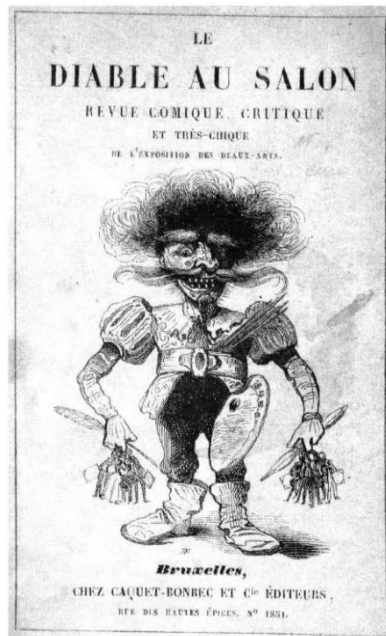
Après ses premières études au collège jésuite Collège Notre-Dame de la Paix de Namur (où il s'avère être un très bon élève honoré avec des prix d'excellence), le jeune Félicien Rops poursuit ses études à l'Athénée Royal et prend des cours de peinture à

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<sup>1</sup> Alain Vaillant, « La lyrique de l'ironie » in *Esthétique du rire*, Presse Universitaire de Nanterre, 2012, texte électronique : <https://books.openedition.org/pupo/2328>, frag. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Ramiro Erastène, *Félicien Rops*, Pellet et Floury, Paris, 1905.

l'Académie de Beaux-Arts de Namur avec Ferdinand Marinus. Le creuset de son future artiste commence à l'Université Libre de Bruxelles (inscrit depuis 1851 en philosophie préparatoire en droit et laquelle renonce très vite), mais surtout dans le milieu étudiant des cénacles et des créations littéraires et artistiques parmi lesquelles la *Société de Joyeux*. Le premier contact avec le monde des publications serait le journal *Le Crocodile* où il va publier ses premières caricatures. A Bruxelles il commence apprendre la gravure comme technique de l'illustration. Son premier ouvrage comique est publié sous le pseudonyme en 1851, *Le Diable au Salon. Revue comique critique, excentrique et très-chique de l'exposition*. Il a été d'abord influencé par le célèbre peintre et caricaturiste français Honoré Daumier, par les caricaturistes Paul Gavarni et Amédée de Noé (connu sur le pseudonyme Cham). « En trois fascicules, l'ouvrage, de petit format, s'inscrit dans la lignée des *salons caricaturaux*, livrets humoristiques qui pastichent le livret officiel, parodient les tableaux et multiplient les jeux de mots et d'images... ».<sup>1</sup> Sur la couverture on trouve une sorte de Don Quichotte (le Diable qui ressemble un peu à l'auteur) bien armé avec toutes les armes de la caricature, prêt de partir à « la guerre » comique qui se moque des pratiques de l'expositions, des commentaires de la foule, mais qui constitue aussi un exercice d'appropriation et de réflexion sur l'art d'autrui.



<sup>1</sup> Ségolène Le Men, „Les débuts de Félicien Rops : entre art et caricature” in Ségolène Le Men (dir.), *Art de la caricature*, Presses universitaires de Paris Nanterre, 2011, pp. 53-71.

« Dans Le Diable au Salon, la culture du calembour et du canular des salons caricaturaux dénote dès 1851 un humour *potache* qui se prolongera chez les zutistes fin de siècle et dans l'environnement pataphysique de Jarry, dont Demolder, le gendre collectionneur de Rops, est proche »<sup>1</sup>, écrit Ségolène Le Men.

Une partie importante de sa jeunesse bruxelloise est consacré au journal hebdomadaire *Uylenspiegel* (Journal des débats artistiques et littéraires) fondé avec quelques amis parmi lesquels Charles de Coster. Il commence aussi à cette époque son travail d'illustrateur. En 1867 apporte une contribution essentielle par ses illustrations à l'ouvrage du poète et romancier Charles de Coster, le poème épique très connu *La légende et les aventures d'Uylenspiegel et de Lamme Goedzak au pays de Flandre et ailleurs* (Légendes flamandes). En même temps il continue sa collaboration à la *Revue comique et critique de l'exposition de l'art* et aux catalogues des contre-expositions organisées par la *Société des Joyeux* en exerçant son humour et son sens critique à l'égard de certains thèmes de la peinture au sujet biblique ou des peintures des artistes de l'époque. L'une de ses premiers grands ouvrages date de ce période. Il s'agit du travail *Un enterrement au pays wallon* (1863) qui, selon Rops, reproduit fidèlement un enterrement à Namur. L'ouvrage est une subtile ironie tragique à l'égard du cynisme du clergé, qui absorbé par le rituel du culte, ne perçoit pas la douleur du petit enfant.



Félicien Rops se marie en 1857 avec une amie de l'université, Charlotte Polet de Faveaux, d'une vieille famille catholique bourgeoise, la fille du Vice-président du Tribunal de Namur. La jeune famille a deux enfants : Paul né en 1858 et Juliette né en 1859 (disparue

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*

à l'âge de six ans à cause d'une méningite). La mort de sa fille a beaucoup attristé l'artiste<sup>1</sup>. La tragédie de la famille, même si dévastatrice pour Felicien Rops elle a contribué à renforcer son esprit ironique à l'égard de la vie et de la mort dans son époque.

### *L'éternel Paris et la subversion de l'ironie*

Tout comme la plupart des grands artistes européens, Felicien Rops va à Paris. Il est introduit dans la vie parisienne comme dessinateur par le journaliste et l'écrivain Alfred Delvaux qui écrit dans le journal parisien *Le Rabelais* que « Felicien Rops est le Gavarni de la Belgique, – un Gavarni doublé d'un Daumier... ».<sup>2</sup> Il l'a chargé à lui exécuter certains frontispices de ses ouvrages (par exemple, le célèbre *Histoire anecdotique des cafés et cabarets de Paris*). A cette occasion l'artiste fait connaissance avec le Paris de bas-fonds avec ses prostituées, ses buveurs d'absinthe, ses malades de syphilis et de phtisie. En 1863 il connaît le célèbre éditeur de Baudelaire, Auguste Poulet-Malassis. L'amitié avec lui a été fondée dans le temps l'exil de celui-ci en Belgique à cause d'une condamnation à la prison en France pour dettes. C'est une période très controversée pour Felicien Rops, qui a exécuté pour l'éditeur français 34 d'ouvrages licencieux (érotiques) qui lui a produit une mauvaise image publique et une réputation sulfureuse à l'époque. Il connaît à cette occasion Baudelaire. « Baudelaire est, je crois, l'homme dont je désire le plus vivement faire la connaissance, nous nous sommes rencontrés dans un amour étrange, l'amour de la forme cristallographique première : la passion du squelette »<sup>3</sup>, écrit Rops à Auguste Poulet-Malassis. Il lie ainsi une forte amitié avec Baudelaire qui a été invité par Rops pour deux semaines à Thozée dans le petit château prêt de Namur, hérité par sa femme Charlotte de la part de son oncle. Baudelaire admire beaucoup l'art de Felicien Rops, une « mnémotechnique du beau ». Il est considéré par le poète française le seul artiste belge de l'époque. « Ce tant folâtre Monsieur Rops,/Qui n'est pas un grand prix de Rome,/Mais dont le talent est haut comme/ La pyramide de Chéops ! »<sup>4</sup>. Reconnaître sa valeur d'artiste coïncide avec l'ascension de Rops dans le milieu des artistes parisiens. D'ailleurs « la formule *Gavarni de la Belgique* cantonne son œuvre dans le registre de l'art graphique et de l'illustration, alors que celui-ci prétend être reconnu comme *artiste* dans la riche acception

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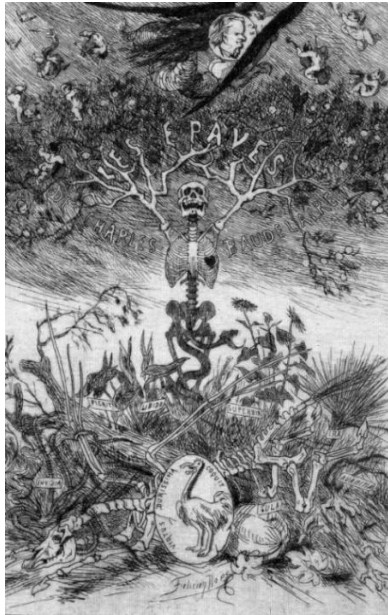
<sup>1</sup> D'ailleurs il exprimait son extraordinaire amour de père pour sa petite Juliette dans une petite lettre : « Juliette a des cheveux noirs et de grands yeux bleus, je l'adore, prie Dieu de me la conserver, je me tuerais si je la perdais – ces yeux-là feront bien souvent rêver leur père ».

<sup>2</sup> Léon Fuchs [pseudonyme d'Alfred Delvaux], « Felicien Rops », *Rabelais*, Paris, 65 (samedi 17 octobre 1857), p. 5-6.

<sup>3</sup> Lettre de Felicien Rops à [Auguste] Poulet-Malassis, [Namur], s.d. – « Dix-huit lettres de Felicien Rops », *Mercure de France*, 01/10/1933, p. 48-50.

<sup>4</sup> Charles, Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes II*, texte établi, présenté et annoté par Claude Pichois, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Paris, Gallimard, 1976, p. 978.

baudelairienne du terme ».<sup>1</sup> C'était une amitié courte<sup>2</sup> parce que Baudelaire est mort quelques années après leur première rencontre. Mais son influence sur l'artiste a été immense. Il a trouvé dans les poèmes de Baudelaire une correspondance vivante avec son état d'âme. En 1867 Rops a illustré la couverture de son petit volume de vers *Epaves*, qui contenait les poèmes chassés par la censure du volume *Fleurs du mal*. Les *Epaves* expriment peut être le mieux l'ironie irréligieuse mais anticléricale du grand poète.



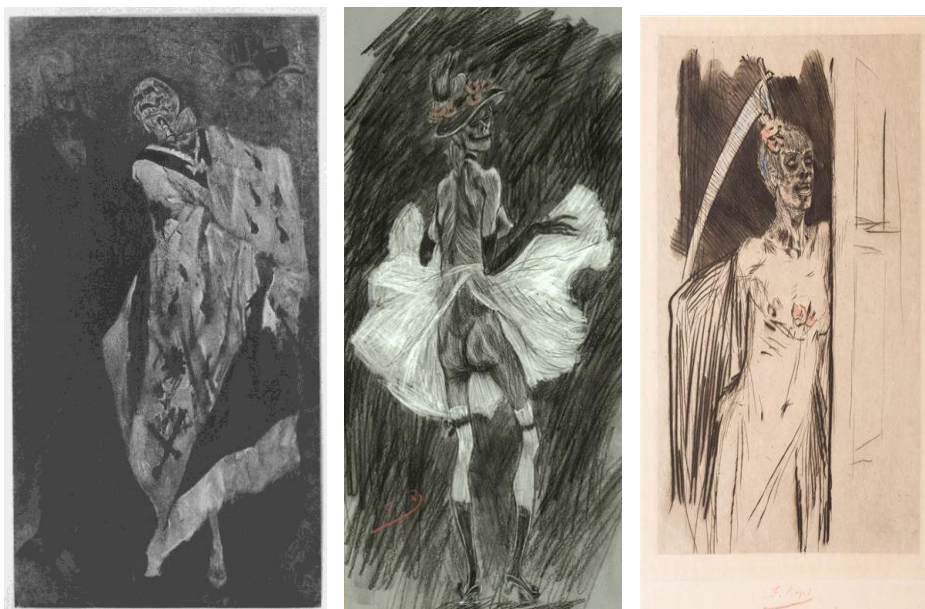
« Nous sommes bien là cette fois dans le jardin de la mort même : d'un geste éperdu, elle semble proposer aux races l'ivresse du péché. Sous l'ombre noire de l'arbre du bien et du mal, le paradis terrestre s'est transformé en ossuaire, et voici, comme la fleur et la pestilence du charnier des âges, parmi la colère hérissée des végétaux, le grouillement des larves et la fuite d'un hippéridon finissant en tarasque ; voici le bouquet des sept péchés capitaux autour d'un médaillon ironique où, sous l'exergue : *Virtus durissima coquit*, une autruche s'efforce d'avalier un fer à cheval »<sup>3</sup>, décrit son premier grand biographe Camille Lemonnier le frontispice de Rops. Parallèlement Rops conçoit trois gravures inspiré par les

<sup>1</sup> Segolène Le Men, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> « J'ai été, je crois, non pas l'ami, mais le plus fidèle et le plus respectueux compagnon de Baudelaire, j'ai allégé sa tristesse en Belgique, comme il disait dans la dédicace d'un portrait qui m'est cher ».

<sup>3</sup> Camille Lemonnier, *Félicien Rops, l'homme et l'artiste*, Ed. H. Floury, Paris, 1908, p. 72.

sujets de la rêverie poétique de Baudelaire : *La Mort au bal*, *La Mort qui danse* et la *Mors syphilitica*.



Le symbolisme dans l'art se prépare ainsi dans le creuset parisien dans un étroite relation avec la littérature et surtout avec la poésie. Le message de l'œuvre est né par la relation subversive établie entre le visible et l'invisible, par la contradiction entre ce qui ironise et ce qui est ironisé. L'artiste voit dans ce qui est la vie dans l'image squelettique de la mort. La mort danse parmi les danseurs et les danseuses du monde. Le plaisir de la vie danseuse est soutenu paradoxalement par le squelette de la mort. Le message ironique de l'artiste s'adresse à l'Humanité entière, tout comme Baudelaire dans son *Danse macabre*.<sup>1</sup>

Le passage du caricatural à l'art a lieu dans la période bruxelloise mais quand l'artiste faisait déjà la navette à Paris, ce qui l'a déterminé à protester d'être considéré par son ami Delvaux un Gavarni ou un Daumier de la Belgique. Rops se voit lui-même un artiste original. « La formule *Gavarni de la Belgique* cantonne son œuvre dans le registre de l'art graphique et de l'illustration, alors que celui-ci prétend être reconnu comme *artiste* dans la riche acception baudelairienne du terme. »<sup>2</sup> Même s'il a été considéré comme un important artiste par les écrivains et les journalistes de l'époque (Baudelaire, Daudet, Frères Goncourt, Huysmans, Musset, Barbey d'Aurevilly, Péladan, Mallarmé, Verlaine, Mirabeau, etc.)

<sup>1</sup> *En tout climat, sous tout soleil, la Mort t'admire / En tes contorsions, risible Humanité, / Et souvent, comme toi, se parfumant de myrrhe, / Mêle son ironie à ton insanité !* “

<sup>2</sup> Segolène Le Men, *op. cit.*

auxquels Rops a illustré leurs livres il a été reconnu comme un grand artiste plusieurs décennies plus tard à cause de son renommé populaire de dessinateur érotique et satanique.

La période parisienne la plus prolifique commence après 1870 quand son art est encadré dans ce qui sera nommé le courant artistique du symbolisme. Il déménage à Paris chez ses maîtresses (deux sœurs modistes Aurélie et Léontine) et il se sépare de sa femme. Il a un enfant avec chacune. Mais la seule qui vive est une fille de Léontine qui s'appelle Claire. A cette époque commence à réaliser la série *Dames au pantin* (1873, 1877, 1883-1885, 1890). Dans plusieurs reprises il en reprend le thème et diverses modalités d'exécution.



La femme est perçue par la tradition médiévale comme manipulatrice et porteuse du mal. Ici la femme habillée dans les vêtements de l'époque tient dans la main un pantin qui symbolise l'homme. Elle conduit l'homme à la perte. A son tour elle est le pantin de Satan. Il ne s'agit pas d'une interprétation théologique médiévale, mais d'une ironie artistique. Même si l'homme (Adam) est la création souveraine du Dieu, il devient un objet dérisoire par l'attirance « satanique » que la femme exerce sur lui. Au-delà de son instinct de perversité, Félicien Rops nous envoie à la force de la sexualité féminine qui domine l'homme. Il exprime ainsi, en anticipant Freud, l'intérêt de la modernité pour la sexualité qui domine la vie.

Les chefs d'œuvre de Félicien Rops réalisés après 1878 sont : la série dite *Pornocratès* et la *Tentation de St. Antoine*.



*Pornocratès* est une femme demi-nue entourée des anges, les yeux bandés guidée par un cochon, et qui marche sur la frise où pleurent les Génies de l'art.



L'ironie est développée dans une lettre de Félicien Rops à Eugène Demolder, qui a dédié une étude à Rops : « Grande, les cheveux ardents, le bas-ventre orné d'une flamme rousse, comme Dieu ou le Diable l'a faite, narguant les pudibonderies, et les peurs bourgeoises des peintres Institutaires, dont l'imbécillité tond les féminines toisons, vêtue seulement de ses bas et de ses grands gants à vingt boutons, – les a-t-on assez copiés ces bas et ces gants-là ! – dont les noirs font vibrer les blancheurs de son héroïque nudité, elle apparaît debout sur la frise où pleurent les Génies des Arts, comme la statue de la Perversité...».<sup>1</sup> Au-delà de l'image d'une femme dominée par des désirs charnels et symbolisée par le cochon, l'animal exprime ici l'instinct de la vie et de la sexualité qui s'impose sur les Génies de l'art pudibond bourgeois des académies. Les anges de l'amour sexuel entourent le corps de la femme déshabillée et voluptueuse qui par les couleurs expressives de l'attraction physique (le rouge, le noir, etc.), par ses gants et tuyaux mettent en évidence ses parties du corps qui provoquent les désirs sexuelles. La couleur bleu qui exprime le calme et la sérénité n'est qu'une annexe de la corporalité sexualisée qui fait grandir l'attraction physique.

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<sup>1</sup> Lettre de Félicien Rops à Eugène Demolder, s. l. n. d. Coll. Privée, Musée des lettres et manuscrits, inv. 72039/34

Dans la *Tentation de St. Antoine* qui ressemble à une composition baroque évoquant Rubens, Rops ridiculise le combat de l'Église catholique en faveur de l'abstinence et la stricte morale sexuelle de la bourgeoisie. De façon quasi-blasphématoire, Rops a remplacé la figure décharnée du Christ par une femme nue, aux formes voluptueuses, tandis que la formule habituelle « INRI » fait place à une référence explicite à Eros. Saint Antoine cherche dans les grands livres théologiques sur l'abstinence l'appui contre ses tentations érotiques. Cette composition exprime l'impuissance de l'Église face au poids de la sexualité très présente en tout être humain, mais aussi la nécessité du retour à la femme et à la vie même. « Voici à peu près ce que je voulais faire dire au bon Antoine par Satan (...) Je veux te montrer que tu es fou mon bon Antoine, en adorant tes abstractions! Que tes yeux ne cherchent plus dans les profondeurs bleues le visage de ton Christ, ni celui des Vierges incorporelles! Tes Dieux ont suivi ceux de l'Olympe (...) Mais Jupiter et Jésus n'ont pas emporté l'éternelle Sagesse, Vénus et Marie l'éternelle Beauté! Mais si les Dieux sont partis, la Femme te reste et avec l'amour de la Femme l'amour fécondant de la Vie ».<sup>1</sup>



L'amour de Dieu est remplacé dans une époque décadente par l'amour de la femme. La porteuse du mal, la femme devient la porteuse de la vie. Satan habillé en rouge (qui ressemble aussi au peintre-même !) et situé derrière la croix est une sorte d'ange de l'amour tout comme le cochon qui met ses pattes sur les livres de la science théologique sur l'abstinence. L'ironie subsiste dans la contradiction flagrante entre l'imaginaire chrétien et

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<sup>1</sup> Lettre de Félicien Rops à Léon Dommartin, Paris, 19 juillet 1889, dans Rops (Félicien), *Mémoires pour nuire à l'histoire artistique de mon temps*. Choix de textes et lecture d'Hélène Védrine, Bruxelles, Labor, coll. Espace Nord n° 146, 1998, p. 84.

l'imaginaire du peintre qui exprime les désirs profonds de son époque, comme une révolte du réprimé.

En 1882 Félicien Rops commence à réaliser la série des *Sataniques* qui envoie au pacte signé par la femme avec un Satan hypersexualisé et qui représente l'ironie du retour de la sexualité dans le monde moderne au contraire des idéaux illuministes. Lucifer-Satan est un satyre grec qui anime la vie mais aussi qui apprivoise la mort. Ses compositions décadentes continues avec neuf illustrations nommées *Les Diaboliques* pour l'écrivain français Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly.

#### *En guise de conclusion*

Le problème est de savoir quelle est la frontière des compositions artistiques de Rops au-delà desquelles son imaginaire artistique devient blasphématoire. Il n'est pas le seul artiste qui ait surpris son siècle par son humour, ses ironies sulfureuses à l'adresse de l'Eglise ou à l'Académie de l'art. La réponse se trouve dans ses écrits sur l'art : « Je tâche tout bêtement et tout simplement de rendre ce que je sens avec mes nerfs et ce que je vois avec mes yeux, c'est là toute ma théorie artistique. J'ai encore un autre entêtement, c'est celui de vouloir peindre des scènes et des types de ce XIXe siècle, que je trouve très curieux et très intéressant; les femmes y sont aussi belles qu'à n'importe quelle époque, et les hommes sont toujours les mêmes. De plus, l'amour des jouissances brutales, les préoccupations d'argent, les intérêts mesquins, ont collé sur la plupart des faces de nos contemporains un masque sinistre où l'instinct de la perversité, dont parle Edgar Poe, se lit en lettres majuscules ; tout cela me semble assez amusant et assez caractérisé pour que les artistes de bonne volonté tâchent de rendre la physionomie de leur temps»<sup>1</sup>, écrit l'artiste. Ses ouvrages sont des créations qui cachent dans leur humeur ironique un tragique imperceptible qui envoie à la grandeur mais surtout à la décadence de son siècle. Le grand peintre symboliste qui est l'un des précurseurs de l'avant-garde avoue ainsi qu'il ne voulait que peindre son époque.

En même temps il est un véritable peintre pré-impressionniste des paysages wallons et les plages flamandes, un amoureux des femmes et des roses cultivées à son château à Thozée ou à sa maison Demi-Lune à Corbeil-Essonnes, sur le bord de Seine. Son héritage artistique est impressionnant : dessins, illustrations, lithographies, gravures, peintures mais aussi un ouvrage épistolaire qui dépasse 4000 lettres adressés aux grands écrivains et les artistes de l'époque. Mais son vrai héritage c'est le fait qu'il annonce, tout comme Nietzsche, la crise de la modernité et la réévaluation des toutes les valeurs artistique du XXe siècle.

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<sup>1</sup> Site web du musée provincial Félicien-Rops, Namur, page « Les techniques », commentaire de Félicien Rops, in *Écrits* de B. Bonnier, N. Malinconi, V. Carpiaux, Copyright © ciGersoft 1995, 2003.

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**IRONY AS THE MAIN INSTRUMENT OF LITERARY EXPRESSION  
IN THE EPIC BURLESQUE (“ȚIGANIADA” BY ION BUDAI -  
DELEANU)**

**Lavinia BĂNICĂ\***

***Abstract:** Țiganiada” is built through a constant play between revealing and hiding, as a vast epic movement, but often broken, creating the impression of global unity through a subtle art of fragmentation. Budai-Deleanu rectifies the ludicrous spirit, willing to offer "a play" or, as Cervantes said, an honnesto entreteniminetto. A world built of pieces of mirror, a world turned upside down, contemplated sometimes with sadness and sometimes with disconnected smile; a heroic-comic-satirical poem with a moral-religious, pedagogical and patriotic purpose.*

***Keywords:** poetic play; allegory; moralizing irony*

“Irony preserves the freshness of the spirit, adequacy to reality, the permanent relinquishing of vain illusions, as well as the perpetual assuming of the exigencies of life.” (Fanache, V.,1994: p.176)

Laughter, jest, the comic, humour, and irony have appeared and evolved hand in hand with human intelligence. Traces of their existence can be found in some of the oldest literary texts, as Greek and Roman antiquity gave birth to an abundance of comico-satirical literature. Having evolved at the same pace as the human spirit, the comic, humour, and irony have gained, aside from complexity and intellectual refinement, a cultural-historical typology, a configuration specific to the great literary and cultural eras. From Socrates’ “*I know that I know nothing*” and the rhetorical device of classical antiphrasis onward, irony has greatly diversified its significations and manners of literary expression. Among the cultural-historical interpretations of irony in Budai-Deleanu’s work there are folkloric irony, Socratic irony, classical irony, Enlightenment irony, and, above all, irony based on intertextual play, an element which will be heavily borrowed by postmodern literature.

*Țiganiada* was created at a time when, in Europe, its genre was past its prime and on its way out, having used up its expressive resources. Under such circumstances, Ion Budai-Deleanu, who was writing in an uncultivated language, had no artistic solution but to transpose into Romanian the expressive effects which had already been tested and tried by the tradition of the genre. Thus, as Ion Istrate points out, the stanzas in which Urgia (Scourge) addresses Satan are, in fact, a parody of the *Aeneid*. In this heroi-comical poem, ridiculisation gives rise to the burlesque, which is a category that comprises parody, travesty, and caricature.

Deep and ample analyses of the evolution of the European comical epic poem with direct reference to *Țiganiada* have been conducted by Ioana Em. Petrescu and Ion Istrate.

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Ioana Em. Petrescu finds that, in the case of *Țiganiada*, the miraculous dimension of Christianity, represented by saints, heaven, hell, and devils, is treated ironically in the style of Voltaire, while the miraculous dimension of magic (Brândușa's spells, the magic courtyard) does not constitute a miraculous plain, or, as the author puts it, "a heroic musical score of the sacred space".

Budai-Deleanu's epic poem should not be read only as an instance of the heroic genre or one of the heroi-comical genre, as *Țiganiada* observes the conventions and patterns of the burlesque of *La Secchia Rapita*: textual travesty, the technique of deceived expectations – which consists in going from a high register down into a derisive one throughout large pieces of text, even whole episodes (the heroi-comical entails tackling a derisive topic in a high register, as is the case in *Batrahomiomahia*).

The comical universe of *Țiganiada* is not limited to the heroi-comical textual area per se, which is dedicated to the parodic feat of the gypsies. Irony, jest, satirical notes, the parodic vocation, the temptation of the caricatural or pamphlet are propensities of the writer's creative personality.

In both versions of the epic poem, the prologue and *Epistola închinătoare* (the dedication letter) present a series of aesthetic, linguistic, and cultural arguments to justify the author's choice of the heroi-comical genre. However, at no point does Budai-Deleanu confess to any natural inclination of his own toward jest and laughter. On the contrary, in both versions of the *Epistolie* (letter), Mitru Perea is promised a serious piece of literature: "Should I perceive that this endeavour of mine finds favour, you shall receive other works, too, yet not farcical ones, but serious and truly heroic." This promise is obviously a reference to the status of comico-parodic literature around 1800, which was thought to be inferior and facetious as compared to the classical heroic epic poem. An important argument for choosing the comico-parodic genre is the author's desire to thus prepare the reader for an encounter with "high" literature: "I have wrought this poetic work, or, better yet, this toy, as I wished to shape and introduce a new taste for Romanian poetry, so that, through such easier habitudes, the language-loving youth should learn to delve even into those more elevated and hidden thickets of Parnassus, where Homer's and Virgil's muses dwell." Being aware of the importance of folklore and folk language as marks of national identity, the poet calls upon them without hesitation, even enthusiastically, and assigns them a place of honour. A similar phenomenon will occur in Romanian literature with the emergence of the works of Ion Creangă.

Rationalistic, Enlightenment-style irony is ideologically overloaded, virulent, spontaneously convertible into satire or pamphlet as the line between them becomes blurred: "There is, on the one hand, a univocal and serious signification – in a basic sense – of the literary message, which also constitutes his literary intention and, on the other hand, there is the overt persiflage, the derision or, by literary criteria, the satire per se, in which the literary message no longer has a merely assertive function, but acquires the obvious function of exposing something or someone. Literary irony is equally distant from these two poles. The ironic writer's art consists precisely in maintaining this intermediary, hesitant position, from

which (s)he will try not to fall either into the serious understanding of the formula taken in its ordinary sense, or in the paradox of the exposing formula.”<sup>1</sup>

In *Țiganiada*, this type of irony justifies the subtitle of the epic poem “*poemation eroi-comico-satiric*” (heroi-comico-satirical poemation<sup>2</sup>) and, together with folkloric irony, constitutes the comical substance of the epic poem.

An abundant source of the comic in *Țiganiada* is represented by parodic, ironic or satirical references to sources and text models found in the fictitious footnotes and comments. In these, not only does Budai-Deleanu not spare any of the literary masters, but even parodies, ironises and caricatures the very basic notions of philology: text analysis, text criticism, editing, and historical documenting. In the most genuine burlesque spirit, the author sometimes resorts to a vulgar register in the footnotes, not without creating remarkable comical effects, due to the parodic philological apparatus.

The dialogues and comical lines of the characters add flavour to the narrative text. The gypsies’ squabbles provide just as many opportunities to insert comical dialogues or mere single lines built on the notion of the characters’ incapacity for genuine dialogue. The caricatural or satirical descriptions and portraits make up the comical background of ample scenes, such as the gypsy bands’ parade, Parpangel’s wedding, the visions of heaven and hell, the allegorical image of Urgia (Scourge) or the images of the numerous individual comical characters leading the bands that Vodă (the Ruling prince) makes note of: Parpangel, Tandaler, Corcodel, Bălăban, or the leader of the sieve-makers.

The amplest comical episodes are concentrated in Song I, in the scenes of the gypsy bands’ parade, the councils, and the preparations for the journey, then in Song IX, which describes Parpangel’s wedding and his journeys into other worlds, and in the last part of Song XI, when Cucavel and the crowd storm into the wise men’s council. In these parts of the text, the comic is built in its purest forms, generated by ridicule, irony, caricature, and humour, with the decisive contribution of folk humour, which is very well integrated among the instruments of parody and the burlesque.

The ironic, ludico-parodic, or critico-satirical manner of relating to literary models and illustrious authors of the epic and parodic genres is a deliberate literary technique, indicated and explained as such by the author in the footnotes: “Then, the title *Poemation iroi-comico-satiric* (heroi-comico-satirical poemation) shows that this work must be a mix of three kinds of poems, that is heroic (namely valiant), comical (namely for laughter and jest) and satirical (namely mocking), for, by mocking certain follies, it drives man away from their consequences. At last, as I reckon, all that is gathered in this poem, though it may not hold together, one can still see that the author has satirised other poets.”

The textual dimension, the vastness and epic complexity of the comical facet of in *Țiganiada*, the variety of comical resources, categories, means, and techniques mastered by Budai-Deleanu make this poet of the Enlightenment the most important Romanian comical writer before I. L. Caragiale. The comical makeup of the epic poem indicates, to a far greater extent than its heroic dimension, the fact that the author had read the Latin and

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<sup>2</sup> T.N.: The Romanian noun “poemation”, invented by Ion Budai-Deleanu, is a fictitious derivative of “poem” (extant in both Romanian and English with a largely similar meaning) obtained with the aid of the Latin suffix -tion.

Greek epic poems in the original, as well as the Renaissance and classical ones, together with the heroi-comical and parodic epic poems from Homer to Tassoni and Voltaire; it also shows that the author was thoroughly familiar with the artistic canon and with antique and classical theory.

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## ***GHEORGHE ASACHI, A PIONEER OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE***

**Marilena Filofteia COSTESCU\***

**Abstract:** *Gheorghe Asachi, the initiator of the national theatre from the beginning of the 19th century, is one of the first Romanian forerunners of the scenic art. In spite of the obvious imperfections in the pioneering activity of the vital institutions in the evolution of a modern state, all Asachi's approaches ought to be seen from the historical and cultural perspective of the period in which he was involved. Thus, the daring play "Mirtil and Chloe", staged in one of Iaşu' salons in December 1816, establishes Gh. Asachi as the founder of the national theatre. The scholar Gh. Asachi' hard work to achieve through school and theatre real instruments of spiritual uplifting of his nation are carried on and accomplished by Mihail Kogălniceanu, Vasile Alecsandri and Constantin Negruzzi.*

**Keywords:** *theatre; pioneer; education; personality; scenic art*

In order to respond to the imperatives of his time and the development of the Moldavian culture, Gheorghe Asachi put into practice his illuminating ideas that were not confined to one direction. One of his aspirations for the development of our national culture was to leverage theater with the noble mission to promote the language of our people, giving it the opportunity to put into practice the ability to express great ideas and feelings as foreign languages. Asachi, a scholar with advanced views, wanted to prove the necessity and the importance of theater in the language of our ancestors. Along with the school, in the scholar's vision, theater represents a way of educating and cultivating the masses, a school of morality, continually emphasizing the sense of cultural rebirth as a progress of the nation towards the great peaks of science and spirituality.

Founders of the theater such as Gheorghe Asachi, Vasile Alecsandri, Costache Negruzzi, Mihail Kogălniceanu considered the theater, together with school, an institution of spiritual elevation, to correct the faults of the society, "an institute of culture for the soul" just as Eminescu dreamed. The first shows in the language of our forefathers are translations that responded at that time to the historical need, national and social objectives. The translations that favoured the first performances in Romanian language also facilitated the acquisition of an experience in order to use the national language to the specific requirements of the drama, to the manner of expression, with dynamics and genre-specific concision. The translated plays that were made known to the public through publications or on stage encouraged and influenced the national writings.

In the history of the Romanian theater, it remains the moment of indelible enthusiasm of the year 1816, when Gheorghe Asachi's aspiration to impose the Romanian stage was simultaneously a dream and a utopia. It had been more than two centuries since the establishment of the Romanian movement and the theater art, when Asachi's enthusiasm and desire to introduce the first play in our national language to the Romanians was materialized through the representation of the pastoral idyll "Mirtil and Chloe".

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The connection with the important cultures achieved during his studies, as well as his frequent trips abroad, gave Asachi the opportunity to borrow and assess the European tendencies that he transformed to suit the Moldovian spiritual specificity. Taking advantage and borrowing from the experience of the countries in which he was formed and which, at that time, had century-old traditions in the field of dramaturgy, the fervent scholar, sustained by some illuminated boyars of that time, campaigned for the fulfillment of the young people's dream from Iasi and for the promotion of everything worthwhile that this nation has in the artistic field. As a result, the noble ambition to assert the Romanian theater in the circuit of the universal theater materialized on December 27, 1816, when for the first time Asachi initiated and directed the premiere of "Mirtil and Chloe" in Romanian. Asachi promotes the national theater and implicitly the Romanian language considered, at that time, by the high class of boyars a "dialect" only used by the peasantry. At that time, the Moldovian boyars spoke foreign languages such as French, Greek, German or Russian, therefore Romanian being only considered a language for servants. Veniamin Costache, Costachi Ghica and Alecu Beldiman are the ones who unconditionally supported Gheorghe Asachi to stage the first show.

The significance of the event is amplified by the presence of the priest Veniamin Costache and Edgar Quinet, writer, historian and philosopher of the time, together with high-class spectators of the well-off boyar dom.

The historian Teodor T. Burada notes that the first theater performance in Romanian was performed in Costache Ghica's room at the light of the candles, on an improvised stage. Teodor T. Burada also informs us that this show was held "opposite the old metropolitan church". In addition, Gheorghe Asachi is the one who directed the play, sketched the decorations, the costumes and painted the curtain. The young "dilettantes" from the Ghica and Sturza families play in the first theatrical performance translated from French into Romanian by Asachi, a pastoral in the naive genre of Solomon Gessner and Jean Pierre Clarisde Florian, Mirtil and Chloe.

The bold theatrical performance played in Romanian, on a background of old songs and traditional dances with actors dressed in their traditional clothing, ended in the applause of the enthusiastic spectators. The play was a real success, having as protagonists the hetman Ghica's grandsons: Elena Ghica in the role of the shepherd Chloe, "a twelve-year-old lass", Prince Grigore Ghica, the ruler-to-be, in the role of Mirtil, "the shepherd, a thirteen-year-old lad". Costachel Sturza is distributed in the role of Lisiz, "the worshiper of Amor". Mirtil and Chloe's naive speeches, which captured the public through the grace and talent of the young dilettantes, resounded for a long time in the circle of the societies of that time, being an interesting beginning. Asachi's purpose of depicting the basis of morality is captured on stage by the two shepherds through the pure feelings of natural love, respect, godliness and gratitude.

At that time, the performances of the French, Russian, and Italian theatrical companies were held in specially designed rooms. Although the first performance of the first piece in Romanian took place in an improvised room, it must be regarded not only as a success of a cultural act, but as an event implying national meanings. Even Asachi's prologue for the play Mirtil and Chloe concentrates on his enlightenment ideas and the significance of an open path for the future of the Romanian theater. (Asachi, 1991: 117)

Asachi realizes another symbol even on the curtain, painting Apollo with his hand extended to Moldavia to raise it, being surrounded by museums, a symbol of his belief that art is meant to influence the emancipation of a nation.

The unquestionable interest shown by Asachi for a play in the mother tongue is demonstrated by several other shows played in Romanian until 1822, when the string of theatrical performances is interrupted by Asachi's departure to Vienna between 1822 and 1827. He returned from Vienna and was involved in a variety of activities: organizing education in Romanian language, organizing the state archives, editing the magazine "Albina românească" ("The Romanian Bee"), drafting the Organic Regulation, being secretary of the Moldovian drafting commission.

After two years, the performance of Asachi held on December 27, 1816 in Iași is echoed by another performance under the guidance of Gheorghe Lazăr, also presented in Romanian language, in Bucharest at Sfântul Sava.

A few years later, the play Mirtil and Chloe is presented to a wide audience, this time on the stage of the Vasile Alecsandri National Theater in Iași, in 1850, when Asachi remembers how in an "epoch of foreignness", in 1816, the play was staged in the house of the late hetman Constantin Ghica, a lavish boyar who appreciated culture, a society theater.

Asachi recalls the actors who staged the song and who "entrusted the company, at that time, to make a breach in that strangeness, addressing the language of the country to patriotic hearts." Asachi is delighted by the progress of the national theater, by the efforts of the creators of dramatic works and by the public's interest in the theater in the language of our ancestors. He strongly believes that national theater is "a practical school, especially when aesthetics, morals and a reasoned philology preside over such works". (Asachi, 1991: 11) "Mirtil and Chloe", "the first dramatic play represented in the Romanian language", though it was staged in 1816, is published in 1850. The clarification is given by the poem's subtitle "For the Anniversary Day of the Opening of the National Theater" in Iași, in 1817, which states that Asachi intended to pay tribute to the ruler Grigore Ghica and Mrs. Elena Ghica, "those who contributed to that first Romanian representation". (Asachi, 1991: 11, 502).

The pastoral "Mirtil and Chloe", translated by Asachi, was also played in the houses of other boyar admirers of the Romanian theater. This fact is underlined by two manuscripts from which we find that in 1820, also in Iași, the piece was also represented in the house of the grand boyar Vasile Rosetti. (Asachi, 1991: 503).

The Romanian theater strengthens after his return, in 1834, from Vienna. Asachi performs on various occasions performances that keep alive the Moldovians' desire for the performing arts in Romania. On the occasion of General Kiseleff's return to Petersburg, on April 10, 1834, Asachi put the play "The celebration of Moldovian shepherds" on the circuit of the precultural theater with a company of amateurs, which included Gheorghe Asachi, Vasile Alecsandri, Matei Millo, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Alexandru Mavrocordat, N. Docan, Scarlat Vârnav and other sons and daughters of the boyars. This is the first theatrical representation on the stage of the Variety Theater played in ornate language, about which "The Romanian Bee" from April 12, 1834 notes that "revealed the greatness of the old Moldavian soldiers, the misfortunes of which this country has often argued, the good deeds of the new settlement and the gratefulness of its dwellers towards their good ruler". From the

writings of "The Romanian Bee", we also find out that the play "The Celebration of the Moldovian shepherds" was an occasional allegorical composition of Asachi's, as he used to compose on different occasions.

In the same year, Asachi writes the play "Dragoș, the First Sovereign Ruler of Moldovia" played on August 26, 1834 "on the occasion of the coronation of Mihail Sturza" (Burada, 1915: 122), a historical drama that opens the way to a new genre that will later inspire Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu in the illustration of the work "Răzvan and Vidra", Vasile Alecsandri who will write the works "Despot Voivode" in 1879, "The Fountain of Blanduziei" in 1884, and "Ovidiu" in 1885.

Asachi does not abandon the Enlightenment idea of the progress of language and nation through theater. Deeply aware of the importance of training actors, he channels his efforts to train young actors for theatrical representations in their mother tongue in specialized institutions. Asachi's initiative to lay the foundations of a permanent theater becomes evident by establishing a "pre-theater class" at Three Hierarchs. Despite the fact that this course is ephemeral, the students' gift for theater, proven in various occasions, encourages Asachi to increase his efforts to create a conservatory, as a perfect theater does not improvise without time, patience, tact and sacrifice.

The evolution and acting talent of the students who attended the school from Three Hierarchs, determines Asachi, at the end of 1836, on November 15, supported by militants such as the Vasile Alecsandri, Stefan Catargiu and some boyars to found the Dramatic Philharmonic Conservatory, the milestone of the National Theater edifice. Among the teachers who teach at the Conservatory alongside Asachi who teaches the declamation, we could remember Cuna and Paul Cervati who teach vocal music. On February 23, 1837, the Conservatory students stage two works after August von Kotzebue of Asachi's: the drama "Lapeirus" and the comedy "The Cunning Widow", followed on April 8 by the representation of the drama "Petru Rares". In the year 1838, on February 20, enthusiastic students perform on the stage of Moldovia an opera sung in Romanian for the first time.

In the year 1839, Asachi notes a premiere by translating and representing the work "Norma" by Bellini. The advancement of the theatrical performances in conjunction with their success on stage in Moldovia are regarded with contempt by the reactionary boyardom, but also by the ruler, as they echoed the progressive ideas of the time while promoting the Romanian language. In order to stop the evolution of the national theater as an institutionalized form, the ruler Mihail Sturza increases the annual grant granted to the French theater and abolishes the annual grant of 200 ducats awarded to the national theater. Following the unfair competition of the foreign theatre companies and the withdrawal of the financial support by the government, the theatrical performances in Romanian end after only two years and as a result the absence of the conservative in the quality of the performances is felt. The fierce struggle to promote the theater in the Romanian language was not easy. The danger that the national culture could trigger is quickly noticed by the power of the time that vehemently opposes the development of the Romanian theater by instituting censorship, by contempt for the Romanian plays, by cutting the subsidies of the national troupes, by the attention and the subsidy granted to the foreign troupes whose representations were only supported in the languages known to a certain walk of life.

The famous triumvirate: Costache Negruzzi, Vasile Alecsandri and Mihail Kogălniceanu take over the leadership of the new institution in 1840, which provided a grand plan of action for the emancipation of the national culture, continuing the program of the "Dacia literară". Thus, through the new organization, Asachi falls into a cone of shadow.

However, Asachi remains the trigger of the Romanian dramaturgy and performing arts, the founder of the first historical dramas and also of the convergent thinking about the theater. Through the plays, translated by him into the national language, played on stage by Romanian actors, Asachi puts on the same pedestal the Romanian language with the European languages, which were present in the theatrical activity of the time. Although Asachi's theatrical representations in the national language were timid, they represented important steps in asserting the Romanian spirituality at this time. The debut, dominated by valuable works such as "Mirtil and Chloe", "Alzira" by Voltaire, "Hecuba" by Euripide translated by A. Nanescu and staged in Bucharest in 1819, the translation made by Ladislau Erdely "The Scrooge" after "The Miser" by Moliere, "Pompei" by Corneille, translated by Erdely or the translation of Alexandru Beldiman after "Oreste" by Voltaire open the way of the theater with an original repertoire in ancestral language.

The precious translations, published or presented to the public, from Metastasio, Moliere, Voltaire and Euripides are followed by a period of decline until the establishment of the Philharmonic. The representative period of the Philharmonic enjoys a conclusive repertoire through the value of the translated pieces of Alfieri, Voltaire, Moliere, Corneille, Goldoni, Kotzebue, Florian or others.

Through his multiple skills, Asachi, determined by the social-political context of the time, remains the founder of the National Theater at the beginning of the 19th century, of education in the national language, of the national press, counting among the first theoreticians of the Romanian performing arts. The disagreement with the literary failure of the theater written by the Asachicannot be removed, but it must be regarded as a pioneering work marked by the characteristic pathos of the time.

Also, among the forerunners of the historical drama, next to Caesar Bolliac is the scholar Gheorghe Asachi, whose works, even if imitated, bring to the stage the glorious past of the nation through heroic figures and deeds. The historical dramas of Asachi come to shape in the souls of the viewers the patriotic feelings, reviving the glorious past, the fight for freedom and independence, the aspect of solidarity between Romanians. Despite the fact that most of his achievements are not impeccable, their value does not diminish, considering the beginning stage and the efforts sustained as a promoter of the Romanian culture and spirituality justified by the historical and cultural environment of his times.

His first work in this field, the tragedy "Mihai Viteazul", destroyed in the fire of 1827 is succeeded by the allegorical scene "Dragoș - the first, sovereign ruler of Moldavia". "The Romanian Bee" tells about this historical drama of Asachi: "based on historical facts and beautified by the graces of an interesting episode; this play presented to the viewers the old glory, the happenings and the birth of this earth again". (Burada, 1915: 123). Asachi's work is not unique, echoing another work of this kind by Matei Millo, a pupil of the D. Kiunem pension. The representation given by the students of this pension on the occasion of the celebration of St. Michael ends with the play of Matei Milo, "The Military Celebration", dedicated to Mr. Sturza. Despite the fact that the play written and played by Matei Milo has

an homage, it stimulated patriotism and national dignity by evoking the heroic figure of Stephen the Great.

In 1837, "The Romanian Bee" also reminds us of two other works by Asachi represented scenically by the students of the Philharmonic Conservatory in Iasi: two-act imitative drama "Petru Rareș-vodă" which presents "a historical episode from the year 1538, the one full of achievements and of noble feature of the Moldovians and that was distinguished by their moral and patriotic target" (The Romanian Bee, 1837: 129) and the comedy "The Smuggler" or "The Darkness of the Moon", also realized in two acts. The playwright continues his moralizing and patriotic work through the short original historical drama "Voichița de Roumanie", which outlines two prominent figures of the Moldovian ruler, Stefan cel Mare and the ruler of Muntenia, Vlad Țepeș, personalities of national history. Although this dramatic attempt was unsuccessful, it promotes with patriotism a sense of brotherhood, solidarity between Moldovians and the dwellers of Muntenia, making Asachi a pioneer. In the same area of concern is presented another three-act original historical drama by Asachi, "Elena Dragoș de Moldovia". The legends created around Mount Pion are Asachi's inspiration for the original three-act drama, "Turnul Butului", a love story from the bygone era.

The impetus given by Asachi through all his dramatic attempts made it possible to affirm the theater in Romanian language and the original dramaturgy. Asachi correctly predicted and managed to convince that the scenic activity has an educational character that converges towards defining the national culture and social emancipation. Asachi considered the national theater a pleasant and effective way to build the spirituality of a nation. The theater, as a living art, opens the way to other forms of literary expression. Asachi's immense and tireless cultural activity also encompasses the concern for the fine arts. In this sense, it lays the foundation stone of the artistic education. Asachi's initiatives in the field of theater, even if they were not impeccable, are valuable, proving fundamental for his successors: V. Alecsandri, Costache Negruzzi and Mihail Kogălniceanu. His daring attempts in this field had as purpose the establishment and evolution of the Romanian theater, the concern for dramaturgy, the setting up of specialized institutions and not least the public interest for the Romanian theater.

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## ***THE IRONIC PROJECTION OF ALTERITY IN THE NOVEL "EUROPOLIS" BY JEAN BART***

**Nicoleta CRÎNGANU\***

**Abstract:** *The researchers labeled the novel "Europolis" by Jean Bart as a youth literature. Reasons are, of course, because the stories of the characters often reach the melodrama, the excessive narrative that leaves too little room for psychology sometimes develop against even the most generous and interesting ideas. Still, Jean Bart seriously discusses the relationship between the multicultural environment and the identity obsession of different communities, associated with the fear of otherness. What makes the novel seem "easy" is the way Jean Bart understands to investigate the identities of the Sulina communities: in a bitter-irony projection, where power relations falsify the reality of the fair, unleashing the vital force of individuals. Placed by some in the series of texts about the suffocating and leveling province, the novel of Jean Bart goes beyond this status by ironically searching into the destinies or stereotypes. A character like Nicola Marulis is under the sign of alterity, being paradoxically a member of the community. His destiny and his daughter Evantia, seen through the lens of the relationship between identity and otherness, reveals an ironic reflex, multiplied in other destinies, following almost the same path.*

**Keywords:** *multiculturalism; identity; irony*

In Sulina's ethnic puzzle it would seem that cultural differences are blurring and people know each other, communities tolerate and support each other. However, each has its place in the architecture of the city. In Stamati's cafe, the authorities have their own table (the "chiefs' table"), career consulates, consular agents sit at the "diplomats' table", at other tables rest the masters of ships, at others, the commercial agents, while the porters and boatmen do not they have access locally, at the European Commission of the Danube not everyone is received, the places of entertainment are also segregated: in the "Englitera" the good world is spending the time and the money in the Sahara slum, the rest of the people.

However, at the Red Cross Ball, organized by the Circle of the Romanian Navy, "after an old democratic tradition", everyone is invited, regardless of nationality or religion. Segregation, however, does not concern only communities, but also occupations or social status, the harbour being both multicultural, exotic, open to unusual experiences (the multitude of adventurers who make and lose assets in the town area proves it), as well as closed, refractory to everything that does not corresponds to the identity vision. A whole gallery of characters is under the sign of the unusual and, for Sulina's community, of the otherness. They contribute to the rich life of the city, in which the ships, the barges, the captains, the authorities of the European Commission, the owners of the cafes, the portals, the boatmen, the thieves of cereals etc. create a colorful, conventional and unconventional world, at the same time, charming and dynamic.

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The first of these unusual characters is Penelopa, Stamate's wife. Orphan, raised in an ambassador's house, she arrives at the home of his uncle Iovanachi Iovanidis, translator, and when he falls into disgrace, she reaches the only relative left in her life, Leonida Iovanidis, who, when the girl is 17, advises her to marry Stamati. The marriage shocks almost to the locals, because the precious and aristocratic Penelopa does not match at all with the trivial Stamati, pilot at the Danube Commission. The marriage does not change her marginal status, because, from an orphan raised on the coast of the Bosphorus, the woman arrives in a space she rejects, isolating herself in the her, even Olimpia, her sister-in-law, calls her "Stamati's shrew". Her loneliness, her lack of concern for integration, the contempt for the community she lives in could generate a drama of a bovaric otherness, then dissolved in "bitter irony" (Cernat, 2010), but Jean Bart thickens another character touch: the mother Penelope had thrown herself into the Bosphorus after she had been left by her lover, a steamship captain who had left for Argentina, and Penelopa millimetrically restored her destiny: she threw herself into the Danube after being left by Captain Deliu, who had left for Rotterdam. The gesture of suicide reminds of the heroines of the ancient Greece, but when doubled it becomes derisory. But this derision of the tragic is also under the sign of irony, because the one who has to make the corpse recognized is precisely the lover Deliu, who had lied to the woman, to get rid of an embarrassing scene. Or, trying to avoid the inconvenience, the captain puts himself in a perfectly ridiculous situation. Moreover, everything that follows the death of Penelope is ironical, because Stamati organizes a "first class" funeral, for which he spends a lot of money. Even if Penelope is not loved by the community the people participate at the funeral, as in a cohesion ritual. Once the alterity represented by Penelopa has disappeared, there is no reason for division. Again, gathering the community just around a stranger is a paradox, and the tears of its members, the admiration for the "heroic, great deed" that they do not know much about, the negotiations with the priest for the funeral service frame an ironic discrepancy between the essence of Penelope's status in community and the appearance that the locals want to create.

Besides Penelopa's story, in the same category of the ironic contrast between essence and appearance there are other characters: Nicu Politicu, Olimpia's husband, Penelope's sister-in-law, is a passionate politician and an enthusiastic patriot. During the Turkish-Greek war, angry that he was over the age of incorporation, he voluntarily enlisted, leaving his client half-shaved and Olimpia, swooned in the arms of the relatives, but, tripped, on the first day, over some rails, in Piraeus, sprains his leg and, hospitalized for three months, can not participate in the battle of Domocos, but when he returns to his family he is considered a hero. Tudorache is bitter against the Greeks who he says are getting rich on the back of the Romanians, but is married to a Greek woman from Galați.

For the Sulina community, Evantia, Nicola Marulis's daughter, represents radical otherness. When she arrives in the harbor, the world immediately notices the color of his skin, naming her "hărăpoaică"<sup>1</sup> or blackish (later, some even call it gypsy), she does not wear a hat, but a turban, he carries a pet monkey in her arms. Then, all the behavior of Evanta, from innocent disinhibition, to the extraordinary talent of swimming or dancing at

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<sup>1</sup> I preferred leaving the term used by the author, as I couldn't find a suitable term for "hărăpoaică", as in Romanian it means arab girl but also servant, most often used to call the gipsy servants.

the ball, all of it outrages the community, which, as long as the community thinks that Nicola has a lot of money, accepts her, but as soon as it is proven that the "American" is a pauper man, it repudiates the girl without giving her a chance. Not in this attitude, sprung from the fear of otherness, is the irony of the character's trajectory, but in the fact that, as Penelopa raises, Evantia is a small orphan (her mother, a native of French Guiana, died after been bitten by a scorpion), she is raised in a monastery - a school of missionary nuns, reads the lives of the saints, holds ribbons, cords and medals with saints, receiving a religious education, because the nuns prepare her for the role of Christian missionary in the colonies. But Nicola has other thoughts with her: for him, Evantia is the only capital he owns, so he hopes to marry her well and, in this way, to make a profit for himself. However, the narrative game is ironic, again, because, in love with Neagu, Evantia is seduced by Deliu, ending the love story, performing different jobs, becoming a dancer in "Englitera", where she entertains the elite of the town with her exotic dance and where only Jak's protection saves her from the harassed promiscuity that the community exposes the girls to. After his death, however, she arrives at the hospital, where she gives birth to Deliu's child, and then she dies of tuberculosis. Again, the vision of her destiny is ironical, as none of her qualities helps her, too many coincidences and turning points lead her to the death.

The stories of the two women are set in the mirror, both of which raise the question of otherness in relation to a community that seems to accept them, but in reality, the closure of the environment is total, and they are rejected. The melodrama that arises from this opposition in relation to the others is mitigated by the subtle irony of the mirror. In the path of Penelopi one can guess the route of the Evantia - one brought from the Bosphorus, the second from French Guyana, neither one nor the other adapts, one is saved and lost through marriage, the other, through its refusal.

One could object that Penelopa and Evantia associate not only the spatial alterity of the immigrant, but also that of the gender, because they discuss the femininity and its relations with society as it is. And it could be true, if the most eccentric destiny in Jean Bart's book wouldn't be the one of Nicola's Marulis. Through him, the book proposes the rethinking of the immigrant's status, in terms associated with leaving and returning to a space that is not the native one anyway.

Nicola Marulis comes, like his brother Stamatis does, from Hios, except that, unlike him, he embarks on a French ship, where, after an altercation related to a love story, he kills a Spanish sailor, being sentenced to ten years of prison. He escapes, but surrenders, along with an old Greek, when he is forced to eat human flesh. He is assigned to a leprosy hospital, where he stays for ten years. He is released and becomes a concessionaire for another ten years, during which time he marries a native who dies bitten by a scorpion, after giving birth to a daughter, Evantia. Poor, he returns to the mouths of the Danube, into a country that has never been his. At Sulina, he is initially welcomed with warmth and fast, in accordance with the stereotype of the rich American, but, after learning the truth, he is banished at the edge of the community. In this sense, significant is the route of the living spaces that Nicola goes through: at first his cousin Ahile takes his luggage to Stamati's house - a space of the fair's elite, placed in the center of Sulina's world, despite Nicu Politicu's protests. After the Red Cross ball, he moves to the hotel and, at the funeral of Penelope, both he and Evantia, are in the tail of the convoy, self-isolated, marginal, considered "bad

sign" by the community. After finding out the truth about his financial condition, the community elites are the first to abandon Nicola: the Greek consul does not recognize him as Greek, the Romanian porters reject him as an alien, because he takes the bread from their mouth, as they say, nor does the French consul consider him a compatriot. He moves with Evantia to a cottage, in the slum, eventually reaching the other bank of the Danube, in a slum where the boatmen and the porters live, that is, those who did not have access to Stamati's cafe. Compared to the moment of arrival, when all the doors were opened, being received in places where nobody has access (to the European Danube Commission, for example), he becomes marginal, rejected by the whole community. The occupational hypostasis are even more significant for the destiny of the excluded one and for the way the community relates to the immigrant's otherness: from the rich American who is offered business with oil, steam, salvage of muddy vessels, fishing, cellulose factory, he becomes a cereal thief, radical alterity for the community, confirming its previous status.

Nicola is, moreover, under the sign of a threefold alterity: a spatial one, of the Greek immigrant who, after a journey through South America, reaches Sulina, the second, a social one, because, in relation to the more or less honest businessmen in the city, he is a convict, carrying his stigma on the body, and a financial one that does not even allow him to dress according to the rules at the balls at which he is received. As an individual deceived by the fate, Nicola is viewed with fear and suspicion by the community of Sulina, but also by the authorities, who initially appear friendly. People's fear of otherness is combined with rumor - the crime committed by an immigrant multiplies to eighteen murders, cannibalism, the killing of seven wives. In reality, the only and greatest crime of Nicola is that he does not fit the stereotype compiled by the society: that of the rich American, who comes with money in the harbour, to do business and contribute to the development of the community.

In their blindness, people do not see the signs of the mistake they make: the immigrant's luggage is poor, his daughter is herself an eccentric, by the color of her skin, talents and the pet, the money that the community expects does not come, at the ball, the hero becomes poor dressed etc. Moreover, the fair's elites are looking for evidence to confirm their vision of the one that has recently arrived in the community: the news of the change of the ten dollars spreads quickly around the community, the clothing worn at the ball is interpreted as a sign of the American clothing eccentricity, bringing even evidence to prove it. The examples can continue, as the community tries to adapt Nicola's portrait to the stereotype they cultivate in relation to Americans, and, when it reveals its falsehood, the Greeks blame their victim for the expenses they had made in the hope of some investment from him. Nicola. Naturally, facing such a strong stereotype, the hero does not dare to oppose, although he does not subordinate himself: he does not respond to business proposals, he does not confess that his only fortune is the Evantia and that, with her help, he hopes to make a living in the new homeland. Coming to Romania, Nicola also perceives the community as altered, although he does not seem to have expectations in relation to it. His fear comes from the inability to project expectations, respectively, the friendship shown by community members. The discrepancy between the strength of the stereotype and Nicola's inability to react, the unpredictable reactions of the elite in Sulina and the lack of reaction of the hero compile not only the status of the excluded person, but also his individual drama.

Nicola's story is written in strident colors: in her fabric, the murder, even accidental, is the punishment for love, the cannibalism, for the desire for freedom, the widowhood, for the desire to overcome the convicted condition. The stories are violent, like that of cannibalism or that of the Arab who had been convicted because he forced his wife to drink the blood of her forbidden lover killed by him. All in one place creates the landscape of the suffocating environment, regardless of the space the individual occupies, creating the impression of artificial, sensational and eccentric sought.

In fact, the whole story is under a false impression. The stereotype of the rich American refers to the American, and Nicola comes from South America. America is not exactly America, because the former convict comes from French Guyana, a colony in South America, not from the north of the continent. The one who reveals the truth and dismantles the illusion of Uncle Sams's fortune is Logaridis, the wise old man of the port, an Ulysses sui generis, who reveals the trembling reality of the dream. Curious, he seeks out for more information about French Guyana, asking the captain of the ship "Tunis" and finding out that French Guyana is, in fact, a big prison, a place where no money can be made. He also convinces the American to tell his story invalidating the stereotype this way. Ironically, the community does not recognise its own mistake, but thinks that the one who is guilty for the money spending and one of its members failure is the American who wouldn't fit the stereotype. Nicola's story is reversed this way.

They say about the "Europolis" novel that it sins by excess of epic inventiveness<sup>1</sup>: *So much is happening (and in such a short time) in the small cosmopolitan port at the mouths of the Danube that from this moment onwards, this agglomeration precipitates towards melodrama.* (Ciotloș: 2014), that *all the characters that line up at the beginning end up as bad as possible, contradictory, in relation to the premises, and predictably, in relation to the clichés*<sup>2</sup> (ibidem), that this book is *about transiency, illusion and failure serves as social background and identity effigy of the Romanian maritime border*<sup>3</sup> (Cernat: 2010), that it is *a fresco of the cosmopolitan life*<sup>4</sup> (Mohanu, 2001: 283). George Călinescu labels it as *nice novel about maritime environment*<sup>5</sup> (Călinescu, 1982: 676), where *the exotic human being transplanted into unpopular territory, which perishes on the banks of the Danube, disgusted with meat and with the desire of bananas and coconuts, Nicola's wandering existence suggests a naval lyricism, a sadness of maladaptation, reminiscent of nostalgia symbolized in ships, ports and cabarets sailors of Pierre Loti*<sup>6</sup> (ibidem), and

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<sup>1</sup> Ciotloș, Cosmin, „Sulina. Visul american”, Dilema veche, nr. 547, 7-13 august 2014, <https://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/tema%20saptamanii/articol/visul-american>, accesat la data de 31 iulie 2019. Se petrec atâtea (și în atât de puțin timp) în micul port cosmopolit de la gurile Dunării, încât, de la un moment încolo, aglomerația aceasta se precipită spre melodramă.

<sup>2</sup> că toate personajele care se aliniază la start sfârșesc cum nu se poate mai prost, contrariant, prin raport cu premisele, și previzibil, prin raport cu clișeele.

<sup>3</sup> despre efemeritate, iluzie și eșec servește drept fundal social și efigie identitară a frontierei maritime românești.

<sup>4</sup> fresca traiului cosmopolit

<sup>5</sup> simpatic roman de medii maritime

<sup>6</sup> ființa exotică transplantată în teritoriu neprielnic, care piere pe malurile Dunării, dezgustată de carne și cu dorul bananelor și al nucilor de cocos, existența rătăcitoare a lui Nicola sugerează un lirism

Ovidiu Papadima thinks that "Europolis" a *valid symbol anywhere and ever of the city of the sea*<sup>1</sup> (Papadima, 1944: 484). The novel is, as very well says Cosmin Ciotloș a *great poem of Sulina* (ibidem).

They are all right because in the center of the story, with its numerous characters, flashing events, with an epic density hard to handle by the reader, there compiles the story of Sulina, with its own life, identity, joys and fears, the characters being only the observers of this tumultuous life of the town – harbour. Its profile composes from the peoples stories, therefore the faith of the men and women (the bankruptcy of Stamati, the death of Penelopa, Evantia and Nicola) anticipate the bankruptcy and the death of fair.

Sulina's "narrative identity"<sup>2</sup> is linked to a sui generis colonisation of the Greeks at the mouths of the Danube, the Greek community being at the center of the novel, but, individually, all the members of the elite are under some legitimation narratives: Stamati had been a pilot at the Danube Commission, but, after the amorous history of the wife, he gives up and buys the café on the floor of which he has his house; Gherasim, the owner of another pub, "Peter the Grics", is the sister nephew of Petre, the son of a famous pirate, raised by an English admiral. All the characters have a story of dislocation: Nicola and Stamatis come from Hios, Penelopa, from Bosphorus, the ships come and go, bringing with them diplomats, sailors, doctors etc. Everything moves, as Paul Cernat mentions, the town lives *an atmosphere shining in the nostalgia of the remote*<sup>3</sup> (Muthu, 2002: 120) and the illusion: *the contrast between the community's huge illusions and the depressing reality is both comic and grotesque* (Cheșcă, 2015:157).

Since the publication of the novel, "Europolis" was read by many generations of readers or professional readers, all of them saying that it is a good book. Nicolae Manolescu even observes that in the youth Romanian literature there are few books that resist. One of them is "Europolis". Its secret lays in the mixture of themes, points of view and even approach of a literary genre. For the reader of its time, the love, the melodrama, the adventure could have been the secret of success. For the nowadays reader, the search for identity, the fear for the otherness, the multicultural environment and its issues are the themes that invite to a new reading. But above all, the mixed discourse, that alternate the lyricism with the irony, the sensational with the cliché, might be the key to this complex and yet simple, old and yet contemporary (even postmodern) reading as the Romanian Literature's Dictionary mentions: "The irony, punishing, as in his other writings, the excess and the artificial, allies with the lyricism, which - affinity with Pierre Loti - pushes the descriptive passages, inspired by the view of the sea"<sup>4</sup>.

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naval, o tristeță a dezadaptării, amintind nostalgiile simbolizate în corăbii, porturi și cabarete de mateloți ale lui Pierre Loti

<sup>1</sup> simbol valabil oriunde și totdeauna al orașului mării

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ricoeur, Paul, Temps et récit, apud Cristea, O, Latea, P, Chelcea, L, „Minoritari, marginali, excluși”, Polirom, Iași, 1996, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> atmosferă irizată de nostalgia depărtărilor

<sup>4</sup> „Ironia, sancționând, ca și în alte scrieri ale sale, excesul și artificul, se aliază cu lirismul, care – afinitate cu Pierre Loti – împânzește pasajele descriptive, inspirate de priveliștea mării”

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## ASPECTS OF THE FOLK INFLUENCES IN THE MINULESCIAN POETRY

Andreea DAMIAN (ZAMFIR)\*

**Abstract:** Most of Minulescian poetry abund in the autochthonous thematic but his folk inspiration has a variety of forms that appear diffusely. The symbolistic features bind with the traditional traces creating the atmosphere of a modern poetry in a folkloric form. Although there are many aspects that lead to new style of poetry, an original creation that follows an initiatory pattern, the minulescian poetry also brings a new folkloric whiff in the symbolistic poetical creation of his era.

**Keywords:** folkloric; themes; influences; symbolism; poetry

Minulescu's folkloric inspiration comes mostly from an adapted theme folklore since he is always in search of a new background for his lyrical creations, so the new discovered city needs anchors into the rural world creating a pseudo-townspeople folklore.

Gradually, the folk inspiration in Minulescu's creations becomes an escape from the exotic poetry he has written from the debut. This is a new aesthetic approach to the symbolism that he decides to embrace in an original manner.

The literary critics report that many of his folk inspiration poetry is not included in a volume and that these creations are pure fairy tales or folkloric songs: "If after 1930, folk, as a thematic source, becomes for Ion Minulescu a simple exotic route or more exactly a metaphoric compensation for the exoticism from his early poetry, unbounded in a volume, some of them are literary exercises on pure folkloric themes, fairy tales inventions, songs or symbolic selections from the folkloric property"<sup>1</sup> Some of these appear in minor literary publications that include and encourage young poets to write in their original way but keeping into the light the traditional inspiration themes which lasted during time and by the new symbolist movement, they were reinvented and reinterpreted according to the new poetical breath.

For Minulescu's lyrical creations it is easy to observe the fact that the scenery is the most common way of approaching the folk inspiration, step by step starting from this the poet adapts the whole story to the folkloric presentation without accepting it literary, but by silently embracing it: "Se scuturau de floare merii.../ Căderea-ntreagă părea ninsă/ Și-n nesfârșita pace-a serii/ Câte o stea cădea, desprinsă,.../ Trecut-au ani de-atuncea mulți/ Și azi prin flori străbate luna.../ De ce nu vii să mai m-ascuți/ Să-ți spun povestea cea cu zâna?" (*Sub meri, Foaia pentru toți, 1898: 113*)

As his interest for these themes is increasing, Minulescu is exploring the vast universe of the folklore selecting and developing new motifs for the symbolist lyrical vision, switching from minor creations to real fairy tale inspiration ballads, telling unexpected stories: "E cald/ Și lacul pare o hartă de noroi... / E harta unei țări după război,/ În care - dezgustat de-atâta murdărie/ S-a sinucis și ultimul broscui,/ Un biet școlar cu nota 3 la

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<sup>1</sup> Manu, Emil, 1981: 128

geografie.../ Pe malul lacului,/ Un bou,/ O vacă,/ Un vițel/ Și-un taur/ Recită Testamentul nou/ Și poezia veche, din clasele primare:/ "Viitor de aur/ Țara noastră are!... " (*Amiază rurală*)

The story is unfolding as the reader goes deeper into the fairy tale world, and by doing this the lyrical creation turns into a rhymed story: "Căci mâine în zori va trebui/ Să plec departe în război/ Să-nfrunt primejdiile și nevoi/ Și poate-acolo voi muri.../Și-au stat mult timp așa împietriți/ De jalea lor omorătoare/ Părea și luna plângătoare/ Și leii toți păreau vrăjiți" (*Zâna lacului*, 1974: 389)

In the beginning of the folk inspiration ballad the author decides to make an ample description of the scenery keeping trace of all the elements that create a romantic environment specifically for depicting the love that follows.

The romantic motifs do not fail to be inserted since the natural background set the story into a forest that seems to be filled with magical creating elements, starting from the twilight time, the night is gradually arriving making room for the mysteries and for the hidden love, away from the real world in a tale adapted to the imagination of the poet.

So the moon, the forest, the wind and the dimming lights are romantic features coming from a folk décor making the debut of the poetry an entrance to another world for the reader, similar to the magical formulas from the fairy tales: "Se sting departe-n asfințit/ Roșietici razele de soare/ Și plângător, o doină moare/ În crângul tânăr înverzit" (*Zâna lacului*, 1974: 387)

The emergence of the characters is done in the same way, in a perfect harmony with the natural scenery. Although the two tale-figures are part of different worlds, their love fits perfectly so that the magical surroundings should not be affected, being given the role of enhancing all the feelings: "E liniște...Din lacul clar/ S-a ridicat încet o zână/ Pe cap ea poartă o cunună/ De pietre de mărgăritar/ Și gânditoare se așază/ Pe mal, cătând în depărtare/ Privirea ei se pierde în zare/ Unde-i luceafărul de pază/ Privea... Și mult n-a așteptat/ Un prinț frumos la chip și-n port/ De sub al frunzelor verzi cort/ Eși în zale îmbrăcat" (*Zâna lacului*, 1974: 388)

Even the use of language is adapted to the context, since the poet is trying to recreate a typical folk story, he allows himself the usage of old, regional speech, just like losing the vowel from "ieși" turning it into "eși" or transforming "vaiet" into "vaet" in order to conserve the rhythmical scheme and to give the text an authenticity air.

In the same way he uses the archaic form of the adjective "veșnic", turning it into "vecinic": "Și-ascultă luna-nmărmurită/ Pe cer cum între trestii vântul/ Plângând își poartă vecinic cântul/ I-ascultă jalea nesfârșită" (*Zâna lacului*, 1974: 390)

It is also noticeably the change by transforming *a* into *e* to keep the folkloric speech as a main use: "Când auzi *sermana* zână/ S-a cufundat în lac pe veci.../ Și azi pe acolo dacă treci/ Pe cer, când strălucește luna/ Auzi din fundu-i argintiu/ Venind un vaet nesfârșit." (*Zâna lacului*, 1974: 390)

As the story unfolds, the reader takes part in it by being involved in every step starting from the scenery at the beginning to last scene going out of the story, in a similar manner to the fairy tale writing.

Even though the folk inspiration is strong the poet decides that the finale should not be a happy one like that in fairy tales. The fairy from the lake falls in love with the man



coming from the real world, but he decides to fight for justice and for his country in the war, a decision which will bring him death and eternal solitude to fairy of the lake.

Just in the same as the debut of the ballad the nature plays a major part, vibrating along with the feelings displayed by the characters, so by learning about the death of the prince, the fairy disappears forever into the lake, turning a sad atmosphere to the once magical forest as it was at the beginning of their love: "Și crângul verde-a-mbătrânit/ Și-n jurul lacului...pustiu!" (*Zâna lacului*, 1974: 390)

The period that comes after is lightly influenced regarding the folklore, sometimes it is only a mere suggestion of what it was before his formation in Paris.

All the themes of his lyrical creations become very well anchored in his everyday reality, so the poet prefers to create his poems as an answer to what happens around him, leaving aside the folklore that he used in his debut time.

The symbolism is going to grow more autochthonous along with the thematic used, leaving the folklore more as a motif than a central theme inspiration.

In the poems that follow he keeps the folklore mostly in the scenery: " Nani, nani.../ Dormi în paza Ursitoarelor,/ Nani, nani.../ Dormi în vraja-mpletiturilor de șoapte/ Ce pătrund printre perdele/ Și te-ndeamnă:/ Dormi, căci somnul a cuprins de mult grădina -/ Lacul,/ nuferii,/ castanii,/ stânjeneii/ și glicina -/ toate dorm./ Dorm toate-n paza albelor priviri de stele.../ Dormi și tu -/ Prin candelabre, iată, adoarme și lumina,/ Dormi,/ Și somnul tău să fie mai senin ca infinitul/ Oglindit în necuprinșii ochi albaștri de femeie,/ Visul tău să fie visul Insulelor Boromee,/ Visul tău să fie totul,/ Tot, precum e răsăritul,/ Începutul celor bune și sfârșitul celor rele./ Și anii/ Să te-mbrace-n infinitul fericirii./ Nani... nani... " (*Cântec de leagăn*, 1974: 129)

It can be observed the fact that the central idea is related to the folklore inspiration through the presence of the fate fairies that are known to weave the thread of destiny in the folkloric tradition. They represent a protective presence, a comfort for the recent life, just like a need for reassurance that nothing will harm him during the sleep because also the natural elements surrounding are taking care of this.

Many times some of the associations between the modern and the traditional seem a bit bizarre, while discovering the main theme of love as an adventure, the background décor is a folk architectural element: " Nu mai turbură-nserarea/ Ce-ascunde-ntre perdele/ Sugrumându-și respiraarea/ Pe tablouri,/ Pe icoane,/ Pe oglindă,/ Pe sofa/ Și pe roșia lalea,/ Încrustată,/ Ca o pată/ De amurg, pe gura ta.../ Între noi și restul lumii/ S-a lăsat ca o cortină/ Agonia unei dăre de lumină.../ Hai să punem capăt glumei/ Și, sub brațele troiței oltenești de la/ Corcova,/ Hai să ne iubim în cinstea/ Lui Giacomo Casanova!.../ S-a-nserat.../ Nu se mai vede pe covoare/ Nici o floare..." (*Pianissimo*, 1974: 208)

So putting together the love of Casanova in a rural Romanian scenery can be a bit odd, but in fact it represents the poet's desire of bringing universal themes into an accessible universe for the reader, in order to ease the understanding: "the themes are interiorized, but the songs remain, even so- intentionally- symbolist, which seem forced to illustrate Romanian essences."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Manu, Emil, 1981: 129

Sometimes the folk inspiration consists in creating the poem around a religious holiday, even though it is a pseudo-prayer referring to the art of creation and about the idea that poetry needs higher sources than the simple individual, it is addressed to the divine forces in a moment of great holiday: "Dezleagă-mă, Părinte, de ce-am jurat să fiu/ Și iartă-mă că-n viață n-am fost decât ce sunt –/ Un cântec prea devreme, sau poate prea târziu,/ Un ropot scurt de ploaie/ Și-un mic vârtej de vânt.../ Dezleagă-mă de vina de-a fi-ncercat să fac/ Granit din cărămidă/ Și bronz din băligar,/ Colan de pietre scumpe din sâmburi de dovleac/ Și-un Pegas cu-aripi duble din clasicul măgar.../ Și iartă-mă că-n viață n-am fost decât așa/ Cum te-am văzut pe tine –/ C-așa credeam că-i bine!.../ Dar azi, când văd că-i altfel de cum am vrut să fie,/ Stropește-mi ochii, Doamne, cu stropi de apă vie,/ Retează-mi mâna dreaptă... (*Rugă pentru Duminica Floriilor*, 1974: 229)

His preferences for romances is well-known, because Minulescu can be integrated among the creators of the Romanian modern romance. Tracing back at its first appearance the romance emergence as a folk song telling about the love and sorrows of the simple men.

When talking about the cultivated literature, in the beginning the inspiration was coming from the folk zone keeping close the popular romances as a source of inspiration in style and shape.

During time the folk influences fade and some of the cultivated romances do the way round, becoming so popular that the author is no longer a concern, but mainly the text, the creation itself.

Minulescu's romances are a resemblance of the folk romances, they are mostly inspired from the *urban folk* but his creations became very popular in the era, among the students and the young people living in different countries. Many of his poems were sung and were adopted as anthems for generations and as a similitude to the folk creations, the author was unimportant but the lyrics were.

As an example for this large acceptance of a text as urban folk inspiration, there are many of Minulescu's romances used as anthems for the students that were studying in Paris during those days: "Iubire, bibelou de porțelan,/ Obiect cu existența efemeră,/ Te regăsesc pe-aceiași etajeră/ Pe care te-am lăsat acum un an.../ Îți mulțumesc!.../ Dar cum?... Ce s-a-ntâmplat?.../ Ce suflet caritabil te-a păstrat/ În lipsa mea,/ În lipsa ei,/ În lipsa noastră?.../ Ce demon alb,/ Ce pasăre albastră/ Ți-a stat de veghe-atâta timp/ Și te-a-ngrijit/ De nu te-ai spart/ Și nu te-ai prăfuit!..." (*Romanță fără ecou*, 1974: 210)

The romanticism that is promoted by his romances is different from those of other symbolists, his way of expressing feelings is related to the musicality and the poetics that his poems possess.

Minulescu has an original manner of adapting the themes and the shape of symbolism, he accepts the sensibility but not in a romantic way changing it to the Romanian living realities, he creates his own autochthonous heroes according to his urban sources of inspiration among which he lives: "Erau doi amănți –/ Doi amănți ca două turturele.../ Erau doi amănți,/ Dar păcat, că nu prea aveau sfanți.../ El era student,/ Iară ea la fel ca el, studentă.../ El era student,/ Dar la cursuri totdeauna absent.../ Într-o zi cu soare,/ Zi de vară lungă cât o boală,/ Într-o zi cu soare/ Se treziră că n-au de mâncare./ Vai ce groaznic vis/ Pentru doi amănți care s-admiră.../ Vai ce groaznic vis/ Fiindcă ambii amănți s-au sinucis..." (*Romanță albastră*, 1974: 465)

Making a difference from other symbolists it is easy to observe that Minulescu's style, apart from Bacovia, has a preference for creating characters and giving the poems an air of theatricality: "A spirit which is obtained from suffering (authentic and simulated), as in Bacovia, a style; and Minulescu becomes the performer of great affection ceremonial, reaching even pure grandiloquence and jest."<sup>1</sup>

In the later poems he tends to stick to the folk inspiration, but only as a stylish technique of writing, putting in the first place his ideas and the originality of expression that he never stops seeking.

The theme of love is seen differently while speaking about matters of the heart in a folk inspired universe: " Inimă - ciură spartă -/ Cui mai duci apă la poartă,/ Dacă nimeni nu mai trece/ Să-ți soarbă din apa rece -/ Apă bună de descântec/ De la ochi până la pântec?.../ Inimă - ciură goală -/ Cine te spoi cu smolă/ Și te-ascunse în ogradă,/ Nimeni să nu te mai vadă,/ Ca să-ți mai cerșească apă/ Când de sete gura-i crapă?/ Inimă - ciutura mea -/ Dă-mi să beau, dar altceva,/ C-apa rece și-au golit-o/ Toți cei care și-au sorbit-o!.../ Dă-mi ce mi-ai păstrat doar mie -/ Dă-mi un strop de apă vie!..." (*Romanța inimii*, 1974: 317)

In some of his confessions during time, Minulescu admits the fact that he used the folk inspiration mostly in his debut poems. He tells the story of an *ivory tower*, his first isolation from the crowded world, the poet finds himself at the top of a tree admiring people going up and down the street.

The poet remembers that he was fascinated by the songs people were singing while taking walks on the street in front of his house, he was so impressed that he ended up learning the songs and day by day he was creating something similar: "Those were the first lyrics which without forgetting, I got to learn them by heart with the easiness of the gypsy fiddler, who steals the music by ear- lyrics which, later, would awaken in me the desire to learn others- until one day when I found myself writing that kind of lyrics."<sup>2</sup>

By admitting this, Minulescu does not leave aside his faith in the symbolism and the features that this literary movement implies. So his poems are deeply influenced by the symbolist idea of a stylish village which represents an escape world from the super urbanized town that is considered to be the place of creation for the symbolist poet.

For all the symbolist generation poets the natural rural background is a mere metaphor that leads to dreaming in a romantic manner, they are by expression the poets of the town and civilisation, yet not ignoring or refusing the folk inspiration as a matter of fine preferences: " Vara umblă toată ziua-n pielea goală/ Prin apartamente-nchise/ Și pe stradă -/ De la Parcul Carol la Șosea/ Și de la Șosea la Cotroceni,/ Însoțită de o droaie de țigani/ Și de olteni,/ Care vând cireși, rahat și limonadă/ Și-o poftesc să cumpere și ea.../ Vara însă-i fata de la țară -/ Bleagă și prostuță ca o oaie -/ Nu știe că-n capitală/ Este și-o "Baie centrală"/ Și când simte că-i zăduf din cale-afară/ Se răsfăță-n Dâmbovița cât îi place,/ Ca Suzana clasică, la baie..." (*Vara în capitală*, 1974: 169)

In the same way the symbolists find in the folk inspiration a kind of exoticism, a way of rather enhancing the symbolists themes in their own original ground and popular

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<sup>1</sup> Dănciulescu, Sina, 1986: 88

<sup>2</sup> Manu, Emil, 1981: 132

inspiration poems become a new manner of transcription of symbolist ideas on a handy ethnographic ground.

It is still a great difference between the folk inspiration poetry in the symbolist creation and the *semanatorist* poetry, while the second ones are looking for a mirror image of the rural world trying not to alter any of its details, the first ones are only searching for an escape, a different world that the poet can find when in need but at the same time he has the power and the ability to change the features of this lyrical background according to his desires and to the metaphorical intentions of his creation, making this only a poetical instrument, unlike the *semanatorists* who make it a poetical purpose.

This symbolist getaway into the folk territory represents a breakthrough for the acceptance of the new ideas coming with the modern poetry into a literature that was previously build on these popular inspiration *beams*, though readers were looking for new and modern they could not understand, nor accept the abandon of what they already knew, it can asserted that the folk inspiration was the most important step into making symbolism autochthonous.

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## **FORMS OF IRONY IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL DISCOURSE**

**Adina DUMITRU\***

**Abstract:** *The present paper approaches the issue of irony in Romanian contemporary social discourse, especially in political discourse, referring both to a pragmatics and a lexical perspective. The first part of the paper presents a brief review of the theory of polyphony related to forms of irony occurring in different types of social discourse. Then, several aspects of irony are presented in a pragmatic approach, considered as persuasion strategies used by the sender of the social discourse message. The conclusion that spoken language characteristics and tendencies are fully manifest both in social discourse, in general, and in irony strategies, in particular, is based on analyzing a set of representative examples.*

**Keywords:** *irony; language use; colloquial register; social discourse.*

1. The present paper proposes an approach of several forms of irony which are frequent especially in contemporary political discourse and in social discourse, in general, as reflected in language use.

The thesis which is the object of the political argumentation could be paraphrased and resumed to the speaker's superiority (as the speaker is the political actor) compared to 'the others', and one of the techniques used to persuade the hearer in this respect consists of discrediting the opponents. Ironizing them represents a means of realizing the propaganda procedure of surname.

One of the various definitions of irony reflects the stylistic approach: "a rhetorical figure by which most of the times, a positive appreciation or even a simulated praise is expressed in order to let the hearer understand that it is about bantering or mocking someone, or, sometimes, a negative appreciation of a person simulated instead of a positive one." (Dragomirescu, 1995: 113) This definition does not refer at all to those elements that could indicate the ironic characteristic of understanding a statement, that 'lecture guide' which allows the hearer to infer the speaker's intention of attributing to the statement exactly the opposite meaning compared to the expressed one.

According to Ducrot and his theory of polyphony, irony is a form of repeating a real or fictional discourse, because the speaker "presents his/her performing as an expression of another speaker's point of view, and he/she preserves a distance from it. The speaker is responsible only for speaking/performing a statement, but not for the opinion expressed by the statement, which belongs to the enuntiator." (Moeschler, Reboul, 1999: 309).

The distance between the speaker/the sender of the message and the so-called enuntiator is indicated by the hiatus between the situation and the content of the sentence, by special intonations, sometimes by specific aspects of stressing the words, such as

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*Frumos!; Am văzut lucruri și mai grozave!; Totul este bine și frumos, ca într-un adevărat basm citit de dl. Ministru.* (CD, 07.10.2008)

The reference to the situation of communication (a speaker who belongs to the opposition party, so he places himself among the critics of government actions), as well as the reference to the general social and economic background shared by the sender and the receiver of the message can reveal the ironic intention of the sentence, as it allows the hearer/receiver of the message to compare the description of real facts given by the speaker/the enunciator with his/her own perception of facts. *Toți politicienii sunt curați, puri și nevinovați. "Statul paralel" îi murdărește, îi corupe și le răpește inocența.* (CD, 06.02.2018)

The ironic effect aimed by the speaker can be reached only if the shared knowledge is activated by the hearer and the irony extends from the person/situation that represents the source of the quoted expression to another person/a present situation, by means of analogy: *Ei, vedeți cum se fură resursele energetice ale României, "măi dragă"?! (CD, 21.02.2018)*

2. Several techniques, frequently used in social discourse in order for the speaker to persuade the hearer that his/her opponent(s) are ridiculous or even worse, prove the speaker's preference for colloquial language terms, expressions, tendencies in word formation. This is not unusual, taking into account that political and social discourse aim to reach at and persuade an audience that is highly heterogeneous, so that the colloquial register could be at hand for the whole targeted group.

2.1. When using diminutives with ironic effects, the social/political discourse resembles to the colloquial conversation: *Declarațiile prin care noul însurățel* (Education ministry) *a încercat și a și reușit să se dea în spectacol.* (CD, 07.10.2008); *Guvernul împarte pungațe cu făină, că doar, vorba aceea, nu împarte din propriul buzunar.* (CD, 07.10.2008).

2.2. The colloquial language represents also the source for elements brought in another technique of expressing irony at the level of social discourse, so that the formal register is abandoned, because the discourse is invaded by expressions specific to informal language or even to slang. These expressions, sometimes idiomatic phrases or parts of idiomatic phrases, function in an ironic way as they create an ironic distance between an alleged previous speaker (who could be the person subjected to irony) would have expressed an important issue of public interest in such a superficial form, using slang or just colloquial terms: *Această sumă nu are cum să pice din cer, cadou de la Mama Omida.* (CD, 07.10.2008); *Se vrea prim-ministru într-o țară de doi lei.* (CD, 07.10.2008); *Partidele afirmă sus și tare că...* (CD, 07.10.2008).

When using certain terms in inverted comas, "the enunciator indicates for his/her reader that his/her discourse does not coincide with himself/herself, but he/she does not indicate the reason. In order to find it, to decode the quotation marks, the reader has to take into account the context and, especially, the discourse genre" (Maingueneau, 2007: 198): *«Daddy la Teleorman» - democrație sau dictatură?* (CD, 06.02.2018); *Liderii PNL au încercat să-l convingă pe T. că nu are sens să participe la o „șuetă” cu președintele B.* (<https://evz.ro/tariceanu-nu-a-negociat-cu-notarul-basescu-2872.html>); *Ministrul „2 în 1”* (<https://evz.ro/ministrul-2-in-1-3074.html>)

2.3. Orally, one word or a group in a syntactic structure is uttered with a specific intonation to draw hearer's attention to using a term with a meaning different from the usual meaning(s) of that term. In writing, this term and its deviated meaning are marked by inverted comas, therefore the receiver of the message receives also a warning regarding the way he/she should understand the inferred meaning of the whole sentence. This meaning deviation often consists of turning the term into its antonym. *Într-o economie **bolnavă**, noi, românii, ne puteam "**mândri**" pe atunci cu un singur lucru **vajnic și sănătos** (dar sănătos între ghilimele): o inflație strașnică. (CD, 13.10.2008); Da, este vorba despre acei pensionari "**speciali**", obosiți de muncă la vârste "**înaintate**" de 40 de ani (CD, 06.02.2018)*

Sometimes, the pejorative meaning of the marked term or expression is widely spread in oral and colloquial language use, so there is no need for the hearer to make any effort in order to infer the contextual meaning. Again, this technique which leads to irony proves that, with the political and social discourse, the speaker aiming to persuade the audience that his/her opponent(s) represents the Evil uses those language structures and terms which facilitate the audience understanding very quickly, yet having the impression that their conclusion was not induced to them, but they have reasoned: *Se anunță a doua revoluție a «mămăligii» (CD, 21.02.2018); Este nevoie mereu de "vaccinuri cu ordonanțe de urgență"(CD, 21.02.2018); în luna februarie, după ce primii "fluturași" de salariu și-au luat zborul către cuiburile fiecărui angajat român (CD, 21.02.2018).*

When the word(s) marked by inverted coma are not used with a deviated meaning, but they simply represent forms which are incriminated in normative grammar, then their ironic use in social discourse can be easily recognized by the hearer if he/she infers the relation to a person (i.e. an opponent) who previously used this incorrect form. *Nu i-ar fi criticat nimeni, dacă, după modelul lui Ponta, finalizau proiecte demarate de alții, la care ei doar tăiau "pamblica"!(CD, 06.02.2018)*

2.4. In some sentences, these two forms of irony combine and some expressions taken from colloquial register are marked by a specific intonation (orally)/inverted coma (in writing), so that the receiver of the message becomes an ally of the speaker because of the distance both of them place related to the alleged previous speaker who seriously disregarded the public interest issues, as well as because both of them share the deviated meaning of those marked terms: *Le-ați arătat "cine este jupânul"!(CD, 05.03.2018)*

2.5. The intention to astound, to draw the attention of a numerous audience can be detected in lexical (even phrasal) creativity, frequently manifested in political/social contemporary discourse, but it often combines with irony, in its various forms. The use of such a combination can be explained by the increased force of a new and shocking word which represents also a strategy for making the opponent appear ridiculous. New and, most of the times, short-lived lexical creations appear in social contemporary discourse, sometimes shocking the audience by their novelty or by their bizarre form: *Educați România, nu o **psdizați!** (CD, 05.03.2018)*

With word formation, it is known that Romanian prefers derivation and this tendency can be detected in contemporary social discourse. A category of numerous derived words is characterized by the specific base, which is a proper noun, often a person's name, but also names used for places, reflecting a need for using new verbs, adjectives or nouns, generalized in oral language. It is probable that such lexical creations disappear as quickly

as they appeared, since the base for their derivation represents a name which will mean nothing to Romanian speakers in several years. When they have no referent, these lexical creations will become useless and their short living is due to the very fact that the unique person, who the proper noun, basis for derivation, refers to, does not cross the space and time limits of the social and historical context in which the derived word is formed: *Mai bine să nu mungești decât să taci* (CD, 30.09.2008); *Generozitatea portocaliilor în curs de becalizare* (CD, 24.06.2008); *Vanghelizare și reactivarea dosarelor grele în PSD* (CD, 22.04.2008).

Before the derivation process, a *sui generis* antonomasia occurs, because the proper noun is recategorized as a common noun by means of associating a concept to the respective sequence of phonemes. The toponyms and anthroponyms do not relate a certain form with a referent directly any longer, but they do it by using a concept that represents a positive or negative moral feature individualizing that person or a specific characteristic of that place. This is a frequent technique used in journalistic language, as “the contemporary journalistic register uses antonomasia and abuses of using it, which is produced in the most spontaneous way, starting from a proper noun with an evanescent celebrity (but indeed very powerful at a certain moment). The essence of this figure does not manifest too many innovations: usually, it is about a name of a person who became a symbol for a positive or negative moral feature.” (Zafiu, 2001: 60): *I-au votat pe băieții buni, care nu sunt nici 322, nici zambaccieni ori alți huliți din clasa politică.* (CD, 24.06.2008).

While in the journalistic discourse the majority of examples reflecting proper nouns recategorizing illustrate a semantic depreciation, resulting pejorative connotations, in the context below the newly formed word, *oprescu*, is considered to be associated with a range of positive features (ambition, wit, patience) that make the common people’s life possible in a society “in transition”: *În stradă există o sumedenie de Oprescu. Sunt opreștii anonimi, care luptă singuri cu viața, cu realitatea, cu sărăcia, cu administrația, cu traficul, cu greutățile și cu depărtările timpului de astăzi.* (CD, 03.06.2008). Lack of pejorative connotations can be explained by the overall intention of the political actor, which consists in gaining his audience’s willingness and attention, directly or indirectly.

More often than the generalizing antonomasia, there occurs a subcategorization in morphological terms and a semantic change for anthroponyms and, sometimes, for toponyms, so they become a derivative base. A preference for certain anthroponyms originates in an exaggerated attention paid to certain people who act and manifest somehow against the public interests, at a certain moment: *Rapidiști cu steliști, băsesciști cu pontiști și cu antonesciști. Lumea noastră arată ca un stadion fără arbitri.* (<https://m.hotnews.ro/stire/8342358>); *De la băsescizare la rinocerizare* (<https://ziarulfaclia.ro/de-la-basescizare-la-rinocerizare/>). If these persons are members of a political party or the name of a political party can be associated with a certain moral feature, then the antonomasia combines with personification, then the derived word formed on this basis captures a set of contextual ironic meanings: *Continuă penelizarea instituțiilor publice din Vrancea* (<https://monitoruldevrancea.ro/2020/01/07/penelizarea-institutiilor-continua-liberalii-au-schimb-secful-garzii-forestiere-focsani/>); *Începe marea „PeNeLizare”!* ([https://debanat.ro/2019/11/incepe-marea-penelizare-alin-popoviciu-se-vede-secretar-de-stat-la-dezvoltare-si-administratie\\_268001.html](https://debanat.ro/2019/11/incepe-marea-penelizare-alin-popoviciu-se-vede-secretar-de-stat-la-dezvoltare-si-administratie_268001.html)); *Depesedizarea = penelizare*



(<https://www.monitorulbt.ro/local/2019/12/03/depesedizarea-penelizare-inca-un-director-pesedist-schimbata-cu-un-liberal/>); *Despre cum se face depesedizarea prin penelizare* (<https://www.libertatea.ro/opinii/e-foame-de-bani-baieti-pah-arata-cu-degetul-depesedizarea-prin-penelizare-2799461>).

When the derivative base is a toponym, then its referent must have become famous before due to the personalities who come from or act in that region/area: *Zicerile d-lui T.B. i-au adus o anumită notorietate, s-o numim ferentariană*. (CD, 26.10.2004)

“In journalistic register, the names of some political personalities of the moment have a significant frequency, because they function as genuine landmarks of contemporary social background” (Zafiu, 2001: 67).

Lexical creativity as a strategy used to convert speaker’s ironic intention could manifest not only by deriving from proper nouns, but also by deriving from terms belonging to slang or spoken Romanian: *Asistăm azi la o golăneală fiscală generalizată* (CD, 21.02.2018); *Geambașerii vocale sau războinice* (CD, 26.10.2004); *a unit Dreapta prin afirmarea de valori și principii, prin impunerea unui comportament moral, și nu prin reevaluări spectaculoase și anunțuri-bombă de racolări ale unor parlamentari sau primari traseiști... membri unui partid cu cel mai mare număr de penali sau de pușcăriabili pe cap de conducere națională*. (<https://evz.ro/vlad-moisesescu-pntcd-vrea-unificarea-dreptei-dupa-modelul-coposu-impunerea-unui-comporta-1080876.html>)

3. The irony relies on the knowledge shared by the interlocutors, so that the hearer should be able to grasp the deviation in the sentence and to decode the speaker’s intention. “The efficiency of the ironic intervention differs according to the type of audience which the speaker faces with. This aspect should be taken into account with the political discourse, as their audience changes very quickly. The most powerful efficiency manifests in front of a homogeneous audience” (Sălăvăstru, 1999: 343)

The homogeneity of the audience can offer confidence regarding the type and amount of shared knowledge, which represents the basis of the semantic inference implied by the speaker / sender of the ironic message. As with the political discourse, in general, and with the campaign speeches, in particular, the audience lacks homogeneity, to ironize the opponent seems less efficient to the speaker. Consequently, the speaker gives up irony in favor of **invective**, which any receiver of the message can understand as such, without making any effort of inference. However, ensuring an understanding congruent with the meaning intended by the speaker may lead to a diminished argumentative force of the sentence, because the hearer might not be convinced that the meaning he grasped is real/true, although this meaning attributed to the sentence is shared both by the speaker and the hearer: *Sforarii politici ai partidelor din opoziție* (CD, 07.10.2008); *Am fost foarte surprins când gângavul politician cu mustăcioară de majur și cărare pe mijlocul unui cap îngust, care răspunde neîntrebat la imposibilul nume de Costică Canacheu, m-a numit frate*. (CD, 07.10.2008); *T.B. despre A.N.: superficial, obraznic, geambaș, înlocuitor, bomboană, jenant, trivial, agresiv* (CD, 26.10.2004); *Astăzi avem la Palatul Victoria un găgă prins la copiat în fața Uniunii Europene, un epigon, cel mult, al unui alt prim-ministru al zilelor noastre* (CD, 09.09.2014)..

Even when the aggressive, insulting expressions are not used, irony can turn into sarcasm, because the ironic performance of an utterance involve the superiority of the

person who, while making the hearer his/her associate, considers himself/herself a model for a correct behaviour, a real landmark for the opponents who prove to be unable to satisfy the audience expectations: *Între o Românie puternică și o Rusie liniștită, Occidentul va alege, în vecii vecilor, a doua variantă. Iată de ce îi recomand președintelui B. un cenzor în materie de politică externă. Sau metode naturiste de calmare în contextele diplomatice, atunci când unele cuvinte se cer înghițite. Altfel, T.B. riscă să intre în istoria României, alături de Antonescu sau Carol al II-lea, ca un lamentabil gestionar al politicii externe.* (CD, 14.11.2006).

4. The systematic study of the forms of irony occurring in Romanian contemporary social discourse could indicate that the two tendencies identified in the present paper are defining coordinates. First, the use of colloquial terms and expressions on the specific purpose of making the opponents seem ridiculous, determined by the heterogeneity of the audience to be persuaded. Secondly, the lexical and phrasal creativity manifest in spoken Romanian, illustrated especially by derivation, serves not only to encode irony, but also to get closer to the majority of the members of audience, “speaking their own language”.

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## ***THE SYNTACTIC CODE AND THE STRUCTURES OF THE POETIC IMAGINARY***

**Ștefan GĂITĂNARU\***

**Abstract:** *In the configuration of language codes (phonological, semantic and syntactic), the latter exceeds the figurative level of the literary text, allowing the functioning of the pragmatic and narrative codes under the law of code compensation. In this way it is possible to approach with the theoretical and applicative system of textual linguistics the artistic particularities of the literary work.*

**Keywords:** *topic; topicalization; interference; compatibility; overcoding*

1. The rules that govern the combinations are fundamental in the functioning of the communication, since they involve all types of units: phonological, morphological, lexical, syntagmatic, the latter being implied at the propositional, phrasal and textual (transphrasal) level.

The syntactic code refers to those units generated by the sign function, because it was in their terms that the mechanism of producing the statements was defined. Some linguists have even defined the poetic function by the dynamism of this code: "La fonction poétique projette le principe d'équivalence de l'axe de la sélection sur l'axe de la combinaison" (Jakobson, 1963, p. 220).

It should be noted, however, that this mechanism characterizes the language as a whole, regardless of the norms of the historical eras or of the framing in styles.

The "poetic" attribute is determined by the nature of the selection from the available lexical mass, by the insistence of the combinations and by the way in which the rules are applied, overridden or even infringed; also, according to the ratio itself established between these operations.

The syntactic level of the combinations is determined by the principle of successivity or linearity that Saussure fundamentally holds it responsible for: "The whole mechanism of language depends on it" (Saussure, 1998, p. 89). It has been shown that it has not been stated for a long time because it seems "that it was considered too simple" (Ibidem). Today it can rather be said that it was avoided because of its complexity. The combinatorial sequences involve several levels of constitution, depending on the nature of the units.

These, themselves, were distributed in the Chomskyan conception on three levels: "This system of rules can be analysed in three main components of a generative grammar: the syntactic, phonological and semantic components" (Chomsky, 1964, p. 21). As it can be deduced, each level has a systematic character and the specific rules according to which it works are real codes. We will therefore have: the phonological, semantic and syntactic code.

The syntactic code is engaged in the final, linear realization of the text, but this final form is the result of the functioning of the rules at each level of the language.

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Because at the syntactic level many of the categories belong to the universalities of the language, certain style facts seem rather lexicalized, so they can fit into what G. Genette called the "simple style", unadorned, according to which "The absolute sobriety of the expression is the mark of an extreme elevation of thought: The sublime feelings are always rendered by the simplest expression "(Genette, 1978, p. 88).

The principle of the relative autonomy of syntax with respect to semantics (the abnormality of the meaning has nothing to do with its grammatical correctness: *piroșii carulează elastic* - cf. Vasiliu, 1970, p. 19) belongs to the language games, made with the absolutization of the axis of combination (the abandonment of the selection).

The principle of linearity remains simple if we conceive it as a succession of first order terms (lexical units). Only that, the succession implies the activation of different units: a succession of syntagms (syntactic groups) in the constitution of a sentence, a succession of sentences in the structure of the statements- complex sentences, within the microtextual unit (the paragraph); the succession of paragraphs within the overall text.

The pragmatic level (the relationship between the signs and their users and, also between the signs and the extralinguistic context to which they refer), that Chomsky had not involved, as Morris did, in the configuration of language acts, is also, to a large extent, implied.

The scholars of Liegè (The  $\mu$  group) limit the constitution to the level of the syntagms: "the complex sentence is defined by the minimal presence of some constituents: the syntagms" (Dubois, 1974, p. 42). The synteme is not considered to be the syntactic word, defined by all the relationships it can establish with the other words from the context in which it appears. One only resorts to its semantic definition, as "an assembly of nuclear semes, without internal order and not admitting repetition" (Ibidem.). But, at the current level of understanding it can be considered that the nuclear semes assembly constitutes the argumentative structure of the lexeme, its syntactic matrix, which is in consonance with the diversity of metataxes.

2. The metataxes are difficult to be included among the style facts defined by difference, because it is difficult to identify the syntactic zero degree, that is, those statements that do not fall within the stylistic incidence. Its features "are therefore the distinctive formal features, such as the combination, the position or the mark" (Dubois, 1974, p. 94). The construction of a simple pattern, which could function as a field of reference, encounters several difficulties, among which "A major obstacle derives from the notion of norm in syntax" (Ibidem, p. 95), the speaker's option to express an informational content having a high degree of freedom, not susceptible to deviation. This is related both to the author's competence to form inedited statements, but also to the receiver's performance to decode them each time. The zero degree does not imply the minimum structured statement, from the main syntagm consisting of the subject and the predicate, but from the nominal-subject group and the verbal-predicate group. There are also reported: the common topic, the cohesion by agreement and the compatibility rule, the latter reflecting the informational outline.

3. The rules of the syntactic code are: the customary character of the topic (types of inversion, the metathesis, the tmesis ...); the rule of cohesion by agreement (the anacoluthon, the elatism and the syllepsis), the rule of connection (the asyndeton, the polysyndeton ...),

the rule of determination (the predicative adjunct, the incidence, the apposition, the asyntactic units); the rule of economy (the ellipse, the brachylogy); the rule of extension (the enumeration, the amplification, the repetition types), the affect rule (the addressing figures: the interrogation, the invocation, the exclamation ...).

Although the syntactic code seems to be less exposed to diversion and deviation theory, the three attitudes towards it in the communication process should be mentioned, as in the case of the codes from the other levels: respect, overbid (for example, the figures of lexical repetition) and deviation (types of anacoluthon). Similarly, in Riffaterre, the three aspects of obliquity: displacement, distortion and creation (Riffaterre, 1978, p. 11).

The same law of code compensation works for the cohesion of communication, a law which requires that at least one code to comply with the usual communication, in case the others deviate.

3.1. The topic (which by definition refers to the order of the constituents in a language) has often been considered decisive in the stylistic syntax: "From a rhetorical point of view and from a grammatical point of view the word order represents the capital aspect of syntax" (Dubois, 1974, p. 98). Two ascertaining statements in which the inversion operates (*Mama a venit; A venit mama*) have zero stylistic value. The displacement of the object in statements such as SVO (*Mama a citit ziarul*) or VSO (*A citit mama ziarul*) does not imply a change in their grammar or any obvious stylistic shift.

3.1.1. The types of inversion have not always worked, in their entirety, and do not work even today under the figurative spectrum. This fact was sometimes emphasized: "The inversion cannot be considered in itself as a figure, but it should rather be regarded as a technique" (Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 150). It is, however, a connotative procedure.

3.1.1. The most frequent syntactic inversion relates to the topicalization of the subject, to the placement of a nominal in thematic position, consequently occupying a priority place in the statement.

In Romanian language, the actants included in the basic topical formula (SVO) are the most frequently topicalized.

The subject is usually topicalized in the case of complex verbal predicates, in which the operator is an impersonal verb or a predicative adverb: *Mare cinste trebuie să aibă* (CO, p. 435); *Copiii noștri, ce bine că nu sunt aici; Asta nu mi se poate reproșa; Maria trebuie să fi plecat* (cf. GALR, II, 2008, p. 365, 366, 707).

The direct object in focal position usually requires an attributive determination and imposes that the clitic forms of the pronouns which have the function of a direct object to be placed in front of the verb: *Eu numai limba ta o știu vorbi* (AB, p. 92); *Parisul, l-am și lăsat din amintirile mele; Iubirea mea n-o vei mai pierde ca atunci* (cf. și GALR, II, 2008, p. 401).

In the old language, the inversion of the subject was quite frequent: *Așea au învățat Adam pre feciorii săi* (VO, p. 210) *Dă Domnul răspuns ucenicilor săi* (VO, p. 225); *se sculă însuși Mahamed cu oștiri mari* (MCU, p. 222); *Și plângea pretutindinea toți* (MCU, p. 175).

In the Latin type topic, on the contrary, the predicate usually appears at the end: *Deci omul, de pre așe tare lătrăturile dulăului precum o jiganie rea la miei să fie vinit pricepu* (CO, p. 458); *Că precum în teaca strămbă sabiia dreaptă nici în teaca dreaptă sabiia strămbă a intra nu poate* (cf. SLR, 2007, p. 44).

The inversion of the epithet is quite frequent in the old texts: *cinstit și credincios boiarul domniei mele* (Niculescu, 1999, p. 1930), *cu multe lacrimi și cu grele suspini și nenumărate* (INB, p. 154); *bună și credincioasă mărturie* (INB, p. 165); *Preacurată și pururea fecioară, Maria* (INB, p. 227); *o, lacome și nesățiosul meu suflet* (INB, p. 294).

Moreover, it was reported the non-Romanian character of some inversions determined by the syntax of the source-texts after which the translations were made, and the influence on the non-translated texts: "The translated texts (religious and laic and even the non-translated texts) contain topical non-Romanic structures. The inversion in prenominal positions of the epithetic (qualifying) adjectives or of the qualification adjectives is frequent. It seems that such an inversion was also part of the stylistic ornaments of the time" (Niculescu, 1999, p. 193):

This fact was, moreover, ascertained: "From the field of the topic, the artificial inversions and displacements of some flexional compound forms or of some groups of words closely related to each other have been revealed as non-Romanian particularities" (Avram, 2007, p. 94): *Duse-se și Constantin de pre lume* (MCU, p. 163); *Așijderea a acestora schimbă împărățiile* (CO, p.190); *Unii de boieri ardea-i cu foc* (MCU, p. 158) *Și plângea pretutindinea toți* (MCU, p. 175); *Și toți întreba cineș de păcatele sale* (VO, p. 332). *Cela ce va cădea sfârâma-l-va* (VO, p. 205).

But the inversion of the epithet is frequent in the new poetic texts: *Dulcele, ce începu, / cântecul, l-auzi și tu?*; *Sub ruginii și roșii, frunzele de viță; răi și mari / Am potrivit potcoave la zeci de armăsari* (cf. Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 148).

The "disordered" dislocations are rather related to the influence of Latin prosody. The syntactical units, with their exact casual marking, could be moved, according to the number of syllables and accent, so that to enter in the structure of the metric feet: *să nu te, singur pre sine, îmblăznești* (CO, p. 279); *de-l vei mai denainte de la dânsul trimis avea* (CO, p. 281); *de se vor cumva putea așeza* (CO, 439); *foarte cu bună socoteală sama a lua să cade* (CO, p. 532).

The prosodic inversion is also found in the authors who did the first exercises of versification in Romanian language. Thus, in Dosoftei there appear topical harmonies of the type: *Unde ți-ai întinsu-ți cortul cel de slavă; Că i-ai scosu-i singur de la greutate; Că noaptea m-ar desfăta-mă; Că i-ai datu-i cu tărie; Ce iarăși mi-ai datu-mi viață; Nuorii ți-au pusu-ți scară; Pământul l-au datu-l la tot omul* (cf. Găitănar, 2014, p. 144).

In the contemporary Romanian language, there were preserved in the norm (in the compulsory norm): the inversion after imperative (*trimite-l!*), the gerund (*văzându-ne*), as well as the feminine clitic in the perfect compound (*au vândut-o*). This means that the procedure has resulted in such structures from the figurative sphere. But in the old language, the last inversion was frequently infringed: *măria ceia ce o au luat; care o am ales; ți-o-am dăruit ție* (INB, p. 10, 44, 95).

3.1.2. The metathesis as a figure involved in the lexical syntax leads to comical effects by relocating the words in statements with predictable topic, at the level of the language games: *De la beat cârciumă viu, / Merg de gard, pe drum mă țiiu, / Nici un latră nu mă câine* (cf. Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 164).

3.1.3. The tmesis was considered the most representative figure of the relocation: "The most characteristic insertion figure seems to be the tmesis ... all the situations in which

two morphemes or syntagms that the grammatical use closely connects are separated by the intercalation of other elements (Dubois, 1974, p. 120): *Când nu-și aduc oamenii de semenii lor aminte; ia să dăm mai bine cărțile pe față* (Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 196). *Stau toată ziua, de dimineața până seara, de vorbă; Să lăsăm pre ambițiosul nostru ciocoi în pace; Când vede că și-a bătut găina joc de dansa, o prinde* (cf. Dimitrescu, 1958, p. 37); *cum au stătut de bine atuncea împotriva turcilor; că i-au luat tată-său, diiavolul, sufletul; nici el războiu asupra cuivași n-au rădicat* (cf. Munteanu, 2013, p. 36, 37, 39).

3.2. The anacoluthon is a case of syntactic discontinuity, which usually occurs in larger syntactic constructions, when the syntactic characteristics of a regent or of a preceding determinant are not found in the continuation of the statement structure. This leads to "the modification of the syntactic-semantic project within the enunciation" (Merlan, 1998, p. 56); "rupture dans la construction d'une phrase" (Ibidem): *Moșneagul, când a văzut-o, i s-au umplut ochii de lacrimi; Credinciosul împăratului, auzind aceste... l-a cuprins spaima; Dar tu, Ilie, al lui Cocoșilă, ce-ți dădu nea Gheorghe când te însurași?* (cf. GALR, II, 2008, p. 797, 798, 799); *acum, băiatu ăla i-a plăcut pă fată; atuncea ei când dă bani li să pare că dă destui* (cf. Merlan, 1998, p. 73, 89); *Omul care nu-i place munca, nu știe ce-i bucuria* (cf. Guțu Romalo, 2001, p. 53).

3.2.2. The elatism implies the involvement in agreement of some units of the language that are, in the suggested context, as invariable adverbs or as morphemes: *Ochii aceia... au apărut nespuse de frumoși străinului* (cf. Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 135); *Locuitorii capitalei sunt cei mai bine plătiți români* (Vlăduț, 2015, p. 176); *Una din problemele largi dezbatute; Soluții îndelungi căutate; Copiii noi-născuți; Dinți strălucitori de albi; Cărți noi apărute; Convingerile adânci înrădăcinate ale oamenilor; Ochi excesivi de limpezi; Au venit destui de mulți* (cf. Guțu Romalo, 2001, p. 46, 48, 49).

3.2.3. The syllepsis means replacing the grammatical agreement with a logical one: *nu pot avea lungă durată niciuna din marile emoții sau pasiuni omenești* (Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 185); *O samă se cățaraseră pe zidul de împrejmuire al mănăstirii* (Breban, 1973, p. 244); *O serie de teatre își vor întâmpina spectatorii; Mari grupuri de turiști se învârtesc dezamăgite* (cf. Guțu Romalo, 2001, p. 37).

3.3.1. The asyndeton is subjected to the principle of language economy, replacing the junction with the juxtaposition. At the same time, the omission of conjunctions gives the message, besides rapidity, also a more pronounced affective gradation: *întreabă și scriu ale lumii locurile, orașele, apele, munții, neamurile, obiceiurile lor, leagile* (ITR, p. 160).

3.3.2. The polysyndeton consists in the insistence on the syntactic ratio, by repeating, in enumerations, each time, the conjunction. The affective cumulation thus acquires a stronger logical outline. In documents, the polysyndeton seems to have had the function of marking the clear individuality of the involved persons or objects: *Mărturie punem: pan Dumitru dvornic i pan Dan vel-logofet i pan Pană vistir i Ștefan comis i Cîrstea armaș (...) i Voico vistir i Pepele logofet i Simeon pitar i Andreico comis i Vladul logofet i Trifa sulger* (DÎ: 212).

In addition to the Slavic conjunction *i*, the Romanian conjunction is required, and eventually generalized: *Să se știe ce-am cheltuit pre iazul de la moară (...): aspri gata 3890 și 10 vaci grase și 10 oi și 12 rîmători grași și 4 bivoli și 200 de oboroace de grâu și alte bucate multe mîncătoare* (DÎ, 98-99); *și amu pus și mărtorie: popa de Budești și Pădure și*

*Toaderu și Stan Zorilă și Ivan și Paraschiva și Dragomirescu, 1975, omir (DÎ, 107); miluia și săracii și mișăii și văduvele și le da și haine și bucate și arginturi; Că și împărat și domn și patriarh și mitropolit și egumen și duhovnic și județ, și bogat și sărac (INB, p. 80, 148); În adâncu-i se pătrunde / Și de lună și de soare, / Și de păsări călătoare; / Și de lună, si de stele, / Și de chipul dragei mele (cf. Petraș, 1996, p. 181).*

Other conjunctions are also present: *Nu-l întrebă nici de rugăciune, nici de postu, nici de oprire, nici de smerenie, nici de răbdare, nici de curăție, nici de milostenie (INB, p. 152); nici bucăți de carne, nici zemuri bune, nici fripturi, nici abur grozav, nici pizvă sau gălcevi, nici mestecături (INB, p. 102).*

The polysyndeton is also encountered at the frastic level: *și cum s-au purtat și cum au descălecat și cine întâi capete și vîoievozi le-au fost acelor limbi și de unde au izvorât aceale neamuri, și dupre care au venit și cine cât au biruit (ITR; p. 198).*

#### 3.4. The figures of double dependence and indetermination

3.4.1. The predicative adjunct is a syntactic construction that implies a double-dependent epithet, of the verb and of the noun in the structure: *Îl văd voios și searbăd, aproape o fecioară (ME, p. 91); Acum cred că mă cunoști și de urât și de frumos, și de bătrân și de tânăr și de slab, și de puternic (IC, p. 85); Se pomeniră toți cu el că a ajuns flăcău (PD, p. 7)*

3.4.2. The incidence can be defined from a pragmatic point of view as a deictic process, by the intersection of two communication plans: the plan of the discourse with the extralinguistic plan, either with reference to the speaker or to the communication situation. In fact, a new function of language, the receptive one, is manifested through it (Găitănanu, 2012, p. 103). The transmitter of the speech is concerned with the fact that it is well understood from the point of view of the subject and of the reference.

In language there are several grammatical structures that are isolated by comma, by intonation, by affectivity, by grammatical isolation. These have often been inventoried and explained (cf. Ungureanu, 2002, pp. 36-42).

The references to the speaker, regardless of the person, are frequent: *Era, dacă nu greșesc, în vara trecută...* (cf. Ionescu, 2006, p. 248); *tată, vorbi cu blândețe Simion, eu am să alcătuiesc cele de cuviință ; Nevastă-mea, că uitasem să vă spui, ..., nevastă-mea aprinsese o sumă de lumânări* (cf. Ungureanu, 2002, p. 26, 23).

There are also to be met, in equal measure, the explanations of the extra-linguistic context: *Când și când, Dana, căci așa o chema pe fată, privea discret în dreapta și în stânga (Ungureanu, 2002, p. 42); Odată, mai în primăvară, era o zi să te înalți în văzduh, ...un călăreț în haine strâmte își învârtea calul negru ca tăciunele (Ibidem, p. 28)*

3.4.3. The apposition implies a repetition of the syntactic position, thus leading to a semantic cumulation, either of explanation (*Georgeta, curtezană și generalul, stricat bătrân, îl ocroteau pe el - CE, 266*), or of analyzing a word with a collective meaning: *Cine să fie? dascălimea: Ionescu, Popescu, Popa Pripici (CT, p. 71).*

3.5. The asyntactic units are usually found in Romanian language in personal and reflexive pronouns. When they are not morphemes of some grammatical categories (of the passive-reflexive, of the impersonal, of the reciprocal), they employ connotative meanings.

Thus, there is the so-called ethical nominative, when the pronouns of the second person singular mark the affective participation of the speaker in the semantic content of the



statement: *nici tu sat, nici tu târg, nici tu nimica* (cf. Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 166); *nici tu casă, nici tu masă; nici tu bogat, nici tu frumos* (cf. GALR, I, 2008, p. 208).

In the dative case, it is implied a certain usage of attribution: *dă-i cu bere, dă-i cu vin; dă-i înainte; na-ți-o frântă; îi dă cu gura; ce să-i faci?* (cf. și GALR, I, 2008, p. 207).

In the accusative case, there intervenes the same meaning, with an additional generic nuance: *nu le are cu matematica; le zice bine; le vede când e vorba de bani; A pus-o de mămăligă; A băgat-o pe mânecă; A șters-o; A luat-o razna* (cf. Ibidem).

The strongest connotation, of co-participation, occurs in the ethical dative: *Dirept aceia să mi-ți deșchiză Domnul Dumnezeu cămara ceriului și să mi-ți fie ușile deșchise* (INB, p. 299); *Și o dată mi-ți-l înșfăcă cu dinții de cap* (cf. Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 132); *mi-ți-l vâdă pe zmeu în noroi* (cf. GALR, I, 2008, p. 207).

3.6. The figures of economy have a general determination in language, namely the principle of the language economy, which, in order to agree on the speed of thinking with the speech, which is several times slower, appeals to different processes of suppression and substitution.

3.6.1. The ellipse is a figure of style because it allows the listener to formally, but especially semantically, reconstruct the statement. The mechanism is similar to that of connotations and to that of initiating suggestions for recomposing a message according to the structures of the receiver's expectations, starting from a given text: *Nu se mănâncă tot ce zboară, și se-ntâmplă de departe trandafir și de-apropae borș cu știr* (Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 137) *Ea a răbdat - nicio vorbă, nicio lacrimă* (Ibidem, p. 136); *Iarna pe ghiață și la săniuş; Oamenii cu oamenii, boierii cu boierii* (GALR, II, 2008, p. 807, 809)

3.6.2. The brachylogy, described by analogy with the ellipse, implies the understanding of a term that can be updated every time in the text: *Am avut nuntași, /Brazi și păltinași, / Păsărele miu/ Și stele făclii; Cum ogorul necultivat nu poate fi roditor, tot așa și mintea fără învățătură* (Dragomirescu, 1975, 119); *Găsește, mănâncă; nu, rabdă!* (Petraș, 1996, p. 138); *Atunci iepurele sare, dracul după el; Astăzi vine supărat, mâine bătut și tot așa în fiecare zi* (GALR, II, 2008, p. 808).

3.7. The figures of extension involve an extension of the statement either by identifying the parts of a whole or by satisfying several syntactic valences of some regents, at the propositional and complex sentence level.

3.7.1. The enumeration consists of the repetition of a whole through its parts or of a general notion through its particular aspects. The whole can be announced: *pre tată-său și pre mumă-sa, frații și surorile, feciorii și fetele și alte rubedenii* (p. 149-150); *munții mari, Atlasul, Caucazul Taurul și Balcanii seculari* (Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 73).

Other times, it can only be presumed: *Vede țară lângă țară ca p-un uriaș covor* (Dragomirescu, 1975, 73); *Iată-mă condamnat pentru neștiință, pentru plictiseală, pentru neliniște, pentru nemișcare* (cf. Petraș, 1996, p. 146).

Or the general-particular relationship is marked: *slabi la fire: brațul, haina, mintea, fața, inima, totu-i subfire* (Dragomirescu, 1975, p.73)

3.7.2. The amplification is considered, in the stylistic works, a descriptive figure, in which certain details are gradually resumed and developed, in the idea of concretizing the exposed meaning. *Noi, cumpărătorii de niște asemenea cărți..., noi încurajăm continuarea și înmulțirea lor, noi suntem gazdele de hoți...* (Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 67); *iară noi, noi*

*epigonii, simțiri reci, harfe zdrobite...., Voi credeți în scrisul vostru, noi nu credem în nimic* (cf. DSL, 2001, p. 44).

3.7.3. The repetition is an extension represented by the identical resumption of language units or structures. There are several types of repetitions.

Unlike lexicalized repetitions, those stylistically marked are met "when they mark the distance from the referent, which they treat as a sum of ontological units, to which the language lends additional units" (Dubois, 1974, p. 202).

3.7.3.1. The most intensely stylistic marked are the anaphora (which implies the repetition in a syntactic parallelism at the beginning of a syntactic unit of the verse type statement) and the epiphora which does the same thing at the end.

It has been shown that, being "a construction of great oratory effect, the anaphora has become ... one of the favorite ways of organizing the literary text" (Duda, 2000, p. 54).

The increased frequency is due to the fact that the initial position exerts an additional focus: *Singuri cei mari judecători, singuri pârâși și singuri plinitorii legii* (cf. Dragomirescu, 1975, 36); *Tot ce e perfid și lacom, tot Fanarul, toți iloții/ Toți se scurseră aicea și formează patrioții* (cf. Dragomirescu, 1975, 36); *cei morți nu cred, cei morți nu mărturisesc, cei morți nu lucrează, celor morți nu să va dăscoperi nicio taină, cei morți nu fac sfaturile cele bune și înțelepte, cei morți nu pot lua plată* (INB, p. 277).

The epiphora often appears as a deductive reasoning: *Casă am, bani am, sănătos sunt, nevastă căzută din cer am, de ce-aș îmbătrâni?* (cf. Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 54)

3.7.3.2. The anadiplosis has, as in the case of the epiphora, the appearance of a reasoning, of a mental operation, for which reason some stylistic treatises do not mention it. The anadiplosis consists of the combination of the anaphora with the epiphora, repeating the end of a structure at the beginning of the following: *Tăcerea face oprire, oprirea face umilință și plângere, iar plângerea face frică și frica face smerenie* (INB, p. 139-140); *postul naște rugă, ruga naște smerenie, smerenia naște curăție, curăția naște milostenie* (INB, p. 168); *Cine face bine, bine găsește; Veșnic este numai râul: râul este Demiurg* (cf. Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 35).

3.7.3.3. The reduplication (the repetition of a word or utterance segment) has no stylistic value when it appears in morphology: the verbs *a da* and *a sta* have the theme of the perfect achieved through reduplication (*dădea, dăduse, stătea, stătuse*); it is also involved in pronominal constructions (*care mai de care*), but it also functions as a trope: *din amiazăzi în amiazăzi și din seară în seară* (INB, p. 113); *Dimineață cu dimineață mă trezeam cu aceeași întrebare* (Blaga, 1990, p. 162).

3.7.3.4. The epizeuxis is a figure that represents the typical repetition of some identical units, in immediate succession, generating a gradation through formal and semantic insistence: *Care vine, vine, vine, calcă totul în picioare; Vine! vine! vine! și-n sfârșit s-arată* (cf. Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 55, 35).

3.7.3.5. The chiasmus involves a repetition with an inverted structure, with a refocusing of the last term of the first structure, by the setting "in cross": *Cine se scoală de dimineață, departe ajunge; arse de span și de rugină roase; Cine face bine, bine găsește* (cf. Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 44); *Femeie între stele și stea între femei; Ca visul unei umbre și umbra unui vis* (cf. Petraș, 1996, p. 139).

Such repositions can also be encountered at a frastic level: *Visul se face lume, lumea se face vis; Căci toți se nasc spre a muri/ Și mor spre a se naște* (cf. DSL, 2001, p. 104).

3.7.3.6. The paregmenon implies the placement of the determinant in the same semantic sphere and lexical family with the regent. In grammar, they appear as internal syntactic functions: *streină streinilor* (INB, 164); *cu înșălăciunea lui înșălă* (INB, p. 167); *încununați cu cumuni* (INB, p. 168) *Și zidul zidea* (cf. Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 56); *Copilul visează un vis frumos; Și-a trăit traiul, și-a mâncat mălaiul* (cf. Dimitriu, 2002, p. 1389).

Sometimes it is also achieved at a frastic level: *Și-a trăit ce-a avut de trăit și-a mâncat ce-a avut de mâncat* (Ibidem).

3.7.3.7. The syntactic parallelism implies a repetition of the structure, of the syntactic scheme. It is "a construction figure, consisting in its perfect canonical variant, in the successive repetition of some sequences with identical morpho-syntactic grammatical structure" (Cvasnâi Cătănescu, 2001, p. 64).

As a rule, these structures are more evident at a frastic level: *Sfârâmați tot ce ațâță inima lor bolnavă./ Sfârmați palate, temple ce crimele ascund./ Zvârliți statui de tirani în foc să curgă lavă...* (cf. Stanciu Mănescu, 2013, p. 49); *Poezia este ochiul care plânge./ Ea este umărul care plânge./ ochiul umărului care plânge* (cf. Cvasnâi Cătănescu, 2001, p. 69); *Nimeni nu-i știe de știre./ nimeni soarta-i n-o-mblânzește./ Nimeni fruntea nu-i mângâie* (cf. DSL, 2001, p. 223); *europenii nu mai primesc, europenii au interzis, europenii au pus nu știu ce condiții* (cf. GALR, II, 2008, p. 789).

3.7.3.8. The refrain is an eminently poetic process, that is why it is rarely recorded in the syntax works. It is very common for its cyclical marking, in the poetry of all times: "The more or less fixed form of the refrain existed in the poetic language of Antiquity, in religious poetry, in the epic or medieval lyric and in modern literature; it has been cultivated by various literary trends, from romanticism to symbolism and to contemporary poetry" (DSL, 2001, p. 428).

It was common in the sung poetry, "which derives from the relationship of a laic or religious singer with his audience, who repeats that verse of the singer with more resonance in the sensitivity of the listeners" (Dubois, 1974, p. 202). As a procedure, it was taken over by the species with fixed form, especially in the rondels (cf. Vianu, 1975, p. 366).

The structural diversity of the refrains is great, starting from lexical identities to the structural ones (cf. Mancaș, 2005, p. 304). The symbolists used it frequently, being a form of manifestation of the poetic musicality: *Cu pene albe, pene negre./ O pasăre cu glas amar./ Străbate parcul secular./ Cu pene albe, pene negre* (cf. Stanciu Mănescu, 2013, p. 141).

3.8. The affective figures most often involve, in the purpose of transmitting the message, an intense subjective participation as a doubling of the rational intelligence with the emotional one, as a transmission of the locutionary message and, not least, as a technique of persuasion in the structure of the argumentative text.

3.8.1. The invocation is an addressing in the divine register, to confirm, approve or facilitate an action programmed by the speaker: *O, prea dulce Iisuse!* (INB, p. 75); *Sfinte Petre!... Sfântă Ana!... Mucenice Spiridoane!.../ Scăpați-mă de pieire* (cf. Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 217, 218)

3.8.2. The interrogation represents a figure of style if it is applied not to find an answer, but to emphasize the evidence or imminence of a truth: *Voi sunteți urmașii Romei? Niște răi și niște fameni!* (Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 217)

Sometimes, the answer is already mentioned, which engages not the gratuitousness of the statement, but builds the state of affairs: *Ce a scos din voi apusul când nimic nu e de scos?* (Ibidem).

The succession of interrogations accumulates additional connotations that bring them closer to the affective content of the tropes: *Chemă oare, la arme pe toți fiii țării? Stețe oare în fruntea vitejilor? Zbură să apere cu pieptul hotarele Moldovei?* (DSL, 2001, p. 272)

3.8.3. The exclamation constitutes the strong trigger of affection, as a surprise to the situation of communication: *O, amar ție, o ticăloase oame!* (INB, p. 149); *Vaide mine, ticălosul și ocaianicul* (INB, p. 224); *O, te-admir, progenitură de origine romană; O sfântă dreptate din zilele marelui Ștefan* (Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 76); *Ah, năcaz, ah, priveghere, temutule și tu dor / Cu câtă plăcere dulce a noastre inimi vă vor* (DSL, 2001, p. 207).

Grammarians usually place it in the area of the spoken language: *Mânca-i-ar pământul, să-i mănânce!* (cf. Ionescu, 2006, p. 250).

4. Conclusions. Although they are very close to metalogisms, the figures of the syntactic code, the metataxes, retain their functional individuality, that of orienting the reception towards the concrete, towards the individual aspects of knowledge, where the artist's sensitivity imposes its own marks of individuality.

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## **ASPECTS DE L'IRONIE DANS LE ROMAN „ÎNTÂLNIREA” DE GABRIELA ADAMEȘTEANU**

**Lavinia-Ileana GEAMBEI\***

**Abstract:** *The novel "Întâlnirea" by Gabriela Adameșteanu, in the 5th edition, 2013, emphasizes the theme of exile, which she assumes and makes reference to from the beginning, through the variant of intertextuality, a motto by Mircea Eliade, which begins with: "Every expatriate is a Ulysses on the way to Ithaca ... The way to Ithaca is the way to the Center." The novel actually follows the spiritual adventure of Traian Manu, the protagonist, his search for the "Center", with memories, wishes, hopes and fears. The novel "Întâlnirea" develops a bitter irony on several levels. It is the irony especially created through the individual's surprise in front of history; it is a situational irony born from the opposition between a desired situation and the existing reality. Starting from these premises, the present work aims to follow and illustrate the way in which bitter irony manifests itself in the construction of the communist imaginary in Gabriela Adameșteanu's novel.*

**Keywords:** *irony; communist imaginary; utopia*

Le roman de Gabriela Adameșteanu, *Întâlnirea (La Rencontre)*, dans sa cinquième édition, définitive, de 2013, met l'accent sur le thème de l'exil, qu'il assume et auquel il renvoie dès le début, à travers cette variante de l'intertextualité, le motto de Mircea Eliade, débutant avec : « Fiecare exilat e un Ulise în drum spre Ithaca... Drumul spre Ithaca este drumul spre Centru »<sup>1</sup> (Chaque exilé est un Ulysse dans son chemin vers Ithaca... Le chemin vers Ithaca est le chemin vers le centre).

Le fragment extrait de Mircea Eliade exprime l'idée de l'exile comme une longue série d'épreuves initiatiques « souhaitées par les „dieux” », l'exile comme forme de connaissance et d'auto-connaissance. Comme on l'a montré aussi dans l'étude „Căutarea „centrului” în romanul Întâlnirea de Gabriela Adameșteanu<sup>2</sup> (La quête du « centre » dans le roman *Întâlnirea* de Gabriela Adameșteanu), ce roman suit, en fait, l'aventure spirituelle de Traian Manu, la quête du « Centre », avec des souvenirs, des désirs, des espoirs, des craintes.

Le protagoniste, le chercheur biologiste Traian Manu, parti de Roumanie dans les années '40, pour échapper à la guerre, et vivant « à présent » en Italie, a la chance de revenir au pays, en 1986, mais dans la Roumanie communiste de Ceaușescu, où il est invité même par la Sécurité afin de soutenir une conférence. Même s'il est parti de Roumanie depuis si longtemps, il est conscient que, s'il était resté « là », sa destinée aurait été autre, dramatique : « Eu pot să mulțumesc lui Dumnezeu că mi-am făcut o viață și o carieră aici, în timp ce, dacă rămâneam acolo, muream pe front sau putezeară într-o închisoare » (p. 68)

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<sup>1</sup> Nous précisons que toutes les citations qui apparaissent dans notre travail, et qui sont extraites du roman *Întâlnirea*, font partie de la cinquième édition, définitive, de 2013, notée dans la Bibliographie.

<sup>2</sup> *Căutarea „centrului” în romanul Întâlnirea de Gabriela Adameșteanu*, în *Annales Universitatis Apulensis*, series Philologica, tom 1, nr.18/2017, Alba-Iulia, ISSN 1582-5523, p. 125-132.

(Je peux remercier Dieu de m’être forgé une vie et une carrière ici, pendant que, si j’étais resté là, je serais mort sur le front ou bien j’aurais pourri en prison). La condition d’exilé, d’Ulysse à la recherche de son Ithaca, à la recherche de son identité perdue, est illustrée tant à travers Traian Manu, que par Christa, sa petite amie, d’origine allemande. Les histoires de vie des deux, vivant la tentation du passé, s’entrelacent de façon harmonieuse avec le tissu narratif du texte. Aucun d’eux ne peut vraiment rentrer dans son « Ithaca », parce que celle-ci est devenue la victime de l’histoire, la victime des régimes politiques totalitaires : l’Allemagne nazie (Christa) et la Roumanie communiste (Traian).

À la différence de Christa, qui a vécu de façon directe le hitlérisme, son avènement et sa terreur, Traian Manu n’a pas vécu les horreurs du communisme, c’est pourquoi il ne peut pas comprendre le comportement de Roumains des années ’80. De cette façon, la distance entre la Roumanie de l’enfance du protagoniste, son « Centre », sa véritable identité, une Roumanie mystifiée et embellie par la nostalgie, et la Roumanie qu’il découvre lors de son retour en 1986, devient insurmontable.

Donc, si le retour physique est possible, le retour spirituel ne le sera pas : comme Christa l’avait averti, aucun retour n’est possible. Acceptant avec difficulté qu’il s’agit d’un « retour impossible », Traian Manu parviendra à comprendre, finalement, tout comme les personnages de Norman Manea, que son « centre » est la langue roumaine.

Tel qu’il fut reçu dans l’espace littéraire italien, où il fut publié il y a quelques années, « *Întâlnirea* (La Rencontre) est une tentative littéraire de la plus haute qualité. Le drame d’Ulysse poursuit comme une ombre tout le parcours de Traian. C’est le drame de tant d’exilés roumains, comme Emil Cioran, dont la phrase „țara care a fost a noastră și nu mai e a nimănu” (le pays qui a été à nous et qui n’est plus à personne) donne le rythme à l’entière histoire » (Iadicco, 2013, IV<sup>e</sup> couverture).

Dans une composition symétrique, la roman, structuré en trois parties intitulées suggestivement *Plecarea, Acasă, Întoarcerea* (*Le Départ, A la maison/ Chez soi, Le Retour*), propose un double voyage symbolique. D’une part, il s’agit d’un voyage spatial, dans les cadres du réel et du présent narratif, le voyage en Roumanie, annoncé dès le premier chapitre, *Drumul spre casă* (*Le chemin vers la maison*), un voyage dont le protagoniste a encore peur, pour lequel il ne se sent pas encore préparé, mais qu’il doit faire avant « le voyage final ». Ce voyage spatial engendre l’autre, plus mystérieux, dans le temps, dans le passé, dans les profondeurs du souvenir, dans la mémoire affective.

Le titre « *Întâlnirea* » (La Rencontre) est chargé de significations selon la perspective dans laquelle il est interprété. Ainsi, pour Traian Manu, il peut être question de trois rencontres symboliques : la rencontre avec la Roumanie « nouvelle », qui détruit l’image de la Roumanie qu’il avait connue, c’est pourquoi il ne peut pas être question de rencontre, de retrouver ; la rencontre avec Christa, des années auparavant, une sorte de variante féminine de Traian et mentor de celui-ci, mais surtout la rencontre avec soi-même (le retrouver). Dans la perspective du jeune Daniel, la rencontre avec l’oncle venu d’Italie, d’ « au-delà », signifie la rencontre avec une forme de la liberté dont il rêvait tant. Traian Manu deviendra un Ulysse sans Ithaca, parce qu’il ne se sent plus chez lui ni en Italie, même s’il a du mal à le reconnaître, ni en Roumanie des années ’80. « Chez lui », « Le Centre » qu’il recherche, le lieu où il retrouve sa vraie paix intérieure, existe seulement dans ses souvenirs, un lieu d’une Roumanie idyllique, quittée il y a quelques décennies :

Și-ar dori o grădină cu plante încâlcite, cu straturile pline de frunze de anul trecut, putrezind în pace, la lumină, cu pânze umede de păianjeni și musculițe bâzâind inconștient deasupra lor. Unde-i această grădină în care ar vrea să zacă pe o pătură, cu ochii închiși, la soare? *În țara care a fost a noastră și nu mai e a nimănui*, spune prietenul Cioran. » (p. 194). (« Il voudrait un jardin aux plantes entrelacés, aux parterres couvertes de feuilles mortes de l'année dernière, pourrissant en paix, sous la lumière, aux toiles d'araignées et de petites mouches bourdonnant inconsciemment au-dessus. Où est ce jardin où il voudrait s'allonger sur un plaid, les yeux fermés, sous le soleil ? *Dans le pays qui fut à nous et qui n'est plus à personne*, dit l'ami Cioran).

Le roman de Gabriela Adameșteanu développe, sur plusieurs plans, une ironie amère. C'est l'ironie créée surtout à travers le thème de l'individu face à l'histoire, surtout une ironie situationnelle, issue de l'opposition entre un état des choses souhaité et l'état existant. Comme on le connaît, l'ironie situationnelle suppose l'existence d'un observateur, de quelqu'un qui constate. Ce rôle est très souvent assumé par le jeune Daniel Izvoranu, le neveu de Traian, une sorte de alter ego de celui-ci, qui est un jeune élevé dans la Roumanie communiste, mais qui rêve de l'Occident, le jeune homme lucide qui voit et qui comprend la réalité sociale et politique où il vit, le jeune homme qu'on pourrait croire, de façon rétrospective, que dans trois ans seulement (1989) serait parmi les autres jeunes hommes dans la Place de la Révolution, luttant pour leurs idéaux. Le retour de Traian est regardé et décrit à travers les yeux de Daniel, et sa rencontre avec Traian signifie la rencontre avec une forme de la liberté. Daniel est une autre hypostase de Traian Manu, c'est l'hypostase de ce que Traian Manu aurait été s'il n'était pas parti ou qu'il fût rentré dans le pays alors, dans ses années de jeunesse. Daniel en est conscient : « Eram el, care nu plecuse, eram el, care avea să se întoarcă » (p. 246). (Moi, j'étais lui, qui n'était pas parti, j'étais lui, qui allait rentrer). Même si Daniel affirme au début avoir pensé à « notre Traian » lors de l'obit de trois mois de Buni (Mamie), l'ancienne fiancée de Traian, que celui-ci avait quittée lors de son départ du pays, va ensuite avouer qu'il avait commencé l'attendre depuis qu'il ait tout petit et qu'il avait entendu des histoires sur celui-ci (Traian) et Mamie. On suggère ainsi, dès le début, que l'image de Traian, vivant « au-delà », est mythifiée.

Dans la deuxième partie, appelée, suggestivement, « A la maison/ Chez lui », c'est à Daniel qu'on donne le rôle de narrateur, durant quelques chapitres. Afin de suggérer qu'il est attiré par le mirage de l'Occident, qu'il est le jeune homme rêvant de liberté et souffrant car il comprend l'isolement de la Roumanie par rapport à l'Europe, on lui donne la parole à travers une phrase en anglais : « Daniel says » (Daniel dit) (p. 82). Dès ses premières phrases, on construit une image réaliste de la Roumanie des années '80, avec des éléments de l'imaginaire communiste et de la langue de bois spécifique :

N-am nimic altceva de văzut decât vârfurile plopilor, antenele de televizor și rufele din balcoanele de vizavi etc., adică vederea obișnuită de la fereastra unui apartament de locuințe proprietate personală, etajul șapte, în oricare dintre noile și frumoasele noastre cartiere din glorioasa noastră patrie » (p. 81). (Je n'ai autre chose à voir que les cimes des peupliers, les antennes de télévision et le linge mis à sécher dans les balcons de vis-à-vis, c'est-à-dire le panorama habituel de la fenêtre d'un appartement « propriété personnelle », septième étage, dans n'importe quel de nos nouveaux et beaux quartiers de notre glorieuse patrie »).

Aussi, l'ironie amère de Daniel naît-elle du constat de l'antithèse entre ce que pensent vivre, ce dont rêvent vivre ses parents et ce qui se passe dans la réalité communiste.



Cette ironie naît inclusivement dans le constat de Daniel que certains aspects / certaines choses de leur vie ont une dénomination inadéquate dans les mots de ses parents et des autres personnes de leur âge. Par exemple, la séquence avec la dénomination de l'une des pièces de leur appartement : « Dar n-am stare și mă foiesc prin sufragerie – cum îi spune, inadecvat, tata, pentru că am mâncat și vom mânca întotdeauna în strâmta noastră bucătărie. Sau living, cum vrea să o boteze, cu eterna ei lipsă de succes, mama, infatigabila Casandra, neascultată de nimeni. Sau, mai pe țărănește, camera bună » (p. 81). (Mais je n'ai pas de repos et je continue à m'agiter dans notre « salle à manger » - comme l'appelle, de façon totalement inappropriée, mon père, parce qu'on a toujours pris nos repas et on continuera à manger dans notre exiguë cuisine. Ou chambre de séjour, comme veut la baptiser, avec son éternel manque de succès, ma mère, l'infatigable Cassandre, à laquelle personne ne prête attention. Ou bien, « à la paysanne », « la bonne chambre ».)

Avec une ironie amère, à travers un langage parsemé avec bien de termes argotiques, Daniel médite sur l'hypothèse de vouloir ou non devenir un « boșo » (vieil homme), ayant deux variantes. C'est à cette occasion que l'on dresse l'image du vieil homme dans la Roumanie communiste, préoccupé principalement à attendre aux queues interminables, par la hausse de sa pension, à gronder les jeunes hommes qui n'ont aucune idée de ce que signifient les classes de russe, la collectivisation, les mandataires etc. La conclusion de Daniel à cette perspective est bien ferme : « Nu, nu, niciodată n-am să accept să fiu un astfel de boșo! Varianta 1. » (p. 248). (Non, je n'accepterai jamais devenir un tel boșo ! Première variante.). En opposition avec ce type de vieil homme, apparaît celui venu de l'Ouest, celui qui se permet de se vêtir pas mal, qui est soigneux en ce qui concerne son aspect extérieur, qui utilise des produits cosmétiques dont les Roumains ne peuvent que rêver, c'est justement pourquoi il est fascinant pour eux. Et Daniel souhaite ardemment adopter cette variante : « Sau da, să fiu el, cum l-am văzut că apare din prima zi cu ochelarii ăia meseriași și țoalele foarte ca lumea, moșule, și toți ciorchine pe el, gagicile, securiștii, bișnițarii, cioclii, și buzunarele de pe mânecă, și barba pusă la punct, cu dâra de After Shave tabac Original, da, atunci muream să fiu el! Varianta 2 » (p. 248). (Ou bien oui, être comme lui, comme je l'ai vu apparaître dès le premier jour, avec ses lunettes géniales et ses fringues géniales, mon pote, et tout le monde s'empresse sur lui, les gonzesses, la sécurité, les revendeurs, les croque-morts, et ses poches sur les manches, et sa barbe soignée, avec l'odeur de After Shave Tabac Original, oui, alors je voulais tellement être lui ! Deuxième variante).

L'accueil de Traian Manu à l'aéroport par des parents qu'il ne connaît même pas est une séquence narrative intentionnellement dilatée dans les pages du roman, ceci étant un prétexte d'insérer des éléments tenant de l'imagologie et des mentalités. L'épisode propose en fait la mise en évidence des différences entre l'Est et l'Ouest, avec la reconstruction de l'imaginaire communiste. Avec une ironie aiguë, Daniel décrit les parents de sexe féminin, le « produit du communisme », agitées et se trouvant dans une situation nouvelle, où elles ne savent pas comment se porter, en attendant le célèbre biologiste, ayant vécu depuis si longtemps à l'Ouest et dont on avait créé une image mythifiée, comme le suggère l'épithète qualificatif multiple, hyperbolique :

Așa că, ieșite dintr-un stres și intrate în altul, își scosese rălcăiele umflate din pantofi și-și desfăcuseră pe furie fermoarele, copcile, cordoanele deasupra stomacurilor umflate, arse de hiperaciditatea îngrijită decenii la rând în cantine de instituție și

ședințe de analiza muncii, își potriviseră rochiile de ocazie ce scoteau aburi de colonie Jubileu și Femina spray pentru subraț și se întorseseră iar la persoana incitantă, sacrosanctă a musafirului: celebrul în toată lumea Traian Manu! » (p. 84). (Donc, sorties d'un stress et entrées dans un autre, elles avaient tiré leurs talons gonflés des souliers et avaient ouvert en cachette leurs fermails, les agrafes, les cordons sur leurs estomacs gonflés, brûlés par la hyperacidité nourrie pendant des décennies dans des cantines d'institutions et aux réunions d'analyse du travail, elles avaient mis leurs robes réservées à des occasions spéciales, émanant des odeurs d'eau de Cologne *Jubileu* et d'antiperspirant *Femina* et elles étaient revenues, de nouveau, à la personne incitante, sacrosainte de l'hotte : le fameux, au monde entier, Traian Manu !).

Mais la même image est immédiatement démythisée : « ... dar suflet n-a avut niciodată. [...] Pe el nu l-a interesat decât să plece! Nu l-a interesat în ce condiții, nu l-a interesat cu ce sacrificii... » (p. 85). (Mais de l'âme, il n'en a jamais eu. [...] Ce qui l'intéressa, ce fut de s'en aller ! Il ne l'intéressa pas en quelles conditions, il ne l'intéressa pas au prix de quels sacrifices.... P. 85). Aussi, dans la discussion entre les parents, vue et rendue par Daniel, c'est toujours avec ironie que l'on surprend un aspect de la période communiste, le fait que les Roumains restés dans le pays espéraient que les Roumains qui avaient eu la chance de s'enfuir « au-delà » leur feraient un appel à les rejoindre au, du moins, qu'ils leur fassent parvenir quelques bons produits, tels qu'on n'en trouvait pas dans la Roumanie des années '80 : « un Wiener Kaffee, un chocolat ».

De façon suggestive, le premier qui reconnaît Traian dans l'aéroport c'est Daniel, en fait, c'est qu'il se reconnaît en Traian : « Dar ca dovadă că ce bun sunt e că nu știam decât fotografia de acum o sută de ani în care Traian al nostru are aceiași dinți strâmbi și aceiași ochi creduli ca ai mei, și totuși am fost primul care l-am recunoscut » (p. 105). (Mais comme preuve de ce que je m'y connais c'est que je ne savais que la photo d'il y a cent ans où notre Traian avait les mêmes dents déformées et les mêmes yeux crédules que les miens, et cependant ce fut moi le premier qui le reconnus ». Les autres parents, formant un véritable personnage collectif, « le chœur des médisants », ne le reconnaissent pas car ils ont d'autres attentes de la part de quelqu'un vivant depuis tant d'années à l'Occident. Il s'agit ici de l'hétéro-image (l'image de l'autre) qui ne se superpose pas à l'auto-image (l'image de soi). Cette différence entre les attentes et la réalité est ironiquement exprimée toujours par le personnage – réflecteur Daniel : « Numai că ai noștri, ei-ele, trebuie să-l fi așteptat pus la țol festiv, costum negru, bleumarin, în dungă, cravată cu picățele, baston, cârjă, servietă-diplomat, melon, ce poți să știi ce e în mintea lor eleganța lu pește, reprezentarea clasică de *old-fashionable*? Și nici rocker nu te puteai aștepta să fie! » (p. 106). (Sauf que les nôtres, eux / elles, doivent l'avoir attendu vêtu à quatre épingles, en costard noir, bleu marine, rayé, cravate à pois, cane, béquille, serviette diplomatique, haut-de-forme, qui peut savoir ce qui est, dans leur tête, l'élégance de merde, la représentation classique de *old-fashionable* ? Et on ne pouvait pas s'attendre à ce qu'il fût un rocker !).

Le même observateur Daniel imagine que Mamie, qui avait toujours aimé Traian, aurait toujours été en vie et qu'elle aurait attendu, elle aussi, Traian à l'aéroport. Mamie, la plus âgée de tous les parents entassés sur les canapés en faux-cuir de l'aéroport d'Otopeni, malentendue par ceux-ci et regardée avec condescendance parfois, évoque, à travers son élégance, ses manières, son maintien, un autre monde, l'entre-deux-guerres, un monde où, finalement, les Roumains avaient vécu comme de véritables Européens, sans complexes,

sans air provincial. C'est pourquoi, dans cet épisode imaginé, Mamie est toujours présentée en antithèse avec les autres parents, qui sont seulement « le produit du communisme ». Dans une séquence pleine d'une ironie amère, réalisée par l'hyperbole et la métaphore, ayant la même protagoniste, Mamie, on suggère l'un des pires aspects du communisme, le démolissement massif des églises et d'autres bâtiments de l'entre-deux-guerres, mais aussi le changement de dénomination, sans justification, des rues et des boulevards :

Și Buni, pierzând din ce în ce pământul de sub picioare și navigând într-o ceață tot mai deasă, le-ar fi explicat amănunțit și foarte confuz un traseu întortocheat, cu repere care existau acum o sută de ani, bulevardul Regele Ferdinand, bulevardul Regina Maria, Piața de Flori, strada Bateriilor, la statuia lui Brătianu, strada Sabinelor, biserica Mihai-Vodă, spitalul Brâncovenesc și alte asemenea repere, demolate și pierite într-un nor de fum, sub ochii noștri plini de înțelepciune (p. 99). (Et Mamie, perdant de plus en plus la terre sous ses pieds et naviguant dans un brouillard de plus en plus dense, leur aurait expliqué de façon détaillée et très confuse un trajet sinueux, avec des repères qui existaient il y a cent ans, le boulevard Regele Ferdinand, le boulevard Regina Maria, le Marché des Fleurs, la rue des Batteries, la statue de Brătianu, la rue des Sabines, l'église Mihai-Vodă, l'hôpital Brâncovenesc et d'autres tels repères, démolis et évanouis dans une nuage de fumée, sous nos yeux pleins de sagesse).

Même à l'intérieur de la « Chronique » de Daniel, il est inséré un court fragment de narration à la troisième personne, où Daniel démontre qu'il peut se dédoubler, il devient l'objet de sa propre ironie. La voix du narrateur est une sorte de voix collective des parents qui n'aiment pas tellement le « maussade Daniel », celui qui est le seul à entendre les voix imaginées sur le canapé. Mamie et Daniel font note discordante avec le reste de la famille, car ils sont le symbole de deux périodes différentes dans l'histoire de Roumanie. Mamie est attachée à la période de l'entre-deux-guerres, et Daniel, celui qui veut refaire les liens avec cette période-là, avec sa mentalité, avec son élégance, symbolise la Roumanie postcommuniste dont il rêve. Il est très intéressant de voir comme, dans une seule phrase, on rencontre la réflexion polyédrique, à travers la jonction ironique de la manière dont Mamie est perçue par les autres membres de la famille et la manière dont la « voit » Daniel : « Doar de aceea o iubim cu toții pe Buni, jucăria noastră ridicolă și desuetă, ultima, singura doamnă a familiei »(p. 100). (C'est seulement pour ça que nous aimons tous Mamie, notre jouet ridicule et désuet, la dernière, la seule dame de la famille). D'ailleurs, comme il ressort des bribes de dialogues des parents, reproduites par Daniel, Mamie, celle qui avait été éduquée et formée durant l'entre-deux-guerres, est devenue la victime du communisme, elle étant obligée de vendre son piano, dont elle jouait avec tant de passion, pour avoir de quoi vivre après que son époux fût mort en prison communiste et qu'elle fût renvoyée de son boulot.

Une sorte de cri désespéré de l'isolement de l'Europe, mais un cri sourd, est le fragment où Daniel, avec la même douloureuse ironie, décrit ce que pensent ses parents venus pour la première fois à l'aéroport Otopeni et attirés par les tableaux où ne cessent d'apparaître des noms des grandes capitales occidentales. Après tant d'années d'isolement, ces villes sont des utopies :

Și atunci, prin mințile lor înclinate de fixativ s-ar putea să fi trecut bănuiala că toate aceste nume ciudate, LONDRA BRUXELLES COPENHAGA ROMA, sunt chiar orașe care există cu adevărat, deci, dacă ai putea să treci de ușa batantă și de alte câteva uși, te-ai trezi probabil într-o carlingă de avion, la prova sau la pupa unui vas » (p. 103-104). (Et alors, dans leurs esprits englués de laque pour les cheveux il se peut

qu'il eût passé le soupçon que tous ces noms bizarres, LONDRES BRUXELLES COPENHAGUE ROME, étaient des villes qui existaient même en réalité, donc, si on pouvait passer au-delà de la porte battante et de quelques autres portes, on se trouverait peut-être dans le cockpit d'un avion, à l'avant ou à l'arrière d'un navire.).

L'impossibilité de visiter ces capitales, symboles de la liberté, de sortir de la Roumanie communiste, où les notions telles « liberté », « propriété », « individu » ont été abolies, est suggérée à travers l'interrogation rhétorique à la fin de ce fragment : « Deci chiar ai ajunge la PARIS LONDRA MADRID ROMA și chiar poți să-ți închipui așa ceva? » (p. 104). (Donc on arriverait même à PARIS LONDRES MADRID ROME et on peut même imaginer cela ?)

Dans la reconstruction de l'imaginaire communiste doit surgir aussi « un trafiquant de devises avec expérience » un personnage controversé, le type de personnage populaire, qui sait tout, qui fait commercialiser des produits apportés d' « au-delà », collaborateur de la Sécurité, le « trop commenté Victor ». Comprenant tout cela sur Victor, Daniel imagine une scène d'un comique grotesque : la transmission en direct, au Téléjournal, de l'aéroport, par le cousin Victor, qui ne pense qu'à ce qu'on pourrait trouver dans les bagages de Traian Manu et à la façon dont on pourrait faire valorifier chaque produit, tout dans un langage familier, riche en termes argotiques, surprenant par la graphie des mots anglais, par la manière dont on lit les noms de certains produits cosmétiques :

În niciun caz nu ne așteptăm ca din bagajele vărului Traian să găsim doar un săpun banal gen rexonaverde sau optioripatruherbfrîș care se găsesc oricând, pe ceva mangoți, la piața neagră! Poate fi o colonie Osovaj sau aftârșeivpacorabano sau ugbos. Sunați-ne dacă sunteți interesați! » (p. 107). (En aucun cas on ne s'attendait que dans les bagages du cousin Traian on trouvât seulement un savon banal tel *rexonavert* ou *optioripartuherbfrîș* qui se trouvent n'importe quand, pour quelque fric, sur le marché noir ! ça peut être une eau de Cologne *Osovaj* (Eau sauvage, n. trad.) ou *aftârșeivpacorabano* ou *ugbos* (lotion après rasage Paco Rabane ou Hugo Boss – n.trad.). Appelez-nous si vous en êtes intéressés !)

Si le moment de la rencontre a été rendu surtout dans la perspective de Daniel, celui des adieux est rendu des autres perspectives, celles de Traian et de Daniel. Il y a aussi des scènes d'un comique grotesque, telle celle où les soi-disant parents lui offrent toutes sortes de cadeaux, tous inappropriés pour un tel voyage, après s'être disputés sur qui devrait renoncer aux souvenirs et qui pas, ils parviennent à déchirer le fermail de son sac à voyage, la solution étant trouvée, comme d'habitude, par le cousin Victor, l'homme dans lequel Traian a la plus grande confiance, la « porte-parole de la famille dans les milieux officiels », comme le considère Daniel, l'agent de la Sécurité en réalité. Mais très suggestive pour la mentalité du Roumain de la Roumanie communiste, qui a un parent « au-delà », est la scène imaginée toujours par Daniel, scène où Casandra, sa mère et fille de Mamie, même dans l'aéroport, lorsque l'Hôte se dirige déjà vers la douane, lui crie qui est elle et comment on avait laissé mourir sa mère et la petite amie de Traian, parce que dans l'hôpital « il n'y avait ni lits libres, ni médicaments, ni ouate... », ensuite elle lui demande ce qu'un Roumain aurait voulu recevoir de quelqu'un venu de l'Occident :

Asta ar striga mama și, profitând de năuceala Înaltului Oaspete, i-ar cere repede un fleac pentru mine, măcar niște adidași, niște blugi prespălați, un medicament pentru tata și pentru ea nimic, nimic, nimic, decât datoria sfântă de a spăla, mătura, curăța, călca, cârpi, bombănind în urma noastră » (p. 165). (C'est ça que maman demanderait

et, profitant de l'ébahissement du Haut Hôte, elle lui demanderait vite un petit rien pour moi, du moins des chaussures de sport, des jeans, un médicament pour papa et pour elle rien, rien, rien, que le devoir saint de faire la lessive, de balayer, de nettoyer, de repasser, de rapiécer en marmonnant derrière nous).

On observe ici aussi la condition de la femme dans la société communiste. Aussi, étant un fragment de la chronique de Daniel, on observe son ironie face à l'adulation de Traian Manu par le « chœur des médisants » exprimée, au niveau graphique, par l'écriture avec majuscule (l'Hôte).

Donc, comme l'observe Carmen Mușat, « Pour Traian Manu, Ulysse contemporain, pour lequel l'exil a constitué une chance et une malchance en même temps, ce dernier voyage est une bonne occasion de voir ce qu'ont fait les gens restés ici et ce que l'histoire a fait d'eux. Et, si le retour dans le pays a été, sur le plan personnel, un échec, puisque l'impression d'être entouré de personnes inconnues est dominante, on peut dire que Traian Manu ne va pas rater sa rencontre avec l'histoire travestie en utopie». (Mușat, 2003, *Tentația trecutului, dezamăgirile prezentului*, postfață la volumul Gabriela Adameșteanu, *Întâlnirea*, ediția a II-a).

Traian, ne comprenant plus les Roumains de la Roumanie des années '80, n'a pas la force de se découvrir dans le jeune Daniel, qui espère cependant jusqu'au dernier moment qu'il serait observé et qu'il lui crierait : « Să nu uiți să-mi scrii! Să nu uiți că la anul vin din nou! Să nu uiți, Daniel, că te aștept, *Dincolo*, la mine! » (p. 246) (N'oublie pas de m'écrire ! N'oublie pas que l'année prochaine je reviendrai ! N'oublie pas, Daniel, que je t'attends *Au-delà*, chez moi !). Même dans ces phrases « imaginées » par Daniel on observe toujours l'ironie douloureuse.

Le Mythe de l'exilé se superpose au mythe du bon étranger, venu nous libérer de l'enfer du monde totalitariste. En ce sens, Alex Goldiș parle du « surhomme occidental » : « Des trucs les plus banaux, (du chewing-gum, des jeans), des emplois (l'insistance pour la promotion sur poste de tel parent lointain) jusqu'aux requêtes de l'âme de Daniel-Télémaque, tout peut être assouvi, dans l'imaginaire pathologique du Roumain sous communisme, par le surhomme occidental » (Goldiș, 2013, p. 293).

En conclusion, dans la reconstruction de l'imaginaire communiste, dans la perspective de Daniel Izvoranu, toute la douleur et toute la déception du Roumain sous le communisme, qui comprend avec lucidité sa situation dramatique, sont rendues à travers l'agencement de l'ironie amère avec l'humour grotesque.

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**REVISITING THE PAST, RETHINKING THE PRESENT: IRONICAL  
ASPECTS OF REREADING „MINOR” FORERUNNERS IN MARIN  
SORESCU AND MIRCEA CĂȚĂRESCU’S THEORETICAL, CRITICAL  
AND LITERARY TEXTS**

**Sorin IAGĂRU-DINA\***

**Abstract:** *The aim of my paper is to give a glance on how the purposes of novelty and delimitation from the current literary code (perceived as obsolete, restrictive, thus no longer appropriate) can be achieved by resorting to so-called “minor” literature made up by remote forerunners. Modern and Postmodern writers found delight and precious resources in the naïve, Premodern poetry of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century, illustrating their fascination both in theory (with critical texts and essays centered on old Romanian poetry) and in practice (the typical Postmodernist process of parodic intertextuality). The main authors I intend to discuss are Marin Sorescu and Mircea Cărtărescu, each of them having his particular manner of relating to Preromantic “minor” writers. What I shall try to highlight is the ironic dimension contained in this unexpected revival of the interest taken in the works of the modest pioneers of Modernity. Is this recollection of the “old ones” humorous and innocent? Is there a lasting distance which separates these inventive, anti-canon poets from their forerunners? The answer is expected to be affirmative, but there still are nuances to be enlightened, such as the distinction between innocent humor and blasé irony in reading the “fathers” of Romanian Modernism.*

**Key words:** *intertextuality; forerunners; humor*

Much has been said about the Postmodernism’s ways of relating to former literary movements and to what has been broadly denominated as *tradition*. Pointing out the Postmodern’s dialogical relation with the *Past*, conceived as a valuable source and no more as an enemy, has become nowadays a cliché. The public has been accustomed to a great extent with concepts like “critical revisiting” or ironic dialogue with the past (Hutcheon, 2003: 4) thanks to theorists and philosophers such as Ihab Hassan, Linda Hutcheon or Jean-François Lyotard who have frequently brought these notions into light. However, Postmodernism, like any artistic movement, despite its skeptical attitude towards radical transformation, emerged and grew as a response to the current, canonical literary forms perceived as no longer representative for the new sensibility of the ‘80’s. What the new generation of writers of that time could no longer accept was the Modernist vanity and elitism, the belief in hard concepts like truth, authenticity, genius and others. But, unlike Romanticism or Vanguardism, the postmodern artist aimed to maintain its basic principle of openness toward otherness, aware of the fact that he ran incessantly the risk of gliding himself exactly in the flaws he had disapproved of: radicalism, stubbornness and pride. It is not surprising, therefore, that Modernism is not brutally rejected, the term *Postmodern* being itself a proof in this regard, as Ihab Hassan noticed in his essay, *Toward a Concept of Postmodernism*: “The word postmodernism sounds not only awkward, uncouth; it evokes

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what it wishes to surpass or suppress, modernism itself. The term thus contains its enemy within, as the terms romanticism and classicism, baroque and rococo, do not.”

Taking into consideration Marin Sorescu’s taste for “minor” writers, superficially treated and perceived as insignificant by posterity, one can draw a comparison between Sorescu’s analyses of Premodern poets and Mircea Cărtărescu’s theoretical and critical point of view expressed in his study, *Postmodernismul românesc (The Romanian Postmodernism)*, where he states and enlarges upon the idea of revisiting old literature as a means of nourishing Postmodern aesthetic production, discovering unexpected forerunners and anticipations for current literary devices such as intertextuality or metafiction. Focusing on their particular manner of discussing this range of writers we shall be able to reach substantial conclusions regarding the beliefs which motivate each of them to undermine the obsolete distinction between minor and major literature. Because, as the Romanian critic Mircea Martin asserted on Paul Valéry’s essays, the poet-critic „scrie despre sine scriind despre alți autori, se vede pe sine multiplicat.[...] Propriile lui obsesii sunt regăsite în operele lor.”<sup>1</sup> (Martin, 2017: 105)

Undoubtedly, Marin Sorescu loved to swim against the tide. This was probably the main reason why he constantly preferred to pay attention to those sections of Romanian literature that had been neglected in favour of some far less valuable productions of contemporary authors. In his *Preface to Biblioteca de poezie românească (Library of Romanian Poetry)*, he states his goal clearly: „Cei prea vechi, cei vechi și cei pre(eminescieni) trebuiesc feriți de uitare [...] există o mulțime de mici maeștri fără noroc, sau cu ghinionul de a fi fost eclipsați de alții.”<sup>2</sup> (Sorescu, 1997: 8). The volume consists of articles, most of them published in *Revista de Istorie și Teorie Literară (Magazine of Literary History and Theory)* which intended to build together an alternative history of Romanian poetry from Ovidius (assimilated as a vernacular poet due to his staying on the Tomitan lands), passing through Eminescu and Arghezi (thus, through Romanticism and Modernism) and reaching the contemporary poetry. The project was not finished, as Marin Sorescu passed away one year later after having written the preface from which we quoted above. One should retain, however, that this anthology is to be read as a means of pleading for our neglected literature. *Minors are prevailing (Minorii sunt majoritari)* is the title which encompasses six articles containing the short biographical presentation and the literary analysis of Premodern poets such as Alexandru Sihleanu, Dimitrie Dăscălescu, Ioan Catina, Vasile Aaron and others. This attempt to bring such obscure names into the public’s attentions rings a bell to the readers who are acquainted with Mihai Eminescu’s poem, *Epigonii (The Epigons)*, where the poet evokes and heaps praise on minor forerunners like Daniil Scavinschi, Barbu Paris Mumuleanu, Ienăchiță Văcărescu and others. There is, however, another aspect which the two literary tributes have in common: the admiration of the past implies a critique of the present. In Sorescu’s case, the major problem of his

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<sup>1</sup> “writes about himself by writing about other authors, he sees himself multiplied [...]. His own obsessions are reflected in their works.”

<sup>2</sup> “The very old poets and the pre-eminescians must be protected from oblivion [...]. There are plenty of small, unlucky masters, or having been cursed with staying in the shadow of other fellows”.

contemporaries is their lack of persistent enthusiasm relating to the books they read, a fear of being fascinated by them and a tendency to forget and replace them hastily with something else: „E păcat că ne sâstisim foarte repede de orice. E un viciu național”<sup>1</sup>, claims the poet-critic in his *Preface*. What Marin Sorescu intends to redefine is the reading experience, and the best material to sustain his ideal profile of the open, emphatic reader, is represented by Romanian Premodern poetry, thus, by a marginal artistic production which needs to be reassessed as valuable. We shall see, furthermore, that this revival of remote literary figures is not devoid of ironical accents, since the essayist, a cultivated and refined intellectual of the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, could not afford to “suspend his incredulity”, as Coleridge would say, to such extent as to become naïve.

On the other hand, Mircea Cărtărescu’s motivation is quite different. His aim is not to demonstrate that the texts he refers to in his study, *Postmodernismul românesc (Romanian Postmodernism)*, are endowed with literary value and are worth reading for themselves. The writer, in his role of postmodern theoretician, establishes a set of criteria connected to the literary movement he wishes to describe and selects his material according to them. In other words, his attempt of bringing old and Premodern Romanian literature into the foreground is restricted to those features which bear a striking resemblance with devices used by Postmodernist writers: “M-a atras, din perspectivă postmodernă, bizareria, iregularul, ludicul, uneori teratologicul unor texte din «subteranul» literaturii române, care strălucesc uneori, scoase la suprafață, asemenea unor cristaline flori de mină. O mică, dar poate sugestivă colecție de astfel de ciudățenii, unele mai cunoscute, altele obscure(...)”(Cărtărescu, 1999: 245)<sup>2</sup>. Cărtărescu seizes and admires the ambiguity of old chronicles, in which truth and fiction are intermingled. His satisfaction with these narrative constructions which surpass the traditional distinction *mimesis* versus *phantasia* is triggered by the postmodern program of breaking with the illusory idea that fiction can reflect reality. Linda Hutcheon clearly describes this process in her book: Postmodernism “does not so much deny as contest the «truths» of reality and fiction – the human constructs by which we manage to live in our world. Fiction does not mirror reality; not does it reproduce it. It cannot” (Hutcheon, *op. cit.*: 40). Postmodern writer cannot feel at ease with radical distinctions or with values imposed on him as unquestionable certainties. He can accept, however, systematization, hierarchies, sets of values, but only as human inventions stemmed from a natural need of coherence, as the same Linda Hutcheon pointed out:

One of the things we must be open to listening to is what I have called the ex-centric, the off-center. Postmodernism questions centralized, totalized, hierarchized, closed systems: questions, but does not destroy (cf. Bertens 1986, 46-7). It acknowledges the human urge to make order, while pointing out that the orders we create are just that: human constructs, not natural or given entities.(*ibidem.*: 41)

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<sup>1</sup>“It is a pity that we get bored of everything very fast. It’s a national vice.”

<sup>2</sup> “I was attracted, from a postmodern perspective, by the bizarre, by the irregular, by the ludic, sometimes by the teratology of some texts from the «underground» of Romanian literature, which sometimes shine, brought to grass, like crystal clear minecraft flowers. A small, but maybe suggestive collection of such oddities, some of them quite popular, others unknown.”



Mircea Cărtărescu follows this aesthetic and philosophical pattern, selecting exactly the qualities which fit this approach: „Indeterminare, interregnum, ambiguitate, plăcere – întâlnim toate aceste trăsături, atât de tipice postmodernității, chiar în zorii ficțiunii scrise, ceea ce arată, cum studiul de față nu a încetat să afirme, legătura subterană, dincolo de marea buclă a modernității, dintre lumea haotică a scrierilor premoderne și postmodernitate”(Cărtărescu, *op. cit.*: 246)<sup>1</sup> (the author refers to the Moldavian chronicler Ion Neculce’s *O samă de cuvinte*, a volume of short stories whose authenticity in relation to historical truth remains uncertain and is admitted to be so by the narrator himself from the beginning).

While for Mircea Cărtărescu old and Premodern texts are instruments of endowing Postmodernism with the age which it seemed to lack, in Marin Sorescu’s essays the minor writers are read, commented and rediscovered in order to call in question the excessive focus of the public (including here the specialized public, the literary critics) on canonical or contemporary literature. Restricted to the peak of Modern Romanian poetry, Mihai Eminescu, the understanding of modernity is not wide enough: Preeminescienii trebuie menționați și analizați toți, claims the poet-critic. Valoarea lor e mult mai mare decât am bănuî. Sunt zecile de pârâiașe modeste, dar importante care contribuie la crearea fluviului.”(Sorescu, *op. cit.*: 8)<sup>2</sup>.

Probably the most noticeable difference between Marin Sorescu and Mircea Cărtărescu’s comments on old and Premodern Romanian literature lays in the disposure of the ironical accents. Sorescu’s irony sets its sight on part of his contemporaries (the unskillful ones, imposed as valuable by the politicized critique of the time), to whom he opposes the enjoyable writing of Hrisoverghi, Catina or Țichindeal: „Oricum, schimb bucurios mediocri din secolul douăzeci contra minori din secolele optsprezece-nouăsprezece”<sup>3</sup>. The poet-critic is ironical whenever he needs to claim, like the main character of his play, *Iona*, that everything is „the other way round“. There is, indeed, here an implied anti-establishment attitude which might encourage one to label Sorescu’s conception as postmodern. Yet, despite his “fear of the sublime“, of fixing forever in a static formula”, as Stefan Borbély claimed in an interesting article, Marin Sorescu clearly rejects the values he cannot internalize such as the illusion of progress, social conventions, routine, artificiality of Modern society. On the contrary, Mircea Cărtărescu, discussing premodern poetry, does not aim at dropping a hint on the narrow-minded part of contemporary critique, public and literature. He only seeks to strengthen the validity of postmodern literary devices by showing that they have come a long way and, thus, they are, unexpectedly, traditional,

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<sup>1</sup> “Indetermination, interregnum, ambiguity, pleasure – we come across all these features, so typical for postmodernity, even at the very beginning of written fiction, which reveals, as the present study has incessantly claimed, the underground connection, beyond the great loop of Modernity, between the chaotic world of Premodern works and Postmodernity.”

<sup>2</sup> “Eminescu’s forerunners ought to be all mentioned and analysed. They are much more valuable than one could think. They are the dozens of streams, humble but important, which contribute to the formation of the river.”

<sup>3</sup> “Anyway, I happily exchange 20<sup>th</sup> Century poor poets for 18-19<sup>th</sup> Century minors.”

with strong and old roots in the vernacular literary soil. Cărtărescu's motivation of analyzing and labeling as Postmodern *avant la lettre* textual strategies from *Țiganiada* is linked to the universal urge of every literary movement to find forerunners, models, anticipators who are expected to make it stronger and somehow to legitimize it. Therefore, Mircea Cărtărescu draws a series of challenging comparisons and finds links between *Catastihul amorului* and E. A. Poe, Costache Olăreanu or Italo Calvino:

Ca și în cazul *Principiului poetic* al lui E. A. Poe, hotărârea de a scrie este lucidă și pragmatică, începînd cu alegerea speciei literare. "Avem, într-adevăr, de-a face cu prima *metaficțiune* din proza românească și cea mai serioasă de pînă la, poate, *Ficțiune și infanterie* a lui Costache Olăreanu. Scrierea continuă cu un remarcabil capitol despre «arta de a începe un roman» (...) în cel mai pur spirit metaromanesc (așa cum o va face Italo Calvino în *Dacă într-o seară de iarnă un călător...*) [...] (Cărtărescu, *op. cit.*: 257) <sup>1</sup>.

However, all these elements of intertextuality or metafiction and the debate that writers initiate on their own writing methods and composition are treated by Mircea Cărtărescu as exceptions which disobeyed the rules of the traditional narration and dismissed the obligation of reflecting or remaking reality. They are accidental anticipations of Postmodernist formula just as chroniclers reached unexpected expressive effects having no intention to create literary texts. This means, thus, that the texts brought into light in *Postmodernismul românesc* did not perform the mimetic function (reflecting reality, being true-to-life, having the classical structure of a story, following a plot), but it is equally true that they did not aim to surpass a literary code. Their otherness was not the result of a structured attempt to renew literature. It was only the achievement of some authors who dared more than their contemporaries. Cărtărescu is aware of this situation and in his awareness is to be found the famous postmodern irony which defines every attempt to rediscover older literary texts.

Marin Sorescu, on the other hand, is not less aware of the limits that the premodern writers he comments had to cope with, both as a result of the language which, at that time, hadn't been polished enough in order to allow great expressive effects and also due to their own endowment. He frequently stresses, therefore, the great tolerance required in studying these mere scriptwriters, the willingness to turn a blind eye on the deficiencies which are to be found in large number in the seventeenth and eighteenth century's old versified chronicles, for example: „S-a trecut prea ușor, în istoriile literare, peste molozul, uneori disperant, într-adevăr, al cronicilor versificate. Ca în orice moloz, însă, se include și noțiunea de zidire. Aceste creații de început mustesc de toate promisiunile”(Sorescu, *op.*

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<sup>1</sup>“Just like in E. A. Poe's *Poetic Principle*, the decision of writing is lucid and pragmatic, starting from the selection of the literary species.“. „We discuss, indeed, about the first *metafiction* from the Romanian prose and the most serious one before, let's say, Costache Olăreanu's *Fiction and Infantry*. His work contains, furthermore, a chapter about «the art of starting a novel (...) in the very metanovelistic manner (as Italo Calvino was to do in *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler...*)”.

*cit.*: 111)<sup>1</sup>. What the poet-critic confesses to feel for Premodern writers is a combination of mercy and admiration: „Dacă ar citi (n.a. Iorga) unele cronici rimate de astăzi, furia i-ar fi chiar mai mare și s-ar răzbuna, firește, tot pe bieții stihuitori de demult. Dar mie îmi e milă de ei – mi-e milă de literatura aceasta, aproape nesărată, totuși gustoasă, ca o lacrimă care ne ajunge din trecut pe buze.”(*ibidem*: 105)<sup>2</sup>.

Is there any real point in studying this poor Preromantic literature, given the fact that Sorescu himself describes it in the terms we quoted above? The answer could be found in the emphasis that the anthologist lays on the merit of this early Romanian poetry to have led the way for Modern literature; authors like Costache Stamati, Dimitrie Țichindeal, Ioan Catina, Alexandru Hrisoverghi and others established a cultural climate. Their contribution is to be perceived, therefore, as a collective effort, beyond their sometimes more than questionable personal talent. There is a certain dose of irony, indeed, in this manner of relating to literary tradition, but Sorescu's irony is rather that kind of empathy and affection felt for the humble, for the marginalized. Mircea Cărtărescu's ironical perspective consists, to a great extent, in the different understanding of those literary devices which the remote anticipators had cultivated. According to the postmodern principles, tradition can be assimilated, but provided that the writer is aware of its obsolete nature. Returning to Marin Sorescu's approach, it is worthy to add here that the poet-critic, in his attempt to invite the public to reconsider the importance of Premodern Romanian literature, takes into account its overall vibe consisting of all those “minor” voices which, put together, built the revolutionary lyrical message: „Operele la care se face aluzie, luate separat, nu înseamnă, îți zici, mare lucru. Dar puse unele lângă altele *fac o literatură*. E literatura în care dacă se scufundă un mare talent, poate ieși un geniu” (Sorescu, *op. cit.*: 199)<sup>3</sup>. The minor literature described as most likely to reach and convey a coherent, unitary message is an idea which also crossed the mind of the two theorists, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. They stated in their study, *Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature*, that the absence of masters, the lack of great talents gives way to a neat, common action, with no voices that might swim against the tide:

Într-adevăr, tocmai pentru că talentele nu abundă într-o literatură minoră, nu se întrunesc condițiile pentru o *enuțare individuală*, care ar fi aceea a unui «maestru» sau altul și care ar putea fi separată de *enuțarea colectivă*. Astfel încât această stare de raritate a talentelor este, de fapt, benefică, permițând să se conceapă altceva decât o literatură a

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<sup>1</sup> “Literary histories have treated superficially the sometimes really annoying débris of the versified chronics. However, in all cases, debris implies the notion of building. These creations of the beginning teem with all promises.”

<sup>2</sup> “If he read (namely Nicolae Iorga) some versified chronics of our days, his anger would be even greater and he would take his revenge, of course, on the same poor old versifiers. But I feel pity for them – I feel pity for this literature, almost vapid, yet tasty, like a tear which falls from the past on our lips.”

<sup>3</sup> “The works hinted at, taken individually, do not mean, one might say, great deal. But altogether they make up a *literature*. It is that kind of literature thanks to which, once dived in it, a talented writer can turn into a genius.”

maeștrilor: ceea ce scriitorul spune de unul singur constituie deja o acțiune comună (...).” (Deleuze, Guattari, 2007: 29)<sup>1</sup>.

In order to provide aesthetic satisfaction and to reveal the contribution it has brought to the evolution of Modern Romanian literature, the poetry of the Eighteenth Century needs to be approached as a whole, patiently and with tolerance – this is Marin Sorescu’s belief and he makes out a case for Văcărești, Gheorghe Asachi, Constantin Bălăcescu and others by a sustained close-reading, offering a detailed literary analysis, with plenty of quotations, in his colloquial and expressive style and, of course, with a brief introduction of the author’s biography, often written with humour and even with mild irony. Mircea Cărtărescu, on the other hand, uses irony as a way of avoiding hard concepts, ultimate judgements, grandiloquence, exploiting, thus, its function of loosening the perception on things in general, as Vladimir Jankêlêvich stated in his study, *The Irony*, referring to the recreational function of irony: „ironia dezvăluie falsul sublim, exagerările ridicule și coșmarul mitologiilor lipsite de sens. [...] pentru că în faptele noastre există o tendință spre deprindere și idee fixă.” (Jankêlêvich, 1994: 137)<sup>2</sup>.

As a conclusion, both Mircea Cărtărescu, with his intention to surpass Modernist understanding of literature, story, ultimate truth and rigorously structured composition, and Marin Sorescu, who revisited Premodern poetry as a form of his older preoccupation of breaking with mainstream literature and signaling the ignored value of works labeled as secondary, are relevant examples of poet-critics who paid attention to remote forerunners and invited the public to enjoy them, confirming once again that the revival of the past can occur at any time, in lots of forms and with a great variety of purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> “Indeed, given the fact that a minor literature does not abound in gifted writers, the conditions are not fulfilled for an *individual enunciation* which would be that of a certain master and which could be separated from *collective enunciation*. So that this state of rarity of the talented authors is, in fact, beneficial, allowing the creation of something different from a literature of the masters: what writers says by himself represents already a common action(...).”

<sup>2</sup> “[...] irony reveals the false sublime, the ludicrous exaggerations and the nightmare of the meaningless mythologies[...] as in our deeds there is a tendency to detachment and obstinacy”.

**VALENZE SEMANTICO-SIMBOLICHE DELL'IRONIA NEL  
ROMANZO „COMPITO PER DOMANI” (TEMĂ PENTRU ACASĂ) DI  
NICOLAE DABIJA**

**Olga IRIMCIUC\***

**Abstract:** *Irony, one of the most significant artistic tools, is used to highlight the controversial difference between reality, often cruel and absurd, and the desired world, which is an image of our expectations, cultural models and ideal relationships. In Nicolae Dabija's novel "Homework", irony takes on different forms and meanings. It portrays a senseless and overwhelming conflictual drama between an individual and their story, between normality and total madness. This is found in the way the characters are developed, in the intonation patterns of the narrative voice, but also in the various structures of the poetic language. Irony is even insinuated through the fascinating and engaging dialogue between the text and the reader, helping the latter to overcome, in an almost purifying way, the deep pain caused by the fate of the characters. Furthermore, irony is compared to a golden thread that mixes the narration of the story with a deep poetic lyricism, creating a formula of unmistakable originality.*

**Keywords:** *irony; lyrical storytelling; historical novel*

L'ironia rappresenta uno degli strumenti artistici più eloquenti per evidenziare il carattere polemico dell'incontro tra la realtà, spesso crudele ed assurda, ed il mondo desiderato, una specie d'immagine disegnata dalle nostre aspettative e contornata da modelli culturali e relazioni ideali.

Trattandosi di una forma sottile del comico, l'ironia „non esiste al di fuori di ciò che è propriamente umano”(Bergson, 2008: p.38) e manifesta uno spiccato carattere sociale, in quanto traduce in un linguaggio poetico la posizione critica di un gruppo verso un fatto interpretato come inaccettabile dal punto di vista etico od estetico. L'inconfondibile particolarità di questa forma comica si esprime attraverso un netto distacco dall'universo degli affetti, considerando addirittura l'emozione il suo „più grande nemico” (*ibidem*, p.39). L'indifferenza rappresenterebbe, in questo modo, un assiduo tentativo di abbandonare l'oggettività del mondo per annullare definitivamente la sua oppressione ed assurdità, perché „nell'ironia il soggetto vuole continuamente uscire dall'oggetto, e cioè gli riesce col prendere ad ogni istante coscienza dell'irrealtà dell'oggetto”(Kierkegaard, 1995: p.259). In virtù di quanto esposto, si può considerare l'ironia come un'immancabile chiave di lettura perfettamente adatta ad interpretare il codice poetico dei testi letterari che affrontano la tematica storica, tra i quali, un posto di rilievo occupa anche il romanzo *Compito per domani*<sup>1</sup> dello scrittore romeno, originario della Bassarabia, Nicolae Dabija.

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<sup>1</sup> La prima edizione in romeno del romanzo *Temă pentru acasă* risale al 2009. In un decennio di vita, il libro ha conosciuto un importante successo, essendo considerato addirittura *il libro più letto nella Repubblica Moldova negli ultimi cinquanta anni*.

Il romanzo è stato tradotto e pubblicato in diverse lingue: francese, inglese, bulgaro, tedesco, ungherese, ecc. L'edizione italiana è stata realizzata dalla casa editrice Graphe.it nel 2018.

La trama del libro si sviluppa intorno ad un'innocente storia d'amore, raccontata in un linguaggio quasi romantico, ambientata in un contesto storico di un'intensa drammaticità: l'annessione nel giugno del 1940 della romena Bassarabia all'Unione Sovietica. Indubbiamente è stata una scelta vincente collocare la narrazione in questo particolare periodo storico, in quanto rappresenta, per tantissime persone originarie della Bassarabia, una ferita ancora aperta, un dolore ormai cronicizzato, non del tutto compreso e superato. Il romanzo *Compito per domani* appare come un primo tentativo di *narrare* una *storia individuale* (che, in virtù della sua somiglianza con tanti destini, diventa la storia di un popolo), agendo con il distacco necessario per creare un universo fittizio autonomo ed aperto. In questo modo, la narrazione tenta di raggiungere una posizione di oggettività, nonostante sia strettamente ancorata ai tanti ricordi ed emozioni personali. Il tentativo si è materializzato abilmente, grazie all'utilizzo dell'ironia e del lirismo, un linguaggio consueto per un affermato poeta come Nicola Dabija, da sempre "irrimediabilmente accaparrato dalla voglia di metafore e dalla tentazione di vivere nel mito"(A. Bantoş, 1998: p.533).

L'ironia assume diverse forme testuali e strutturali, aiutando il narratore ad evidenziare in modo sottile la drammaticità del conflitto o l'assurdità del contesto, oppure contribuendo alla costruzione dei personaggi carismatici ed indimenticabili.

L'abbinamento dell'ironia con il lirismo in alcuni passaggi descrittivi offre all'autore la possibilità di comunicare, indirettamente, ad un attento lettore, gli indizi su un mondo che sta cambiando in modo violento e drammatico. In questa chiave, si deve interpretare la descrizione della giornata del 28 giugno 1940, la data in cui l'esercito sovietico ha invaso il territorio della Bassarabia. Il passaggio si concretizza con una constatazione, ispirata soprattutto agli elementi intuitivi di una situazione inedita: "*Era una mattina speciale, diversa da tutte le altre*"(Dabija, 2018: p.29). Inizialmente, il testo induce a collegare l'originalità della mattinata descritta, al grande impegno e totale dedizione agricola dei personaggi, indaffarati nella mietitura del grano. Il narratore descrive l'attività dei contadini in un modo quasi idillico, evidenziando la ritualità di ogni gesto:

Prima di annientare le spighe con le falci, gli uomini si fermavano per un attimo al confine della piantagione, come davanti a un altare destinato a facilitarli la comunicazione con il cielo azzurro, con i fiordalisi spuntati nel campo e con la terra nera come il carbone (*ibidem*).

La perfetta sintonia, basata su un rispetto ancestrale tra l'uomo e la natura, raggiunge l'apoteosi nel momento in cui i contadini cominciano a cantare, generando un'inedita sinfonia di voci e suoni:

Il fischio delle falci, la sistemazione delle spighe in fasci, l'allegria delle donne, gli scherzi degli uomini, le risate dei giovani, lo sbuffare dei cavalli che pascolavano accanto ai carri lasciati sotto gli alberi: tutto quanto si mescolava con le note di canzoni così ancestrali e così nuove (*ibidem*: pp. 31-32).

Il canto unisce la tradizione con l'attualità, proiettando il lavoro dei contadini in uno spazio quasi atemporale, dove domina l'armonia e l'imperturbabilità. Il lirismo rinforza ancora di più l'idea di uno spazio mitico e solenne, accentuando in seguito l'elemento perturbatore che distrugge improvvisamente il contesto creato dall'autore:

Bruscamente, il canto si congelò sulle labbra delle ragazze, gli uomini interruppero il lavoro, stringendo fortemente le falci nelle mani come per difendersi, le donne rimasero impietrite con i fasci di grano tra le braccia e con gli occhi puntati là dove arrivavano quei tuoni cupi. Poi, tutti videro come marciando nella pianura, avanzavano nel campo di grano, cannoni, grandi come uomini, che puntavano il cielo (*ibidem*: p.32).

L'arrivo dei carri armati si manifesta come una nota dissonante nella sinfonia idillica, obbligando il narratore a cambiare anche il registro stilistico. In questo modo la simmetria tra i due campi lessico-semantiche dell'umano e della natura viene annullata improvvisamente con l'introduzione dei termini militari (cannoni, carri armati, mitragliatrici, ecc.). L'atmosfera di pace svanisce sotto i segnali delle minacce ancora sconosciute. E proprio in questo momento, il narratore utilizza l'*inversione*, uno dei procedimenti considerati da H. Bergson utili per creare diverse forme del comico (Bergson, *op.cit.*: p.90). Inespugnabilmente, gli elementi bellici, espressione di pericolo e di terrore, si improvvisano evocatori di felicità:

Mentre Stefan Razesu si chinava per raccogliere alcune spighe, il mastodonte ferrato che concludeva la fila raggiunse i falciatori e si fermò di colpo. La testa di un militare uscì dal portello aperto della torretta e li salutò con un grande sorriso:

- Buongiorno, compagni! Gioite! Da adesso siete liberi.

Pronunciò queste parole con una gioia irrefrenabile e poi sparì nuovamente nella pancia ferrosa del carro armato [...] (Dabija, *op.cit.*: pp.32-33).

Lo scambio dei ruoli tra *l'apparente felicità*, promossa da un regime disumano ed ottuso, e la *vera ancestrale gioia di vita* invocata attraverso il canto pastorale, diventa una pungente, sottile e premonitrice espressione di critica sociale e di ironia che "si accentua lasciandosi sollevare sempre più in alto dall'idea del bene quale dovrebbe essere..." (Bergson, *op.cit.*: p.110).

Nicolae Dabija impiega, inoltre, l'ironia nella struttura testuale del romanzo per la descrizione di alcuni personaggi. Anche in questo caso la sua funzionalità si manifesta sotto forma di condanna sociale, attraverso la ridicolizzazione di alcuni tratti fisici o psichici del personaggio. Uno dei ritratti più memorabili da questo punto di vista è quello del colonnello Kudreavtzev, il direttore del lager di Zarjanka e un fervido difensore del regime stalinista. Il narratore descrive il personaggio partendo dai suoi tratti fisici:

Il capo del lager, Kudreavtzev, era un uomo basso, con i capelli rossi e il viso rotondo che sembrava privo di tratti, come se li avessero cancellati con una gomma. Era impossibile ricordare il suo volto, anche se lo si fosse guardato per anni, proprio perché non si vedeva (Dabija, *op.cit.*: p.92).

Il ritratto inizia con una formula del tutto banale, indicando l'altezza del colonnello, il colore dei capelli e la forma del viso, per scivolare, verso la fine della frase, in una affermazione metaforica di un *viso "privo di tratti"*. Si tratta di un'immagine piena di significati e degna di un grande artista del verbo. Cosa può suggerire in modo più evidente il carattere disumano e assurdo di un potere politico se non il ritratto del suo fedele servitore *senza volto*? Come si può rappresentare meglio l'assoluta mediocrità e mancanza di empatia

di una persona se non cancellandogli ogni tratto del suo viso? Kudreavtzev, *l'uomo senza volto*, appare come un personaggio ridicolo, in quanto sembra un oggetto e non un essere umano e, come affermava H. Bergson, “noi ridiamo ogniqualvolta una persona ci dà l'impressione di una cosa”(Bergson, *op.cit.*: p.70). Ma l'ufficiale sovietico, proprio a causa della totale mancanza di tratti distintivi, si iscrive a gran fatica anche nella categoria degli oggetti, scendendo fino al livello di totale nullità. Il processo di degradazione accentua in modo inequivocabile l'abisso tra ciò che il lettore si aspetta di trovare in un personaggio che occupa un ruolo amministrativo e sociale di rilievo e la nuda e misera realtà. L'immagine creata è impregnata profondamente dal ridicolo che nasce “quando ci si presenta una cosa, prima rispettata, come mediocre e vile”(ibidem: p.108). Il narratore, senza alcuna pietà verso il suo personaggio (o forse verso il potere che lui rispecchia), affila insistentemente la lama dell'ironia, continuando il suo ritratto nello stesso linguaggio di apparente banalità, con latenti inserti di antitesi poetica: “L'uomo senza volto era, però, pieno di grandi ambizioni”(Dabija, *op.cit.*: p.92); “Kudreavtzev aveva tante cose: discorsi, potere, ricchezza, schiavi. Gli mancava solo l'immaginazione”(ibidem: p.93). Il linguaggio e la sintassi delle frasi diventano un'unica e assoluta espressione della verità, mettendo insieme gli elementi che rischiano ancora di ingannare: in questo modo, l'ignoranza intellettuale ed affettiva del direttore del lager rende nulle anche le sue *grandi ambizioni*; invece, l'incapacità di associare in modo razionale gli elementi della realtà, senza ridurli ad un livello strettamente materiale (*tante cose*), lo rende immune anche all'influenza di una possibile intelligenza emotiva (infatti, *Kudreavtzev è privo di immaginazione*). Anche se il colonnello ha il ruolo di gestire un lager, il vero prigioniero, il vero schiavo è lui, perché una persona senza la capacità di sognare e di progettare le proprie aspirazioni in uno spazio e tempo immaginari non potrà mai essere libera! Sarebbe, probabilmente, questo uno dei messaggi che Nicolae Dabija vorrebbe trasmettere ai lettori del romanzo *Compito per domani*, un messaggio foggato nel distacco e nella ri-scrittura critica di una realtà storica a lungo interpretata in modo erroneo, perché anche “l'ironia... nasce dalla consapevolezza del potere della ri-descrizione”(Rorty, 2001: p.109).

Una delle espressioni maggiori e suggestive dell'ironia si concretizza attraverso la realizzazione di un personaggio insolito, ispirato ad un'importante personalità russa del primo Novecento, Osip Mandel'stam<sup>1</sup>. Per ragioni implicite ed inerenti all'immaginario letterario, N. Dabija ignora la realtà storica, inserendo nel romanzo un personaggio che si ispira al grande poeta acmeista, collocandolo nel 1940 nel carcere di Zarjanka, accanto a Mihai Ulmu, il protagonista dell'opera.

Osip Mandel'stam simbolizza, in questo modo, non solo il destino dell'intelligenza russa, disposta a contrastare ogni tipo di potere dittatoriale ma anche l'espressione dei valori europei nella Russia del Novecento, è “un missionario dell'Europa, è un suo custode”(Novodvorskaja, 2009: p.255). Attraverso la presenza di questo personaggio nel romanzo, la storia di Mihai e Maria si configura come il dramma di un popolo (romeno), di un'intera comunità storico-culturale (Europa) e addirittura di tutta l'umanità. Nella struttura narrativa, Osip Mandel'stam rappresenta la voce critica, nella

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<sup>1</sup> Osip Mandel'stam (1891 -1938) è un grande poeta, prosatore e saggista russo, vittima delle rappresaglie staliniste.



veste di un pazzo, buffone, ormai consolidata dalla convenzione letteraria europea. Non a caso, Mihai Ulmu lo conosce come un *bizzarro detenuto* che si avvicinava a diverse persone parlando loro in latino:

Così Mihai conobbe Mandel'stam. Osip Èmil'evič Mandel'stam, professore, poeta e filosofo.

Al poeta faceva piacere discutere con Ulmu. Parlavano la lingua antica dei patrizi per ore intere, ma, su suggerimento di Mandel'stam, lo facevano a voce bassa.

“Perché?”, chiese Mihai.

“Potrebbero facilmente accusarci di essere spie dell'Impero Romano, nonostante sia scomparso da millecinquecento anni” (Dabija, *op.cit.*: p.85).

La scelta del latino come lingua di comunicazione diventa una forma di selezione, di individuazione dei veri interlocutori, capaci di trasmettere e ricevere dei significati razionali ed emotivi. Il latino rappresenta, ovviamente, uno dei pilastri fondamentali dell'Europa, ma non possiamo dimenticare che si tratta comunque di una lingua morta. Il carattere eccentrico di Mandel'stam suggerisce al lettore la sterilità totale della società stalinista, incapace di generare delle strutture relazionali e comunicative, se non nel modo sovversivo ed attraverso un idioma antico. L'ironia viene, quindi, utilizzata per offrire al personaggio la possibilità di sentirsi libero, nonostante il contesto restrittivo, di sentirsi il protagonista del proprio destino, capace di pensare, emozionarsi e fare delle scelte in modo autonomo, di concepirsi come un essere umano, non come una marionetta nelle mani della storia. Nuovamente, il buffone, come espressione della voce critica della società, provoca il riso ma scandisce anche la pungente verità, in quanto “è la forma più comune dell'ironia dire seriamente quanto invece non si prende sul serio” (S. Kierkegaard, *op.cit.*: p.249), oppure non si vuole, per una scelta programmatica ed ideologica, prendere sul serio. In questo contesto, il ruolo testuale di Mandel'stam, nella sua condizione di *buffone-poeta*, assume un significato di rilevanza: far emergere le emozioni in uno spazio dogmatico e ostile, perché l'unico modo per resistere e rimanere uomo in “un mondo sospettoso, disperato, indifferente, agonizzante, malato di cattiveria”(Dabija, *op.cit.*: p.88) è di conservare la sincerità degli affetti, soprattutto, nella loro forma più estrema: la disperazione. In una delle conversazioni con Mihai sull'umanità e sulla poesia, Osip Mandel'stam gli consiglia:

“In questo posto al confine del mondo, tra la vita e la morte, le persone non sono diverse, ma lo diventano. Come le persone morse dai vampiri che si trasformano in seguito in vampiri a loro volta, così gli uomini deboli, aggrediti dalle bestie, si trasformano in bestie. La sofferenza unisce la gente, ma semina anche discordia. Non abbandonare, però, la disperazione!”, disse sorridendo, per aggiungere poi a voce bassa:

“Ho incontrato tante persone rimbecillite dalla disperazione, ma ancora di più dalla speranza. Quando starai malissimo, prega: *Signore, non portarmi via la disperazione!*”

“Perché?”

“Perché la disperazione significa ancora vita, il suo limite verso la morte, dopo di che viene il nulla”(ibidem: pp.88-89).

L'inconfondibile lirismo presente nel discorso del personaggio contribuisce ad una delimitazione quasi netta tra la meschinità e la violenza del mondo incattivito ed i valori di una società che crede ancora nella tradizione umanistica. L'ironia di Mandel'stam si nutre del suo lirismo, in quanto "per lui i vocabolari decisivi sono creazioni poetiche e non il frutto di una ricerca scrupolosa condotta secondo criteri prestabiliti" (Rorty, *op.cit.*: p.94). Un narratore sembra quasi investire il poeta con una missione nobile e messianica: trasformare il dolore lacerante di tante vite umane sacrificate dal potere nelle parole, per aprire, in questo modo, le porte verso il superamento del dramma, verso la liberazione. Secondo il filosofo americano R. Rorty, quest'azione catartica rappresenta un appannaggio quasi esclusivo del poeta, in quanto:

il dolore è un fenomeno non-linguistico, è ciò che unisce gli essere umani alle bestie prive di linguaggio. Di conseguenza le vittime della crudeltà, le persone che soffrono, non hanno molte risorse dal punto di vista linguistico. Ecco perché non esiste una voce degli oppressi o un linguaggio delle vittime. Il linguaggio che le vittime usavano prima non funziona più, e ora esse soffrono troppo per poterne mettere insieme uno nuovo. Pertanto dev'essere qualcun altro a descrivere con parole la loro situazione (*ibidem*: pp.114-115).

In conclusione, si deve affermare che nel romanzo *Compito per domani* di Nicolae Dabija, l'ironia assume diverse forme e significati, contribuendo alla delimitazione della drammaticità di un conflitto, insensato e stravolgente, tra l'individuo e la storia, tra la normalità e la pazzia totalitaria, diventando, in questo modo, un elemento dell'*arte della suggestione*, „difficile da individuare ma di profonda sottilità" (Dolgan, 1998: p.547), che rappresenta, secondo il critico romeno M. Dolgan, l'asse strutturale della poetica di N. Dabija. La ritroviamo nei meccanismi di costruzione dei personaggi, nelle sfumature intonazionali della voce narrante, ma anche a diversi livelli strutturali del linguaggio poetico. L'ironia penetra addirittura nell'affascinante e coinvolgente dialogo tra il testo ed il lettore, aiutando quest'ultimo a superare, in modo quasi catartico, il peso di un profondo dolore che avvolge il destino dei personaggi.

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## STYLISTIC DIMENSIONS OF THE TEACHINGS OF NEAGOE BASARAB TO HIS SON THEODOSIUS

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**Abstract:** Although minimized for a long time, Neagoe Basarab's work must be reconsidered in its original part by its special artistic value. The analysis on her full translation into Romanian language from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and not on the partially preserved source text, does not diminish the importance of the research (the *Cazania* of Varlaam, considered our first prose, is also a translation, ethically speaking. It is an exercise of displaying the artistic virtues of the Romanian language, before its formalization as a cult language in the church.

**Keywords:** manuscript; tropes; period; persuasion

1. In the studies on *The teachings of Neagoe Basarab to his son Theodosius*, although many appreciations have been made concerning to the artistic value of the original texts which were considered at the height of those proposed by the intertextuality specific to this work, analyses to show the artistic expressiveness at the level of language or style figures have been rarely performed. This is especially due to the fact that artistic language specialists have succeeded, after much effort, in establishing their place in the field of artistic creativity.

First of all, it is known that this is not a work of artistic finality, but a didactic one, according to the tradition of the universal parenetic literature. It has also been emphasized that it is a translation after Neagoe Basarab's original Slavonic. However, as far as the Slavonic version is concerned, the comments are very eloquent, most of the times with reference to the art of writing: "This way of education through pedagogical readings which were prepared with a real art and accompanied by the author's personal comments (...) is unique in the parenetic literature of Byzantium and of the Eastern world" (Mihăilă, 1996, p. LXXVII). The Russian philologist P.A. Lavrov believes that the artistic value of the text provides the voivode writer "a place of honor in the South Slavic literature" Ibidem, p. LXVII. Also, the Russian researcher A.I.Iamimirschi writes about Neagoe Basarab the following: "Excellent stylist, profound thinker and lucid moralist, the author voivode is above all a wise man" (Ibidem, p. LXVIII).

On many occasions, taking as an argument of authority from the patristic literature, Neagoe Basarab amplifies the figurative aspects. Thus, in Ioan Hrisostom's *Homily 69*, the repetition as a figure of speech is simple: *Listen to the men, listen to the men* - p. 98 - оуслышите жены, оуслышите мужіе (cf. Mihăilă, p. 242). In the Slavonic text, Neagoe Basarab greatly amplifies the repetition: *Listen to the women, listen to the men, listen to the emperors, listen to the kings, listen to the women, listen to the boyars, listen to all the ages* (Ibidem., p.243). In translation, the repetition has the coefficient 7, but the translator always

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puts the men on the first place in the complex structures: *Listen to the men, listen to the men* ... (p. 98).

Stylistic amplifications to the Slavonic text also occur in other parts of the manuscript translations. Thus, the text *dacă i-ar zice cineva să se îmbrace în zdrențele unui sărac* (if someone told him to get dressed in the rags of a poor) (the exact translation of the Slavonic text - Mihăilă, 1996, p. 245), appears amplified and more stylized in the old translation: *când ar zice cineva unui împărat să se îmbrace cu niște petece **rele și fărâmate** ale unui sărac* (when someone tells to an emperor to dress up with some **bad and crumpled** patches of a poor) (p. 99).

In pseudo-rhetorical or closed interrogations, where the mental contour also contains the formulation of responses, as in dialogued structures, the affective component is doubled by the rational one, thus, the translation becomes more faithful. This is observed by comparing the most recent and exact translation with that of the seventeenth century: O, nenorocire! O, misfortune! - Gh. Mihăila, 1996, p. 249 (O, mare nevoe și greutate! - sec. XVII, p. 123); Unde este frumusețea feței? Iată s-au înnegrit! (Unde iaste acum frumusețea obrazului? Iată s-au negrit); Unde este rumeneala cea frumoasă și unde sunt buzele cele roșii? Iată s-au vestejit! (Unde iaste rumeneala feței și buzele cele roșii? Iată s-au vestejit!).

The translator empathizes with the author, transposing himself to the affective area of the message, which, whenever he has the opportunity, he amplifies it, and to a sentence of relative complexity, he gives it periodic dimensions: *Pricepe, omule, cele spuse, cercetează mormintele, vezi oasele noastre și întoarce-te către tine și lăcrimează, înțelege ce sfârșit vei avea*" (Mihăilă, 1996, p. 249) - *Ia aminte și socotește, o, oame, acestor cuvinte ce fură grăite și caută în mormânte și vezi oasele noastre cum zac și-ți vino în gând și-n firea inimii tale și cugetă ce sfârșit vei să aibi și te întoarce cu lacrimi* (p. 124).

According to the analyses above, it is to be noted that the translator is in the rational and emotional substance of the work, respecting the specificity of the message, seeking to intensify as much as possible the force of impressing and persuading the recipient for a better self-training. 2. *The Teachings of Neagoe Basarab to his son Theodosie*, not being considered a poetic work, established through art gratuity, does not rely on the awareness of the expressive expression of the figures of speech. Therefore, even if all four types of metaboles (metaplasms, metataxemes, metasememes and metalogisms - cf. Dubois, 1974, pp. 41-42) can be identified in this large text, they do not have the same power in the creation of the message.

2.1. The metaplasms, which are the figures of speech formed at the phonological level, are of great importance in the poetic text, defining primarily the musicality of the verse (alliteration and assonance).

In a text in prose, the sequences and repetitions of sounds can be at random or can decide the rhythm in the segments of statements in the narrative structures.

Many of them are involved in the word configuration. Thus, the apheresis and apocope resizes the length of words. It may be invoked that they have no expressive value, as they represent the norm of the epoch, therefore, being a normal use of lexemes.

Most of them, however, are encountered in the form that has been imposed in the dominant norm (today's norm), which means that the oscillating use served to create

connotations of the message, depending on the diversity of the manuscripts and the idiostyle of the publishers.

Researchers of the  $\mu$  group distinguished between the figures of speech achieved by suppression (apheresis, syncope ...) and those achieved by adjunction (epenthesis, paragogue), and they also identified an area of interference (suppression-adjunction).

2.1.1. The apheresis seems to correspond to the principle of the language economy, either as a norm or as a stylistic deviation: : *călcară porunca* (p. 56); *prăjină naltă* (p. 85); *nu sã va putea potrivi* (p. 89); *sã nu te tinzi* (p. 110); *junghierii* (p. 114).

2.1.2. The same can be said about the apocrypha: *întocma* (p. 86); *degrab sã stricã* (p. 90); *fãr' de slugi* (p. 236); *pân'ce iaste* (p. 240); *asemene* (p. 111).

2.1.3. The syncope implies the elicitation of an interconsonantic vowel in an unstressed position: *înfrumșițatã* (p. 236). The most interesting situation is represented by the adjective *drept* (lat. *directus*), which often appears in accordance with the dominant rule (as it is today): *dreptu aceia*, *drepti* (p. 87); *drept aceia* (p. 159, 160, 162...). The evolution from Latin to Romanian meant, in the case of this adjective, the syncope of the unstressed vowel *i*, and the change of the consonant group (*directus* - *dirept* - *drept*).

However, in the text of the *Teachings*, there is also an unsyncopated, older form with a high degree of frequency: *pe direptate* (p. 6); *Dirept aceia* (300, 301, 302, 303). It should be noted, however, that the unsyncopated form is generalized in the conjunctive phrase *dirept aceia*, in the first annex of the *Teachings* ((*Cuvânt de învățatură al bunului creștin domn Neagoe Voivod, domnul Ungrovlahii, către 2 slugi credincioasele sale și dragi, carele se lepădară de lume și se dederă vieții călugărești*). There are 13 entries. The adjective *dirept* (4 entries) also appears only with its unsyncopated form.

2.1.4. The epenthesis, as a metaplasm carried out by adjunction, involves the introduction of a phoneme (most frequently a consonant but also a vowel), in the structure of the word: *meșterșugul* (p. 87), but *meșteșugul* (p. 241); *rumpe* (p. 131); *sã rumpe*; *sã sã rumpã* (p. 68). The pronoun *fiștecare*, *fiștecine* occurs only in this form.

For the demonstrative pronoun of differential distance ((*celălalt*, *cealaltă*), which has in its structure an epenthetic **I**, the translator or the copyists also places a vowel phoneme: *decât al domnului celuialalt*; *a celoralți domni* (p. 205).

2.1.5. Unlike the apocope, the paragogue adds a vowel, without the marking of any grammatical meaning, perhaps only from the needs of euphony, which is credible, since each of the exemplified words is also encountered outside this process: *deaciã* (p. 56); *acuma* (57); *acolea* (p. 61); *pretutindenea* (p. 84); *tuturora* (p. 90); *aicea* (p. 92); *nimenelea* (p. 97); *atuncea* (p. 248); *deacii* (p. 26); *tuturor* (p. 40); *acum* (p. 62); *acolo* (p. 217); *aici* (p. 151)...

2.2. Of all the metasemes, the most important figures of speech are: the epithet, the comparison, and the metaphor.

2.2.1. The epithet as the determinant of the name or verb must have the force to sensitize the reader's feeling or fantasy (cf. Vianu, 1955, p. 12). In fact, its role is to sensitize the notion, regardless of its nature: "It must embrace the pure idea, provide it with an imaginary garment, make it sensitive to the mind and imagination of the reader" (Duda, 2000, p.69).

Among the decorative epithets, the sublime ones must first be mentioned, with an insistent reference to the attributes that characterize the divine entities (God, Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary). Their role is rather persuasive than connotative-suggestive: *bărbatul cel sfânt și slăvit* (p. 84); *bunule și iubitoriule de oameni* (p.159); *dumnezeeștile scripturi* (p. 241); *cinstitele lor icoane* (p. 159); *Preacurata Lui Maică* (p. 159)

At the opposite end, a great number of epithets with the same persuasive role, but in contrast to the light of faith are the epithets that accumulate the dark colors of the devil, his tools and the dark paths of unbelief: *păgâni foarte răi și iuți* (p. 72); *amăgelile hicleanului diavol* (p. 242); *focul cel nestinsu și în viermii cei neadormiți* (p. 281); *tartarul cel rece și în vaetele cele neîncetate* (p. 281).

As far as the epithet is concerned, a certain persuasive evolution can be noticed in the uninterrupted game between the divinity strategies and those of the occult forces, but most of them know such a high frequency, enlisting themselves in the specificity of the Christian literature, so that the connotative force, pendulating between the qualifier and the determinant, seems diminished by the latter: : *niște meștersuguri frumoase și minunate* (p. 74); *cu fețele vesele și cu sufletele curate* (p. 69); *slugilor celor drepte și credincioase* (p. 85); *v-am dăruit cununi vecinice, împletite* (p. 280).

In addition to the epithets of another register that seem to be common (*va fi o grădină de flori* - p. 48; *pre cer de stele* - p. 84), there are also determinations at the limit between the ornant and the individualist: *jupânească mare și de neam vestit bolnavă spre moarte* (p. 74); *o împodobeste cu zăveze de in, subțiri și cusute..., caftanuri frumoase* (p. 99); *lucrurile cele nebune și dobitocești* (p. 99); *petece rele și fărâmate* (p. 99). On the other hand, there are others that remind us of the beauty of Dosoftei's combinations: *zăblae rupte și rele* (p. 99); *lucruri rele și grozave* (p. 100); *peștere strimte, cu fieri rele și cumplite* (p. 151); *ochii miei au rămas arși și pârlâți de jalea înfloririi tale* (p. 158); *avuștia inimii mele cea scumpă și lumina ochilor miei cea strălucitoare* (p. 159).

2.2.2. The comparison is a very common figure of speech in the text of the *Teachings*. There are also real comparisons, which have a connotative index close to zero, which has led some stylists to consider the comparison as a metalogism amongst the figures of thought and not as a metasememe among the tropes. (cf. *Dubois, 1974, p. 166*): *le tocni cum să cade* (p. 77); *cum sfātuise și zise ... așa vrea fi și fost* (p. 90); *vru să fie mai mare decât Dumnezeu* (p. 86).

The analogies are saved, however, by their spontaneity: *dârji ca ursoaicele cele fătate și ageri ca cerbii* (p. 89); *te arătași ca o floare frumoasă înaintea ochilor mei* (p. 158); *fiul meu, zăcând sub pământ..., ca un trup al fieștecărui sărac* (p. 158); *Că inima omului iaste ca sticla* (p.186); *mîntea ca trestia când o bate vântul* (p. 221).

However, most comparisons include the affective content and the objectives of persuasion. They have in their structure, most of the time, as a comparative term, a concrete and highly suggestive referent, which proves that during Neagoe Basarab, the comparison did not lose its aesthetic role.

An exemplary comparison quoted by Mihai Dragomirescu in *Mică enciclopedie a figurilor de stil* (1975, p. 126), of the comparison-image type, is, for example, at Eminescu (*Văd poezi ce-au scris o limbă ca un fagure de miere*). But, one equally suggestive is also found in the *Teachings*, combined with a metaphorical comparison *Tu ești vița cea*

*adevărată, ce ai făcut nouă strugurul cel copt... mai dulce decât mierea și decât fagurul ei* (p. 156).

In simple comparisons, analogies do not overcome the idiomatic boundaries, but they surprise each time by their spontaneity in the context in which they occur: *să fiți înțelepți și chibzuiți încai ca albinele* (p. 270); *aceluia-i sunt slugile ca și florile* (p. 271); *iaste mâniia ca un tată, iar urgiia ca o mumă* (p.260).

The distance between the two terms can often be polarized between the general and the particular, the role of the latter being to prove through the obvious concrete, so as to generate affective tension: *stă toată lumea înaintea lui Dumnezeu ca o picătură de ploaie în strașina unii case* (p. 149).

The same effect can also be obtained by hyperbolic polarization: *păcatele mele eu nu le poci socoti, că sântu ca stelele ceriului și ca năsipul mării* (p. 286).

As a type of paradigm-comparison, some of them which are considered representative are quoted from Neagoe Basarab's texts: *cum mănâncă rugina pre hier, așa mănână și pre om slava cea omenească; cum mănâncă carii copacii, așa și pisma pierde sufletul călugărului* (Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 127). Nevertheless, much more can be cited, *și cum să înfășură volbura sau curpenul de viță și puiarde roada ei... așa puiarde trufia și mândrețele roada împăratului* (p. 138); *diavolul să încolăci împrejurul inimii lui cum să încolăci volbura de viță...* (p. 222).

However, extended analogies, which do not imply a cumulation of terms but present a true narrative syntax, are very good examples of Homeric comparisons: *cum răsare soarele cu căldură și să veștejescu buruenile, și florile lor să scutură, așa și bogății carii nu să bogățescu întru Dumnezeu* (p. 15); *socotește, o, ticăloase oame, ce iaste albina cum să socotește și să ferește și nu să pune pe florile cele amară, fără numai pre cele dulci..., iar noi n-am avut atâta chibzuială... noi nu le alegem care sunt dulci și care sunt amară* (p. 270).

2.2.3. The metaphor occupies the most important place in the figurative process, which means the semantic transfer from one name to another, and in fact involving a new denomination process. However, this denomination is no longer arbitrary, but is motivated by a transfer of connotative features on the basis of which the reader accepts the substitution of the terms.

Dumarsais has shown that this transfer is similar to that which implies the comparison, but the field of freedom is greater in the absence of the comparison connectors and comparative terms, which are implicit (Dumarsais, 1981, p. 106).

As forms of knowledge, the comparison and the metaphor are two phases of the same process, the former being explicit and the latter implicit. The implicit character leaves the field of poetic suggestiveness and the connotations resulting from changing the context, thus realizing the poetic expressiveness (Munteanu, 1972, p. 185).

The first step of metaphorization is the identification or qualification as a predicative name (*X este ca un leu* = comparison; *X este un leu* = metaphor - cf. Ibidem).

Such simple metaphorization is met in the text of the *Teachings* (*lacrămile sunt aripile pocăinței* - p. 239). However, Neagoe Basarab and his translator also have, at the opposite end, the technique of a complex metaphorisation: *lacrămile aripă pocăinței și mumă și fete și izvor viu* (p. 239). When the instruments of comparison (the connector and

the comparator) are absent, one can speak about proper metaphors: *schimbăm sufletele în lumina luminilor* (p. 239); *au fost înțelepți, sufletele într-această lume* (p. 239).

2.3. Metataxemes are the figures of speech formed by deviating from the syntactic code, involving the suppression of some parts of the sentence, connectors or the metric order; the adjunction under its various forms, especially at the sentence level and the suppression-adjunction.

Of all these, the most common are: asyndetone, polysyndetone, enumeration, repetition and inversion.

2.3.1. The enumeration is one of the important figures of insistence or semantic cumulation. Not every enumeration has an aesthetic value. For example, in the enumerative apposition, the component parts of a whole or the elements of a crowd or of a collectivity are enumerated. In a literary work, however, the semantic cumulation depends on the context, generating affective tension: *și sântu într-însa locuri de vie și de pâini și de măslini și de stupi* (p. 58).

As a rule, the stylistic works do not describe the enumeration and its negative variant when the elements that compose it are excluded in sequence from a multitude: *nu-l întrebă nici de rugăciune, nici de postu, nici de oprire, nici de smerenie, nici de răbdare, nici de curăție, nici de milostenie* (p. 152).

3.2.1.1. The enumeration involves the obsessive repetition of a conjunction, defining itself as a polysyndetone achievement: *și săracii și mișăii și văduvele și le da și haine și bucate și arginturi* (p. 80).

Other co-ordinating conjunctions are also involved: *care au fost împărat și care au fost domn, sau care au fost boiaru, sau care au fost slugă, sau bogat, sau sărac, sau bătrân sau tânăr, sau care au fost harap* (p. 123).

The polysyndetone requires, through the insistence of the connectors, the attention on every element of the enumeration: *că și împărat și domn și patriarh și mitropolit și egumen și duhovnic, și județ și bogat și sărac...* (p. 148).

3.2.1.2. When formed by juxtaposition, it is equivalent to an asyndetone: *măcară domni, măcară bogați, măcară săraci* (p. 5).

When referring to an asyndetone, the elements that function as connecting instruments are missing, and the author seems to be disinterested in arranging them in a sequence with a certain organization: *sîntem împărați, domni, boiari și slugi* (p. 123).

In the text of the *Teachings*, one may notice a lot of simple enumerations of the polysyndetone type, as seen above, when the elements of the enumeration sequence come one by one.

However, the complex enumerations are very frequently used, usually with groups made up of two elements: *Așa și voi, boiarii mireni, bogați și săraci, bărbați și mueri* (p. 153); *pre tată-său și pre mumă-sa, frații și surorile, feciorii și fetele și alte rubedenii* (p. 149-150).

3.3. The inversion is also part of the metataxemes. The Text of the *Teachings*, not being a poetic text, has fewer inversions with a high degree of affection. However, when the persuasive force of the didactic text requires, the instrument of inversion is also used. The subject is reversed from the normal topic where it is found with the predicate: *zie împărații și domnii că iaste lucru greu* (p. 151); *pentru-aceea știm și noi* (p. 152); *nici să fie sufletele*



*priiatenilor noștri lunate; ci până iaste omul viu* (p. 240); *fu arătat să fie camăta un lucru cumplit* (p. 241).

The epithet-attribute is most often reversed: *în sfintele și dumnezeieștile biserici* (p. 4); *iar în luminata noaptea Sfințelor Paști* (p. 79); *O, mare nevoe și greutate* (p. 123); *buna și sfânta, adeverita credință* (p. 125); *sfintele mănăstiri și lavre; bunul meu părinte; cinstiți egumeni* (p. 153); *cu multe lacrimi și cu grele suspini și nenumărate* (p. 154); *bună și credincioasă mărturie* (p. 165); *Preacurată și pururea fecioară, Maria* (227); *o, lăcome și nesățiosul meu suflet* (p. 294).

In case of inversion, one can observe that the elements of other parts of speech are sometimes involved without too many affective connotations: *înduratele și de oameni iubitoriule Doamne* (p. 150); *să veselea împăratul de acelea foarte* (p. 78); *că nici de un lucru... nu s-au grijit* (p. 151).

4. The metalogisms, the so-called figures of thought, are mostly related to the pragmatics of the text, for "Whatever its form, the metalogism has, as a criterion, the compulsory reference to an extralinguistic one" (Dubois, 1974, p.185).

4.1. The first group is represented, among others, by repetition, antithesis, allegory and chiasm.

4.1.1. The Repetition. Some stylistic works no longer record the repetition as an individual trope, preferring to record the types of repetition in a larger chapter on the figures of repetition (Dragomirescu, 1975, pp.26-30, Duda, 2000, pp. 52-58).

In common language, the repetition has a phatic function, not an aesthetic one. However, it may intervene "when it marks the distance from the referent, which it treats as a sum of ontological units, to which the language lends some additional units" (Dubois, 1974, p. 202). It makes an adjunction, a cumulation: *măcar de ar fi împăratu, măcar domnu, măcar boiaru... Măcar sărac, măcar mișel..*(p. 30).

Among the semantic elements of the repetition, the greatest persuasive functionality has the anaphora (the repetition in a syntactic parallelism of the unit at the beginning of the construction) and, more rarely, the epiphase, with the repetition of the element at the end of the construction.

4.1.1.1. The importance of the anaphora in rhetoric was emphasized, as well as of the texts with a pronounced declamatory character: "A construction of a great oratory effect, the anaphora has become ... one of the most important ways of organizing the literary text" (Duda, 2000, p. 54). For Romanian literature, its high frequency in romanticism is specified, being a form of manifestation of the romantic rhythm. But the anaphora is also very common in the text of the *Teachings*, in which the author is not concerned with the romantic image, but with the persuasive force of the semantic insistence: *Ascultați, bărbaților, ascultați muerilor, ascultați împăraților, ascultați împărăteselor, ascultați, ascultați..., ascultați...,ascultați* (p. 98); *cei morți nu cred, cei morți nu mărturisescu, cei morți nu lucrează..., celor morți..., cei morți...cei morți* (p. 277); *De tine să cutremură puterile..., pre Tine cântă soarele..., pre Tine..., de Tine* (p. 286); *Tu ai întinsu ceriul...,Tu ai întărit pământul, Tu..., Tu* (p. 286).

The paradigmatic repetition refers to the repetition of the same element with different paradigmatic forms: *Pentru tine își întoarse Hristos Dumnezeu fața Sa...! Pentru tine...* (it is repeated seven times -p. 129); *Tu ești Preacurată...* (tu is repeated five times - p.

129). The forms *ție, te* and the possessive forms *ta, tale, tău* are also repeated, on the same page, in direct addressing structures.

4.1.1.2. Among the figures of repetition, the most complex structure is anadiplosis, which, due to the fact that it is rarely encountered, assuming a more elaborate mental operation, is omitted by many inventories related to the figures of speech (see Dragomirescu, 1975, p.36). It can involve the repetition of the last term of a structure, the first place of the next structure.

It is well represented in the text of the *Teachings: Tăcerea face oprire, oprirea face umilință și plângere, iar plângerea face frică și frica face smerenie* (p. 139-140); *postul naște rugă, ruga naște smerenie, smerenia naște curăție, curăția naște milostenie* (p. 168).

4.1.1.3 As subspecies of repetition, one can also mention the reduplication and the parigmenon.

The reduplication is grammatical (*dede* - p. 57; *și-și dederă* - p. 85) and lexical: *din amiazăzi în amiazăzi și din seară în seară* (p. 113); *care de care* (p. 114).

The parigmenon carries out an internalization of the meaning, in so far as the grammar can speak of the internal subject (*Muncitorul muncește*), direct internal object (*visa un vis*), etc. There are quite a few examples: *muncilor când îi muncea* (p. 111); *cu ruga și cu rugăciunile* (p. 113); *streină streinilor* (164); *cu înșălăciunea lui înșălă* (p. 167); *încununăți cu cununii* (p. 168); *te va încoruna cu coruna* (p. 245).

4.1.2. Antithesis. This type of artistic image has a compositional character at the level of *the Teachings*, even if it is frequently encountered at lexical level (antonymy) or at the other levels of the language. It was described by stylists and philosophers as deriving from the contradictory nature of the human being, which, like any being, is bound up with the Earth through corporeality and, as a spirit, aspiring to save itself through faith, through the entry into communion with the divine sublimation.

It was also described as a very effective communication strategy, through the semantic contrast between the two terms, thus emphasizing the fundamental dimensions of the human existence as well as the profound truths emerging from the tension of the two poles of the contrast. It works as a knowledge deixis for which a context of evidence is created.

In addition to the usual antitheses of faith (Divinity-diabolic forces of the Devil; the path for redemption—the path of perdition; the lights of Heaven—the darkness or flames of hell, faithful-pagan, etc.) are also encountered those from the existing environments in the complexity of the pedagogical act proposed by the *Teachings*: the political environment (allies-enemies, friends-usurpers...) and the social environment (rich-poor, boyars-servants...).

An interesting antithesis is that of the enumeration of antithetic pairs, which, engaged in a gradation, could be considered as belonging to the anticlimax: *am flămânzit și mi-ați dat de mâncat, însetoșat-am și m-ați adăpat, ... gol am fost și m-ați îmbrăcat, bolnav am fost și m-ați cercetat* (p. 275); *am flămânzit și nu mi-ați dat să mănâncu, însetat-am și nu m-ați adăpat..., gol am fost și nu m-ați îmbrăcat* (p.275).

The most touching antitheses, however, are not the usual ones of faith, but those which contain one of the most profound affectivity areas, when, at death's door, the ruler experiences, in retrospect of his own existence, the dramatic aspect of the universal theme *Vanitas Vanitatum: Într-o vreme erai bogat, iar acum tu ești sărac* (p. 158); *cel ce eram*

*odată împărat, acum sânt gârbov și de nimic* (p. 224); *Cel ce eram odată tuturor drag și cunoscut, iar acum nu mă bagă nimeni în seamă* (p. 225); *Cei drepți în bucurie, iar noi în tristăciune, cei drepți vor merge în lumina cea cerească, cu multă veselie și părere bună, iar noi vom merge în temnițele iadului cele întunecate* (p. 276).

4.1.3. The allegory, which usually implies an abstract concept, evoked through a narrative metaphor, replaces in the text of *the Teachings* the abstract by the sublime love for his mother (*Ce numai ce știu pre albină că să ostenește și ia multu, că aceia niciodată de dulcele florilor nu să poate sătura nici de osteneală* - p. 154) and for the divinity of the Virgin Mary (*ești masa cea dreaptă și curată care ne-a adus pâinea cea cerească, din care au mâncat dreptii; ești vița cea adevărată care ai făcut nouă strugurul cel copt, din care ne-au cursu băuta spăseniei, care iaste mai dulce decât mierea și decât fagurul ei* - p. 156).

4.1.4. The chiasmus is related to antithesis (it is a structural antithesis), because this construction "consists in the reverse repetition of two grammatical structures" (Dragomirescu, 1975, p. 44).

It has been shown that the texts of the Holy Scripture, both from the Old and the New Testament, have, as a fundamental figure, the chiasmus, linking the structural specifics of this figure (cross-repetition) to the way of structuring the biblical text (cf. Breck, 2005, p. 23).

According to these demonstrations, it would have been expected in *the Teachings*, which contain many biblical passages used as authority arguments in the didactic strategies used by Neagoe Basarab, to meet many examples with such inversions. Here are a few examples: *cu suflele bucuroase și cu blânde cuvinte ziseră* (p. 80); *limba care tace acum, atuncea iar va să grăiască; lată, să făcură țărână, că țărâna au fost* (p. 123).

The explanation of this situation was given by B.P. Hasdeu who, in a study dedicated to this figure of speech, showed that the Slavonic language does not know the chiasmus as a syntactic structure (Hasdeu, 1882, P 332). However, *the Teachings* were written in Slavonic.

4.2 The direct addressing figures, with express reference to the extralinguistic context are part of the second group of metalogisms. The direct addressing is a communicational deixis that brings in the foreground of the text the person of the transmitter and receiver, either as direct engagement or as a targeting to an imaginary character. The most important figures of speech are: the apostrophe, the invocation, the interrogation and the exclamation.

4.2.1. The apostrophe plays an important role in communication strategies, as it primarily makes an interruption in the communicational stream by creating a standby state, then focusing the message on a real or imaginary person. A lot of examples can be mentioned here: *Acum pricepeți, împăraților și vă învățați, toți cei ce judecați pământul* (p. 7); *Iar de nu mă vei asculta, o, iubitul meu fiu...* (p. 19); *Vezi, iubitul meu fiu...* (p. 24). Such direct addresses are met at a small distance in the text: pp. 34, 36, 50, 55, 62, 63, 65, 83, 84...

It is a special type of apostrophe, since the direct addressing, in *the Teachings*, is directed right to the recipient of the message and has the role of establishing the semantic feedback. It is not only that, but also a process of approaching him to the famous characters

of history and faith (Constantine the Great, Alexandru Macedon, etc.) whom, in this form, it offers as models: *Vezi, iubitul meu fiu că Costandin, marele împărat...* (p. 83).

At the opposite pole, the ordinary believers are invested with the quality of witness: *Și aceasta să știți, o, iubitorii de Hristos* (p. 169).

4.2.2. The invocation is usually addressed to the divinity, which is asked for help: *Doamne, Doamne, păstoriul cel bun! Întoarce-ne cătră calea pocăinței și îndreptează-ne pe cărările mântuirii* (p. 132). The request can also be made to the small elements of nature, but which, like the Great Emperors, are eternal: „*Voi munților și dealurilor, luați glas de plângere și de jale (...) Plângeți și voi, florile câmpurilor cele frumoase și cu bună miroaseală, care v-au împodobit și v-au înfrumusețat făcătorii tuturor*” (p. 224-225).

The invocation to Divinity is sometimes made through the agency of their own children: *Iubiții miei fii și avuția inimii mele cea scumpă și lumina ochilor miei cea strălucitoare ... vă sculați și alergați cătră îndurătorul și despuitorul nostru, Domn și Dumnezeu, Iisus Hristos și cătră preacurata a lui Maică* (p. 159).

4.2.3. The rhetoric interrogation is a type of investigatory statement, which, by stating it, emphasizes the importance of the already known response. Sometimes they seem devoid of affective connotations: *dară cunoști care iaste împăratul cel mare și puternic?* (p.6); *Dreptu aceia fraților, de am și făcut păcat, ce vom face?* (p. 263).

The answer underlined by the interrogation appears very frequently: *Au doară ne vom înfolosi de fața satanii cea groaznică și întunecată? Sau ne va face el vreun bine?* (p. 276). *Vezi cât iaste de rea mânia și urgia și pizma?* (p. 260).

The interrogative structures can compose texts with extensive structures, in order to integrate themselves into a certain period: *Sau cine te va mai băga în seamă sau să vie la tine, deaca vreme ce vei umplea voia boiarilor tăi, iar celora ce-ți vor sluji bine tu nu vei face dreptate* (p. 232).

The often mimed presence of the recipient makes most interrogations to be engaged in a dialogue structure, with the invitation to receptation: *Ci, deaca vei fi domn gonit și pribeag și necăutat, ascultă să-ți spui și de aceasta. Cine fu gonit și mai probeag decât Iosif cel frumos, fericitul fecior lui Iacov?* (p. 253).

The dialogue structure seems to postpone the rhetorical nature of the interrogation, as it also proposes the answer: *de te vei grăbi pentru pâra lor să le faci judecată... ce vei folosi? Nimic, făr'numai vei face greșeală sufletului tău* (p. 182).

A superior phase of the dialogue structure is that organized according to the technical-scientific style, meaning question and answer: *Întrebare: De ce va să să înțeleagă aceasta? Răspuns: Aceasta iaste biruința pământescă...* (p. 11; cf și p. 13).

4.2.4. By its obvious affective content, the exclamation can be quite difficult to be integrated into metalogisms, which are considered a product of meditation. Today, things seem to be simpler, because scientists have put in a natural correlation the rational intelligence with the affective or emotional intelligence. The statements thus created are messengers of feelings of surprise, admiration, or horror. The exclamations directed to the Divine beings are, as a rule, admiring: *O, stăpâne, cum nu va fi acesta lucru minunat și să întrecă toate cugetele omenești!* (p. 249).

The terrifying ones are dictated by their antithetic message: *O, ce amar și ce nevoe și ce greutate va fi atunci în veci!* (p. 95).

Most of the time, the exclamatory statements are accompanied by interjections and nouns in the vocative: *O, cât iaste de rău omul cel fără de sfat și fără de chibzuială!* (p. 109); *O, cinstite împărate, binezici și-mi plăcură cuvintele tale !* (p. 111); *O, despuitoare stăpâne, împărate atotîitorule, înduratulre și de oameni iubitoriule Doamne!* (p. 150).

5. Conclusions. In not too long history of interpretations of the text of *the Teachings*, the exegetes positioned themselves to extremes. Some, as has been seen, recognized its exceptional value, highlighting the complexity and the message full of humanism; others considered the text a teaching mosaic of a minor artistic concern.

The reality is that, by its message, the work is of particular complexity and depth. Because the message was addressed to a child, the son of a ruler, one of the guiding principles was that of simplicity. The use of well-calculated argumentative strategies by the author did not diminish the coefficient of affectivity.

The real and spontaneous nature of artistic imagery doubles the text with a poetic value that the translator in the Romanian language has preserved for the most part. Through her humanist message and through the special art of writing, this work occupies a place of great importance in the history of Romanian literature.

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## **"PAVEL ANICET. THE HYPOSTASIS OF THE BRUTALIZED YOUNG MAN OR THE IRONY OF FATE"**

**Valentin-Iulian MAZILU\***

**Abstract:** *The current article surprises the ironical attitude that Pavel makes use of when treating his destiny, becoming an extension of the huxlerian heroes. But destiny, in its turn, banter him: the character succeeds in falling in love and loves with the same intensity two women whose personality is antithetical. This fact causes profound inner dramas to the hero, taking the form of acceptance about characters of their creator, Mircea Eliade. Another aspect that the article aims at illustrating is the ergography of the novel 'Return to Heaven', thus the Romanian writer reflecting in the story his existential problems related to eros: the simultaneous love for Nina Mares and Sorana Topa. The revelation of the writer's solution to his drama is also revealed to Mircea Eliade by his hero: Pavel Anicet leaves life of his own free will, and the end of the story becomes the absolute representation of irony: destiny seems to defeat him, but Pavel Anicet's attitude denotes the revelation of existence beyond existence. So, from this perspective, destiny obliges the hero in a bantering manner to become aware of his own existence.*

**Keywords:** *destiny; eros; atypical; character*

Eliade's novel, *The Hooligans*, fresco of the young generation, is released in volume in 1935 at the National Publishing House S. Ciornei in Bucharest. The writer's wish was that this novel would be part of a cycle that was intended to present the history of a family in a Balkan tradition: Francis Anicet and his two boys, Peter and Paul (Eliade, 1997:211). Eliade's intention goes to a fresco of his generation, marked by the first novel of the cycle, *The Return from Heaven* in 1934, whose "incubation moment" is the Indian period: "Then, suddenly, in mid-June, I felt I had to write a novel. I first named it *Victories*, then *Peter and Paul*. It was different from what I had written before, was no longer autobiographical, like the "Shortsighted Teenager's novel" or "Gaudeamus," was no longer written in the first person as "Isabel," but there was no "fantastic" as "The light that extinguishes". The action was in Bucharest immediately after the war. Apparently, it was the history of a family: Francis Anicet and his two boys, Peter and Paul. (*ibidem*: 210-211)

"The Return from Heaven," opens the creation in Eliade's literary creation a new chapter that of the realistic - life-telling novels - as Eugen Simion (Simion, 2005: 51) tells them, which surprise the destiny of a special generation. Through these novels, Eliade creates the X-rays of one of the most agitated periods in modern history of Romania, a social image that overwhelms the inner nervousness of some adolescents and goes to another stage with countless complex experiences: love, death, generations, which lead to their disintegration as intellectuals. The theme of the trilogy is an extension of the theme of the novels of his youth, prefigured in the "Shortsighted teen's novel" and "Gaudeamus," but are written from a different, theoretical, brain perspective.

From this angle, Pompiliu Constantinescu (Constantinescu, 1967: 504-508) considers that the new novel, "The Return from Heaven", is a new stage in the author's

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literary evolution regarding authenticity, because a new Eliade who is familiar, discursive, meditative, dissociative and imaginative, sensual and ascetic, haughty, humane, and contemptuous (*ibidem*) " that creates the ideological pretexts in the epic context, and from the perspective of the character's conception, the same literary critic thinks that: there are some more consistent figures in" The Return from Heaven, "but you have the feeling that series of intimate journals, woven to evoke a fragment of life. What makes the impression of an intimate journal undoubtedly uncompromising is also the uniform process of the inner monologue. Characters think their facts, and comment on them and live them mentally. That's why you end up at the strange conclusion that the novel is a fake epic. (*idem*, 2000: 241)

The novel, begun in India, wants to be the novel of his generation, a novel with young people and about young people - in fact, the novel contains two old people, one of whom is Francis Anicet, who died six years ago."I decided to resume *Peter and Paul*, now entitled" Return from Heaven. " It was the story of Paul Anicet, who, though so different from me, I understood: just like me, Pavel Anicet loved two women. It is true that Una and Ghighi did not resemble Sorana and Nina, but Anicet's perplexity and inhibitions were familiar to me. I wanted, on the other hand, to write the novel of the "young generation," as I understood it now. "Return from Heaven" meant the loss of the beatitude, the illusions and the optimism that had dominated the first twelve years of "Great Romania". As part of my generation, I had experienced adolescence and the first youth in this atmosphere of euphoria, trust and stupidity. I knew now that this "Paradise" is somewhere behind us. We had lost it before we realized we had known it, in fact, I had been the first and only generation to enjoy the "Heaven" set up in 1919-1920. (Obviously, this paradise was spiritual: it was simply the beatitude resulting from the fulfillment of a collective ideal. It did not involve any paradise syndrome manifest in social, economic or political life.) When, on the hot July nights, I began to write *The return from Heaven*, the whole construction was still not clear to me I only knew that this would be the first volume in a trilogy, presenting, for example, the story of Pavel Anicet in a series of events and confrontations of the group of "intellectuals" he was part of. The action took place in Bucharest in the years 1932-1993, that is, even during the time that had elapsed since my return from India. I had forgotten to write the history of Francis Anicet, the fall of the family following the expropriation of the estate, the poverty where the two boys, Paul and Peter, had grown up. In this first trilogy, Peter appeared only episodic, but the other two volumes were largely dedicated to him. Because I wanted to present at the same time a fresco of the "young generation," I could not write to the person I, as in the novels "Isabel" and "Maitrey", but neither the "style" of "Light that is extinguished" suited. I wanted to write a novel in realistic appearance, but using the inner monologue and some technical recipes learned from John dos Passos. "(Eliade, 1997: 156-157)

From an ergographic point of view, the novel proposes a complex history reflected by the inner conflict of the author manifested by the love of two women: Sorana Țopa - an invading vampire and Nina Mareș's maternal, protective love: "I was trying to guess how Paul Anicet will solve the problem-which was my problem at the same time. Only a few days later Sorana's presence began to make me tired. She wandered almost continuously and Sorana was obliged to stay a good part of the day in the same room with me, reading. But

whenever I see myself rising from the table or lighting up a cigarette, ask me how it goes if I can write with her or ask me to read what I wrote. I promised her I would show the manuscript as soon as I finished part I. But, once turning from the woods, where I had managed to walk alone, pretending to have to solve, I do not know what, a mess made by one of the characters, I found her at the desk, my manuscript in front, crying. "You must have suffered much because of me!" she told me. "I did not understand," and she showed me the first lines, the scene with which the novel opened: "When he heard the bathroom door shut, Paul leaped out of his bed and breathed deeply, freely, as if he had been afraid until then to breath at will. For almost ten minutes he pretended to be asleep, covering her face with her arm, and breathing slowly, rhythmically, wishing to attract the woman's attention. How did he feel asleep out of bed, the heart began to beat them: could he stay for a few minutes alone? ... "" Was it so hard for you to bear?" he asked. (And it was enough to look at her to figure out how much she had suffered, he was ten and twenty years older.) I tried to lie. "It's not about you," I said. Or it's not just you. That's the reaction of any man; and of any woman, I added. You can stay alone, for a few moments, with the one you love. An abusively prolonged presence in two is demonic. You remember what Goethe was saying ... She interrupted me to remind me once again that I am "the most beloved ever who ever lived. "If her presence pushed me, it meant I did not love her. But that was impossible, because she knows that I love her. So the cause was different. We had to discover together why my presence was overwhelming, when I should have exalted myself. "We'll talk about that another time," I said. Now I have to write ... "Rightly, my selfishness exasperated her. She soon became the person that I knew so well. She was 30 years old again and, walking around the room, she springs. I was undoubtedly an impossible man to understand. An enigma. Let us be together here in the mountains, which we have had the luck to meet and love as we love - and instead of climbing both the highest peaks of the spirit, analyzing us, explaining to us, by completing one another, I write a novel. This was only a few months after we had published "Maitreyi", which had been so successful. Why this hurry? Why did I again take refuge in a book instead of living together? ... As usual, listening to it, I realized that in a sense it was right. If Nina did not exist, maybe I would have put Sorana on the "heights of the Spirit," with all the risks I expected. But now there is Nina. I mean, Paul Anicet had to find the solution to his problem, to help me find myself. I had to write "Return from Heaven". I set myself up at the wood table, and Sorana resumed her book. I could hear her crying. She was hearing me sighing and asking me why I sigh. "Works slow. I cannot understand what's going on in the mind of the main hero. He thinks he's in love with two women at the same time ... "He was pale, but he smiled, unexpectedly gentle."That's impossible." "That's what I think," I continued. "But he's convinced he loves both of them. He cannot decide to choose. " "Then he's a coward!" exclaimed Sorana. I then realized that the solution to which Anicet had begun to think was the right one. In a sense, Paul Anicet was, like me, a coward, or at least so he would appear in the eyes of others when he committed suicide. For him, suicide was the only possible solution: by suicide only, they would keep both. Death usually restores the unity that every life is broken by the mere fact that every existence is contingent, limited, frayed, and fragmented. In the case of Anicet, however, who had acquired this unity here on earth, while loving two women, death keeps it "in aeternum". If he had chosen, he would have broken the unity and would have lived



stinging, frustrated, thinking constantly to death, waiting for it. "You're right," I said. Pavel Anicet is a coward. In the end, he will commit suicide ...” (*ibidem*: 283-288)

The literary criticism of the period meets the novel in various manners, from subtle denigration to eulogy. For example, the writer Dan Petrasnicu believes that "The Return from Heaven" is a weak novel, but an excellent book. The literary critic believes that the Romanian author wants to create a novel of a generation of young people who manifest their existence under the tattoo mark and total spiritual uprooting. But his heroes are dominated by ideas and not action. Șerban Cioculescu writes in the same year, 1934, that: "The return from Heaven" is the novel with which he owed to the post-war youth. It is the soul map of the generation between the ages of 16 and 25, not ruled by other novelists, unwitting to trace it.”(Cioculescu, 1972: 274) Young people are similar to those in Turgenev's novels. Also in the year of the novel, Constantin Noica wrote: "Mircea Eliade wrote his latest book in all his riches. It is a waste of thoughts, problems, epic moments, themes, types, and things, as it seems to have never met our literature ... "The Return of Heaven" does not resemble anything but the least with "Isabel and the waters of the Devil »or« Maitreyi ». It is curious that the literary case of Mircea Eliade fails, even involuntarily, to overcome a novel formula. In fact, his latest novel is also trying a new technique, often happy. It's not a social novel, though the author had the pride to do that. " By discussing the action, it is crowded in a few days, the first part being twelve hours, the second part of the day, and the third one taking place over two days, but this is only physical time because the epic time is much wider through comments to the characters' past. Eliade uses a new technique in Romanian literature by presenting concurrently several parallel destinies that only occasionally intersect without influencing one's way or another. The presented destinies are, in fact, parts of the life of young people who go beyond adolescence, live dominated by "obscurity" and violence. The young Eliade in the novel is only apparently unmoved by nothing, but they are, in fact, related to an essence of anxiety, of non-realization in their human condition. The Gordian knot issue generates the free action of the characters. Also from the compositional point of view, to the same extent as individualized heroes are faces of the same polyhedron, it is easy to notice the implicated presence of the writer in each of their reflections by the fact that each chapter becomes a soliloquy that leaves the impression of a narration.

The collective mentality of the time is explained by Ioan Petru Culianu (Culianu. 2004: 188), who considers that at the beginning of the twentieth century Romania was profoundly anti-capitalist, dominated by a cultural trend of the Orthodox who represented him as Nechifor Crainic. This adherence to orthodoxy allowed the creation of ideologies on both sides, the right and the stand, which did not make them very specific. Thus, Eliade's hooligans do not belong socially or politically to any well-defined class, but they are dominated only by the feelings that derive from their purely spiritual behavior. They are, therefore, heroes of ideas: "In Romania, at the beginning of the 20th century, there were no friends of capitalism outside the capitalists themselves. Between the wars, public opinion, expressing itself through the most influential instruments of the press, from the extreme left to the extreme right, remained the same. "What inspires the writer's characters is hope, an illusory and irrational one, but which outlines some atypical hypostases of his Romanian heroes.”

Returning to the epic technique of the novel, it can be observed that it is the counterpoint by the lack of homogeneity of the alternation of the episodes between which there is no causal link, but rather the narrative plans are incidentally disposed. There are divisions in the existence of young people that manifest themselves by rebellion towards everything that seems to be the fires of the age. But what dominates the novel are the monologues of the characters that capture the fears, but also the capacities of their being. The conflict between generations seems to be the central theme, a conflict overwhelmed by Paul Anicet's relationship with his deceased father, who in his absence creates feelings of unease or that of David Dragu with his father who he hates. So young people do not feel fulfilled in the world created by their predecessors; moreover, they exclude anything that looks like their parents and their ascendants. In an essay in "Oceanography", the Romanian writer illustrates in an essay his ideas about youth and old age: "Youth, in itself, remains a mystery to me; for she is always right, and yet it is always mediocre, feeble, and impotent. The terrible impotence of youth! As young as you are, you are asleep as a landless unconscious; you cannot accomplish anything, that is, you cannot give birth to anything organic, but only fragments (even genius, but only fragments) of discontinuous, unequal, without style. You uselessly fuck you, you think unnecessarily; you never understand anything, do not get in touch with reality, do not breathe life. It is wrong to say that youth is closer to life, for between it and life there are no deception, experiences, mental structures that characterize maturity. On the contrary, youth brings with it a million superstitions, ready ideas, suggestions and illusions. [...] It is strange that young people have the sense of the past more than the mature people. A young man lives much more with memories than a fifty-sixty-year-old man lives. Not only that, in a young man the past is an element always present, how paradoxical it would seem. It is permanently bound by an osmosis that is constantly fueled by its memories. [...] What is depressing in the show of manifested youth is its total lack of originality. It is absurd to say that "young people" are original, personal, and new. Their originality lies in the fact that they do not understand well certain things that they will understand later, and then they will not tell them because they will not be interested anymore. I would not know how to define otherwise the "experience" (any experience) than to say that it is a perfect and instant nudity of the whole being. You cannot experience anything if you do not know how to get out of it, if you do not stick to all the forms you've been through before, unless you make a "presence" of yourself. Experiences out of "aesthetic desire" from spleen - do not lead to nothing, because they do not cancel each other (each of them reaching the nutritional medium, the creative plasma of the other), but it gathers like in a museum, dozens of forms death, the mummies, to which you endlessly connect nostalgia, regrets, gentle and cheerful memories, etc. These experiences are simply accumulations of deadly forms, although they were alive at the time that asked them, updated them. True experience, however, comes almost with a function of your whole being, it confuses itself with the life that bears you and urges you to know it, updating it, in infinite manifestation, in a continuous creation. That's why it seems to me that the term "experience" is a little confusing. The experience, the German "Erlebnis" so rich and suggestive as meaning, would be better. This does not mean abandoning the vital equations that are always variable, contingent, and always limited. When you abandon yourself, you no longer live, but "you are lived" at random. I believe that the mystery of "experience" lies

in this perfect coincidence with the external term (which may be an accident or a state of soul) and, at the same time, an overstepping of it, a release from it. Therefore, each new experience demands a renunciation; not the actual fact, which must be realized, updated, known, but rather the inherent limitations of this fact and the limits of the person who knows it. You know nothing by giving up an experience. You also know very little if you do not give up the limits imposed on that experience. (Eliade, 1937: 68-69; 162-164)

Although at first glance the dramatic traits of the characters seem superficial, they have a deep, profound substrate. The main character, Pavel Anicet, meditates, as the drama of the author, about the balance between the two lovers which consumes him progressively without completely believing in love and the impossibility of choosing. Another drama is the writing to which it quits and begins to minimize it. He desires a perfect, cosmic passion, thus seeking a demiurgical force: "but sometimes I am myself, a flaming and instantaneous apathy that overwhelms me, transcends me. It was then, he found, a compassionate, soul-god of cosmic thought. That is me, and the rest of the time is a polymorphic and infinitesimal mollusc. "But desires are only sporadic, ending always by returning to the carnal love that the two women offer. From the point of view of the female construction, Eliade does not give him a special role in the novel, as opposed to, for example, by Ileana from the novel "Wedding in the sky" or the young Bengali from "Maitreyi", a novel she had previously published, only plays a role as a reason for the teachings of young intellectuals, dominated by superficial actions: reads light novels and is controlled by common vices, with the sole goal of marriage. So women do not actively participate in the intellectual life of male heroes. The paradox of Paul Anicet's love condition lies in the fact that although he does not believe in a woman, in love he is left to be captivated by the two loving lovers: "I do not understand - because I want to get out of love and I cannot, I love it, and yet I'm disgusted with the dough, I love One, and yet I think of Ghighi just the moment I embrace her, I love Ghighi and yet I hate it because he is trying to cheat on One ... "

Eliade's hero lives the experience of three stages throughout his life: magic, abrasion, and mysticism. About these stages, the Romanian prose writer writes in an article called "Words about a Philosophy" in *Gandirea* magazine, in which he explains how he influences man's existence. By magic is meant: "monism, imantism, self-creation and creation of the world through personal effort, absence of ethical function, self-support, denial of objectively objective existence (if it is not me - I have no reason to believe it is someone else; I am not the cause, why should I deduce a strange and opposite cause to me?), the cosmos understood as a spiraling of impersonal forces, and the sense of existence as a magical achievement, an update of the inner potencies and the cosmic possibilities disciplined and led by labor. " (Eliade, 1928: 300) These feelings are felt by Paul Anicet, who does not end up being existentially indecent with the stage because, as all the Romanian writer concludes, he would have become God, he would have discovered the fulfillment of his existence. But the hero of *Return from Heaven*, who promised to be an out-of-the-way cultured man, was magically autocratic - the oath of virginity with David Dragu - the center of his universe is he, the dream of his life is dictated by reason, misses this experience at the time of his father's death, an event that becomes the threshold to another stage, that of the abrasion. This stage manifests itself by renouncing its ideals, struggling in devout carnal love, becoming mediocre from a social point of view, having a

secretary service, and consciousness dominated by violence, appealing to the image of a Don Juan:

"For him I am the cynical Don Juan; it's gotta be so hard to get me back, try to understand me." Pavel Anicet resorts to masks in dealing with others. The mask is the symbol of identification, which generates an extreme danger to the one who resorts to it: by the desire to hold others' qualities, the main character ends up realizing that he has the artifacts of what he wants to represent. Its actions take on the appearance of a vicious circle from which it cannot be released. The mask itself has a vital force that will take possession of the one under its care. Pavel Anicet is in the stage of abrasion, giving up any magical experience, which does not allow him to interact with himself. Camouflage is a way of manifesting the universal self. Its role is not to change the personality of the camouflaged, but to protect it by becoming the element by which the demonic tendencies are outlined.

The last stage is the mythical one in which the hero breaks from physical reality through death. By suicide, Pavel Anicet seeks the essence of his own existence beyond the being by solving the difficulties of his living in a Gordian manner. Gordian knowledge, according to Eliade, means "to neglect or ignore absolutely all attempts to solve a problem and to try "from outside "its unleashing, from other data, using other investigative tools, assuming another total vision of the world." The issue of death cannot be viewed from a different perspective because life is not only a strictly biological link, but rather a connection with the being, with the immaterial aspect of existence.

The path of Pavel Anicet is an initiative that ultimately brings about the freedom. It reaches purposes in several ways. The first way is dominated by the debt to the Anicians' family, the only possibility of fulfilling the debt is its cultural development mediated by asceticism. This glorification of his own nation to which he dedicates himself becomes a condemnation. The existence of the ego is under the sign of the mythological character Ashaversus who seeks salvation. Eliade's hero "walks" by himself, but he is a handcuffed self. His uncovering is concomitant with the death of the father, an event that generates the desire to live at the will of chance, milled by the experience of love and death. Pavel Anicet seeks to transcend by designing into another that has the sexual experience that symbolizes the evolution of the Styx's water. Happiness turns him into an uprooted man, who through his acts becomes the typology of the flat man. In Bahtin's view, the flat man "has neither core nor shell, neither outward nor interior," but is the man of the dwelling-dominated hazard.

In the novel, the eros moves in several directions: the imperfect sensual love she experiences with Lucky, love as an affective necessity lives with Ghighi and Una. The two women can be the correspondence of a mythological binomial, Demetra-Aphrodite. Lucky the hero lived with animal love: "And until then we look at foreigners and drunkards, two cerebral beasts." Returning to the two hypostases of love, Ghighi and Una, we must discuss the mythological aspects of the love triangle. Through his relationship with Ghighi, Pavel Anicet manages to free himself. The heroine attempts to insight the depth of his lover, but he does not intend to go beyond the mask the character carries. This mask allows him to "breathe", and they, to design in Pavel Anicet the ideal of a universal man: Now after they have met, he feels that he frees himself from her presence, he remains alone; the heat of his

arm was no longer worn to him, nor the words. It's as if it's down somewhere, and this loneliness to which the whole being is going makes him good, quiet. [...] And Faust..."

According to Julius Evola, the human being consists of two parts, the first being the inner, the exogenous one, and the second is the outer, artificial, acquired through circumstances that form in the relationship life creating the person of the individual: the original meaning of the word, which means mask, the mask of the actor (in contrast to the "face", which can be related to the other side, namely the essential one). Depending on individuals, but also on the type of civilization, one or the other may be more developed. The degenerative limit corresponds to an almost exclusive, teratological development of the outer and built part of the "mask", of the "social", intellectual, practical and "spiritualized" individual, which is almost autonomous and only very few organic relations with the deep and essential being.

The Demetric love is found in Ghighi, whose name can be interpreted as a daughter of the earth (Ge = earth, Geea - the goddess of the earth) who, with her appearance of Magna Mater, offers her some kind of parental comfort. Paul Anicet's dream can be considered an argument in favor of this interpretation: He woke up late, near the evening, and kept for a few moments the taste of an overly sweet dream, with chubby angels without wings, with good ladies' faces; a whole sky of women who could have been all sisters, mothers, daughters. He had never tasted a happier happiness; women's cheeks, the children's eyes were an endless mirror of gentle, warm smiles."

The same Julius Evola considers, in relation to the Demetra - Aphrodite pair, that it is the divine, eternal archetype of the mother and of the lover: in terms of the feminine principle, the great variety of his images or epiphany can be orodonzized under the sign of two fundamental types, we can call them the "Afroditist" type and the "Demetric" type, and they appear to us as the eternal archetypes of the beloved and the human mother. The afroditic type is the correspondent of One, a heroine that, paradoxically, the author of the novel does not consider it essential in the unfolding of events, in the same way that Ghighi does not seem to influence the hero's destiny. However, Paul Anicet tends to transcendence because the One-One relationship illustrates the primordial couple, and the relationship with the heroine of the novel involves several stages, which can be characterized by the liberation and manifestation of the feminine power awakened upon the masculine, which, conscious of the necessity of the woman, reaches the transcendent when the male principle loses its self in the feminine. The awakening similar to salvation is represented by overcoming union with the female element by overcoming the dominating force. Pavel Anicet resorts to liberation by suicide, is the one that breaks down and exceeds the female pressure transcending to unimaginable. On a symbolic level, this suggests cosmic destruction: "I also believe in death, said Anicet. It seems to me that there I will encounter the primordial unity, I will be one, the one, and I will be so ..." So transcendence through eros is deceiving because the woman also contributes to her own failure, and the resilient solitude is impossible for the hero: You can live all your life alone, twin with butterflies and birds, love the stars and waters, satisfy your instinct that leads to death, loving something other than man, loving any life other than human life, for it is constantly rolling you up, embracing you deeply, wanting to be herself, wanting to give up, disappear, swallow you ... where does this

little dashing instinct, which forces you to jump alive and into the flame of each other's love?"

The last connection between Paul Anicet and Una is out of existence, the hero feels the necessity of the woman without proposing this fact, is something beyond him, cosmic: If I had not come today? Maybe I would have taught without her. In fact, I did not miss, she, Una, but that thing that lies outside me, beyond me, which attracts and expects me; something to which I have to go, whatever happens. One, what importance can she have? As long as there are millions of things that you can feel attracted, soaked up to nothingness? From the point of view of Una, the presence of the loved man beside her becomes a vain consciousness of her domineering role: she approaches him. He puts his hand gently on his shoulders. She feels so much of her; he is more than a slave; a captive boss, an arrogant warrior who struggles and insults, who does not recognize the record, the ropes; and yet whatever he does is mine. No one had it the way it is. A joy that he exalts to sacrifice, until the offering. In the last union, Paul has the revelation of love beyond love through the flesh. For him, sex becomes negligible and secondary, and it is little important if the woman is that woman, because this state is reduced to the primitive senses, so that her self is formed: She does not know if she really says it. The words come out of one's words. He no longer feels the need to reflect, to look in, and to monologue. Everything is happening; nothing else: it's happening. He almost no longer exists, for what he answers, what he thinks, especially, is so alien to him, so meaningless to him."

The novel can also be read from a soteriological point of view because Pavel Anicet, by reference to the world, becomes the taurus of his own self. The healing happens through violent, conscious death that allows Mircea Eliade's hero to regain his memory beyond death, and the eros is nothing more than the spring of the goddess. Through this complex narrative, the Romanian writer seeks to heal only the Romanian novel, problematic about the absence of a mythical character, but also on his own, finding the solution of his erotic dilemma, the choice between Nina Mareș and Sorana Topa.

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## **GEORGE COȘBUC - THESES AND ANTITHESES IN THE FOLKLOR RESEARCH**

**Lili MOCANU (VÂRTOPEANU)\***

**Abstract:** *There should be pursued the openings and limits of the theories used by George Coșbuc in the scientific research of the folklore. His explanatory applications enlightened the popular creation, even if they were based on an ideational mechanism that was later reconsidered. These understandings ensure the elaboration of appropriate interpretations for his own poems.*

**Keywords:** *rhapsode; mythogenesis; itinerant; epic; creativity; automatism*

1. Taking contact with the Western literature through the German poets (Opitz, Heine, Schiller, Chamisso, Bürger etc.) from which he translated and adapted (Voia, 1966: 140), focusing mainly on the 19<sup>th</sup> century poets, George Coșbuc had the chance of a romantic direction for his artistic personality. George Călinescu included him in *Istoria literaturii române...* in the chapter *Micul romanticism provincial și rustic* (Călinescu, 1982: 583-590). The major themes of Coșbuc's creation (folklore, history) are also found in the structural matrix of romanticism. But, temperamentally, Coșbuc was not a romantic. In fact, after 1848, the German romanticism had entered an epigonic phase, in a "time of exhaustion for the romantic effervescence ..., marked by the reaction to the profound romanticism (...) and also by a realistic revival" (Voia, 1966: 144).

Driven by this rustic realism, arrived in Bucharest, we find Coșbuc together with Delavrancea, Slavici and Caragiale, in the editorial of some magazines such as *Vatra* (1894), and, later, in 1901 at *Semănătorul*.

Moreover, the poet's non-affiliation to romanticism was subsequently registered by specialists: "a classicism of popular nuance defines the profound originality of his poetry" (DGLR, 2004: 409).

Instead, from the German culture, from the comparative-historical school, he took, for his passion as a folklore researcher, the mythological theory of Max Müller and F. Schwartz (confirmed by the Brothers Grimm), which he applied with much perseverance, even when, at the time, it was outpaced by newer theories (the migration theory and the anthropological theory).

2. The activity of folklorist is characterized by some more important directions. But at the beginning it should be mentioned that George Coșbuc was not a folklore collector (this was established after all the left manuscripts were researched posthumously). He was a folklore researcher for the purpose of a thorough knowledge of his sources of inspiration; he was also a creator in a folkloric manner.

As a researcher, he was remarked, as it has been said, due to the knowledge and application of the mythological method; as a creator, having the intuition of the great art, he applied the criterion of artistic value every time. The socio-political context in which he

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lived, as a Transylvanian, determined him to militate in an enlightening way, as a creator of the values that were related to the affirmation of the national consciousness. In particular, he was concerned about the healing (enlightenment) of the rustic mentality, populated by some superstitions and obscurantist habits, harmful to the physical and moral health of the people.

2.1. George Coșbuc's tendency for the scientific research of folklore was favored by several factors: the special fame, recorded in the publications of the time, which was enjoyed by Vasile Alecsandri, Dimitrie Bolintineanu, Anton Pann, etc.; the fame of the village rhapsodes, in emulation with which it becomes "a kind of poetic itinerant art of the village. I was teaching the lads the occasional banns, which they could shout at the hora; I was teaching the girls how to sing the doina at the evening sitting. At that time I improvised the folkloric lyrics very easily" (acc. Scridon, 1966: 13); the importance that was then given to folklore in the Romanian language and literature textbooks of high school (they noted and insisted on the fact that the soul of a nation is best reflected in its artistic creation, traditions and customs); the contact with the German poets who, following Herder's exhortations (it seems that his theories had been included in the school textbooks), were frequently inspired by the popular creation, adapting, besides the national myths, many of the German medieval legends (Fochi, 1971: 22).

Because, in the meantime, he had published many original creations, with topics from the local folkloric fund, and also many translations, he received a confirmation of his value, being summoned to Sibiu (in 1887), as an editor and contributor to the *Tribuna* magazine. The period from *Tribuna* was considered by the researchers and by the poet himself ("the most fruitful years") a decisive phase in the formation of the poet and also in clarifying his poetic formula (DGLR, II, 2004: 409).

Arrived in Bucharest in the year of Mihai Eminescu's death, summoned by Titu Maiorescu, at the insistence of Ioan Slavici, he is subsequently confirmed as one of the great national poets, after the apparition of the volume *Balade și idile* (1893). It is the moment of triumph for his creative formula, disputed by some people in terms of originality (Anton Bacalbașa, Alexandru Macedonski), defended by others (Alexandru Vlahuță, Nicolae Iorga). After a few years (1900), he was received as a member of the Romanian Academy.

For over 6 years (1894 - 1910) the poet carried out a sustained activity of folklore research. Although he dissipated his ideas in several studies, they are complementary and find their place "within the frameworks of a coherent system, being able to discuss- in the case of George Coșbuc - about a scientific, unitary and organic conception, about folklore" (Fochi, 1971: 56).

Although in the research done up to that time it had been imposed the idea that any act of culture, be it of a popular origin or not, is an individual act, George Coșbuc launched himself into folklore, in 1897, with the study *Poporul poet* (in *Tribuna*, no. 14: 1897). Despite the title, the poet states that the first act of the folkloric creation is assumed individually. However, he makes the fundamental difference between creation (as an individual act) and circulation (as an act with collective participation). This conception is constant. Thus, in his later study about *Baladele populare*, he states: "any popular poetry, whether it is a doina, a rhapsody or something else, is created by a single poet, because it cannot be otherwise" (in *Albina*, 1903: 35). The collective character emerges, as it has been shown, through their circulation.



The context of the popular creation contains two basic components: a community with artistic receptivity and a creator or a speaker, gifted with talent, who satisfies this receptivity.

The artistic receptivity is not an accidental aptitude in the subconscious of the community, but a necessary one. It is required by the imposition of a festive catharsis: in the important events of the human life (birth, baptism, wedding, soldiering, death); on calendar holidays; in marking the most important phases of field work; in individual parties, etc.

Not all communities are endowed with a talented rhapsode. From here, the idea of the itinerant rhapsodes and the circulation, with them, of the popular creations. This has not only the importance that is commonly assigned to it by folklore researchers, that of becoming, over time, the collective author, but also that of constantly adapting, through modifications and additions made to the lecturers' new structures of expectation.

The collective character thus achieved through the circulation of the texts is a very important adaptive characteristic, since it corresponds to the law of the change of aesthetic values. Only in this way the exceptional force of preservation of the popular creations, which carry their artistic message up to the phase of the present generations, can be explained.

In the village Hordou, where George Coșbuc was born, the rhapsodes were greatly honored in front of the community. Ion Goriță, from whose repertoire the young Georgică al Popii (George Coșbuc) borrowed, as he confesses, fairy tales, anecdotes and, in the case he did not have it, his predilection for humor. The singer from his father's parish church, Tănăsucă Mocodean, is presented by the poet as a true local bard, master of ceremonies ("colăcar," a person that resembles the old waits) at all the village events. Engaged by them in various contests of textual improvisations that had to be adapted to certain parts of the ceremonial, the poet seems to remember, from his classicist studies, the Fescenian poetry contests, or the celebrations (convivalia), borrowed by the Latins from the Etruscans (acc. Grimal, 1997: 56).

If he had remained in the village, Georgică al Popii would have increased his reputation as a local rhapsode. Going to studies, this vocation followed him all the time, but, naturally, the dimensions were enlarged. He managed to become the rhapsode of an entire nation, as he later acknowledged: *Sunt suflet în sufletul neamului meu / Și-i cânt bucuria și-amarul ... / Izvor ești și ținta a totul ce cânt* (the poem *Poetul*, in Coșbuc, 1958, II: 443). He was not an ordinary rhapsode, who creates, borrows and transmits a repertoire, but one concerned with the scientific research of the popular phenomenon as a whole (works, beliefs, customs, superstitions).

As George Coșbuc had the first contacts with the Western literature through the German poetry, so the basis of study in the science of folklore was the German folklore.

But before getting acquainted with their theories, the poet had been concerned, ever since he was a young man, with the creation of a national mythology, in which to frame the diversity of folk productions based on the fairy tale. In the poet's conception, the fairy tales were reminiscences of some ancient myths.

The founder of the mythological theory was Max Müller, and the one who developed it and tried to confirm it through numerous applications was F. Schwartz. Although it was shown that "the decisive influence on his thinking in this order of ideas was

exerted by the second one" (Fochi, 1971: 296), in the most important directions the Romanian poet followed the first.

Max Müller was an Indo-Europeanist, an adept of the comparative-historical theory. (The method had been founded by Franz Bopp, as early as 1816, but only later, between 1900 and 1915, the Tocharian and Hittite texts were deciphered, launching Indo-Europeanism in a decisive phase. Max Müller had died in 1900). He went to Oxford University in England to improve his Indo-European studies and succeeded in translating the ancient texts of *Rig Veda*. George Coşbuc knew that, in order to be a Romance philologist, you had to know Latin (he knew it well and he translated into Romanian the most important literary works of the Latin classicism), in order to study mythology you had to thoroughly research the Sanskrit language. Following Max Müller, he learned the Sanskrit language very well, and he also translated, in Romanian, *Sacuntala* by Kalidasa and *Antologie sanscrită*, for which, in 1897, he received the Năsturel-Herescu prize of the Romanian Academy.

George Coşbuc followed Max Müller also in his conception of interpreting the myth, in its nature, as a solar phenomenon. He himself was considered, not only for the idyllic atmosphere generated by his texts, but also for the symbolic interpretation of the characters from the epic structures, a poet of the sun. In fact, "Făt Frumos is the sun in the fight with the darkness, Miorița, a solar dirge" (DGLR, 2004: 414).

At the beginning of Indo-Europeanism, Max Müller had also been impressed by the similarities between the Sanskrit and classical languages and considered, as all the other followers of the comparative-historical method, that at the base of all these languages there existed a common, primitive, Indo-European language. Since the representatives of the mythological method considered that the myths appeared at the same time with the language, it was assumed that at that time there was also a common fund of myths, which, with the evolution of the languages, were taken fragmentarily by each family of languages. In different forms and features, they were found in the culture of Europe from the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the next.

But, according to Coşbuc, the folklorist's role is not to reconstruct from the fragments the whole of an ancestral mythology, to reach the first mythogenesis, but to explain under certain historical conditions the occurrence of the second mythogenesis and the way in which its results work.

In the study *Elementele literaturii populare* (in *Noua revistă*, 1900: 159-168), he applies the theory starting with the ballad (the rhapsody) and continuing with the fairy tale, with the epic species realized by the narration. He starts from the idea that the popular rhapsode is devoid of creativity. His only ability is that he, being the subconscious keeper of a mythical matrix, can adapt the remarkable facts and events that he knows within the integrating meaning of the myth: "He can neither sing about important facts, nor about the people" (Ibidem). This idea was probably based on the psychology studies of his forerunner. The psychological arguments, be they from German psychology, however, cannot demonstrate what the popular rhapsode can or cannot do. He is primarily endowed with the possession (intuition) of that ancestral matrix of the myth. Myths, however, when they were created, were a form of philosophical understanding and historical knowledge of life. They did not have, as the specialists stated, an artistic functionality, except, eventually, as a

secondary effect of communication. Or, in the second mythogenesis, the force that updates the mythical matrix in the subconscious of the rhapsode is precisely the artistic purpose. Moreover, as it turned out, Coşbuc himself attached great importance to the criterion of the aesthetic value, both in research and, especially, in his involvement in the act of his own creation.

The ballad, in George Coşbuc's conception, is made according to a fixed scheme, by means of automaticity, as "a report of the historical, unique and unrepeatable fact to the general and eternal myth" (Fochi, 1971: 63). This reporting is arbitrary, unable to establish a selective determinism between the two realities or certain significant correspondences between the heroes of the two plans. Thus the poet is at odds with himself, with the one who contemplated the reconstruction of a national mythology, with the heroes anchored in an ancestral symbolism.

Moreover, the part of the mythological theory for which Coşbuc was criticized by the contemporary and further folklorists was his tendency to separate the ballads and fairy tales from the historical context that generated them, they only counting as pure mythographic schemes. It is true that neither the exaggerations of hazardous equivalences (Ler/Doamne – Aurelian, Dochia – Dacia, Iorgovan – Hercule etc.) were acceptable. This was a mania held by the Greek historian Euhemerus (about 300 BC), who, being an atheist, desecrated the gods, showing that they were real heroes, who passed into mythology through the apotheotic process. According to Coşbuc, "it is not good to look for historical facts or truths in ballads" (acc. Fochi, 1971: 64).

Firstly this fact dissatisfied the Enlightenment representatives, who, in the tradition of the Transylvanian School, were looking for evidence of our Latin origin in myths.

Among them there was also the professor from the University of Cluj, Grigore Silaşi. However, his influence on Coşbuc (acc. DGLR, 2004: 414; and acc. Pop, 1966: 132) cannot be proved, as Adrian Fochi showed: when Coşbuc entered the university, Grigore Silaşi had already been dismissed, without any communication (dispute) between them.

3. Besides the mythological method (in the meantime, the anthropological and the migratory methods were identified with important limits, too), many of Coşbuc's criticizable ideas (his cantonment in the schematism of a single theory), had been outrun by the author himself, by the way he applied them in practice, these applications being still current nowadays.

Some poems attempt to explain theories and to describe the reversible path from history to myth. Thus, in the poem *Atque nos*, the poet, listening to a fairy tale, enters by a dream into a journey in time: *parcă mă cuprinde-un vis/ Şi-atunci eu mă pierd pe-ncetul pe-ale fantaziei maluri.../ Şi pe-a căror frunte pus-am mitologic diadem* (Coşbuc, 1958, II: 53).

Coşbuc considers the fairy tale as the basic element of any ethnomitology. Something similar is mentioned by a famous folklorist, Stith Thompson, who considers that "the myth is a (traditional) narrative prose which, in the community in which it is told, is considered to be a true account of something that happened in a remote time" (acc. Vulcănescu, 1987: 27).

According to Mircea Eliade, the mythogenesis is repeated because the myth is "an exemplary model of all human activities" (Eliade, 1977: 15).

If it is not possible to make abstraction of Coșbuc's theories in his explanatory applications, in his own poetry, his applications as a secondary game reached the dimensions of the art and enriched the Romanian literature with a creation that relied a lot on the originality of the form.

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## **MYTH AND SYMBOL IN THE WRITING OF MIHAIL SADOVEANU**

**Marius Romulus SALAGEAN\***

**Abstract:** *The imaginary and the symbolism recognizable in the canvas of the sadovenian text, interferes in the privileged area of the myth. The disconcerting writing of the one who invests in Kesarion Breb with all the marks of an initiate, the future magician of the sacred mountain, hides an unbelievable love story. Of a platonic level, the attraction between the ascetic Kesarion and the princely Maria, reach to give the narrative unique resonances, revealing the rumors of a personage with a special complexity. The lexicon adopted by the writer offers a sample of the combination of the old words with their replicas, other terms, "other rooms" in which the linguistic novelty is relevant through the latency of the symbols. As a correlator, we can say that, the spiritualized love between Kesarion Breb and "empresed" Maria, bears the imprint of a The Golden Bough, meant to ensure the permanence of significant human acts.*

**Keywords:** *imaginary; myth; remnant.*

The recourse to a lexicon impregnated by the archaic breath, but doubled by the uniqueness of the metaphor and the refined reverberations of the symbol, impress the sadovenian text, elements that cannot be replicated.

Far from being artificial, the writer reveals a seductive narrative, with depths and "well tempered" linguistic ups and downs. The imaginary to which Sadoveanu calls, enhances his writing, through the representations that take place in the consciousness of the reader but also by the surprising "imaging".

The miracle of his prose, resides in the lyricization of the epic, an insertion process, convincing, having as an aesthetic purpose, that byzantine perfume that envelops the pages of the novel "The Golden Bough": "The both sat separated from each other, each in its darkness. The sky was moonless; still, after a while, they saw their sadness in the light of the stars. The atmosphere was so clear that the gold of the height made the night translucent "[...]

By placing the sadovenian evocation within the sphere of attraction of the myth, we will confront that dialectic of "historical time" and "glorious time primordial, total"<sup>1</sup>, which Mircea Eliade shades. In his meaning, "personal adventure" takes the image "of a saga mythical "which leads to the circumvention of" the present "<sup>2</sup>. Only the sacralized temporal duration, the evasion during the mythical time, "primordial", can claim the desirable "nisus formativus".

Underlying these mythic-symbolic considerations is the exposition of Gilbert Durand, who certifies that "every myth is a search for lost time. The search for the lost time and even more so with a comprehensive effort of reconciliation with an euphemized time

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<sup>1</sup>Eliade Mircea, *Essays, myths, dreams and mysteries*, Ed.Science, Bucharest, 1991, p.122.

<sup>2</sup>Eliade Mircea, *Essays, myths, dreams and mysteries*, p.122.

and with the defeated or transmuted death in the paradisiac adventure, thus the true inductive, final meaning of all the great myths appears."<sup>1</sup>

Especially in this ideal register is the substance of the myth, its mark, Durand pointing out that "the meaning of the myth in particular"<sup>2</sup> tends to claim the territories of the "imaginary" in general.

In the novel "The Golden Bough" (1933), it stands out the replacement of the historical time with a mythical one, especially in the narrative episode that has as lover Kesarion Breb, the discoverer of that "vision of eternal beauty ..." <sup>3</sup> The narrative paragraph underlying the one in which the ritual of taking possession of the shoes crystal is carried out, with a clear intention that "coup de foudre", which will harm, even the "Egyptian", this hero, a civilizer, none other than Kesarion Breb .

The text indeed preserves the agreements of a ceremonial of the love of the chivalric duty: "[...]; and his powder heart humbles him, receiving the blow of a moment, the only one in eternity and immortal [...]"<sup>4</sup>

Righteous to look for Constantin Isaurion's wife, archetype of the Dragon, Kesarion meets the future princess under the symbol appearance of Cinderella. The shoes crystal sewed with silver thread is part of the fairy tale scenario which hints at the epic level.

Another discontinuity that intervenes in the consistency of historical time, it seems to emerge at the end of the novel, when the succession of the magician function of the "hidden mountain" takes place. As a result of the visual impact, which manages to distract the initiate from the depths in the Self, we will understand that Breb loses, for a moment the steps, when seeing the archetypal image of the beauty of platonic nature ...

At rigor, however, what strikes Sadoveanu's character, is the spiritual force, its brilliance, acquired after a course of identity retrieval. His true Temple will be "the hidden mountain", where he will retire, surpassed by a desolate world, without any significance, except the iconic appearance of the Lady Mary, who will stay close to him.

As in the depths, the sacred fire of the vestals from the "hidden mountain" is preserved, so it also resides in the being of Kesarion Breb, love for Teosvei and Filaret's granddaughter, love, like, to spread "unhappiness:" - Great owner, he spoke in a soft voice, unhappiness did not bring you the Emperor's behavior, but my love "[...]

The discreet love story that the author insert, on the historical background, serving only as the interface of the Romanian creation can be seen as a last proof of the initiation of the archetypal hero; also the humanization of Breb transpires, this passion, discovering, even to him, multiple existential facets.

The hero, here, will submit to a mystical ministry to which "the Thirty-third Decheneu", the last magician of the "hidden mountain,"<sup>5</sup> adheres. Everything starts from that medieval episode, a ritual of the recognition of the lady, for the future emperor Constantin Isaurul. There is, in that epic sequence, a sublimation of eroticism, through notes

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<sup>1</sup>Durand Gilbert, *Structural and anthropological structures of the imaginary*, Ed.Univers, Bucharest, 1997, p.467.

<sup>2</sup>*ibidem*

<sup>3</sup>Sadoveanu M., *The Golden Bough*, p.70.

<sup>4</sup>Sadoveanu M., *The Golden Bough*, p.70.

<sup>5</sup>Sadoveanu M., *Creation Cited*, p.155.

of an overflowing sensuality. The main appearance of Maria, Teosvei's daughter, (we say the daughter as an affective hue, the true degree of kinship being that of a granddaughter), which will prove to be "like a sacrifice from old and sad stories"<sup>1</sup>, causes Breb to speak words only for he:"O, vision of eternal beauty, sigh Kesarion, in the depths of his being"<sup>2</sup>

The ceremonial meeting between the two keeps the reverberations from the myth of Tristan and Isolde. We attend, de facto, in the reiteration of the erotic myth, the passion act being paired with a challenge type initiation. With regard to Tristan and Isolde, let's not forget that King Mark wants to marry the queen of Ireland, straight, Isolde, and Tristan himself is sent to marry her, but Isolde's charm will only make the man happy who will kill the dragon from Ireland. "Mutatis mutandis"; we reach the "myth of the dragon killer", noting that in "The Golden Bough", Raul is defined by the "dragon" ruthless in the hypothesis of Constantin Isaurian (Dragon). The idea of its metamorphosis, at night, when scratching its skin, is explicitly suggested by the writer.

Paradoxically, the beloved Kesarion Breb brings the emperor to the prey, as Ovid S. Crohmalniceanu also notes: "Moreover, instead of rescuing the virgin girl, from the dragon's claws, Breb bring her him, being the petitioner and the bringer of Lady at the gates of Byzantium."<sup>3</sup> We find an interesting point of view of the respective critic, who comes to our aid, expanding the perspective related to the explicit or implicit appearance of the "dragon", as well as of the one who kills "dragons".

Appears also, the idea of the abyssal beast we sometimes carry within us. If Tristan is forced to fulfill his mission and kill the dragon in Ireland, Kesarion Breb must follow "The Way to Himself" and defeat his love for "young empress Mary": "The dragon is the attraction that pushes him towards Mary, that is earthly love, identified here, in the sense of the magician's beliefs, with liberty, or unclean lust, of a demonic essence. In this light, Breb proves to be, in turn, a killer of dragons."<sup>4</sup> Of the countless masks that this "alter ego" of the writer wears, the ascetic one best suits him. The Sadovenian character transforms his weakness to love into a mortification of the body.

"The Egyptian", after the new nickname is placed in a position to defeat his inner daimon, which does not seem easy at all, especially as he himself confesses: "The vicinity of a child is often more dangerous than that of a courtesan."<sup>5</sup>

Through her annoyance, the flashing passion, with reference to "amour courtoise", obviously a "coup de foudre", having as protagonists Breb and Maria, from Amira, shows similarities with the forbidden attraction between the priest Tonea and the inciting Borivoje, the heroes. sentimental of the novel "From us to Cladova" belonging to Gala Galaction. The semantic bridge between the impossible loves whose ferocity cannot be circumvented, would constitute it, keeping the proportions, the inner fight, the victory of the affections, the sensuality tempered by the horizon of the Spirit. In the sadovenian writing, reminiscent of

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<sup>1</sup>Sadoveanu M., *Creation Cited*, p.70.

<sup>2</sup>*ibidem*

<sup>3</sup>Ovid. S Crohmalniceanu, "Five hypostases in five kinds of reading", Ed.The Romanian Book, Bucuresti, p.34.

<sup>4</sup>Ovid. S. Crohmalniceanu, *Creation Cited*, p.34.

<sup>5</sup>Sadoveanu M., *Creation Cited* p.70.

the myth are sometimes found in details, but even more convincing is the text's hermeneutics.

We resume the narrative section dedicated to the ceremony of investing the beautiful virgin from Amira, referring to the following aspect: "Kesarion's things were placed in the bark of the unicorn." [...] From there, from the "bark of the unicorn", the red-skinned shoes crystal will be taken away by the petitioner, and the image of the unicorn tempts different hypostases, such as: "the defense of virginity (unique horn raised to the sky) and fertility (the phallic sign of the horn)." <sup>1</sup>

We have to nuance here, because the representations of this chimerical animal, also converge on "two unicorns facing each other, appearing to be engaged in an uncriminal struggle"<sup>2</sup> Also, in many situations, appears the "image of a violent internal conflict between the two values that the unicorn symbolizes" <sup>3</sup>.

More specifically, we are heading towards the "phallic sense of the horn" as opposed to protecting "the virginity (the unique horn raised to the sky)." <sup>4</sup> The ideological connection related to the symbolism would be ensured by chapter IX, named: "Here things are happening as in the long time of the mother's fairy tales"<sup>5</sup>, where there is a reiteration of a marital scenario, in which twenty virgins participate "dreaming of the crown and purple", of which only one was destined to Constantin Isaurul, the embodiment of the dragon, "As a sacrifice from old and sad stories [...]", Mary from Amira will be chosen.

By defiled of the lial clothes that "protected" the "the little empress" Mary, Constantin will also receive his punishment, reaching the initial stage. Blinded in the lowest way, by the red wear executioner, he would vainly seek his salvation through the darkness, where he had been living before, not being able to see the beauty near him. Thrown into the darkness, definitely, he is nothing more than a damned, another face of "Hell" crossed by Kesarion  
Breb.

Breb's lively projection of the writer, Breb is a clairvoyant, having extrasensory qualities. The character outlined in strong lines, initiated in Egypt, possesses, at a closer look, an imaginary capacity, managing to take certain images representing the face of the beloved person. Alone, near the royal court, the "Egyptian" sees Maria: "Kesarion Breb snatched his face for him, throwing away the gold. In the howls and hauls they mingle with the powders of those crowds with big, black mouths, he seemed to sit quietly until the image shivered in his expensive eyes, drawing to his eyes full of joy or fear [...]"

The text brings to the foreground an eminescian phrase: "In the black framework of my life / It is an icon of light." [...]"

Going beyond the lexical affinities of the proposed sequences, we will focus on that magical act, committed by Breb, which has as a consequence the imaginary placement of the prince Maria, close to him, as in a enchanted mirror in which, the face of the lover reveals itself" pointed on his eyes full of joy or fear. "[...]"

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<sup>1</sup>Jean Chevrolier-Alain Gheerbrant, *Dictionary of symbols*, Ed.Artemis, 1993, p.217.

<sup>2</sup>*ibidem*

<sup>3</sup>*ibidem*

<sup>4</sup>*ibidem*

<sup>5</sup>Sadoveanu M., *The Golden Bough*, Ed.Junimea, Craiova, 1986.



It seems that the missed expression of this love between Kesarion and Maria, bring compensatory, visions of the unconscious. They are constantly searching, becoming closer by invoking images from the inside, which may correspond to some models. For Breb, the virgin of Amira, it represents a paradigm, an archetype of "eternal beauty", as it is expressed. And for the unhappy prince, who will be exiled on an island of penance, the man in white straps, Breb, embodies the nobility and generosity, making him wait in vain. The one who, passing by, creates the sensation as a light scattering, due to a genuine spiritual effort, "rapes the face" of Mary, succeeding in a true declaration of love, but "without words", the text tells us, which enhances the charm of those thoughts: ".. My heart has found you," Kesarion said without words. At this moment we can let it rise in the sun or fall into Propontida; we have before us the eternity of sorrow " <sup>1</sup>

At the lexicon-semantic level, there are visible common points with the end of chapter XI from "Baltagul", where Vitoria "had to find out if Lipan rose in the sun or ran on a water.

In the ideological-symbolic context of "Baltag", Alexandru Paleologu supports the recurrence of the Osiris myth, arguing that "Osiris as a divinity, represents the sun that sets and raises, that is, it dies and resurrects [...]"

The devolved paragraphs, being almost identical, elicit a key to the interpretation, in the light of those said by the eminent critic, but supported by an original approach. If in the "Baltagul", the myth of Osiris fits perfectly on the scheme of the murder of Nechifor Lipan, in "The Golden Bough", things take another turn. The landmark is proving to be eternal, and in the register of those suggested by Kesarion, "without words", the Osiris myth may refer to the death and resurrection of a spiritualized love.

We do not know why the writer called that flash: "the vain moment." Rather, it seems to be called the eternal moment, once it can be "high in the sun." It is quite plausible that the "eternity of sorrow", mentioned by Kesarion, is to represent their failure on this earth, but there may be a resurrection of love, ensured on a transcendental plane, like a "The Golden Bough that will shine in itself, in out of time."<sup>2</sup>

The imaginary and the delivered representations of the sadovenian epic defy any interpretive grid with the canonical pretenders. All this simply happens in the text canvas, with freshness and meaning. The writer proves himself a master in directing the atmosphere that floats above the Byzantines. The image of the two lovers is reflected on the background of the night, in the light of the stars. Both Kesarion and Maria seem hypnotized by the charm of that fragile nearby, lost in the "gold of the height", unable, as it were, to say something. The narrative text "makes concessions" to an authentic poem.

It should be mentioned that at the end of the fifteenth chapter, we explicitly meet the symbolic reason for the "The Golden Bough", outlined here, to delimit the land, the expiration, of the flashes of a platonic source eroticism. The last words changed by the two seem unbelievable. Spoken like in a mythical scenario of spiritualized love, they bear the imprint of a golden branch sprouted in the sacred fire of the vestals. The text has a remnant in the consciousness of the specialized reader: [...] "Here we will break up. The delusion,

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<sup>1</sup>Sadoveanu M., *The Golden Bough*, Ed. Junimea, Craiova, 1986.

<sup>2</sup>Sadoveanu M., *The Golden Bough*, p.144.

which is called the body, will also unfold. But what is between us now, cleared in the fire, is a golden branch that will shine in itself, outside of time. "

However, the two do not seem to separate, as neither sea manages to get rid of the shores of the Golden Horn ...

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## THE ABSURD OF MAX BLECHER'S IMAGINARY

Alina-Mariana STÎNGĂ (ZARIA)\*

**Abstract:** Under the slogan of P.B. Shelly, "I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire", the debut of the novel "Happenings in the immediate non-reality" has, over time, led to a pluriperspectivist interpretation. The title expresses the substance and the style of the book, in which the hero carries its existence into an "unreal" reality. The fictional narrator lives the experience of self-estrangement materialized into a crisis of identity there being a clear dissociation between the ego of the narrator and the ego of the author. The dissociation of person-character is obvious because the "clear" image of the person is doubled by an "abstract" one of the character that represents the point of departure with a double valence of the Blecherian imaginary. After a moment, reality returns, re-stratifies, and the room is a closed inner space which reconfigures "fresh". The reflexive nature of the beginning, in the spirit of Eminescu's novel *Poor Dionis* was remarked by Dumitru Micu, focussing the critical discourse on the same crisis of identity, crossed by the narrating ego that "derealizes", cancelling the boundaries between real and dream. It is a struggle between an "over-ego" and a "concrete ego" which disputes their supremacy over the narrator's being. Permanent ambiguity reality-dream is maintained by the character - narrator through the novelist's will for whom the outside world is confused with the inner world and vice versa. The reverse of the immediate reality allows voids to be filled and people float like bubbles of air through water. The unusual universe of the Blecherian fiction allows as harmless facts, gestures that are actually shocking in the material reality: immersion into the mud or into erotic attractions coming from a malicious magnetism. The fantastic realism of Kafka's prose is found in Blecher's work through the ability of being able to describe everything that is common lending him "a confusing transparency". On the other hand, common for Bruno Schulz and Blecher is "the preference for depreciating and common things" as starting points of genesis for "the world of strange and alienation".

**Keywords:** the absurd; fantastic; non-reality

Recently recovered writer, Max Blecher occupies a special place in the context of interwar literature, when literary criticism, seemingly indifferent, did not identify with the greatest accuracy the symbolic of his writing. The unusual blistering work has led to some reticence of literary criticism in accepting it to its true value: on the one hand, it was seen as a sick refugee in literature, and on the other hand as a willing to expose his illness and crises to a in a manner considered by some impudent. His fictions were located in an area of frontier literature, considered "an insoluble experiment" (Radu G. Țeposu).

Under the slogan of P. B. Shelly, "I sink, I sink, I tremble, I'm out", the debut of the novel *Happenings in the immediate unrealism* has, over time, led to a pluriperspectivism, depending on critical comprehension: ontological nature, reflexive and Proustian spirit, etc. The title expresses the substance and style of the book, in which the hero carries his existence into an "unreal" reality that "reveals him in colours, shapes and sounds of a hallucinatory sensory power" (Sebastian, M., 1936: nr. 5432/22 febr.)

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The fictional narrator experiences the experience of self-estrangement, materialized in a crisis of identity, there being a net dissociation between the ego of the narrator and the ego of the author. Dissociation of person-character is obvious, because the “clear” image of the person is doubled by an “abstract” character of the character, which is the point of departure with the double valence of the Blecherian imaginary. After a moment, reality returns, restrains, and the room is a closed inner space, which is reconfigured “freshly”. Appreciation takes place only if “subtraction” lasts more than a moment: “when it lasts longer, it becomes a fear, a fear of never being able to ever find it.” (*ibidem*)

Manolescu observed the Proustian dimension of the novel’s debut, the critic denying psychology by the fact that the interior of the soul is empty, “and the higher consciousness is suspended.” (Manolescu, N., 2007:564)

As Kafka, Blecher uses the language of introspection and psychological analysis, but in a special form, not to be confused with the stream of consciousness, the concept of William James (*The Principles of Psychology* - 1890). And the question “who are they” permits to establish the ontological propensity of the narrator’s experiences, acquiring a metaphysical reality. Lucidity is invoked as a solution to the “terrible question” answer.

The reverse of immediate reality allows voids to be filled, and people float like bubbles of water through the water. The insoluble universe of fleecy fiction captures anodic facts, gestures that are actually shocking: immersion in mud or erotic attractions from a sickly magnetism, which become absolutely natural now in this “unreality.” The fantastic realism of Kafka’s prose is found in Blecher’s work, by being able to describe everything that is banal, lending him “a confusing transparency.” (Crohmălniceanu, Ov. S., 1967: 546)

On the other hand, common for Bruno Schulz and Blecher is “the preference for devaluing and common things” as genesis for “the world of strange and alienation.” (*ibidem*).

In the incipient of the novel, the “intermediate image” of the room is clarified as a landscape in the rear window, allowing it to be retrieved and return to reality: “never, and under no circumstances, seems more obvious than at those times that each object to occupy the place he occupies and that I must be who I am.” (Blecher, M., 2016:34)

The perimeter of “unreality”, as the topos of the artistic vision, is defined by the dream-fantasy valence, with the connection of the real reality with the “hallucinatory reality”. As she had confessed to Sașa Pană, in a letter from 1934, Blecher sought to raise “the equally lucid and volunteer value of any hallucinatory temptation,” (*apud* Balotă, N., 1974:161) the terms “lucid” and “volunteer” actually belonging to the surrealist artistic desideratum.

The final describes the awake “dream,” immersion into abyss of consciousness and real-unreal confusion; the differences are almost insensible, except for a “do not know which air of authenticity” floating in things. A new crisis, in the view of N. Balota, is that of the real. The reason of the “awake dream,” as an anticipation of the postmodernism in which Blecher falls under the poet Mircea Cărtărescu, creates a new dilemma, reminiscent of the Eminescu question, “were they dreamed or not?”: “I dream that I sleep deeply in the bed I slept with the evening (...) I’m awake, but I sleep and dream of my watch. I dream of my sleep and at that moment.” (*ibidem*: 134-135)

In another vision, the Manolescian, this end was considered a form of exiting from a unique and limited reality, similar to a nightmare that no one wakes us up. Human existence, the “bizarre adventure of being human,” is defined, in extremis, by an ostentatious struggle to overcome the almost hermetic condition, sometimes perforated by the suspension, for a moment, of one’s own identity. The ecstatic state is achieved through the awareness of Arthur Rimbaud’s statement: *Je est o Autre* (Manolescu, N., *op. cit.*:575).

The grotesque of the disease is also found in connections of sometimes obscene eroticism: the reference to the pornographic postcard shown by a dressing-up is associated with the counterpoint technique with the indecent photographs shown by Quitonce’s sick Emanuel in scarred Hearts: “the vision of a frenetic, and trembling all over his body in love was awkward”. (Blecher, M., *op. cit.*:93)

The style is eminently confessional, and in this diary of a sick person there is a distorted reality, hallucinating placed in the sphere of faculty. With “authentic” means (narrative in person I, confession, diary), Blecher builds a work considered “rather a Romanian replica of Kafka’s visionaryism”, involuntarily but born of the psychic structure of the Romanian writer who lived in real as in an “unreality” (*ibidem*: 143).

The Romanian speech at Max Blecher is built as the lecturer penetrates into the subsidiary of the creative act set up alongside the triptic under the sign of the illness. A hermeneutical and semiotic analysis allows the organization of narrative material through the hierarchy of recurring motifs in Blecherian prose, becoming idiosyncratic, constant symbols of artistic imagery: *topos, ontological, theatrical, pictorial, musical, and primordial*.

The topos are arranged in a dichotomy that distorts the hero’s feelings: cursed / evil spaces and benevolent / beneficial spaces. The native states of the narrator go through sinuous trails, from dizziness and faint to ecstasy and beatitude.

The narrator’s crises in the Events are generated by the so-called trappings, dominating the image of the cavern, embodied in various forms: the walls of the shore, the beds of the bed, the room, the consulting room, etc. Here the vital functions are attenuated, and the absurd created leads to the Kafkian Metamorphosis, with characters such as the mouse-doctor or scenes like mud-diving that degrades the human. Every such space has its “maleficity”, it carries an anathema, a kind of *espaces maudits* (Florin Oprea).

Cursed spaces are also found in the size of the illness, that is, the sanatoriums that become the landmarks of the Blecherian imaginary: the Berck sanatorium in France, Leysin in Switzerland and Techirghiol in Romania, described in terms of funeral and disease.

The moon is triumphant in the scene after Edda’s funeral, when “the mud was more aggressive and dirtier than ever” (Blecher, M., *op. cit.*: 130-131), and the conclusion is frank: “there is nothing in the world outside the mud.” (*ibidem*). The identity found in the mud supremacy is also confirmed in the existence of pain as a “protoplasmatic protuberance modelled in words and reasoning”. It is a reduction to the original “mud” in the manner of Samuel Beckett, a “nihil” that in a vesperal movement gives rise to the existence of the case.

The tyranny of objects creates a form of prisoner of human existence, the others living in prisons in which nothing penetrates, while the narrator empirically lives the contact with the reality that invades him through all the pores. He lives on the verge of believing in the innocence of objects or in their terror. The crises were both of his and of the place where

they were going, places with “their personal wickedness.” The aggressiveness of the external environment that causes the narrator the faint states is illustrated by these virgin or closed places.

Photographs and letters were witnesses to the passage of time, reducing life to a smaller scale, because once the photographers existed and the letters were impressed by a warm and living hand. The gramophone in the grandfather’s house, the stamps with King Carol I and Queen Elizabeth were part of the series of defunct works, reborn from the melancholy of the weather.

Just like the picture in the showcase, imitations like wax statues or small statuettes give the bizarre feeling in front of the inappropriate. Kafka confessed to Gustav Janouch (about Metamorphosis): “The dream reveals reality, besides which the imagination is far behind. It’s terrible in life and shaking in art.” (*apud* Balotă, N., *op. Cit.*:161). But that “more real” reality the Blecher narrator-character implies is not, as in the Czech writer, the nature of the dream (traumhaft), Nicholas Balot, thus denying Blecher’s contiguity with “surrealistic onirism” (*ibidem*) in spite of the declared affinity the writer with André Breton (whose magazine *Le Surréalisme* was a collaborator) and Sasha Pană, a prominent representative of Romanian surrealism.

An alleged “metamorphosis” is recognized in the analogy of “mouse” (the little animal looking at the erotic game of the two) and the same doctor, who had been found dead in the attic of the house. Involuntarily, the rhetorical interrogation “Were mice in the attic of the house?” generates the absurdity. For the certainty of the doctor’s death, this paradoxical episode of the “Unicorn Invasion” needed to recover the matter borrowed from them by the doctor.

The convergence of the artist gives rise to a sui-generis authenticity, for the interior of the Schulz mannequin store or the Blecher fair is an imitation and concretization of the “artificial”. “The Corinthic Dramas,” which Manolescu talked about, unfolds in those evil spaces, and the encounter between the object and his image, between the living and the inanimate, as is the scene of his own photo, is characteristic of the Corinthian novel: Everything seems to be unfolding in a “Chinese Shadow Theater”.

The artificial, de facto kitsch (Dumitru Micu) exerts, in an almost esoteric way, a permanent attraction for the narrator. An explanation would be that all “cheap” objects and decorations lead to the idea of degradation, implicitly to nothingness, to “existential nihilism”. It is an artificiality reiterated by Adrian Marino in M. Blecher’s study, “*Aventures dans l’irréalité immédiate*” published in 1974 in “*Chaiers roumains d’études littéraires*”. “Small and insignificant objects” are endowed with a double valence: on the one hand, they are a mark of the past and, on the other hand, obstacles that restrict the full manifestation of the human condition.

The world of shadows concentrates an overturned reality, in which the umbrellas of things (the shadows of ships, birds, and planet) are obsessively restored into a sort of miniature universe of bedding of the bed sheet. Existence in a “more real reality” implies an inverse relationship, a world overturned in an eye projection, managed by the replacement of the full void.

The theatricality and the artificial are constant of the Corinth, but also of the decadence, manifested in spaces such as the cinema or panopticum, reminding of the

Bacovian vision of the poetry Panorama: "Around me wax bodies / With hades and fixed eyes. The wax statues, unnatural, sometimes grotesque, are actually the real life in the Blecherian conception, similar to Bruno Schulz's view: "it impresses me with all that is imitated. Artificial flowers, for example, and mortar crowns". (Manolescu, N., *op. cit.*: 567). The world is a general show in which the artist is attractive, and the actors understand the disguise of a colourless universe in which life must be played "fake and ornamental" (*ibidem*: 66).

The fire episode in the cinema captures the reality of "live" reality: the flames appearing on the screen are an imitation irony, because for a second, the device seems to continue "the actualities". The surprises of this space are actually the surprises of life: the inability of the individual to react in the face of the unexpected (such as illness) is similar to the immobility of the spectators "with the powder gypsum" in the face of the imminent danger. Only the screams remain echoes of a crisis manifested in this purgatory. Fake dominates reality through "mimesis," and people are worthy of mercy for the seriousness "they were always busy with".

For the narrator hero, the wax characters are "the only authentic thing in the world", for they falsify life in an ostentatious and pictorial way: the yellow-figure archduke, the woman in black laces, a stunning red rose and a wig blond, with a pink blush and blue eyes are infinitely more tragic symbols than any real death.

In the fine description of the Gypsy ring, the same artistic vision of the panopticum, which hides the ineffable pictorial mysteries, is found: the violet of the corroded corpses near the pornography of the garters reconstructs a hallucinating picture in which the superlative and grotesque coexists.

The confession continues. "I am impressed with all that is imitated," including artificial flowers, mortuary crowns, cropped pictures of children, cheap statues, to which, naturally, the Catholic churches are added. Life itself is an invasion of the elements of the panopticum and gets the size of a "fairy-tale" panorama.

The speech is a space of sensory, a *topos* that contaminates initiation and spiritual enrichment. In August, this is the space of the same imitation, populated by noises and images, lights and shadows. The futility of existence reverberates from the chaos of the fair like the undisturbed atmosphere of childhood crises. The transition from the artificial, but sublime, spectacle into the real but immense space of life equates to the transcendence from the plan of the atheism to that of "vanity."

The Weber House is another space associated with the artificial, a sort of panopticum full of wicked and populous things with wax figures, of which the enigmatic and libertine Paul Weber stands out. It was the most enigmatic and finer "wax figure". The boringness is thrown out of the imaginary dialogues with Ozy Weber, which gives them the illusion of the freedom and voluptuousness of the play: "the absurdity and stupidity of things" said led to some kind of air independence, and it all got a special gravity. Paul Weber marries Edda, "the pale woman with gestures and quiet silent mechanism," thus completing the variety of wax figures "alive" (along with Samuel Weber and Ozy infantry captain). Edda becomes an "object" that heals him, transforming the Weber house into a four-character pantomime: Paul, Gray and Faithful, Old Weber, Ozy the Disabled and the narrator-character, lost in the void. Normality is not comfortable, and organic needs are

getting worse: self-mutilation comes from a familiar push of blood thirst (scratches his cheek deeply). Also, the imaginary attack on Edda is an exacerbated violence, the blood spilling into a plethoric, anathematic image.

This sequence suggests, *stricto sensu*, “the unreality”, anticipating, in the opinion of Dumitru Micu, George Orwell’s novel *The Animal Farm*, being also a Kafkian episode. But the “unreal” is not only found in the fabulous or SF-surprise captured in the lighted *Vizuina*, but also in banal things and spaces like cinema.

It is certain that the difficulty of framing the Blecherian work in a single formula, given the depth and originality of its vision, but also its entirely literary profile. It is a personal and aesthetic Weltanschauung based on the reality-unreality duality, according to Kirkegaard’s faith-reason model. The Blecherian triptic illustrates the convergence of narrative formulas from the interwar period.

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## DU SOURIRE DE MONA LISE AU SOURIRE DE BOUDDHA

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**Abstract:** *In our article, we trace the essential features of a semiotics of the smile and the marks of laughter at the bodily level. This bodily symptom shows an emotional state that carries meaning and the measure of a certain degree of soul immersion in different states of consciousness. But the context of this symptom is one that gives it a very wide range of meanings. By "meaning" at the bodily level we also understand the linguistic meaning - or a linguistic manifestation - but also the concomitant manifestation where language and referent overlap, as in music. The smile seems to be the point of balance between explosive laughter and the "serious mine" or neutral facial expressions that one could have. Our method of analysis focuses on the semiotics of passions, while drawing on the support of art history.*

**Keywords:** *smile; symptom; state of consciousness*

### Introduction

Nous allons présenter dans cet article quelques aspects concernant un *symptôme* et ses significations psycho-sociales. Nous entrons donc dans une analyse sémiotique de la manifestation physiologique d'un contenu *significatif* qui, par conséquent, détient une fonction communicationnelle – il s'agit du sourire.

Nous savons que la « catégorie » principale des effets et manifestations de l'humour est *le rire*. Il a été longuement traité et analysé par de nombreux auteurs. Nous détenons moins d'analyses sur le sourire qui n'est pas du tout compris par nous comme un « moindre rire » ou un rire qui n'est pas arrivé à une certaine intensité. Il ne s'agit pas donc d'une analyse sous l'aspect quantitatif. Dès lors, la relation entre le rire et le sourire nous ne l'analysons pas comme une relation de type cause-effet ou comme une même structure sémiotique qui présenterait deux figures<sup>1</sup>. Nous partons de l'hypothèse qu'entre le rire et le sourire existe une différence majeure et de nature. Une différence qu'on retrouve d'habitude dans les mathématiques où nous rencontrons des structures semblables en apparence, mais qui ont des solutions ou raisons internes complètement différentes. Ici on souligne le fait que malgré cette ressemblance, leur nature est complètement différente. De même, le sourire

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<sup>1</sup> Nous utiliserons ici le terme de « figure » dans le sens de Pascal, sous une analyse du rôle de l'imagination chez lui, telle qu'elle est interprétée par Jean-Pierre Cléro (*Pascal. Figures de l'imagination*). Dans ce sens, le terme renvoie à un sens mathématique – comme figure géométrique – qui est distinct de celui de « forme ». La figure est une forme pourvue d'un puissant caractère individuel, personnel, d'unicité.

et le rire n'ont pas la même structure interne. L'humour, la situation amusante et l'ironie peuvent déclencher en premier temps le rire. Mais le sourire n'est pas une conséquence ou un symptôme de l'humour tout à fait. Parfois, c'est vrai, les deux se succèdent, mais notre thèse soutient le fait que cette succession est due à un complexe de structures sémantiques qui surgissent en même temps ou aléatoirement à la surface de la conscience qui détermine la *réaction* rire-sourire. Traitons donc ces manifestations sous l'angle de manifestations-réactions de la psyché, mais qui ne pose pas en bloc un même complexe de structures mentales/psychiques. Autrement dit, le sourire et le rire ne sont pas une seule et unique forme de manifestation sous laquelle sont *réduites* plusieurs structures significatives de la psyché. Le sourire – aussi bien que le rire – développe un énorme ensemble de nuances qui sont réduites seulement linguistiquement à un très faible complexe de dénominations. Sous le terme de « sourire » nous rencontrons une palette assez riche de nuances qui partent du *subtil* vers un concret manifeste sans se soucier quant à une délimitation aussi fine soit-elle du point de vue linguistique. La tendance généralisatrice de la langue devient parfois obstacle pour la compréhension du *sens* de ces mécanismes qui restent derrière le « simple sourire ».

#### « Coloriage » du sourire et coloriage de la voix

Il existe une sorte de blocage ou de limitation du pouvoir *d'exprimer* certains faits ou manifestations du comportement humain. Le sourire, dans notre conception, fait partie de la même catégorie que la *voix* humaine<sup>1</sup>. Le timbre, l'intensité, la douceur, la fermeté, les nuances, le propre de chaque voix se déplace avec chaque interprétation, contexte et signification langagière qu'on veut transmettre ou non. La voix est l'instrument avec lequel on travaille les figures de la communication. Elle devient un outil essentiel pour obtenir un plus d'efficacité dans nos actes sociaux. Ou elle peut devenir aussi un grand fardeau qui encombre et devient obstacle pour la manifestation de nos intentions. *On pourrait parler d'une limite ou bien d'un appauvrissement* de la langue au moment où elle veut *rendre compte de significations précises*. Nous entrons avec la voix et la musique dans le domaine de « l'à peu près » ou de « je ne sais pas comment dire ». La description reste dans un blocage, malgré le fait que le monde complexe des sensations ou sentiments est bien clair. On a du mal à exprimer certaines structures. Il en est ainsi du sourire. *L'éclat de rire* c'est une manifestation qui engage aussi la voix – sous l'individuation cognoscible du « rire » en *ha, ha, hi, hi, ho, ho, heu, heu* ou le plus maladif *hou, hou*. Qu'est-ce que la voix « veut » ajouter au rire ? Le rire ne serait-il pas en effet une manifestation vocale ou physiologique (les dents montrées, la bouche largement ouverte les yeux plissés etc.) ? Le rire où serait-il « le mieux à trouver » ? Dans les sons de la voix ou dans la mimique ou dans les deux à la

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<sup>1</sup> Voir dans ce sens le livre de Noëlla Finzi – *Bien dans sa voix, bien avec soi*. L'auteur essaie de nous introduire dans un domaine du contrôle de la voix et de son entraînement pour obtenir le plus d'effets sur les autres et sur nous-mêmes. Finzi nous offre un ensemble de règles et exercices pour travailler la voix, et pour ce faire il est nécessaire de *conceptualiser* et d'exprimer dans les mots les nuances qu'on perçoit dans la voix des autres ou de la nôtre.

fois ? Et, en ce qui concerne le sourire, son essence réside seulement dans la forme de la bouche ? Est-il une esquisse de rire à qui on a enlevé les sons de la voix ?

### **Du rire au sourire**

Je vais faire référence en ce moment à une « théorie » du rire qui part de quelques idées de l'écrivain Milan Kundera (1979). L'écrivain expose donc sa conception sur le rire dans un roman. Mais quelles sont les implications philosophiques de cette théorie ? Tout d'abord il attire l'attention sur un type à part de rire – *l'auto-rire*. Nous allons utiliser cette formule dans le sens d'une *auto-référentialité*. La bonne question devient : que ce passe-t-il au moment où le rire est suscité par un autre rire ? Kundera expose cette situation de cette façon : « Je disais à ma sœur, ou elle me disait, tu viens, on joue à rire ? On s'allongeait côte à côte sur un lit, et on commençait. Pour faire semblant, bien sûr. Rires forcés. Rires ridicules. Rires si ridicules qu'ils nous faisaient rire. Alors il venait, le vrai rire, le rire entier, nous emporter dans son déferlement immense. Rires éclatés, repris, bousculés, déchaînés, rires magnifiques, somptueux et fous... » (Kundera 1979 ; 93) Nous rencontrons donc deux types de rire dans une seule entité : le rire forcé, faux – *en régime second, comme représentation* – et le *vrai* rire, authentique, présent, qui dérive du premier. En fait nous rencontrons une situation paradoxale où un référent joue le rôle d'un signe qui engage un autre référent, comme l'objet cherché ou visé. C'est un chemin à rebours. Kundera parle ici d'un rire *imaginé* et un rire authentique, comme objet *réel*. L'imaginaire engage le réel dans la phénoménologie du rire. Il s'agit en réalité d'un passage aussi psychique – d'un registre intellectuel, calculé sous la forme du faux-rire vers un rire chargé de sentiment, appelé *jouissance*. Sous l'emprise d'Annie Leclerc, citée d'ailleurs par Kundera, la femme (comme un peu plus loin dans son livre le diable aussi) sont les dépositaires du vrai rire, plein de jouissance, tandis que l'homme (et l'ange) sont trop sérieux, sous l'emprise d'un rire intellectualisé, spécifique aussi au Dieu-créditeur. Seulement le diable peut se moquer dans un sens sémantique – rire d'un artifice langagier, une blague, un discours etc. – tandis que l'ange/Dieu sont sous la détermination d'un acte créateur qui devient très « sérieux ». Kundera dit : « Seul un imbécile pourrait sourire de ce manifeste de la joie. Toute mystique est outrance. Le mystique ne doit pas craindre le ridicule, s'il veut aller jusqu'au bout, jusqu'au bout de l'humilité, ou jusqu'au bout de la jouissance. De même que sainte Thérèse souriait dans son agonie, sainte Annie Leclerc [...] affirme que la mort est un fragment de joie et que seul le mâle la redoute, parce qu'il est misérablement attaché à son petit moi et à son petit pouvoir. » (Kundera 1979 ; 95) Il énonce donc le *sourire*. Le sourire appartient à l'idiot (imbécile) qui fait un calcul rationnel devant le vrai rire – une relation d'opposition.

Kundera n'entre pas en détail concernant la nature de ce « sourire », qui n'est pas un « rire ». A partir de ce contexte on suppose qu'il les superpose et ici nous allons faire notre distinction. Tout de même, il déplace vers « sourire » la marque d'une possible imbécilité – dans le sens d'un malentendu – devant l'identification du vrai rire. Sainte Thérèse, tout comme Bouddha, sourit dans son agonie/extase, car le rire n'est pas tout à fait approprié comme manifestation. Le rire accompagne plutôt la *jouissance physique*, celle

issue de la vie et de ses manifestations *extérieures*. Le sourire surgit d'un état méditatif. La femme d'Annie Leclerc, c'est vrai, comme Kundera marque d'ailleurs, expose ce rire qui surgit d'une plénitude de vie à laquelle seulement les femmes peuvent avoir accès d'une manière *naturelle*. Le male arrive à ce point seulement par un effort, par une ritualisation de type mystique, comme Bouddha en fait preuve. « Vivre est heureux : voir, entendre, toucher, boire, manger, uriner, déféquer, se plonger dans l'eau et regarder le ciel, rire et pleurer. » (Kundera 1979 ; 94). Ce registre de la vie fait preuve de rire, de vrai rire. Les amoureux qui jouent dans l'herbe rient sans avoir une « raison » - en fait c'est leur amour qui les engage dans la manifestation du rire ; ils rient en vivant la jouissance issue de ce vivre dans la réalité de l'amour. Le sourire apparaît seulement quand le dynamisme de l'amour s'apaise et ils entrent dans une sorte d'intimité intérieure. Le sourire se passe en silence, sous une voix murmurée, méditative.

### **Histoire du sourire**

Nous retrouvons dans l'histoire de la culture trois moments principaux *pour ce qui est du sourire*. La plus ancienne représentation d'un personnage qui sourit remonte à 2400, avant Jésus Christ. Il s'agit de la statue de Ebih-il, aux yeux de lapis-lazuli<sup>1</sup>, qui se trouve aujourd'hui au Louvre. Ensuite on parle du moment Bouddha. La plupart de ses statues en Asie représentent le personnage sourire les yeux à moitié ouverts. En revenant en Europe, on retrouve quelques statues antiques grecques, mais pour l'histoire de l'art on parle effectivement de représentation du sourire dans la peinture à partir d'Antonello da Messina (1430 - 1479) dans un portrait. Léonard de Vinci peint son fameux portrait de La Joconde entre 1503-1506 et celui-ci devient le symbole et l'élément prototype du sourire dans l'histoire. Après Léonard on retrouve un grand nombre de représentations du sourire dans la peinture, même si parfois cela passe pour un signe d'insolence, d'audace et au moment de la présentation de certains tableaux cette représentation a provoqué un grand scandale (comme, par exemple, le tableau d'Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun – autoportrait avec sa fille, 1786 – où l'on retrouve le sourire et l'on voit les dents également).

### **Le sourire de La Joconde**

Si derrière le rire se cache l'humour, une situation qui déclenche cette réaction et une certaine charge de surprise, comme le rire provoqué par l'inattendu d'une blague, derrière le sourire se trouve une palette plus riche d'éléments. Le rire peut être *décrypté* plus facilement en montant vers la situation possible qui le déclenche, situation qui a un degré de manifestation assez élevé qu'on peut classer dans le registre du comique. Le sourire nous oblige à poser des questions, à sonder la personne ; on demande d'habitude « pourquoi tu souris ? » et même si la personne nous en donne la raison, on trouve un reste d'incompréhension, car on n'arrive pas à saisir de manière exacte la personne en question. Quand on demande « pourquoi tu ris ? » et la personne nous en donne la raison, on saisit

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<sup>1</sup> Il faut « lire » le sourire de la statue en relation avec les yeux et leur coloriage.

plus rapidement et plus exactement la situation comique qui provoque, par imitation le rire à la personne qui a compris le message. Il n'en est pas de même pour le sourire. Il existe un reste, un contenu *subtil* qui échappe à la compréhension du demandeur. C'est-à-dire le sourire a des raisons individuelles, uniques, soumises à la compréhension de la personne souriante. Pourquoi La Joconde sourit-elle ? La question a généré une bibliothèque tout entière de réponses. Le mystère de son sourire est plus riche à cause du fait que de Vinci lui a accordé un sens caché. C'est le tableau qui a voyagé le plus au monde, il a accompagné son créateur comme un symbole ou effigie ; son créateur le voulait auprès de soi dans ses voyages pour une raison méconnue. Et il faut aussi associer cet attachement de Léonard au mystère qui cache le sourire de son personnage. Et le sourire est la clé du tableau ! Comment interpréter le sourire de La Joconde ? La tâche est difficile car on ne peut pas trouver un seul référent. Le sourire joue le rôle de symbole, donc on est obligé de trouver un *pattern* ou une constellation significative.

Tout d'abord il faut préciser que le sourire est sexué. Tout sourire détient un sexe. Le sourire d'une femme n'est pas le même que celui d'un homme. Et cela ne veut pas dire que les sexes sont incapables de communiquer les mêmes contenus. Il s'agit plutôt d'une essence ou d'un schéma principal, comme archétype du sourire qui exprime « en paquet » les messages. Et le sourire de La Joconde ? Nous ne partons pas tout à fait d'un constat d'un autre grand artiste qui a parlé de ce fameux sourire, Salvador Dali. Dans son style bien connu, il disait que la Joconde sourit pour nous montrer « qu'elle a chaud aux fesses ». Ce registre amusant continue avec l'histoire de Léonard de Vinci exposé dans un livre illustré avec des caricatures qui marquent certains moments de la vie de l'artiste. L'illustration du livre<sup>1</sup> – réalisé par Ralph Steadman – nous montre le moment de la réalisation du tableau de Mona Lise par une interprétation assez proche du registre de Dali. Mona Lise était une fille très sérieuse et c'était impossible de lui faire extraire le moindre sourire sans un effort incroyable. Cependant, pour réaliser le tableau, Léonard, dans cette fiction amusante, a été obligé d'employer un ensemble de saltimbanques qui défilent derrière l'artiste, pour faire rire la demoiselle. Et tout ce qu'ils ont réussi à faire a été le sourire qui, d'ailleurs, a pu ainsi être immortalisé par l'artiste. Mais quel est le « sérieux » de ce sourire ?

Le sourire de la dame, comme tout autre sourire, est associé à un *état de bien général* de l'être. Le sourire *parle*, exprime quelque chose de l'intérieur. Soit l'amabilité, le sentiment de communication sociale, intégration, invitation, bienveillance etc., tout un ensemble de sentiments qui tournent autour de cet état de bien. Voire plus. Le sourire de Mona Lise nous envoie dans cet *univers intérieur*. Le rire explose, éclat vers l'extérieur. L'objet qui déclenche ou vers lequel le rire s'oriente appartient à l'extérieur. La voix s'exprime complètement et la personne qui rit se montre, se manifeste à différents degrés d'intensité du rire. Le sourire reste discret et intérieur. La voix est silencieuse. Peut-être les cordes vocales sont sous une certaine tension due à une charge énergétique psychique, mais

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph Steadman – *Moi, Léonard de Vinci*

cette tension n'arrive pas à une sonorisation. Il n'y a que la bouche à annoncer l'état de sourire. Il ne faut pas considérer le sourire comme étant l'expression de la forme de la bouche toute seule. Les yeux y participent aussi, la voix également, même si elle est passée sous silence. Le plissement des yeux pendant le sourire soutient une certaine grâce, surtout chez les femmes. Mona Lise exprime un sourire social, c'est-à-dire orienté vers l'autre, mais fortement chargé d'un contenu intérieur. La plupart de son énergie psychique reste à l'intérieur de Mona Lise. L'artiste ou celui qui regarde essaie seulement de saisir cet univers subtil intérieur qui ne nous montre que la face observable qui est le sourire. Il peut y avoir un grand amour derrière ce sourire ; et par amour on pourrait comprendre la somme de toute autre énergie positive qui est ressentie par le personnage être un *état de bien*.

### **Le sourire de Bouddha**

Mais, dans le cas de Bouddha, nous parlons d'un sourire tout à fait différent. Il ne s'agit plus de l'amour ou du sentiment intérieur qui vise un aspect social, comme dans le cas de Mona Lise. Le sourire de la dame de Léonard doit être vu, il s'adresse à quelqu'un – l'artiste, celui qui regarde – tandis que le sourire de Bouddha se trouve sous un autre schéma. Il s'agit du sourire qui se cache ; il n'a pas besoin de « témoins ». Il exprime, manifeste un état intérieur explosif. Il s'agit d'un autre bien-être, complètement différent de celui de Mona Lise. Comme Dali ou Ralph Steadman se représentaient l'expression de ce sourire de Mona Lise, il faut dire que, au-delà de leur figuration amusante se cache pourtant le schéma général d'un état de bien *physique/social*. L'eau chaude d'un bain peut nous ôter un sourire quand on s'y introduit – un état de bien qui nous *surprend* peut avoir cet effet. Nous n'arriverons pas à un vrai rire qui peut être interprété comme maladif pour une telle situation. Le sourire surgit à la surface du psychique et se manifeste sous la forme d'un sourire. Mais Bouddha ne ressent pas une sensation de plaisir, due à une « caresse » ou un « compliment ». Il s'agit de tout à fait autre chose. Il s'agit d'un état de bien qui touche l'extase. Les yeux ne sont pas plissés, étincelants et ne regardent plus à l'extérieur. Les yeux sont à moitié ouverts, avec les pupilles sous les paupières et le personnage se trouve dans un état de conscience aiguë, même si l'aspect mi-ouvert des yeux peut donner l'impression de somnolence. Les yeux regardent dans les profondeurs de l'âme et ce qu'ils voient provoque une énorme extase qui engendre à la surface du corps le sourire. Le sourire de Bouddha est impénétrable, reste illisible et ineffable comme la musique. La voix se tait complètement ou passe dans l'ensemble de l'harmonie du corps entier. N'oublions pas que Bouddha se trouve dans une certaine posture – assis, les pieds croisés, les mains sur les genoux ou au creux du pelvis, les doigts unis dans différentes positions. C'est une posture qui exprime la tranquillité et l'éveil en même temps. Le problème qui se pose dans le cas de Bouddha est le suivant : pourquoi a-t-on besoin du sourire comme expression d'un contenu si tout l'univers intérieur reste clos et veut rester clos ? La seule réponse qu'on choisit pour le moment – même si d'autres sont possibles, mais nous n'avons pas le temps de les y analyser – concerne une interprétation *physiologique*. Le sourire est un symptôme, comme nous l'avons souligné dès le début. Toute énergie psychique – au sens jungien du terme – a

tendance à se manifester sous différentes formes ou figures au niveau corporel. Le psychisme implique une somatisation de ses mouvements. Même le silence et l'inactivité peuvent se « traduire » dans les *mouvements* corporels. Pendant le sommeil, quand le corps reste presque inerte et toute l'énergie psychique se déplace vers le rêve ou le sommeil profond, il existe toujours des signes qui marquent un état de *vie* de ce psychisme. Le corps est un instrument et un « terminal » de l'énergie psychique. Le corps est l'interface entre deux univers – celui intérieur et celui extérieur. Et pour cette raison il répond à sa manière pour toute influence de ces deux univers.

### **Conclusion**

Le sourire n'est pas la manifestation d'une influence extérieure à l'individu. Le rire est l'apanage de *l'extériorité*. Le sourire se pose comme un symptôme d'une énergie psychique qui reste ou se garde plus à l'intérieur de l'individu. Nous pouvons montrer cette chose en appelant à la théorie aristotélicienne du sommeil-rêves. Le Stagirite part dans son analyse du phénomène de la *vision*. L'œil n'est pas chez lui seulement un organe *récepteur*, passif, il *émet aussi de la lumière*. Cette lumière qui se projette sur le monde pendant l'état de veille nous donne la sensation de vue diurne, qui nous donne accès à l'univers extérieur. Pendant la nuit et le sommeil, *le feu* des yeux ne peut plus se projeter à l'extérieur et il retourne vers l'âme. Les rêves sont le résultat de cette lumière intérieure qui se projette sur l'univers intérieur. Le corps reste un élément neutre ou intermédiaire entre ces mondes. Le modèle d'Aristote peut nous servir pour notre sujet. Dans la même logique, le sourire détient deux sources. *L'éclat de rire* peut se transposer vers un *éclat de sourire*, mais cette notion impliquée, celle « d'explosion », dans le cas du sourire, est beaucoup plus intime, vient des profondeurs de l'âme et pour cette raison nous ne disons pas facilement *éclat de sourire*. Mais cet éclatement est impliqué, présupposé dans cette manifestation. Le deuxième aspect qu'on doit marquer concerne le fondement de tout sourire. Quelle est le point géométrique de tout sourire ? L'état de bien, l'extase ; dans un mot, la *vie de l'âme*. Le plaisir préfère le sourire que d'autres formes d'expressions possibles à l'ensemble mimique du corps. Le sourire ne consomme pas l'énergie psychique ; au contraire, il la met sous une certaine puissance qui peut s'accumuler avec le temps.

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## **HUMOR AND THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE OF ADVERTISING**

**Odette ARHIP\***  
**Cristian ARHIP\***

***Abstract.** Since 1990, the structures used for advertising have been diverse, but they had a closer form to the classic printed publication. The paper presents and comments on the humor of the texts and cartoons that make up an advertising campaign for Connex GSM in the 1990s. Both forms of presentation of mobile phone and its products belonged to Ion Barbu, a talented graphic designer, teacher, laureate of many national and international awards. The familiarization of the consumers with the mentioned product was realized through humorous texts and a caricature type advertisement. The verb-iconic alliance holds a plus-value consisting of humor and analogical representations.*

***Keywords:** advertising; narrative structure; hero; humor; irony*

Humor is a creative advertising tool. It was a special kind of initial technique used at the beginning of the development of advertising in Romania.

Immediately after 1990, it evolved as all creative or production areas, continuing, in a way, the folk tradition, mainly the specific humor of the narrative structures of what was widely called *banc* (a kind of joke) by Romanian people. It also appealed to stories, history, legends, and paremiology, etc. "Advertising builds stories" (Moraru 2015: 88). These stories are imposed by heroes who have national characteristics. For example, Păcală is a hero of the Romanian folk creations (19th century). He is known for his humor and cleverness, hidden under a mask of naivety and simplicity. This hero is no longer a character. He has become an allegory next to Tândală, Stan Pățitul, Dănilă Prepeleac, etc. The imaginary of the Romanian people also includes this kind of perception of the world in a humorous key. There are similar characters in the mythology of many nations (e.g. Nastratin Hogeia – Arab or Turkish tradition; Ivan – Russian tradition; Till Eulenspiegel – German tradition; Svejksoldier – Czech tradition).

The present contribution comments upon a specific campaign - Connex: one of the first mobile phone companies introducing itself to the Romanian consumers. Connex promoted its products alongside its services through all kinds of texts and cartoons. Thus, with a limited edition book (Barbu 1997), potential clients had access to a series of humorous drawings, encouraging the use of Connex Network, which was presented to the public as a loyal friend, offering guaranteed quality and keeping its promises (Figure 1).

Starting from the rather threatening proverb "You are a dead man!" and from the classic Romanian ballad (*Miorița*), the use of the mobile phone was suggested for extremely useful purposes such as the one in which a person must be prevented. In the countryside, in the universe, as if detached from the novel *Baltagul* written by the famous M. Sadoveanu, a sheep launches, with the help of a cell phone, the well-known warning: "Master, the

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Hungarian man and the Wallachian one want to kill you at sunset." In this case, the killing of a person and the disastrous change of the mobile phone system are real reasons for concern (Figure 2).

Distances disappear and dangers can be prevented. Communication becomes easy and the transmission of a message is done accurately and effortlessly. Technology penetrates everywhere, and the ancient customs to communicate news, dangers, experiences, joys, pleasures, the desire to self-indulge or to experience something, etc. are becoming tangible by Connex, the network available anywhere and for all the subscribers (Figure 3).

We remember with pleasure the childhood and the situations in which the wireless phone game was playing. To whisper a word to the ear, transmitting it from one person to another as accurately as possible, without changing the meaning, takes a new form: the tangle of sounds talking about feelings, lived moments, and it is transmitted via Connex at any distance, without distortion, the human chain no longer necessary. The service helps not only to inform about events, but also to know the self. People can talk anytime, regardless of location, the captivating side developing freely (Figure 4).

Also, the need for updating, modernization, in line with the intense feelings of the people and the increasing, difficult to encompass waves of the information we intend to be known and shared, is also highlighted. The network itself extends to crops and fermenters, and Connex is a kind of maid she proudly recommends a feminine version of Vodafone's Ghiță peasant. In rural areas, people are primarily interested in the fruits of the earth that provide their living, income. Through a synecdoc, the farmer in the village gets drawn to the possibility of leaving aside the distance as the enthusiastic neighbor. The Connex seeds its fruit, and roaming connections have become possible in any corner of the world, including the Land of Fire, as ironically suggested in the text accompanying the drawing (Figure 5).

The ancestral and inexplicable desire of the Romanian to stand in line in order to get the desired product was successfully and humorously transposed for mobile phones. They are exposed like the products of a sausage shop, but there is an expiration-deadline, Connex stores have the right stock to satisfy everyone. The metamorphosis of a butcher shop brings to the forefront premium products at an affordable price in a format for all tastes. We can underline a parallel between the prosperous family business and that of a popular, egalitarian brand: "Give one to everyone!" a reply that I did not hear during the communist period, turned into an altruistic impulse, exposed to a warm empathic manifestation. Human figures are diverse, representative of different social and professional backgrounds, and physiognomies express impatience, satisfaction, curiosity, envy, etc. (Figure 5).

The quality and the large coverage of the signal lies in the length of a queue, a metal pattern inherited from the communist period, and is related to everything that is necessary and good. The humorous batch also exploits the homonymy of the word "tone / ring" (Figure 6).

It is also possible to communicate with the loved ones who are no longer in this world. Connex offers the opportunity to talk with those who have passed away as a sort of a spiritis session. Connex provides to the clients a highly familiar dialogue, even talking to the Death. Romanian people have an optimistic view about the loss of life. A proof may be the famous Cheerful Cemetery (Săpânța). If we take humor to the limit of the morbid, it can be

interpreted as a kind of access to a dating site all these due to the existence of the mobile phone (Figure 7).

Including the ultimate wishes of those condemned to death are transmitted through the wondrous network that knows no limits, useful in any circumstance, even in a limiting situation. The preservation instinct, the desire to convey the last thoughts, the materialized joy of touching and possessing goods are all found in a mobile connected to Connex. Everybody can rely on it. The phone seems to turn into a writing tool. It arrives at the last meal (the most appetizing products) and the divine grace of sins (Figure 8).

In fact, the accessibility of the mobile connected to the advertised network is also apparent from another drawing, suggestively called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Each key facilitates access to pleasure, lust, and wish, vice, dream or necessity. The effort has become minimal: one finger is pressed and no one is persecuted. The gates open miraculously to what we coveted, and the client obtains at his discretion what he wants in a competition where there are no losers (Figure 9).

Accessibility is, of course, valid for any of the regions of the country that became united for marketing purposes, as was the case in Mihai Viteazul's historical moment of the union. If old friends wear out, sometimes break up, twinning takes time, and the stability of such communion is ensured by the quality service offered by Connex. Life of the nation has a major meaning (The union / Unirea!). Alongside an immediate one was the ability to communicate unlimited, everywhere. The king's expression "My wish wanted so badly / Pohta ce-am pohtit!" referring to the old, truly ideal national desires, turned into a palpable reality. All the Romanian lands were brought together in 1600 and they have the privilege of acquiring the best network nowadays (Figure 10).

With a technological arsenal, even the fear of classical characters from childhood fairy tales. Grandma's Red Riding Hood finds an extra form of faith, and the hunter can walk lazily through the forest without worrying because he will be called and announced when the wolf has arrived. Connex also offers the chance to overcome any peril, but those who do not fall in the eyes of others as elders and back. Even the roles were reversed, the grandmother receiving the Connex sales agent job sheet. This kind of activity is not deprived of the heroism so necessary in history, legends, and stories and even more so in the real life in which we are surrounded by wolves disguised as friends. The heroic narrative, unlike the one lived, is legendary, while the latter is notorious (Figure 11).

Oxymoron provides us with a devil which has a humanizing shape. He confesses in the church. Satan turns away from Satan by confession. It is also a confession made through the mobile, and everything he has committed becomes known, eventually forgiven. Yet, here too, the knees of glory become famous, famous on both sides of the confessional. The priest and the uncle have the same image. Only the religious symbol distinguishes them. God is and beyond, as well as the circle of sin in which people turn uninhabited (Figure 12).

Narrative dynamism takes us alive through the lives of business people who are not able to store so much information, contacts without the help of Connex that takes some of the brain's functions. The healthy mind of the ancient Latin dictum takes the form of the cell phone with the database. In the evening, when he arrives home, the businessman feels that he carries with him the fullness of a day full of decisions and meetings. The acuity of the mind is weak, and the ease with which you can get in touch with the secretary, business

partners, colleagues makes it easier for you to spend time. In his concentrated face one can see the interiority, and, according to the expensive and fancy costume, the social status. Product users are perceived in publicity as community models. No article, no product is chosen until it tells its story to persuade: in this case the business community is convinced that such a tool is useful, indispensable (Figure 13).

In another cartoon an iconic narrative is called: the caricature already has an agenda status with a concentrated universe of activities that every individual can check on a daily basis much more easily to know success. Such parody of the ancient calendar keeps in touch with the old custom of people to organize their time and actions (Figure 14).

The Latin maxim emphasizes the necessity; *Ecce homo*: the exclamation attributed in the Gospel of John (19: 5) to the Roman Procurator Pontius Pilate, when he showed the crowd Jesus with the crown of thorns on his head near the Fortress Antony of Jerusalem. However, he was subjected to the crowd, at will, to condemn to death, either Jesus or Barabas ("imprisoned with some rebels who had committed murder in the rebellion") respectively a Jewish warrior for the liberation of the province of Judea under Roman oppressive custody. The common people prove conservatism using the classic public phone. The determined hardworking eager to succeed comes out of the habit of using modern technology designed to operate it in everything he does. It is full of optimism and takes the benefit of a time saved to achieve lucrative goals or relaxation (Figure 15).

Nobody can oppose to this extraordinary success. A dictum (*Vox populi, vox dei!*) confirms that God loves beautiful, useful devices. This service seems to be unaware of the notion of imperfection and has led people to progress. Like the divinity, the telephony service is in the authoritative position of the person knowing everything. It seems to whisper: It is a shame not to benefit from what is useful! A parallel to the sport is also used. The first stage of the podium is the magical force of technology and that of divinity. The product is positively positioned on the leading place by associating it with the value. The Connex brand needed validation and marketing success in the eyes of the consumers, imposing itself as a market vector and activating its latent position that the beneficiaries perceive hard under other conditions (Figure 16).

But the advertising story can be said very simply, personifying the brand as the best friend of the target (Figure 17).

Needless to assert, these ideas and graphic designs challenged the first advertising-attempts. It is difficult to decide whether the solitary artist or the zeitgeist is ultimately responsible for the creative output of a given area.

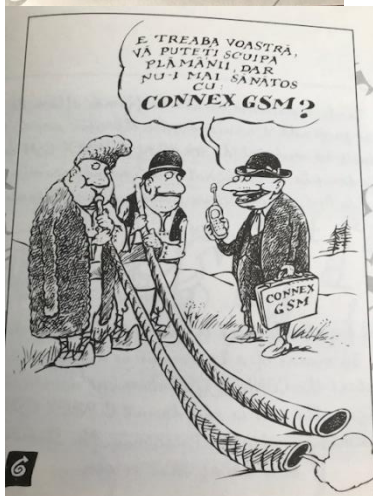
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Telefonul fără fir oferit de **CONNEX** GSM

**Restructurare fără durere!**

Wireless phones offered by **CONNEX GSM** change the course without remorse!

\* „Changing the course” is one of the most used phrase in nowadays Romania.

**DATI!**

ALO, DATI  
CATE UNUL  
SACUM LA  
TONIA  
LUMEA!

**CONNEX** GSM

“Hey, there, get him only one so that we can all have one.”

\* Common situation referring to the food crisis during the Ceausescu regime before 1989.

VRETI  
TONO?

**CONNEX** GSM

**VĂ DĂ TONUL!**

Would you like some fish?  
**CONNEX GSM** has some sets.  
\* “Tuna” and “tone” are homonymy in Romanian.

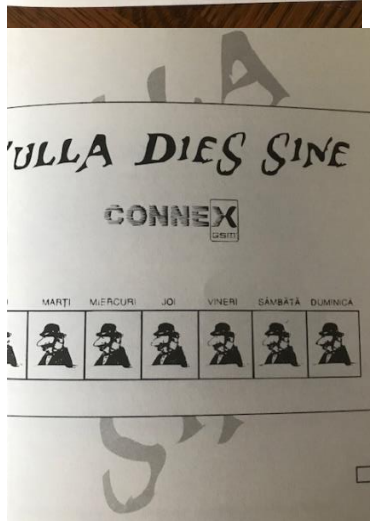
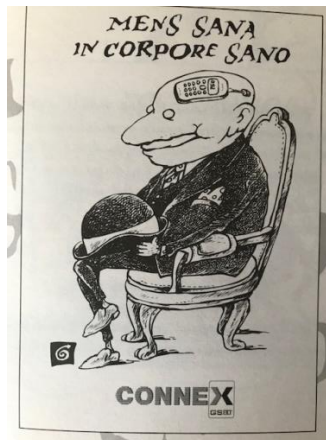
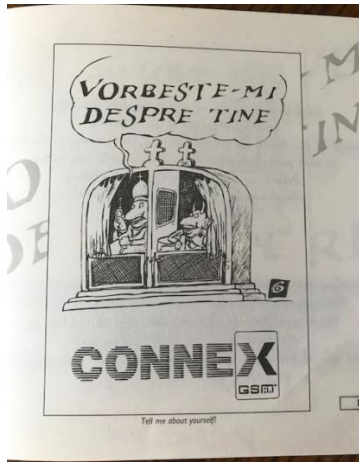
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SA INTRU  
IN VOREA CU  
TINE

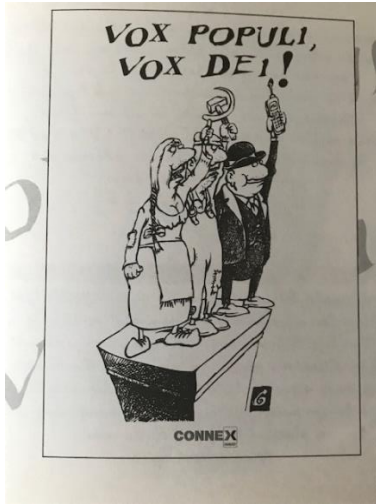
VASILE  
1943 - 1986

**CONNEX** GSM

I'd like to get into touch with you.









## ***SYLLEPSIS – AN INSTRUMENT FOR COMIC AND IRONY***

**Carmen DOMINTE\***

**Abstract:** *Functioning as a rhetorical figure, syllepsis may be regarded as the possibility of encapsulating two different meanings into a single word – the first rendering the proper meaning while the second revealing the figurative sense. Placed among other figures such as metaphor or comparison, syllepsis seems stuck between the two elements it contains which, when perceived simultaneously, can generate different types of oratorical or literary effects but, when noticed in a progressive manner, may stand for a stylistic development employed as a source of comic, humour or irony. Mainly used in literature, syllepsis was transferred to other arts, such as theatre, cinema or music. Aiming to obtain a comic or ironic effect, the figure represented a basis for all these new artistic opportunities. Starting from a literary approach based on Beaumarchais's "Le Mariage de Figaro", the study intends to analyse the manner in which not only the literary syllepsis but also the musical syllepsis employed by Mozart in his "Le nozze di Figaro" was transposed into theatrical syllepsis as it was used in the homonymous opera performance.*

**Keywords:** *syllepsis; comic; irony; literature; music; opera*

### **Syllepsis – General Considerations**

From the most general perspective, syllepsis refers to the use of a single word or phrase for modifying or governing syntactically two or more words or phrases with only one of which it formally agrees in gender, number or case. It may also concern the use of a single word or phrase in the same grammatical relation to two adjacent words or phrases in the context with one literal and the other metaphorical in sense. Going further, syllepsis employs a more and more rhetorical sense. As a figure of speech, syllepsis, also known as zeugma, usually indicates the same term for being applied to two other words but in different senses. From the literary point of view, syllepsis was defined by Pierre Fontanier in 1830 in his *Figures du discours*. Besides the purpose of embellishing or ornamenting a text, any figure of speech is intended to amplify or multiply registers of reference. In this respect, syllepsis may ambivalently refer to two different elements but choose only one of them to advance or let this ambiguity to generate diverse effects of comic, humour or irony. Considered a figure of discourse, syllepsis aims to have an effect by means of which discourse, in the expression of thoughts, emotions, ideas and sentiments, distances itself from that which has been a common, simple phrase or expression. (Fontanier, 1977: 180-182) Thus, both grammar and rhetoric are animated by feelings or, in Fontanier's terms, by passion which makes possible the process of outstripping the common language.

As it is already known, the figures of speech are not fixed but flexible, capable to function as effective channels for varied states of mind or levels of argument or different effects. Considering the multiple levels of sense in addition, it is important to state that each figure, including syllepsis, has within its own proper field a great variety of applications

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mainly for rhetoric and literature.<sup>1</sup> (Vickers, 1989: 121) A figure has always a function that could modify the whole message of a text that, in its turn may also influence, if not change, the entire context according to the purpose.

Placed within the literary context, syllepsis as a figure of speech proves to be able to create rhetorical and literary effects, becoming a source for comic, humour and irony. The two different senses could stand not only for a single word or phrase but also for other types of rhetorical elements, such as figures of speech and figures of discourse, or of literary elements, such as characters. Taking into account the fact that syllepsis contains two different referents as well as the fact that, when needed, it permits the comparison between the two referents, just as metaphor or metonymy it may be used as a basis for further development into the literary means of quiproquo. Mistaking a character for another can be possible on the common grounds of certain similitude between them. Starting from these facts, the study intends to analyse the manner in which literary syllepsis as well as the musical syllepsis could be transposed and function as theatrical syllepsis.

### **From Literary and Musical Syllepsis to Opera Staging**

The starting point of the study is given by the play *Le Mariage de Figaro*, completed by Beaumarchais in 1778. From the very beginning the story is found under the pattern of a comedy that reveals Beaumarchais's specific techniques such as the scoring of witty debating points, the development of the characters' rhetorical appeal for sympathy as well as their tendency not to have too fixed a personality since the unusually incident-packed plot forces them into rapid transformations. (Francis, 2007: 251) Most of Beaumarchais's heroes, starting with Figaro, share the tendency to be constantly busy which leads to the need to react in different ways to progressively changing circumstances. (Géraud, 1999: 132) These characters are always in the process of adapting themselves to new contexts, either determined by them, as the Count or plunged into them, as Figaro. Such contexts are also the source of comic and humour if not of irony too, generating the basis for other literary instruments and techniques to work wonders in order to make the expected effects break out.

The analysed play consists of a pattern that is specific for comedies full of moments of ambiguities delivered by the quiproquo means having the main purpose to extract the maximum of the comic and humorous effects. An infidel count is given a lesson by his wife assisted by few of her servants, Suzanne, Figaro and Chérubin. The main line of the plot is governed by this aim set into action by several literary means and instruments among which syllepsis may be included. Besides the historical, political and ideological aspects of the play, the main conflict is induced by a matter of love. Not being contented with what he is entitled to and already has, the Count Almaviva, in his greed, also wants Suzanne, the woman intended for Figaro. Learning about her husband's intentions, the Countess is determined to give him a lesson. Suzanne's invitation for a walk in the garden turns to be a trap for the Count who discovers that it is his wife to whom he declares his interest and not

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<sup>1</sup> In spite of the endless range of reference for rhetoric and literature, the figures of speech do not automatically include a guarantee of rhetorical and literary excellence.

Suzanne as he thought. At the end of the play, the Count is taught forgiveness and humility by his wife as well as by his servants. The Count apologizes and everyone forgives him. Using syllepsis as an instrument for creating comic or ironic effects, most of the moments of misunderstanding and confusion are highlighted. Mistaking a conjunction for another could seem unimportant, but when a contract is put under question and a person's future is at stake it becomes a matter of the highest importance, as in the act III, scene 14. It is the moment of reading the contract between Figaro and Marcelline containing the clause of either paying back the money Figaro borrowed from Marcelline or marrying her. The fact that the conjunction *or* has been mistaken for the conjunction *and* leads to the characters' comic reactions. Similar confusions among characters generate more comic and, sometimes, ironic effects. In the course of the events, the Count suffers the most for these confusions, finding himself repeatedly deceived by his servants generating a laughably and ridiculous series of scenes that make him the object of mockery and contempt. The peaks of this series could be the moments when the Count accidentally kisses Chérubin or slaps Figaro or captivates Suzanne or the Countess, each time mistaking the true character with someone else as in the act V, scenes 7, 8 and 9. Based on the similarities between few of the characters, it turned to be impossible for the Count not to mistake Chérubin with a young girl, Figaro with Chérubin or the Countess with Suzanne. Playing the part of the fool, the Count becomes the core character for all these humorous quiproquo moments. All these comic and ironic moments were preserved when transposed into the opera *Le nozze di Figaro* but perfectly adjusted to the art of music as it could be noticed in the libretto written by Lorenzo Da Ponte and in the music composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.<sup>1</sup>

There were several changes that Da Ponte made to the play in order to make it suitable for opera, since Beaumarchais's five acts would have never been produced an opera. Thus, Da Ponte removed several minor plot lines, focusing on the main characters. Both the Count and the Countess are stripped of some of their complexities; moreover, the Count is realized in a more shallow fashion that permits him to be easily identified as a little more than a bullying philanderer with pride and lust as his chief motives, except when occasionally overcome by guilt. (Steptoe, 1988: 111) In fact Da Ponte's text portrays Almaviva as not wounded emotionally but indignant by the loss of his dignity.<sup>2</sup> Figaro himself was changed too. In Beaumarchais's play, Figaro was described as honourable but also self-deprecating, in Da Ponte's libretto, this side of the character was subdued, turning

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<sup>1</sup> In defiance of the operatic tradition, Mozart considered that the words should be the 'obedient daughter' of music. Taking a proactive role in the shaping of the libretti, Mozart was given by Da Ponte a strong narrative structure, well-drawn characters, elegant verses. In other words, Da Ponte's poetic gift was combined with his sense of theatre for making the perfect match for Mozart's musical genius. (Holden, 2006: 70)

<sup>2</sup> There are several moments when Beaumarchais's characters were deliberately changed for the opera as the one at the end of the second act, when the Count discovers Cherubino hiding in the closet and bursts into anger. In the opera version the Count reveals a more violent temperament, shouting and threatening to kill Cherubino. More than that, Da Ponte inserted the Count's aria *Vedro mentri'io sospiro* for portraying this character as not emotionally affected at all. In Beaumarchais's text, this scene is dialogued presenting the Count expressing his true distress.

Figaro into a true hero. All these changes were meant to make the poetry of the text compatible with Mozart's imagined music.

Using the text in the service of music may generate memorable moments of the highest importance in the history of opera. In this case, music and text were employed in order to obtain certain effects. According to the purpose of this study, it is the instrument of syllepsis intended to be analysed in the process of producing the comic effect as well as the ironic effect. In this respect, the text of a letter may function as a core element for creating such effects within the development of the opera in question. In the third act the Countess and Suzanne are making plans for meeting the Count in the garden. In fact, the Countess disguised as Susanna will meet her husband and thus she will pay him a lesson for his intended infidelity. The planning of this rendez-vous starts with a letter dictated by the Countess to Susanna. The moment is rendered by a duettino between these two characters on the words of the letter. The text is plain and simple and followed by a reply of a single line.

“RECITATIVO

Contesa: Eh, scrivi dico; e tutto

Io prendo su me stessa.

“Canzonnetta sull'aria...”

Susanna: “...sull'aria”.

DUETTINO

Contesa: “Che soave zeffiretto...”

Susanna: “Zeffiretto...”

Contesa: “Questa sera spiretà...”

Susanna: “Questa sera spiretà...”

Contesa: “Sotto i pini del boschetto.”

Susanna: “Sotto i pini...”

Contesa: “Sotto i pini del boschetto.”

Susanna: “Sotto i pini... del boschetto...”

Contesa: Ei già il capirà.

Susanna: Certo, certo il capirà.” (Abbate, 2019: 117-118)

The same text is used several times for including other musical fragments. There are only few words spoken with no sincerity whatsoever, functioning as poetical cliché referring to gentle breeze and small pine wood but meant to deceive the Count. Besides these words, there is the music of duettino composed for the two soprano voices. The manner in which the two melodic lines were joined together with the common melodic theme makes impossible the distinction between the two voices. Towards the end, the words lose their meaning and become abstract so that it is no longer important who is delivering them. This intended melodic confusion based on the common voice features may be regarded not only as a beautiful musical fragment but also as an anticipation of the future quiproquo, considered a moment of comic climax.

The same relationship between text and music was also employed for the end of this opera. It is the scene 4 of the fourth act which contains the most confusing moment of the opera when Figaro convinced that Suzanne has betrayed him expresses his sadness as well as his anger with a recitative followed by an aria *Apprite un po' quegl'occhi*. Thus Figaro's

words are marked by a dynamic *pianissimo* which turns to *forte* just in the next measure revealing the hero's anger. This dynamic contrast is meant to make the words more speech-like.<sup>1</sup> From the musical perspective, the relation between the two characters in this scene is also marked by their orchestral accompaniments: strings for Figaro and wind instruments for Suzanne. During the aforementioned aria, Figaro's jealousy is marked by the insertion of horn sounds within the usual musical string accompaniment. Although the aria is meant for highlighting Figaro's human features, it also reveals the character's hidden emotions not only by the melodic lines but also by the symbolic meaning of the word horn. This garden scene, full of ambiguities and quiproquo, represents the climax of the play and of the opera. Right during the moment when the Count begs for forgiveness in a beautiful but cunning *bel canto*, *Contessa perdono*, it is inserted the Countess's reply which comes in the form of a short cadence, a predictable manner to point out a musical end but also, by its simplicity, a reproach. (Abbate, 2012: 129-130)

In this way, either it is the voice confusion or the horn insertion into the strings melodic line, or even the short cadence, the comic and ironic effect is based on the double meaning of core common features shared by the voices, by the orchestration or by the musical composition.

The use of syllepsis for a literary text is more or less similar to its use for the musical composition. In both cases there is a core element that joins the two meanings of the same word, phrase, idea or literary means, on one hand and, on the other hand, of the same vocal timbre and ambitus, specific instrumental sound or the harmonic succession that mark the end of a musical composition. Employed for an opera staging all these possibilities of revealing the comic as well as the ironic effects are facilitated by certain factors among whom the most important ones are the contextual factors and the factors needed for the characters impersonation.

When setting the stage for an opera performance there are four basic scenic elements to be taken into account: painted scenery, spatial arrangement, the actor and the light design. For facilitating the representation of the peak moments full of comic and ironic effects, the contextual factors of stage scenery, spatial arrangements and light design are necessary to be considered. The relationship between the text and music becomes one of most importance when dealing with the visual representation of stage. Understood as the configuration and manipulation of space in the specific relation to the performance on stage, the art of scenic representation is meant to bring to life a literary text and a musical composition, in the case of opera. Anything that happens on stage is meant for the reception of the audience. Not only the framing nature of the stage space but also its contained objects stimulates and has a concrete influence upon the performed action. (McKinney, 2009:118-120)

In this respect, the placement of buildings, columns, statues, trees and flowers is intended to create a particular context favourable for making possible the quiproquo so that to obtain the maximum of a comic effect. Perspective represents another element whose aim is to assist the creation of a determined space where ambiguity and confusion could lead to comic situations as it could be noticed in Figure 1 where the vertical disposition of the

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<sup>1</sup> In order to reveal the humanity of the characters, Mozart preferred to set the words in close relation to their poetic meaning which, in its turn, was reflected in the melodic line.

columns intersects the horizontal repeated model on the floor in order to achieve visual unity.<sup>1</sup>

The use of light is not has developed its purposes. Being no longer constrained to illuminate painted canvas, light can spread out into space filling the stage with colours and lots of possible variations. Having its own flexibility, light is able to produce shadow as well as to distribute the harmony of its vibrations is space in a similar manner to the spreading of music within the same space. (Innes, 2013: 58) Playing its flexible part, light may also be employed to contribute to the design of the performing space by unifying different elements of the stage image casting illusion and ambiguity that make the whole emotionally very expressive.



Figure 1  
*Scenery-contextual factor*

The maximum use of reduced light could be observed in Figure 2 where the chiaroscuro reduces the presence of the particular characters to simple human figures. Using such a diminished light the depth of space is magnified as well as the optical conflict between the colour of the blue environment and the black and dark blue of the silhouettes. Besides the ambiguity generated by such a context, sometimes emphasised by other stage effects as the filtered light or stage smoke, the whole stage image leads to a more general overview upon the message of the scene and also of the play: the generic characters revealing generic and ordinary situations.



Figure 2  
*Light design-contextual factor*

So far the painted scenery, the spatial arrangement of all the elements within the performance space as well as the light design have highly contributed, as contextual factors, to the process of creating the necessary ambiguity for making possible the confusion.

On the other hand, there are factors used for the characters' impersonation. The most common ones are the costumes and the actors' voice, in this case the sopranos. Although it is a case of intended ambiguity and confusion, the whole stage image is based on balance and visual unity. The main stage elements being the garden containing the columns, the buildings, the statues, the trees, the flowers or other items according to the director's views, the main dynamic elements, meaning the actors, represent those items around which the entire action of the opera is intended to intensify. Singing and moving become acting parts meant to manipulate the confusion thus making possible the comic quiproquo. Regarding the role of the characters, it is first the voices of the two sopranos, so similar, that make the distinction between them almost impossible. At the same time it the costume that facilitates such confusion. It is needless to mention that the Countess is wearing Susanna's dress. In most performances, the Countess's costume also adds a veil, or something similar for hiding her face so that the Count may not recognise her as it

<sup>1</sup> Most of times, when staging classical operas, the combination of solid objects and empty space is very suggestive and meant to make more visible the relation between light and shadow allowing more dynamism for acting. (Innes, 2013: 57)



*Costume-factor for impersonation*

represented in Figure 3. Even in the modern performances of the opera, the Countess tends to hide her face in different ways – using, masks or large hats or hiding behind a bunch of coloured balloons.

As mentioned before, the process of staging represents a great possibility for all the effects, including the comic, humorous and ironic ones, to enrich the literary text as well as the music in a more

Figure 3 complex artistic representation, the opera performance.

## **Conclusion**

Taken as a starting point for this study syllepsis, the linguistic and rhetorical figure, demonstrates its capacity to adapt to new artistic representations. Its possibilities for further use proved to be not only various but multiple. Proposed by Beaumarchais' play, syllepsis exceeds the literary text and plunges into Da Ponte's libretto and then further into the musical composition created by Mozart, each time adding new ways of representation.

Considered an instrument for generating comic and ironic effects syllepsis was employed to operate distinctively for literature as well as for music. Even if the core element was different, a word or a character for the literary text, a timber and an ambitus of voice, a specific sound of a musical instrument or a harmonic element, syllepsis accomplished its purpose. Transposed on stage, syllepsis was emphasised by other factors – the painted scenery, the spatial arrangement, the light design and the costume. Apart from being a mere rhetorical figure, syllepsis turned to become a true instrument for creating the comic and sometimes the ironic effect for literary texts and for musical compositions which when revealed on stage as in an opera performance enriches the whole representation.

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**Online Resources**

<http://www.google.com/search?q=le+nozze+di+figaro+images&tbm=isch&source=univ&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjR4oao&8cXjAhXibosKHXRxB5QQs> (accessed in 21.07.2019)

Figure 1: Le Nozze di Figaro (Harvard College Opera) <http://www.harvardcollegeopera.com>

Figure 2: Nunta lui Figaro (Le nozze di Figaro) <http://www.operanb.ro>

Figure 3: Le Nozze di Figaro (Mozart) <http://www.pragueexperience.com>



## **ABOUT THE LAUGHTER OF JOY AND THE LAUGHTER OF MOCKERY IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT**

**Horia DUMITRESCU\***

**Abstract:** *Along with smile, humour is a feature of human nature, it often facilitates communication between people, can tear down walls that would seem insurmountable, it is a form of opening of the human being towards communion with the other. In this study we are going to review the scriptural texts that speak about this state of mind which is called laughter under its two forms: joy and mockery, in the order of the books of the Old Testament, about the holidays established by the Law of the Old Testament that were always accompanied by moments of joy, when the communities were united, when they were called together, without exception: “And thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you” (Deuteronomy 16, 14), but also from the mocking laughter of the people around the chosen people when they depart from God: “You will be a reproach and a taunt, a warning and an object of horror to the nations around you when I inflict punishment on you in anger and in wrath and with stinging rebuke ...” (Ezekiel 5, 15).*

**Keywords:** *God; humour; laughter; joy; mockery; punishment*

Throughout his life, man does not have only happy moments, but also difficult moments that he has to face. At those times, humour allows people to forget about the hardships of life, helps them to stand firm in the face of their hits and at the same time helps them to face the obstacles without falling into despair, hopelessness or depression, humour “offers hope, reason for resistance”.<sup>1</sup> If we did not use humour sometimes, the pain would tear us down <sup>2</sup>.

Quite often, the truths we want to hear least are the ones we need the most, and the sense of humour gives us access, without pain, to these fundamental truths, which often seem paradoxical and therefore unacceptable because they criticize the world because of the illusions and lies we live in, precisely because humour has its universal mechanisms<sup>3</sup>.

Quite often, humour brings out, under a delicate shape, truths that may remain unuttered; when used for purposes that are pleasant to God, humour is to be distinguished from mockery, whose meaning is never an expression of a humorous motivation or a brilliant attribute of the spirit, but it rather hurts and hurts really hard.

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<sup>1</sup> Jacqueline A. Bussie, *The Laughter of the Oppressed: Ethical and Theological Resistance in Wiesel, Morrison, and Endo*, New York: T&T Clark, 2007, p. 4

<sup>2</sup> Archimandrite Teofil Părăian, *Veniți de luați bucurie*, Teognost Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, p. 122

<sup>3</sup> Salvatore Attardo, *Linguistic Theories of Humour*, Humour research 1, editors Victor Raskin and Mahadev Apte, Mouton de Gruyter, New York, 1994, p. 213

The Lord Himself gives us an example when the Pharisees and the scribes presented him with an adulterous woman and asked him what to do, Jesus does not accept the challenge, but does not ignore it either. He answers in a simple and clear manner: “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her”. Then, after all the accusers left in shame, Jesus asks the woman: “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” (John 8, 7-10).

Christians are allowed to laugh, to wallow, to continually rejoice in the love of God, thus not transforming faith into a long series of forbidden things and actions they have to observe without understanding what they are.

Entering the Christian churches, we can easily see the painted faces of God’s saints, hierarchs, martyrs, military saints, male and female saints who received the crown of God’s holiness. They are painted in archery robes, military straps, etc. having the faces and bodies pressed by fasting, by askesis, by the necessities which they willingly submitted to in their ascension to completion.

We could hardly imagine that these people could be embraced with joy, with gaiety, with laughing like us, but, at the same time, the fact that they all in one voice confessed Christ, the true God and the true Man like us, apart from sin, made them as human in front of life as Christ the God.

The Orthodox teaching confesses that Christ was true God and true Man, thus, apart from sin, nothing of the human nature remained unknown to Him: neither birth and growth, nor hunger, nor sorrow and suffering, nor death. It is true, He had the same affects as us: he cried for Lazarus: “When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” (John 11, 32-36); He wept for the city of Jerusalem: “As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it” (Luke 19,41); in the Gethsemane Garden, “He began to be sorrowful and troubled” ( Mathew 26:37), “He began to be deeply distressed and troubled” (Mark 14:33), his soul was “overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death” (Mark 14:34).

The Holy Gospel does not testify to times when Christ the Saviour is laughing, but the moments of joy did not bypass Him as He began His work through a miracle performed at a wedding, in the Cana of Galilee, at the wedding of His Apostle, Simon the Zealot<sup>1</sup>. At

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<sup>1</sup> Simon was a native of Cana of Galilee, known to our Lord Jesus Christ and His Mother, because Cana was not far from Nazareth. When Simon had the lawful wedding, Jesus was also called with his disciples and, since the wine proved not to be enough, the Lord turned the water into wine. The groom, seeing a miracle like that, immediately believed that the Lord was the true God, and, leaving his wedding and house, followed Him with boldness, for which he was called the *Zealot*, meaning covetous (full of zeal). So, he was animated by such great divine love for Christ that he overlooked his bride and all the worldly people for the love of God, and made his soul a bride to the Bridegroom without death, joining the disciples of Christ and becoming one of the twelve Apostles. After receiving, with the other Holy Apostles, the Holy Spirit, who descended as tongues of fire, he passed into Mauritania and Africa, preaching Christ and patiently enduring everything for Him. Afterwards, while in Britain, where he would enlighten many by the word of the gospel, he was crucified by the unbelievers, and found his death in a similar way with that of Christ.

the request of His Mother, when the wedding participants ran out of wine, he turned the water from the six vessels into a wine, even better than the one held by those who had organized the wedding, according to the godfather: “Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!” (John 2, 10). The Lord knew that “wine rejoices the heart of man” (Psalm 103, 16), but also God to the same extent: “...Should I give up my wine, which cheers both gods and humans, to hold sway over the trees? ...” (Judges 9, 13) and yet in an atmosphere of joy, of gaiety, behold, He turned water into wine, so that the joy of the wedding would not be overshadowed by the lack of wine.

The wedding and the meetings that precede such an event were accompanied by a meal, wine, socializing moments during which details of the event and the future of the family-to-be were drawn up: “His father-in-law, the woman’s father, prevailed on him to stay; so he remained with him three days, eating and drinking, and sleeping there”, (Judges 19, 4) “So the two of them sat down *to eat and drink together*. Afterward the woman’s father said, “Please stay tonight and *enjoy* yourself.” A joyous heart is a happy heart, a happy heart can contemplate God, acknowledge His good deeds, bring glory to Him for all.

Along with smile, humour is a feature of human nature, it often facilitates communication between people, can tear down walls that would seem insurmountable, it is a form of opening of the human being towards communion with the other.

In the following, we shall review the scriptural texts that speak about this state of mind which is called laughter under its two forms: joy and mockery, in the books of the Old Testament.

After the fall of the first people into the sin of disobedience, the receiving of righteous judgment from God, their removal from Heaven, Adam and Eve received the first good news: “Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever.” (Genesis 3, 13) The first moment of joy, a joy that will be a permanence in the human being throughout human history, man was not irretrievably separated from God, but will have the opportunity to regain the likeness of the Creator.

After the vow God made with Abraham, God glorified in the Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit showed Himself to Abraham at the oak in Mamvri; after finding out about the pain of the infertile womb, God promised that Sarah would give birth in a year’s time. For Abraham, not having children was a heavy burden, but not so heavy as to weaken his faith<sup>1</sup>. Sara was old and had wanted to have a baby her entire life, and the lack of children could be a response from God for disobedience<sup>2</sup> (this not being the case with them).

Listening from the tent to the dialogue between Abraham and the Three Young Men, Sarah laughed to herself, “being put in an impossible psychic situation”<sup>3</sup> having

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. David Dean Mimier King, *The (Un)wavering Faith of Abraham in Romans 4*, [https://www.academia.edu/1353228/The\\_Un\\_wavering\\_Faith\\_of\\_Abraham\\_in\\_Romans\\_4](https://www.academia.edu/1353228/The_Un_wavering_Faith_of_Abraham_in_Romans_4), accessed on April 13, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Vanessa L. Ochs, Ph.D., *Sarah laughed*, Modern lessons from the wisdom & stories of biblical women, McGraw-Hill Publishing House, New York, 2004, p. 107

<sup>3</sup> Kristine Gift, *Sarah’s Laughter as Her Lasting Legacy: An Interpretation of Genesis 18:9-15*, p. 100

doubts about the veracity of the words said<sup>1</sup>, laughing at the words of the Lord<sup>2</sup>, as she was aware of her age. Her reaction was one of joy and pain at the same time, she could hear the words, the words seemed to be true but she couldn't believe them at the same time, remembering the years she was carrying on her shoulders<sup>3</sup>.

In this case, Sara is not a subject of laughter, but has the opportunity to rejoice because God turned His face to her and blessed her<sup>4</sup>, God, the Almighty, was aware of Sarah's reaction, but did not speak back. Sarah gave birth to Isaac one year later (Genesis 18, 12-15), and the name of the child was chosen by God as a sign of the vow he had with Abraham<sup>5</sup> - the name itself meant "he will laugh."

Another moment of joy is found when Jacob left beyond the Euphrates at Laban Aramaic without announcing, he rebukes him: "Why did you run off secretly and deceive me? Why didn't you tell me, so I could send you away *with joy and singing to the music of timbrels and harps?*" (Genesis 31, 27).

In many Old Testament texts, laughter has a layer of scorn, most often about the chosen people when they depart from the law of God: „and Israel will then become an object of *ridicule*” (I Kings 9, 7).

People have always laughed at the misfortunes of others, this is not a novelty, it is not only a reaction of the people from today, they laughed even when they should not have laughed, when human nature should have shown compassion, should have helped, should have removed from person in suffering from the affliction. The most conclusive example is of Job the righteous, who suffered so much from God's indulgence and in those times when he felt he could no longer mourn before God, did not blaspheme, did not curse, but only wished friends understood him, but they did not: "God has made me a *byword* to everyone, a man in whose face people spit" (Job 17:6), "I have become a *laughingstock* to my friends, though I called on God and he answered—a *mere laughingstock*, though righteous and blameless" (Job 12:4), this was not a mere resignation before God, but he humbled before the greatness and almightiness of God, expressing full adherence to His will.<sup>6</sup>

Reading the Book of Job it is very difficult for us to imagine how a man can withstand the misfortunes, sufferings and mockery that Job endured, in this context the joy of Job the righteous which in his sufferings confesses: "Then I would still have this

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Altmann, *There Will Be Doubt, But When is Doubt Good? Reflections from an Old Testament Perspective*, Hermeneutische Blätter, 2011, p. 74

<sup>2</sup> Marcos Possegi, *He who laughs last, Some notes on laughter in Isaac's birth story*, Davar Logos, no. 5, 2006, p. 63

<sup>3</sup> Vanessa L. Ochs, op. cit, p. 111

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Emanuel Conțac, *Influența versiunii segond asupra versiunii Cornilescu 1921*, in Eugen Munteanu (coordinator), Ioan-Florin Florescu, Ana-Maria Gînsac, Maria Moruz, Sabina Savu-Roten Ștein, Mădălina Ungureanu *Receptarea Sfintei Scripturi între filologie, hermeneutică și traductologie*, Lucrările Simpozionului Național „Explorări în tradiția biblică românească și europeană”, Iași, October 28-29, 2010, p. 129

<sup>5</sup> David J. Zucker, *Isaac: a life of bitter laughter*, Jewish Bible Quarterly, vol. 40, no 2, 2012, p. 105

<sup>6</sup> Dionisie (Policarp) Pîrvuloiu, *O interpretare (inactuală) a suferinței. Iov pe movila postmodernității*, Receptarea Sfintei Scripturi: între filologie, hermeneutică și traductologie, Lucrările Simpozionului Național „Explorări în tradiția biblică românească și europeană”, Iași, 28-29 October 2010 Ed. Universității Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 2011, p. 356

consolation — my joy in unrelenting pain — that I had not denied the words of the Holy One” (Job 6, 10). Job also states that: “For then you will delight yourself in the Almighty and lift up your face to God.” (Job, 22, 26) The moments of joy were sometimes forbidden as the same Old Testament book confesses: “There the wicked cease from turmoil, and there the weary are at rest” (Job 3, 17).

In His preaching and saving mission, God sent to humankind special people, providential people, prophets that were able to make His words known. Prophecy being in Israel a religious phenomenon through which the message of God was transmitted, through which to proclaim His work, the prophecies were widely present in the prophetic books of the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup>

However, there were many who, even if the message transmitted came from God, laughed at the prophets He had sent, not just once, for making them aware of the need to become righteous: “*But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.*” (2 Chronicles 36, 16)

In the book of the Prophet Jeremiah, the second great prophetic book of the Old Testament<sup>2</sup>, the Prophet confesses: „ *I am ridiculed all day long*” (Jeremiah’s Complaints, III, 14), in the same sense he says “*I am ridiculed all day long; everyone mocks me*” (Jeremiah 20, 7), deploras Moab’s fate in times of distress: “*And Moab shall be the object of laughter and fear for all that are round him*” (Jeremiah 68, 39).

Speaking against the people of Israel, God warns the people through the prophet Ezekiel: “*You will be a reproach and a taunt, a warning and an object of horror to the nations around you ...*” (Ezekiel 5, 15), when the people of Israel depart from God and forget His laws, “*Their language hath made me a reproach in the land of Egypt*” (Hosea 6:16).

When wrongdoing and sin draw the wrath of God: “...Therefore I will make you an *object of scorn* to the nations and a *laughingstock* to all the countries” (Ezekiel 22, 4) but because of the laughter against the holy place of God, He punishes the Ammonites: “*Because you said "Aha!" over my sanctuary* when it was desecrated and over the land of Israel when it was laid waste and over the people of Judah when they went into exile” (Ezekiel 25, 3-4).

The Holy Scripture announces joy, the joy of the chosen people when God received the sacrifices of Moses and Aaron in the tent of the meeting: “Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they *shouted for joy* and fell facedown” (Leviticus 9, 23), joy is the natural state that man must have in relationship with God when following His ways.

Moses even set feast days for the people to rejoice: “Also at your *times of rejoicing* - your appointed festivals and New Moon feasts - you are to sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, and they will be a memorial for you before your God” (Numbers 10, 10), “The Israelites who were present in Jerusalem celebrated the

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<sup>1</sup> John Rogerson, Philip Davies, *The Old Testament Word*, T&T Clark International, New York, 2007, p. 166

<sup>2</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology, The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2007, p. 1

Festival of Unleavened Bread *for seven days with great rejoicing*, while the Levites and priests praised the Lord every day with resounding instruments dedicated to the Lord... The whole assembly then agreed to celebrate the festival seven more days; so, for another seven days they celebrated joyfully” (2 Chronicles 30, 21, 23). With joy, gaiety, song and play the Jewish Easter was celebrated during the time of Hezekiah: “There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem” (2 Chronicles 30, 26).

In the book *Deuteronomy*, the name being made up of two Greek words: deuter (the second) and nomos (law), the second law being broken or the repetition of the law<sup>1</sup>, the moments of joy to which all were called, without exception, are rendered: “Be *joyful* at your festival--you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levites, the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns” (Deuteronomy 16, 14).

These moments of joy were very well established by Moses:<sup>2</sup> “For seven days *celebrate* the festival to the LORD your God at the place the LORD will choose. For the LORD your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your *joy* will be complete” (Deuteronomy 16, 15). For the love with which God blesses man, man *is due to rejoice*, “describing man’s duties and obligations in relation to God”<sup>3</sup>: “Then you and the Levites and the foreigners residing among you *shall rejoice* in all the good things the LORD your God has given to you and your household.” (Deuteronomy 26, 11).

The moments of service at the temple worshiped to God were always solemn, sweet, but the service of God had to be done with joy “by all tribes”<sup>4</sup>, not out of duty, but out of love for the One who holds all in His palm<sup>5</sup>, and again if they did not obey the voice of the Lord, and turned their faces from Him, curses and plagues would be brought upon them, they would be put under the control of other nations<sup>6</sup>: “You will become a thing of horror, a byword and an object of ridicule among all the peoples” (Deuteronomy 28, 37), precisely because “...you *did not serve the LORD your God joyfully and gladly* in the time of prosperity,” (Deuteronomy 28, 47) “LORD, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you” (I Chronicles 29, 18) confesses King David, speaking at the anointing of his son Solomon as a joyous moment for all the people “They ate and drank with great joy in the presence of the LORD that day.” (I Chronicles 29, 22).

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<sup>1</sup> James Gray, *Concise Bible Commentary*, The AGES Digital Library Commentary, AGES Software Albany, OR USA, 1999, p. 243

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Rolles Driver, *A critical and exegetical commentary on Deuteronomy*, Edinburgh, Printed by Morrison and Gibb Limited, 1896, p. 196

<sup>3</sup> J. W. McKay, *Man’s Love for God in Deuteronomy and the Father/Teacher Son/Pupil Relationship*, *Vetus Testamentum*, 22, 1972, p. 426

<sup>4</sup> Gerhard Yon Rad, *Deuteronomy*, The Old Testament Library, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966, p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Harper, *The Book of Deuteronomy. The Expositor's Bible*, New York: Hodder & Stoughton, p. 140.

<sup>6</sup> John D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Deuteronomy*, Evangelical Press, New York, 2006, p. 431

It is said that after reading his law given by God to Moses, the people were saddened, which made Nehemiah, the leader of the people, and Ezra, the scribe, to exhort the Jews: “This day is dedicated to the Lord your God, *do not be sad nor cry!* For all the people were crying, hearing the words of the law. But you go eat fat meat and drink sweet wine - they added - and send part to those who have nothing cooked, because this day is sanctified to our Lord. Do not be sad, for *the joy of the Lord will be your power*”. And the Levites tempered all the people, saying: “Be silent, for this day is holy. *Don’t be sad!*” (Nehemiah 9, 11).

Therefore God allowed the joy, the songs, the festive meals accompanied by music and dance, holidays were set up, as well as occasions of great joy, of celebrations and exchanges of gifts: “The Jews of the province, who live in loose villages, spend the fourteenth day of the month of Adar in merriment and celebrations, as a feast day, sending gifts to one another; and those who live in cities also spend the fifteenth day of the month of Adar in great joy, sending gifts to their neighbours.” (Nehemiah 9, 19) “their *sorrow* turned into *joy*, and their *weeping* changed into *happiness*” (Nehemiah 9, 22).

The decree of King Mordecai<sup>1</sup> by which the Jewish people received the right to defend themselves was enthusiastically received by the people: “For the Jews there was nothing but happiness and joy, joy and honour” (Esther 8, 16), but also for the surrounding peoples “there was joy, gaiety, fame and feasting on the Jews” (Esther 8:17) “in every city where the king’s decree came, there was joy and joy among the Jews. Banquets were organized and holidays were declared” (Esther 8, 18).

The people returning from exile<sup>2</sup> and living on the site of the first temple<sup>3</sup> rejoiced greatly when the construction of the second temple began again: “many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others *shouted for joy*” (I Ezra 3, 12), their manifestation of joy was very intense, “the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away” (I Ezra 3, 13).

In reading the *Psalms of David*, we cannot help but notice that they are utterly rejoicing and at the same time deeply sorry for what life has given to and taken from the Jewish king. After a large crowd of men followed David to Hebron wishing to anoint him king, they “spent three days there with David, eating and drinking, for their families had supplied provisions for them” (I Chronicles 12, 39), even neighbours from the farther parts of Isahar, Zabulon and Naphtali add the following: “There were plentiful supplies (...), for there was joy in Israel.” (I Chronicles 12, 40).

And David commanded to bring the ark of the God of Israel, as Moses had commanded, “on the levers; on the shoulders, and not with the wagon”, accompanied by “their fellow Levites as musicians to make a joyful sound with musical instruments: lyres, harps and cymbals” (I Chronicles 15, 16). “So, David and the elders of Israel and the

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<sup>1</sup> Pauline Bebe, *Ishah: femeile și iudaismul dicționar*, Hasefer Publishing House, 2002, p. 87

<sup>2</sup> In 539 B.C., the Persian emperor Cyrus conquered Babylon and allowed all deported people to return to their countries and restore their destroyed temples. Many Jews returned to Israel and rebuilt Jerusalem and the Temple.

<sup>3</sup> David E. Pratte, *Commentary on Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther Bible Study Notes and Comments*, 2016, p. 17

commanders of units of a thousand went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-Edom, with rejoicing” (I Chronicles 15, 25).

“Fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound.” Psalm 4,7 urges the prophet to rejoice “Sing a new song of praise to him; play skilfully on the harp, and sing with joy.” (Psalm 33, 3); “Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God.” (Psalm 42, 5); “A song. God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” (Psalm 46, 1); “What mighty praise, O God, belongs to you in Zion. We will fulfil our vows to you” (Psalm 65, 1).

The king himself praises God with joy for the love, mercy and forgiveness he has enjoyed before the Lord: “My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to You, along with my soul which You have redeemed!” (Psalm 71, 23); “My soul *longs*, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh *cry out* for the living God” (Psalm 84, 2).

In the same register, the prophet David also mourns when the hardships press him, when the people are oppressed by strangers, when it seems that God has turned His face away from him : “We were scorned by our neighbours, being *mocked* and *laughed at* by those around us” (Psalm 78, 4), the only escape being God: “we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord/ his power, and the wonders he has done” (Psalm 78, 12); “But I will sing of Your strength and proclaim Your loving devotion in the morning. For You are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble” (Psalm 59,16).

The prophet testifies of the moments when God pours out His mercy upon the people: “... They *rejoice* in your name all day long, and they *are exalted* by your righteousness” (Psalm 89, 16-17).

### **Conclusions**

Given that laughter illuminates the less luminous moments of life and often reveals things and attitudes and emotions that otherwise would have remained hidden, when the situation allows it, laughter protects us from false situations and from appearances. It predisposes those who practise it to receive the Good News, which is the beginning of change, regarding the human condition and our individual destiny in trying to regain the image and likeness after which we were created.

The scorn or mockery of laughter is also present in our lives and cannot be ignored, those who resort to it do so out of a sensation, from an inner infirmity. They cannot understand the suffering; neither accept it, nor remove it. These people laugh because they do not see, because they lack humanity.

God allows the moments of joy, as long as it has its limits, the moments of joy we discover in Holy Scripture are numerous: receiving the blessing from God in different situations, receiving the guests, the good news concerning the family, the festive meals, the holidays appointed by the Law.

Life being a combination of happy or sad events, the Holy Scripture could not fail to recount the painful events both in terms of personal life (the example of Job and King David) and the lives of the people, pain generated by the people around whom God allowed them to exercise His power over the chosen people.



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## IRONY AND HUMOUR IN THE BIBLICAL CANON

Gheorghe GÎRBEA \*

**Abstract:** *The Old Testament word games and puns (over 500 in number), onomastic farces or riddles represent the expression of popular realism and categories of folklore-sourced comic, inherent in sacred writings as well. Measured and decent laughter remains a characteristic of normative humanity in the Holy Scripture. If Yahweh, the Old Testament God, had destroyed his opponents by laughing quietly at their powerless enmity, the Logos incarnate in history, the Christ of the New Covenant, is shown to people to be always subject to derision and deicidal mocking of the Jews or Romans. In general, it can be stated that the Holy Scripture is in this line in which the smile is the expression of a state of joy that characterizes the believer reconciled to God, as well as to his own conscience.*

**Keywords:** *humour; irony; Bible; Christianity*

According to the *The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language*, humour can be defined as “the inclination towards jokes and irony hidden under an apparent seriousness – the verbal or written manifestation of these inclinations” (*The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language*, 1998: p. 1134). The same theme also encompasses the term *laughter* - the action of laughing and its result, the manifestation of joy expressed by a characteristic movement of the face and mouth accompanied by a specific non-articulated sound, laughter (*Ibidem*, p. 896). In the same note, one can define irony as “word, phrase, expression, statement that contains a slight mockery to someone or something, usually resorting to meanings opposite to their ordinary meaning; ridicule, persiflage; irony of fate, unexpected play of chance” (*Ibidem*, p. 509).

Humour and laughter have been bestowed upon the human being since creation, to a greater or lesser extent, by defining a person, a group of people, a nation (see, in this sense, English, Jewish, Scottish, German, German or Romanian humour), the specificity of each category defining and characterizing the respective person, group or nation. In 2014, the American cognitive neuroscientist Scott Wems published the paper “*Ha!: The Science of When We Laugh and Why*”. According to him, humour and the most common sense, laughter, is a consequence of the brain that is based on conflict. He explores from a neuroscientific point of view what happens in our brain when something makes us laugh; he explores the essence of humour itself, why we laugh more and more heartily at some things and not at others, and how a healthy sense of humour can help us maintain a healthy body. Wems argues that jokes have deep roots in our human needs and psychologies. Human life is complex, not simple, although we have simple needs (food, love, safety, sleep, friendship, etc.). Humour does not lie in the joke, it is in the attitudes of those who say and hear the joke. The same joke will be funny to some people and will not fully respond to different people at different times. Humour and irony are basic traits of the human spirit so that lack of humour is sometimes perceived as a moral defect. Humour is always accompanied by a

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smile, this, the smile, being considered a form of opening of the human being towards communion with the other. If the meeting between two people is considered a holiday, it is the smile that expresses the joy of the holiday.

### **I. Sacred Comic in the Ancient Middle East**

Any cultural space (has) possessed a certain level of the comic in the past and in the present. The European Christian space with its Old-Testament roots urges us to decipher “the history of a profound relationship between it and the miraculous universe of laughter, the eternal human smile, which is so polymorphic in its manifestations.” (Claudiu T. Arieșan, 2009: p. 7).

It has been rightly stated that laughter makes a profound distinction, just as personal writings or fingerprints would do, between individuals, each person laughing at something else. Much has been written about the “absence of humour in the old Middle Eastern cultures” (Val Panaitescu, 2003: p. 33-44), but after a thorough analysis of the nature and specificity of Semitic laughter, we can state that in the space of Middle Eastern spirituality we do not even meet a form of religious state, but rather, on the contrary, “relaxation (authorized by the holidays) seems to actually participate in the generic solemnity of collective life” (Claudiu T. Arieșan, 2009: p. 8). Thus, in the Sumerian-Babylonian civilization, the young gods of the Enuma-Elish epoch give birth to worldly things through their simple laughter; in the cultural matrix of ancient Egypt, “it is enough to compare the egolatrous gaze and the thunderous rasp of the frozen representations of the Saragossa despot, the one in whose mind the idea of imperial conquests was conceived, with his eyes looking in an optimistic and deifying manner towards the pyramidal eternity of the Pharaoh Tutankhamun’s lightly smiling mask” (*Ibidem*, p. 8).

Commenting on the existence of the comic element in the literary mythological texts belonging to the Anatolian populations of the Hittites and the Hurians, Sabatino Mascoti stated the following in the volume *Antichi imperi d’Oriente*, 1963: “sometimes, in the primitivism of some manifestations of Hittite literature, there was found a deliberate background of farce, an intention to laugh and provoke laughter. Well, we seem to find this judgment outside the boundaries of reality; the experience is rarely encountered in the ancient Middle East, and even if an immediate and spontaneous impression can be drawn from these cultures, this impression has to do mainly with their deep, almost sober seriousness in the field of religious life. Exceptions to such an overall character are to be found in Egypt, where the special geographical and political situation promotes peace of mind and the highly refined civilization promotes the next step which is the urge to smile.” (Sabatino Mascoti, 1982: p. 220).

Moreover, the idolatrous cults of the Eastern populations surrounding the Jews were infused with religious naturalism and vitalist enthusiasm. “Laughter is the expression of happiness and joy in the Canaanite cult,” states Jakob Jonsson (Jakob Jonsson, 1985: p. 47). Moses must have been the first religious reformer to prescribe a different existential attitude.” After the sedentarisation of the Jewish tribes, monotheism leads to the guilt of the original idolatry-like frenzy. We can assume that Jewish Messianism led to the first condemnation of laughter” (Teodor Baconsky, 1996: p. 91-92). In fact, mockery is not

allowed to a Jew “except to idolaters and, by extension, to everything that is morally or legally blameable” (Judith Stora-Sandor, 1984: p. 38). The Orientals’ moderation in laughing is also noted by the French traveller De la Roque in his work *Voyage dans la Palestine*: “They (the Orientals) place so much restraint in their facts and attitudes that everything that is most enjoyable in the world could not make them laugh” (De la Roque, 1718, p. 133).

Nevertheless, today researchers in the history of mentalities are almost unanimous in recognizing that the Old Testament people like to be entertained and manifest this attitude by dedicating themselves to entertaining events for about one third of the year, with the Semites, however, proving more reserved than the inhabitants of ancient Rome, who sometimes celebrated more than two hundred holidays throughout a single year. On the other hand, we must agree with Paolo Santarcangeli, who states that “in a daily mentality strictly regulated by fixed norms and by Divine Law, irony and self-irony can moderate, model and make their maximum demands bearable, the first by its interrogative and relativizing character, the second by assuming the paradox of self-reflection” (Paolo Santarcangeli, 1989: p. 299-308).

In his work *The Life of the People from the Bible*, André Chouraqui noted the enigmatic contests, music and especially the multiple forms of ritual choreography. “Sacred dance plays a privileged role within Jewish holidays, who are a joyful people despite the austerity of their religion. The crossing of the Red Sea, the pilgrimages, the annual gatherings in Siloam, the processions or military victories, all their holidays are celebrated through songs and dances.” (André Chouraqui, 1988: p. 170).

## **II. The Laughter and Sacred Comics of the Old Testament**

The Old Testament word games and puns (over 500 in number), onomastic farces or riddles are the expression of popular realism and categories of folklore-sourced comic, inherent in sacred writings as well. For a complete religious edification, Jakob Jonsson notes that: “The holiest objects and ideas were discussed in a humorous way, not because the holy ones should be ridiculed, but because the comical attitude served a holy cause.” (Jakob Jonsson, 1985: p. 86-87, Nicolae Neaga, 1996: p. 16-25).

### **II.1 The Risible of the Biblical Man**

The risible for the biblical man can be defined by two distinct terms that designate laughter in the Old Testament. *Lâak* expresses the mocking, negative laugh, often tintured. “It is the laughter of the madman that symbolically indicates the whole of fallen humanity. The crazy mocker (*stultus, insapiens*) is a moral anarchic that systematically discredits the holy ones through a kind of monstrous characterization of satanic counterfeiting of the divine smile. From Solomon’s parables we deduce the sketch of this individual as a bad, incorruptible human being, magnetically attracting disasters and reproaches, rebellious to any exhortation or ruler, constantly rejecting reproof and teaching, becoming a perpetual source of turmoil for others until the time requires his exit from the city like the Bohemian boys’ from Plato’s *Politeia*” (Claudiu T. Arieșan, 2009: p. 11). The example of this

prototype in the Old Testament is expressed by Cain's response to God after the murder of his brother: "Then the Lord said to Cain, «Where is your brother Abel? » «I don't know, » he replied. «Am I my brother's guardian? » Then he said, «What have you done? Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground!» (Genesis IV, 9-10).

This "qualifying" laughter emanating from the essence of the human being is equivalent to the hooligans if it is mad and insane, or with the righteous man if it remains within the boundaries of common sense and compassion: "the clothing of the human being, the uncovering of the teeth when he/she laughs and the way he/she treads allow his/her nature to be foreshadowed" (The wisdom of Jesus Sirah XIX, 27-30).

Moderate and decent laughter remains a characteristic of normative humanity: "When he laughs, the fool raises his voice, whilst the good man will only smile" (The Wisdom of Jesus Sirah XXI, 22). In this regard, Job's irony towards the foolish laughter of his close friends who asked him to blaspheme God is illustrative: "No doubt you are the people, and wisdom will die with you! But I also have a mind like you; I am not inferior to you. Who doesn't know the things you are talking about?" (Job XII, 2-3), "You use lies like plaster; you are all worthless healers. If only you would shut up and let that be your wisdom!" (Job XIII, 4-5) and "How you have helped the powerless and delivered the arm that is weak! How you have counselled the unwise and abundantly provided insight" (Job XXVI, 2-3).

The reaction of Job's "friends", without exception, was to accuse Job of blasphemy, mockery, pride and lack of wisdom - understanding. Nothing new under the sun, the same thing happens today when one ironizes what is worth ironizing.

## II.2 The Second Type of Old Testament Laughter

This type is expressed by means of the term *sâhak* designating a laughter of happiness, of positive enthusiasm, of gratitude in spirit. It is the name Isaac received from God Himself (Yčhk-El – *let Elohim smile*). For Philo of Alexandria, "the wise man will seed in joy and not in suffering ... Abraham looks cheerful and smiling because he will seed joy, Isaac and virtue ... Sarah, in her turn, laughs as well ... the fruit is laughter and joy, for this is the translation of the name Isaac. Abraham laughs to increase his godliness toward God, thinking that God is the only reason of grace and goodness" (Teodor Baconsky, 1996: p. 98-99). Delicate laughter as an emblem of constructive optimism and of a faith that is devout to the end had been embodied in the perimeter of the Eastern Mediterranean under Sophia's feminine hypostasis, serene wisdom. The Jewish exegesis confers on laughter a divine meaning from the very beginning. "*Yit-hak* means first of all the one who will laugh in the future. Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, differ in the fact that the former knows how to laugh in the present, while Isaac, our father, was meant to weep until the coming of the Messiah, God bless Him, who will bestow eternal laughter upon us all" (*Ibidem*: p. 96-97).

No wonder Christian esotericism made the smiling Isaac the symbol of the feast of Israel's ears of wheat and even the symbol of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we can speak of a divine promise of laughter, represented and imagined by Isaac. The existence of a promise contained in the future laughter is also evident from the Saviour's words: "Blessed are those that weep now", to which the promise is "for they shall laugh"; just as there are promises

stating that “they shall be called sons of God”, “they shall see God”, “they shall inherit the earth”, “theirs is the kingdom of heaven”. “If this virtuous, decent laughter is not, on the one hand, in harmony with such declared happy tears and, on the other hand, in opposition to those differing tears declared as miserable that are given to those who display the opposite behaviour, woe unto those who laugh now because for will mourn and shed tears. The tears that are declared happy tears are one thing, whilst the tears of those who have lived in sin are totally different (Origen, *Homilies to Jeremiah, II, 20,6* apud Claudiu T. Arieşan, 2009: p. 13). When commenting on this fragment, Teodor Baconsky considers it important for several reasons. First, by making Patriarch Isaac the biblical hero who makes laughter free of impeachment, he states that God makes man a “promise of laughter that will be fulfilled in an eschatological context.” Secondly, it introduces a double series - dangerous laughter/wailing tears, virtuous laughter/happy tears, thus putting the laughing/crying couple in a new light. Naturally, too, because tears betray repentance, they are the condition of a saving forgiveness, while laughter (sign of impropriety, truffle, and disobedience) is considered harmful. Here the double series above relativizes the laughing-crying opposition for the sake of greater freedom; nothing is bad in itself, everything is decided intentionally” (Teodor Baconsky, 1996: p. 100).

### III. The Area of the Comic in the New Testament perspective

The New Testament brings with it an indisputable paradigm shift in the area of the comic. With the person, life, teaching and activity of the Saviour Jesus Christ at its centre, a serious question mark was raised from the very beginning about the existence of a Christian laughter inspired by the Saviour’s deeds or words. Based on the silence of the evangelists after which Jesus Christ, God incarnate and the definitive model of perfect humanity (Roger-Cristian Safta, 2019: p. 172), would never have laughed during His earthly life, theologians had reservations about the existence of a Christian laughter. The eminent medievalist Jaques Le Goff goes to the extent that, in the lecture *Laughter in the Middle Ages* held at the “Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales de Paris”, synthesises the problem by placing it under a heading of questioning: did Jesus ever laugh?

From the Apocrypha *of the Epistle to Lentulus* to Rufinus, St. Basil the Great or St. John Chrysostom, the certainty that Jesus did not have laugh seems ubiquitous in the spiritual literature of the time. Outlined against the background of the respective theme, the main problem remains whether laughter is part of human nature and whether God the Man, fully participating in human nature, ever laughed, thus consecrating a specific Christian joy. Trying to answer this question Petrus Cantor in the scholastic treatise *Verbum abbreviatum* states: “Let us therefore cherish the joy of the mind – *mentis hilaritatem* –, just as we shall despise frivolity – *lascivia*. Let us rejoice in the image of the saints, we who have the countenance of those who are going to Jerusalem. But is it possible that God himself might have laughed heartily? He seems to have had a healthy joy from within – *letitia bona* – since He was able to show it on the outside by creating laughter, more especially since He took on all our weaknesses except sins, so along with the sense of humour, man gained from creation the power to express His laughter as well. Therefore, why would God not have

been able to exercise the faculty of laughter? He could, yet nowhere does He laugh (Claudiu T. Arieşan, 2008: p. 229-250).

If Yahweh, the Old Testament God, destroyed his opponents by laughing quietly at their powerless enmity, the incarnate Logos in history, the Christ of the New Covenant, is shown to people as always subject to the derision and deicial mockery of the Jews or Romans.

### **III.1 The Gospel According to Mark - Paradox and Irony**

In the canon of the New Testament, the Gospel according to Mark occupies the second place because until the nineteenth century it was considered that this was the second Gospel written after that of Matthew, Blessed Augustine considering it to be an abbreviation of the latter. Yet, throughout the course, it has been shown that Mark has a visual narrative, quite frequently rendering in an expressive way the gestures and mimicry of Jesus, thus having a unique character. The shortest Gospel, the Gospel of Mark, presents us with a laconic and brief portrait of Jesus, contained in an alert narrative structured in simple episodes full of drama and with a concrete character. The disciple of St. Peter, John Mark, writes his gospel at the request of the Christians in Rome, whilst Peter was still alive, from the content it being understood that the addressees were not Jews, the place of writing being Rome, a statement supported by most Bible scholars.

In his Gospel, the emphasis is laid on facts, less on speeches. At the centre of the gospel is Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate. The miracle, the deed and the opposition to the person and deed of Jesus are the main features of the narrative. Historical and geographical interest is almost absent, some evocations and chronologies becoming problematic. Mark has the merit of creating this new literary genre of the “gospel” that will become very popular, the others being placed in the area of memorialism and biography. Given the stylistic and very possibly temperamental affinity between Saint Mark and the Blessed Hieronymite, we find this matter of paradox and irony especially in the version of the Bible revised by the Blessed Hieronymite in Vulgata

The most striking feature of the Gospel after Mark is conciseness. Mark excludes very stingily everything that is not related to his purpose. The speeches delivered by Jesus are simple. There is no rendering of Jesus’ deeds and words, but rather of the impressions and impact they have on the contemporaries. Numerous passages of the Gospel are controverted today. Jesus cannot perform miracles among His people, the relatives consider him to be a lunatic; His statements and explanations are more disturbing and scandalous than enlightening; His disciples are painted in the gloomiest colours: they are extremely difficult to understand, they do not notice the irony and subtle allusions of Jesus Christ, they are unbelievers, they do not understand the miracles that happen constantly under their eyes. The bitter irony of Jesus is deeply embedded in the passage from the Chapter VIII, 14-21. When after the hunger of five thousand people is quenched with only five loaves of bread that were lying before them, the disciples are worried because they have only one loaf with them; the contemporaries, after enjoying a series of miracles performed by Jesus, ask for another wonderful sign, and after foreseeing that He will die dishonoured and crucified, the disciples ask Him to offer them privileged places in His earthly kingdom. But Jesus remains

silent about the purpose of His suffering and death, He does not explain their meaning at all - it would have been just another misunderstood parable. When the disciples confess Him as the Messiah, Jesus strongly reprimands them so as not to tell anyone. When He is arrested, everyone leaves Him, moreover, one of them renegades Him. Only women are with Him, but from a distance. Strangely, as a supreme irony, a pagan Roman centurion understands near the cross that this was the Son of God. The narrative seems to follow the reader's disorientation; the feeling is of suspension, confusion and perplexity. This effect is supported by the continuous use of the imperfect and the historical present, but especially of the irony subsequent to the entire narrative discourse. Along with metaphor, Mark will generously appeal to antithetical, ironic and paradoxical formulations to suggest a pale impression of the overwhelming truths of the Holy Trinity, of the Incarnation, of the Church, truths that appear to the limited human mind as contradictory. The first encounter between the created and the uncreated can only bring amazement and disorientation. The divine mystery presents itself as staggering – *mysterium tremendum* – strange, without equivalent in human knowledge. Thus, we find figures of speech such as paradox, oxymoron, hyperbola, antiphase and catharsis, considered as predominantly Christian, mystical figures of speech.

### **III.1.1 The Functions of Irony in the Gospel of Mark**

To speak of irony in a Gospel may seem at least surprising, but modern literary theory has shown that irony is a natural component of human language, and not just a result of literary artifice. At the same time, irony is an extremely complex phenomenon in which the playful, humorous component is only a segment of it. The relationship between text and subtext has always been a serious problem for the biblical text subjected to a continuous hermeneutic siege. Irony speculates the striking contrast between the projected expectations and their deliberate denial, so the contradiction between the text and the subtext, in the case of the evangelical text, the relationship between the two levels of discourse, is more complex. For example, the congruence in the case of the statement from Mark II, 17: "It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick. I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners." Jesus ironizes the selfishness and self-assumed superiority of the Jews over the sinners, heathens. At other times, the plan of irony is embedded in that of the natural discourse. For example, the insertion of the episode of the denial of Jesus by Peter in the trial of Jesus (Mark XIV, 55-56). Although Jesus is repudiated by the religious leaders of the Jews and by the apostles as well, He proves His messianic nature by fulfilling His prophecy about Peter.

The literary function of irony in the Gospel implicitly becomes a theological function. In the Gospel, one can also speak of the social function of irony, for example, in the case of parables with esoteric speech, the identity and specificity of the Christian community are preserved. Irony thus possesses the role of having a linguistic matrix in which imagination and spiritual experience work and, therefore, an environment in which a community can interact with its own tradition by evaluating and forming its content and preparing it to cope with new situations. The many parables and mysterious expressions of Jesus (Mark IV, 11 et.) send to a plane of reality, the transcendent one. Irony is thus a



hermeneutic vehicle and, at the same time, a spiritual guide in the way of the human mind to God. Thus, irony has an impact beyond the rational level through subtlety and shock. Jesus is both man and God, His language is divine-human and it materializes in surprising, paradoxical, ironic formulations, which sometimes harms our common sense. The main theological function of the tension created by irony is the subsequent exhortation (rarely expressed directly) to conversion. Mark the Evangelist always emphasizes that God incarnate has always respected man's freedom and invites him with love to follow Him.

The story of Jesus' sufferings is structured around dramatic irony. The strategy of the story has as its purpose the gradual discovery of the glorious divinity hidden within the dishonoured human nature. Finally, Jesus is forsaken by all, even by His heavenly Father. Before death, everyone is left alone. Thus in Mark XV, 16-32 we read: "They dressed him in a purple robe, twisted together a crown of thorns, and put it on him. And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They were hitting him on the head with a stick and spitting on him. Getting down on their knees, they were paying him homage". There are three scenes where Jesus is dishonoured:

- a) Mark XV, 16-20 – by the Jewish authorities
- b) Mark XV, 16-32 – by the Roman soldiers
- c) Mark XV, 21-32 – by the spectators of the crucifixion.

We found ourselves in the grotesque realm of irony. The tragic irony was also surprised by the patristic exegesis. Barabbas, the one who is innocent of countless crimes and sins, is acquitted, whilst Jesus, the innocent, who forgives the sins of the world, is condemned. This work is rendered masterfully by the Christian hymnographic poem from the Tenebrae service on the Maundy Thursday of Triod: "Today He Who hung the earth on the waters was hanged on the wood. The king of angels was crowned with a thorny crown, and He who clothed the heavens with clouds was clothed with lying porphyry; blows on the cheek received He who freed Adam at Jordan, with spears was betrothed the Groom of the Church, with the spear was stung the Son of the Virgin". (*Triod*, 1986: p. ....).

The tragic irony verges on the grotesque; through the parody of worship of the "King of the Jews," the Roman soldiers unconsciously serve the divine revelation: though crowned with thorns, Jesus is truly the king of the universe.

Mark is the most realistic and most spontaneous evangelist, he is sincere, without sparing any kind of feeling, he does not cosmetise anything, he does not silence the embarrassing episodes. His writing does not have the synagogue perfume of Matthew, the aesthetic focus of Luke, or John's speculative enthusiasm, but it is a writing about life, as it is in reality, with its aspirations and failures. Mark's irony is a maieutics of Christological mystery, which gradually reveals itself and seeks to bestow upon the reader the access to the mystery of the kingdom. "For those who do not want or feel this perfume of eternity emanating from the text, it remains one full of irony, paradoxes and enigmas that can be dissected and interpreted with the most sophisticated methods and techniques of modern poetry and stylistics. The tension that follows from the text is the tension of revelation that slowly enters the space of human values, overturning, undermining and dramatically dislocating them." (Dionisie Constantin Pîrvuloiu, 2012: p. 334).

### III.2 Irony, parody, laughter and humour in ancient Christianity

The theme of laughter and humour in ancient Christianity did not enjoy in-depth studies precisely because there was a widespread idea that Christianity is hostile to the topic. Monasticism played a decisive role in propagating hostility toward laughter and humour. Athanasius the Great, in the *Life of St. Anthony the Great*, must be the hero of Egyptian monasticism, he is not exuberant in the manifestation of joy, and he easily forbade the pleasure of laughter to concentrate on the contemplation and satisfaction required for spirituality. As a biblical argument, the founders of monastic life, both in the East and in the West, had the text of *Proverbs XXI, 23*: “He that keepeth his tongue and his mouth keepeth his soul from trouble”. According to his biographer, St. Antony the Great gave in Alexandria a speech flavoured with divine humour, as St. Paul the Apostle Paul described it to the Colossians: “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person” (Colossians IV, 6).

The church of antiquity always argued for this hostility to laughter, postulating that the Saviour would not laugh at all in the Gospels. The Apostle of the nations himself forbade indecent jokes to the Christians (Ephesians V, 4): “But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you, as is proper for saints. Obscene and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but rather giving thanks”.

In Clement of Alexandria’s *The Pedagogue* (II, 45-47) we read ample passages about laughter and humour. St. Ephrem the Sir wrote an exhortation against the laughter of the monks, stating that laughter harms man, even more so the monk, because it contradicts the experience of Christian asceticism. Saint Basil the Great believes that for a true Christian there is never time to laugh and make jokes.

On the other hand, Clement of Alexandria considered laughter, play, and joy as manifestations of a soul that is faithful and in harmony with itself. St. Basil the Great warned of the futile and exaggerated laughter, but at the same time considered that a simple smile describes the happiness of the soul.

The fourth century confronts opponents of the Christian doctrine so that their writing reveals comical expressions, especially in polemical confrontations, either starting from the interpretation of the opponents’ name or playing humorous puns. For example, the Blessed Hieronymite, the translator of the Vulgata, is ironizing all his opponents. Thus, the famous Melania, whose name means “black”, the friend of his adversary Rufin from Aquileia is characterized as being black by name and deed, and Rufin himself, because of some features of the face, was called “a pig that growls”. A heretic Fotinus, excommunicated bishop of Izmir, whose name means “luminous”, because of his erroneous doctrine receives the name of *skoteinos* - *dark*. Lucifer of Cagliari often qualifies Eudoxiu the Aryan, whose name means *great*, in opposite terms, *without greatness – adoxious*.

### Conclusions

From the above we can state that in Christianity, in general, we can speak of the prohibition of humour and exaggerated laughter, as expressed in the theatre. However,

looking at the concept of humour from a broader perspective and inserting derision, irony, parody under its umbrella, we find it everywhere in the controversial literature and in all the writing. The Bible canon is part of this line in which the smile is the expression of a state of joy that characterizes the believer reconciled with God and his own conscience. Jesus as a historical figure, and before the Resurrection, may have laughed like any other human. But the Evangelists suggest to us that during the gradual affirmation of his divinity, man gives up the place to a God who can no longer laugh. (Teodor Baconsky, 1996). However, laughter is an integral part of the divine creation and we do not consider that a caesura of demonic source must necessarily be postulated in order to insert it into the holes and into the very essence of the human being. “Even if there are malignant, harmful and sad aspects, even of the manifestations of laughter in our world, at least the refined meaning can be easily associated with the angelic realm, and the almighty emperor of humans and angels, as worshiped by the faithful, may sometimes look smilingly at His subjects engaged in the theandric effort to imitate and serve him as they see fit” (Claudiu T. Arieșan, 2009: p. 15).

Therefore, we do not think we are wrong if we affirm that a sense derived from the ability to laugh, the sense of humour, may be: a technique of survival, a non-violent martial art; the sense of humour is cultural, a revealer of paradoxical truths; the sense of humour could be a possible way to become saints - an antidote to fanaticism.

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## **IRONY IN CONTEMPORARY ROMANIAN AND BRITISH MEDIA DISCOURSES – A SOCIO-CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC APPROACH**

**Ana-Maria IONESCU\***

***Abstract:** It goes without saying that the social and the cultural context, the beliefs, the mentalities and the lifestyles of people influence the selection of the means of expression, of the content, of the discursive practices and the transformations and mutations at linguistic level, as well. The paper focuses on several instances of media discourses, both Romanian and British, and aims to point out, in a comparative and intercultural manner, the way in which the critical or mocking attitudes are expressed indirectly. The selected topic is the world-wide debated issue of Brexit. The paper approaches the phenomenon of irony comprising pragmatic theories such as: irony as substitutive conversational implicature, irony as echoic mentioning, irony as pretence, and irony as simulation of the illocutionary force of speech acts.*

***Keywords:** media discourses; linguistic irony; Brexit*

Reconsidering the perspective from which communication is approached, in the sense of re-evaluating the importance of the general context in which it takes place, is, in my opinion, a necessity. In order to understand human actions, including communication, we should see individuals in connection with all those elements which form them and inoculate them with conceptions of the world: the structure of the real and the imaginary universe, collective consciousness, mentalities and the daily life events, in which the discursive, polyphonic<sup>1</sup> and interactive assemblies occupy a central place.

With the development of technology, the new media has increased in speed, in connectivity and has become increasingly important in shaping public opinion. At the same time, the recent invention of social networks has definitely changed communication making it more polyphonic. Everybody can now participate in what could be called a "planetary discourse", can broadcast, post messages, comment on various subjects, can state their opinions, make remarks, criticise or express thoughts and ideas publicly.

The impact of the transformations at the level of the channel of communication on various discursive practices has already been extensively researched. However, the present article attempts to partially answer one of the questions that have arisen: has social media killed irony or has it overused it? To try to answer it I have chosen a well-known topic, the issue of Brexit, a subject that has recently caught widespread attention in the media, both in Europe and worldwide, and which has also become a topic of bitter irony. The selected

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of *polyphony*, strongly connected with that of *dialogism*, originates in Mikhail Bakhtin's works on literary theory and narratology and is defined as the simultaneity of *points of view* communicated through an utterance and of the different *voices*, even different language varieties, styles or ideological representations, encountered in a given discourse. The term was taken over by pragmatics and discourse analysis (Bahtin [1963] 1970, Ducrot 1984, Moeschler & Reboul [1994] 1999, ScaPoLine 2001).

corpus was taken from British and Romanian printed and online magazines, newspapers, blogs, groups and chat rooms.

Although by no means exhaustive, the analysis also attempts to make a comparison between different perspectives and culture-bound attitudes towards the subject, the article thus becoming an intercultural and imagological research carried out at linguistic level.

To enumerate only a few of the most important theoretical developments in pragmatics, irony is defined as a *substitute of literal meaning, echoic mention, pretence or simulation of illocutionary force of speech acts* (cf. Grice 1975, 1978; Sperber, Wilson 1978; Kotthoff 2003, Currie 2006).

H. P. Grice (1978) account of tropes is similar with the one in classical rhetoric, where verbal irony is analysed based on the opposition *literal meaning vs. figurative meaning*. Thus, he defines irony as a case of *substitution*, a situation in which there is a gap between *sentence-meaning* and *speaker-meaning*, the latter being something different and, sometimes, quite the opposite of the former.

In *Logic and Conversation* (1975), with the development of the theory of *conversational implicature*, H.P. Grice introduces the *Cooperative Principle* and the *Conversational Maxims* and states that they are the consequence of the fact that communication is a goal-oriented rational behaviour, inferentially recognised by the interlocutor. "A meant something by X is (roughly) equivalent to A intended the utterance of X to produce some effect in an audience by *means of recognition* of this intention" (Grice, 1989:220). On the other hand, in a conversational logic, irony is considered a violation of the *Maxim of Quality* which says that speakers are expected to be sincere and that they are assumed not to say anything that they believe doesn't correspond to reality (Grice, 1975).

Grice's ideas were the starting point for further developments. D. Sperber and D. Wilson's approach is a criticism of Grice's idea that irony is a violation of the maxim of quality and a criticism of Grice's opposition literal vs. ironic meaning. For Sperber and Wilson, the process of communication is *relevance*<sup>1</sup> driven, an ironic utterance is not *used* but *mentioned*, conveying something about itself: "*Use* of an expression involves reference to what the expression refers to; *Mention* of an expression involves reference to the expression itself" (Sperber & Wilson 1981:303). Thus, irony becomes *echoic mention* of critical attitudes and thoughts towards a mentioned proposition. It refers to itself or to other similar expressions.

The *echoic theory* of irony finds its strongest rival in the *pretence theory* (cf. Clark and Gerrig, 1984; Currie, 2002, 2004, 2006; Recanati, 2000, 2004). "The central idea behind *pretence* accounts of verbal irony is that the speaker is not [...] performing a speech act such as making an assertion or asking a question, but pretending to perform it (or, in more elaborate versions, pretending to be a certain type of person performing it)" (D. Wilson, 2006:18). Thus, irony expresses attitudes and is a pretence of *to be* rather than a pretence of *to do*. In Currie's own words, "[...] what is essential is the expression, not the communication" (Currie, 2006:115).

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<sup>1</sup> Sperber and Wilson (1986) see *implicature* in connection with the process by which the interlocutors select relevant features of context. Their *Relevance Theory* is defined in terms of *manifestness* and *cognitive effect*.

In spite of some differences, there is an overall high level of similarity between the approach of irony as *echoic mention* and the one which considers irony a case of *pretence*: "[...] irony involves an echoic interpretation, and [...] this echoic interpretation in many (but not all) cases takes the form of a pretence that the ironist has a certain perspective" (D. Simpson, 2008:12).

On the other hand, irony can also be defined as a *simulation of the illocutionary force of a speech act*: "[...] Verbal irony determines the realisation of a simulated illocutionary act. This idea starts from the following assumptions: a. verbal irony implicitly contains the expression of a negation; b. ironic utterances express an evaluation of a content outside the reality described by the discursive situation they belong to; c. interlocutors use ironic utterances in order to perform speech acts; d. the ironic meaning of an utterance modifies the illocutionary force of that utterance; e. the understanding of irony depends on the recognition of the reflexive intention accompanying the utterance; f. the communicative intent in an ironic utterance is determined by the illocutionary force associated with the utterance content; g. the interpretation of an ironic utterance implies the recognition of the ironist's intent and of the simulation of the illocutionary force of the performed speech act" (Negrea, 2010:149).

Through irony, one may display, in an indirect manner, critical or mocking attitudes towards the others. Indirection gives the interlocutors the possibility of taking refuge in the area of literal meaning, in an attempt to protect the *faces* of the individuals confronting in the interaction, therefore representing a kind of conciliation between the rules of social behaviour and the intention of criticising. Nevertheless, irony often injures the *positive* or the *negative faces* (cf. Brown, Levinson, 1978) of the interactants. In a different key of interpretation, other functions of irony are the humours effect and, at the other end, sarcasm or banter.

Since the 2016 EU membership referendum in the UK and its results, leading to what is called Brexit, the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, in addition to the debates concerning political or economic implications, research has been carried out in the sphere of language, *the language of Brexit*. Articles and studies have been published or public lectures have been delivered. See, for example, such titles as *The Language of Brexit. How Britain Talked Its Way Out of the European Union* by Steve Buckledee (Bloomsbury, 2018) or *Talking about Brexit – Voices from Before and After the Referendum*, a public lecture by Dr. Veronica Koller. The corpus-based studies involve collecting data from British political speeches, media/journalistic discourse, media and social media discourse. As stated above, the present analysis of irony focuses only on the last two, media/journalistic discourse and social media discourse.

Discussing the post-referendum political actions of the Prime Minister Theresa May, in January 2019, *The Independent* (<https://www.independent.co.uk>) publishes an article in which the journalist states:

- 1."[...] She is indestructible. She is the cockroach in nuclear winter. She is the algae that survives on sulphuric gas from sub-aquatic volcanoes, seven miles beneath the daylight. She is the Nokia 5210".

In the example above, the irony and sarcasm are obvious, the attitude of the ironist is critical and mocking while its expression is allusive and witty. From a pragmatic point of

view, the irony comes from the violation of the *Maxim of Quality* (cf. H. P. Grice, 1975). However, the author's intentionality or the illocutionary force of the speech acts (cf. Searle 1977) is not the act of deceiving. In fact, the irony comes here from a discrepancy between what the ironists says and what he truly believes, it is thus a *pretence* (he makes a comparison pretending he believes that the Prime Minister is indestructible, can survive on sulphuric gas, is as strong as Nokia 5210, etc.) or a *simulation* of a communicative behaviour (cf. Currie, *op.cit.*). Once the reader recognises the simulation of the illocutionary force of the speech acts, he can capture the ironic meaning of the excerpt. Irony as *pretence* does not exclude *echoic mention* (cf. Sperber and Wilson *op.cit.*). The association between the adjective "indestructible" and "cockroach in nuclear winter", "algae that survives on sulphuric gas", "Nokia 5210" is in fact a repetition of a general truth, of previously known and acknowledged utterances that could be called pre-constructs in *enunciative pragmatics*.

A headline in *The Daily Mash* (<https://www.thedailymash.co.uk/>), 14<sup>nd</sup> May 2019, announces that several measures on *How to rescue an older relative from the Brexit Party Cult* are going to be presented:

2."Have your parents or grandparents become brainwashed followers of Nigel Farage? Cult deprogrammer Norman Steele explains how to stage an intervention. **Study cults:** All cults begin as strangers unifying against injustice, and all cults end with fanatical worship of a charismatic leader. If your sixty-something parents both wish to marry Nigel Farage, now is the time to act; **Gather evidence:** Cults demand their members give over all their money and worldly possessions, so check their bank statements for payments of £25 to join the Brexit Party. Other signs include subscriptions to publications like *Albion: Economic Lion Unchained* and bulk-buying golliwogs; **Kidnap them:** The most effective interventions involve isolating members from the cult. Lure older relatives into a shed or garage by saying you've got some old *Midsomer Murders* DVDs you're getting rid of, then lock the door. Ideally done before the European elections. **Begin deprogramming:** Expect strong resistance. Many older relatives will be so brainwashed by the *Daily Express*. It will be hard to convince them that Liverpool, St. Ives and Chester are not under Sharia law; **Show them love:** Remind your older relatives there is a normal world outside Farage worship, and that if they didn't know about the EU they'd find it hard to care about. Soon they'll shift to just whining on endlessly about car insurance, wheelie bins and wasps".

The example above is a criticism of the political options of a certain category of citizens, the elderly, who, the journalist believes, may agree that Brexit is advantageous for the United Kingdom and thus blindly follow the so-called Brexit party. First and foremost, irony is to be found in the locutor's evaluations which carry negative connotations: *the Brexit Party Cult, brainwashed followers, fanatical worship*, etc. The phrase *Brexit Party Cult*, for example, contains epistemic modality implying "I state/believe that the Brexit party functions like a cult". However, to recognise irony, the reader has to recognise the *pretence* or the *simulation of the illocutionary force* of the speech act.



Irony is also found in questions, advice and advisories. In the interrogative sentence "Have your parents or grandparents become brainwashed followers of Nigel Farage?", the purpose of the ironist is not to receive an answer, he is not really interested in the reply, the question being rather reflexive and rhetoric. We thus have a case of *pretence* or *simulation of the illocutionary force* of a directive speech act. In addition, all the subtitles are cases of ironic advice and instructions: "Study cults", "Gather evidence", "Kidnap them", "Begin deprogramming", "Show them love". The list is completed by such sentences in which the journalist urges readers to "Check their bank statements", "Lure older relatives into a shed or garage", "Remind your older relatives there is a normal world outside" and some advisories: "Expect strong resistance", "It will be hard to convince them that Liverpool, St. Ives and Chester are not under Sharia law". All these examples are dissimulations of the communicative intent. The ironist pretends to give advice and pretends that the readers could and should really follow his advice when, in fact, his purpose is to make discourse ironic through such linguistic means as simulation, pretence and evaluation gap so that the readers capture the irony, both in appearance and in effect.

*The Financial Times* dubbed *Brex-lit* a recent genre of satirical fiction to span the spectrum of dystopian writings following Britain's decision to leave European Union.

Similarly, some internet pages, under such headlines as "Funniest Jokes about Brexit" (<https://inews.co.uk/>) collect from social media a series of cases of irony, both verbal and non-verbal (caricatures, images) which we could call a fashionable "wit" style and ironic wordplay, exploiting homophony or polysemy:

3. "What did Britain say to its trade partners? "See EU later", a paraphrase of a headline from *The Sun*: "See EU Later. Britain votes to Leave the EU on a dramatic night as Nigel Farage declares victory for ordinary people". (<https://www.thesun.co.uk/>);

4. "Why does Britain like tea so much? Because tea leaves".

Other examples of social media comments are cases of irony as *pretence* or *simulation* of the communicative intent of certain assertions, some of them performing comparisons or evaluation gaps, a situation in which the locutor occupies an unreliable or an unconvincing position with respect to the content of the assertions:

5. "I voted Remain, not just for political reasons but because my mum moved to Spain and I want her to stay there."

6. "I was angry about the whole Brexit and free movement thing but then I realised I haven't been on a holiday since 2012 and I'm broke anyway so how much worse can it get?"

7. "Brexit was like the UK got drunk and accidentally unfriended Europe on Facebook."

8. "Let's get one thing clear, personally, I in no way believe that all those who voted for Brexit are racist or stupid. People voted based on the information (albeit limited and misleading) put before them by politicians. We could just as easily have arrived at a result by counting belly buttons. Innies vs. Outies. Turns out we are a nation of outies."

Other instances of irony are obviously cases of repetitions, allusions or *implicit echoic mentions*, meant to enhance parody:

9. “How many Brexiters does it take to change a lightbulb? Whoa, whoa, whoa. I didn’t say there was a lightbulb.”

10. “Well, they’ve been trying to get younger people in by calling the referendum ‘Votey McVoteface’.”

For ironical and humorous effects, social media came up with possible names for EU exits for all members of the EU. To give only a few examples:

11. Austria-Outstria; Bulgaria-Nullgaria, Cyprus-Byeprus, Germany-Deutschleave, France-Frexit/Adieu, Greece-Grexit, Romania-Roamania/Bucharrest (<https://qz.com>).

The same type of allusive wordplay also appeared in Romanian social media (Facebook post):

12. “Brexit is followed by Italeave. Czechout. Finish. Slovakout. Latervia. Byegium, Luxembye. Portugone. Donemark. Spaout. Outstria. Polend. Only one country will probably stay: Remainia”.

Most Romanian references to Brexit, though critical and ironic enough, mainly target the position of Romanian politicians with respect to Brexit, rather than Brexit itself.

Thus, a title in *Dilema Veche* promises to describe the situation of „Remainia after Brexit” ironically pointing out the inability of the Romanian politicians to participate in any decision-making processes, to understand the gravity of the situation or the implications deriving from it. To convey ironic meaning, the author uses ironic denomination (a case of *echoic mention*), ironic comparison and ironic evaluation:

13. „[...] Nowadays, when the general confusion determined by the British vote is dominant, Remainia is somehow serene. There is a certain disarming relaxation regarding the great debate concerning the future of the Union. Excluded from the table of adults [...] Romania is absent from all important decisions influencing its future” (Teodor Tiță <https://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/pe-ce-lume-traim/articol/remainia-dupa-brexit>).

Another example in *Dilema Veche* is yet another example of deviation from Brexit towards domestic issues, an example in which we can identify both *echoic mention* (*id est* the story of the golden fish) and *pretence* or *simulation of the illocutionary force* of a speech act taking the form of an advice or possible solution:

14. „Dăncilă, a Hard Brexit and the Golden Fish: The golden fish could help Romania to free itself and its image from the hard burden of its Teleorman staining. And posterity from the immense embarrassment that the dissolution of UE, through a hard Brexit, falls in history to a Community ineptly led by Dăncilă, Daea, Meleşcanu et comp” (Petre M. Iancu <https://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/pe-ce-lume-traim/articol/dancila-brexit-ul-dur-si-pestisorul-de-aur>).

A Romanian journalist stages a linguistic play about Brexit combining ironic comparisons with *literal meaning–ironic meaning*:

15. „Great Britain is waking up from the drunkenness of Brexit, but it’s still hangover. [...] Like a partier bachelor after a hard night in the club, they (the British) now seem to be waking up to reality not only to realize that they haven’t ended up with the princess [...] but to also understand that the party was and is still threatening to be very expensive” (Bogdan Cristea <https://republica.ro/marea-britanie-se-trezeste-din-betia-brexitului-dar-e-inca-mahmura>).

The critical and ironic attitude in Romanian media with respect to Brexit targets mainly the so-called British self-sufficiency, island mentality or populism of politicians maintaining however, most of the time, a mild tone and a certain degree of restraint. In the example above irony is conveyed through the simulation of an advice:

16. „Brexit should not be seen as an accident [...] The famous English phlegm is only equalled, at the level of constancy, by their great sovereignist pride and their obsession to remain different. [...] Let's not fall into despair: the British will manage, they have always managed, they will not exit the history of Europe, and they will build new bridges to the European Union [...]” (Matei Vişniec <https://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/pe-ce-lume-traim/articol/brexit-ul-haotic-si-dreptul-la-diversitate>).

The conclusions could only be provisional as the subject is still open, the analyses carried out here could be refined and others could be made. We can however state that, despite the differences between the two languages, British and Romanian, irony is conveyed through the same pragmatic strategies: the opposition literal meaning – ironic meaning, violation of the Maxim of Quality, echoic mention, pretence and the simulation of the illocutionary force of speech acts.

For obvious reasons, ironic instances concerning the subject are quantitatively larger in British media and social media and range from humour to bitter irony and stinging sarcasm. In British media and social media, irony targets domestic politics and certain categories of British voters. Romanian media, while criticizing and ironizing Brexit as a reflection of self-sufficiency and unproductive British national pride, also makes comparisons and connections with Romanian politicians and inefficient or even damaging political strategies. Yet, in the collective mentality of the Romanian people, the Western outside world embodies the model.

Even though more thorough analyses are required, to give a partial answer to the question raised in the introduction – has social media killed irony or has it overused it? – I would dare say that precisely the excess of irony, its overuse and especially the intense pathos which characterises social media communication make irony very often turn into sarcasm, slander, mockery or derision.

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## ***MUSICAL CULTURE OF BYZANTINE ORIGIN IN THE 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY AND THE FIRST HALF OF THE 18<sup>th</sup> CENTURY***

**Ion ISAROIU\***

**Abstract:** *In this article the author highlights the Byzantine musical art beginning with the 17<sup>th</sup> century and finishing with the representatives of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The author presents in a nutshell the musical personalities that became representatives on a musical and composition plan, underlining the fact that the 17<sup>th</sup> century was less prolific in this field. The article presents an abundance of details on the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a century in which the musical culture of Byzantine tradition was brought into attention by creators and psalm-singers of high quality who gave everlasting works of great artistic and literary value. Mention should be made of Filothei sin Agai Jipei who - in 1713 - made the first musical work in Romanian Psaltichia rumânească (Romanian Psalter) manuscript no. 61 in the Library of the Romanian Academy and published in four volumes by the specialist in Byzantine lore Sebastian Barbu-Bucur. We must also mention Șărbăniș Protopsaltul (the Protopsalmist) and Mihalache Moldovlahul (The Moldavian-Vlach), the latter's work being recently published by Sebastian Barbu-Bucur in three volumes. The series of great proto-psalm composers of the eighteenth century ends with Naum Ramniceanu, theologian, musician and writer, psalm singer and psalm reader.*

**Keywords:** *psalm singer; art; psalm teacher; religions songs; composer*

In the Romanian spiritual space, the musical creations of sacred or profane inspiration were fully approached in concerts and included in anthologies, printed or in manuscript, depicting the universality of art generated by the spirit of the Renaissance or of the Reformation. This aesthetic principle lies at the basis of such volumes which reunite works by authors from different schools, including the local Romanian school, and saw their completion in the anthologies compiled by the Romanian scholar **Ioan Căianu**, composer, organist, printer, organ builder, representative of the Latin Church in Transylvania (Tomescu, Vasile, 2006: p. 9). Taking into account that the monumental work *Codex Caioni* belonged to a Romanian, Ioan Căianu, and was written in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it can arguably be asserted that it was a period of strong discrimination of the Romanians in Transylvania who were in the position of "tolerated" people. This meant the Romanians did not take part in the political life of the country and in the local governance either (Cosma, Octavian Lazăr, 1973: p. 237). In those harsh times, in order to assert himself on a cultural plan, Ion Căianu chooses the Romanian folk music and introduces it into his *Codex* along with other musical pieces. Through the Romanian songs, he expresses, in a musical language, the vigor and charm of his people's artistic creations, thus giving to the future generations a telling document of his age, a solid landmark for the purposes of understanding the local musical phenomenon of the respective age (*Ibidem*, p. 238).

Therefore we can easily see that, along the whole of the seventeenth century, folk music continues to be the richest musical vein in our culture. Stylistically, the rhythmic and

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melodic formulas of Oriental (Asian) origin conquer more ground affecting part of the repertoire cultivated by the musicians. But the oriental influences altered only slightly the peculiarity of Romanian folk music. In the full cultural process of introducing Romanian as a public liturgical language, books of historical importance are being published in Targoviste and Brasov, starting with deacon Coresi's works, consisting of the translation and printing of fundamental works for the consecration of literary language, which led directly to the affirmation of the religious songs having a text that can be understood by the Romanians. Among all these printings in Romanian and Slavonic language, the most valuable as far as the affirmation of religious songs is concerned are *Octoechos* (1556-1557), *Triodion-Pentecostarion* (1558) etc. and *Octoechos* I and II (1574- 1575) - a work which can be found in the Library of Schei Brasov (Tomescu, Vasile, 2006: p. 11). "Unfortunately, states the musicologist Octavian L. Cosma, few investigations have been made upon the local musical church manuscripts so that we cannot precisely indicate the sinuous historical path of the efforts that were carried out in this field. That is why there is a hiatus in the history of our religious music, an obscure area that does not allow to reveal any prominent creative personalities along the whole seventeenth century. It is hard to admit, the great musicologist continues, that within the short period of time between Eustatius of Putna and Filothei Sin Agai Jipei - Constantin Brancoveanu's musician, the greatest exponent of the Musical School of Bucharest -, we had no prominent personality in the field of Romanian religious music" (Cosma, Octavian Lazăr, 1973: p. 236). Regarding the relations between the Romanian and Byzantine liturgical music, the famous Byzantinologist Gh. Ciobanu says that "Slavonic was until late 17<sup>th</sup> century the liturgical language and the state language..., and in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Greek replaces the Slavonic language in the chancelleries of the Romanian rulers, gaining an increasing share in the church, until the early 18<sup>th</sup> century when the Romanian language imposes itself totally as the cult language" (Ciobanu, Gheorghe, 1979: p. 263). We know that those who felt a great responsibility for the culture in Romanian were the Romanian rulers who created the best conditions for the development of Orthodoxy in general, through direct support of Greek scholars and the necessary affirmation in Romanian. However, there is evidence that, in the mid-seventeenth century, there was Greek singing in one pew in the church and Slavonic in another (Cantemir, 1875: p. 170, apud Ciobanu, 1972: p.171), and Paul of Aleppo relates that, in 1653, during the Resurrection liturgy, the canon was sung in Targoviste on the *Psaltichie* (*Psalter*), both in Greek and Romanian language (Poslușnicu, M. Gr., 1928: p. 68). In the eighteenth century stand out several personalities of Byzantine musical art who mark, through their activity, the history of this century, being the scribes, psalm-singers and teachers of the school of church music. **Mardarie Cozianul (Mardarie of Cozia)** was educated at the beautiful monastery of Cozia placed on the right bank of the river Olt, and it seems that in the middle of the eighteenth century, he became the headmaster of the Romanian-Slavonic school of Cozia (Pârnuță, 1976: p. 140, apud Gavrilă, Pr. Prof. dr., Ion, 2010: p. 54). He compiled a *Slavonic-Romanian Lexicon* (1649), the first lexicographical work preserved until today, made during the reign of Matei Basarab, with the blessing of the Metropolitan of Wallachia, Kir Stefan (Păcurariu, Pr. prof. dr., Mircea, 2002: p. 270).

**Iovașcu Vlahul (Iovașcu the Vlach)**, the most controversial figure in the opinion of Byzantinologist Vasile Vasile (Vasile, Vasile, 1997: p. 51) performer, teacher and

creator, universally praised for the value of his work. The one who has dealt with this personality of the eighteenth century was the celebrated Byzantinologist Barbu-Sebastian Bucur (Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, 1989: p. 171-183), who, after the investigations he made, succeeded to clear up the problem of the period in which Iovașcu the Vlach lived and worked, namely the seventeenth century. The one who first mentioned Iovașcu, Georgios Papadopoulos said that he had lived in the thirteenth century, information taken in their works by Alexander Luca, Ionescu Gion and, later, Egon Wellesz. The information from these sources passed to other studies, entrenching the idea that this Romanian hymnist lived and worked in the thirteenth century (Ionescu, Gheorghe C., 2003: p. 40). More recent Greek researchers, reviewing great protopsalmists who contributed to the completion of the Byzantine musical treasury, placed Iovașcu the Vlach at the right place, namely in the second half of the eighteenth century, after Hrisafi the New, Gherman Neon Patron, Balas the Priest, Cosmas the Ivirite Machedon and Damian of Vatopedi and Manolis Hațighiacumis, placed him around 1700 (Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, 1989: p. 173). The investigations undertaken by Sebastian Barbu-Bucur show that Iovașcu the Vlach served in the second half of the seventeenth century, around 1670-1700, composing valuable ecclesiastical songs, especially doxologies, of which stands out the one at the Ascension of the St. Cross voice IV. The illustrious Byzantinologist says these songs composed by Iovașcu Vlahos were found in 35 manuscripts to which we add another communicated by Jorgen Raasted and one by Nicu Moldoveanu (*Ibidem*, p. 174).

Besides *Doxologies*, Iovașcu the Vlach wrote an *Asmaticon*, Holy God "at sea", at the end of *Slavoslovia*, a *Heruvic* (*Cherubikon*) voice V, a Chinonic (Sunday *Kinonikon*), Praise the Lord voice I, a irmos calofonic (*Kalophonic Heirmologion*) voice I Ode VII of Christmas *Katavasia*, other three *Heirmologion*, The Good Word *polyeleos* voice III., The 35 manuscripts listed by Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, plus one reported by Nicu Moldoveanu (Moldoveanu, Nicu, 1984: p. 239), one by Raasted (Raasted, Jorgen, 1976: p. 565-573) and another by Ozana Alexandrescu (Alexandrescu, Ozana-Irina, 1993: p. 115), offer a rich material for making an inventory of the works of this great protopsalmist (Vasile, Vasile, 1997: p. 52).

**Părintele Theodosie (Father Theodosius)** (17th century), psalmist, psalm teacher, composer. In his famous *Psaltichie* (*Psalter*) Filothei sin Agăi Jipei mentions him in its Preface, as his teacher of psalm performance (Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, 1989: p. 95). Byzantinologist Sebastian Barbu-Bucur opines that Filothei was the disciple of a different Theodosius, the future Metropolitan of Hungaro-Wallachia (1668-1672 and 1679-1708) (Ionescu, Gheorghe C., 2003: p. 49). Father Theodosius may have been the author of songs devoted to raising the glass to the Ruler, to the Metropolitan or to the one who prepared the meal (Idem, 1981: p. 17-19).

**Coman Dascălul (Coman the Teacher)** (17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> century) was a teacher of church singing at the Music School founded by Constantin Brancoveanu in Bucharest. On a book manuscript, *Alexandria*, can be found an inscription copied by Bucur Grămăticul (Bucur the Grammarian) in 1704 which speaks of Coman, "the royal teacher" (Ionescu, Gheorghe C., 2003: p. 49). In the notes on the manuscript mentioned above we can find information on Sarban the Protopsalist (the Singer). The renowned musician Octavian Lazar Cosma claims

that, in the school where Coman taught, music was taught with musical notes, the school having an impressive number of pupils, i.e. fifty (Cosma, Octavian Lazăr, 1973: p. 254).

In his *Lexicon* (Ionescu, Gheorghe C., 2003: p. 49-50), Gheorghe C. Ionescu also mentions **Stoica Dascălu** (**Stoica the Teacher**), psalm teacher at the Royal School in Bucharest and **Radu Dascălu** (**Radu the Teacher**), grammarian and psalm teacher at the Annunciation Church in Bucharest, whose work has not been preserved.

Quoting Barbu-Sebastian Bucur, Octavian Lazar Cosma mentions in the *Chronicles of the Romanian Music* that “in 1640, in Iasi, at Vasile Lupu’s College, music, an important subject, is taught by musical notes” (Cosma, Octavian Lazăr, 1973: p. 254).

However, the end of the seventeenth century knows a new period of cultural, printing and artistic development under the rule of St. Martyr Constantin Brancoveanu, ruler of Wallachia. At a time when the trend to impose the Romanian language in church reaches its peak, there appears in Bucharest a genuine musical school which will last until the end of the eighteenth century. Documents certify an intense flow of printed books in Bucharest, Râmnic, Snagov, Buzau, etc., as well as a rich activity of the promoters of culture in cultural centers on both sides of the Carpathians. Throughout the eighteenth century, the musical art will assert in the Romanian historical provinces under three essential aspects: a) folk music representing the traditions and customs of the Romanians and other inhabiting nationalities; b) ecclesiastical music represented by the melodies of Byzantine tradition cultivated by the Romanian creators and interpreters, by the Gregorian melodies and the Protestant Chorale emphasized by performers and composers from the Romanian provinces and from other European schools; c) the music promoted in the professional and amateur secular background, covering a wide range of genres from entertainment to superior, more complex genres of choral music, chamber music, symphonic music, opera and ballet (Vasile Tomescu, 2008: p. 8). Yet a milestone in the Romanian Byzantine music is marked by **Filothei Sin Agăi Jipei** (1670-1720), the first notable representative of the beginnings of writing Byzantine songs in Romanian. He is the one who finished writing, in 1713, the first music book in Romanian, entitled *Psaltichia rumânească* (*Romanian Psalter*), manuscript no. 61 located at the Romanian Academy Library, studied and published in four volumes by Sebastian Barbu-Bucur between 1981-1992, in the collection *Sources of Romanian Music* (*Catavasier* (*Katavasia Book*), București, 1981, *Anastasimatar* (*Anastasimatarion*), București, 1984, *Stihirar* (*Stichera Book*), București, 1986, *Stihirar-Penticostar* (*Stichera and Pentecostarion Book*), Buzău, 1992). Prominent personality of the musical culture of Byzantine tradition, Filothei, born in 1670 in the village of Mârșa, Ilfov county, distinguished by his musical and literary talent, by his culture, thus integrating into the local intellectual elite who represented Brancoveanu’s era. His main work, *Psaltichia rumânească* (*The Romanian Psalter*), that made him famous is the first known collection of church hymns which, by its patriotic nature, triggers the process of Romanianization of the psalm performance in Romanian (Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, 1989: p. 183). In 2013, The National University of Music, the Byzantine Music specialization, celebrated 300 years of Romanianization of the sacred chants of Byzantine tradition by an international symposium attended by an impressive number of musicologists from the country and abroad. Filothei’s manuscript contains songs of liturgy chants whose melodic line is slightly adapted to the Romanian prosody and order of words (Ciobanu, Gheorghe, 1972: p. 171). The title of the



work, *Psaltichie rumânească (Romanian Psalter)* represents an unprecedented formulation which marks the moment when the Byzantine music of our country is called by the notion of Byzantine chant. As religious music could not be called “Byzantine” any longer since the Byzantine Empire had long disappeared, a new terminology was found with the same substance, i.e., *Psaltichie (Psalter)*, with the addition of *Romanian*, in order to represent the Romanian religious music. Thus, Filothei imprinted a Romanian peculiarity to the songs, which makes the famous Byzantinologist Sebastian Barbu-Bucur to use, later on, the phrase “Byzantine music of Romanian tradition”. Filothei is the one who not only placed musical notes above the syllables of the Romanian texts, but also gave us the Romanian versions of all these songs in a sweet language that has remained perfect to this day and clothed in melodic lines that are true landmarks of our psalmic music, many of them having entered the cult system (Vasile Vasile, 1997: p. 67). In addition to his masterpiece, *Psaltichie rumânească (Romanian Psalter)*, Filothei translated and printed in Snagov, in 1700, *Floarea darurilor (The Flower of Virtues)* and *Învățăături creștinești (Christian Teachings)*, and in 1714, in Targoviste, the first *Catavasier (Katavasia Book)* in Romanian. At the end of his work about Filothei, Sebastian Barbu-Bucur says: “The books and songs translated or compiled by Filothei have been widely circulated. Thus, *The Flower of Virtues* spread - by many reprints and manuscript copies – all over the Romanian territories, replacing the old translations made of the Slavic texts, and *Catavasierul (The Katavasia Book)* – a pew book widely used with a large, perhaps the largest use, in the cult of the Romanian Orthodox Church - was reprinted from the first edition of Filothei in 1714 until 1826, in at least 38 bilingual or trilingual Romanian editions. And a large number of songs from *Psaltichie (The Psalter)* was circulated in all three Romanian provinces” (Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, 1989: p. 202). Filothei sin Agăi Jipei marks a very important moment in Romanian music, namely the first stage of Romanianization of chants that leaves deep marks upon the next stages. The illustrious Byzantinologist Sebastian Barbu-Bucur states that “he should be considered, therefore, a brilliant creator of Romanian chants which launched a broad movement of patriotic resonance oriented towards highlighting our sensitivity in church music and establishing folk speech” (Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, 1981: p. 81). Illustrative are *Catavasierul Floriilor (The Katavasia of the Palm Sunday)* that are part of the first Romanian compositions of classical music. The relatively smooth, rising and descending melodic line confers to the expression a flowing character, with doina and ballad inflections. Obviously, such a melodic profile “is easier and more beautiful” – as the author himself stated – because it reaches deep areas of folklore, lending it a direct, honest feature, close to the local background.

**Șarban Protopsaltul (Sarban the Protopsalmist)** (1675-1765) was the disciple of teacher Coman, psalm teacher and composer, exceptional personality of the musical culture of Byzantine tradition in Wallachia. In 1689 he was a cantor (prevet) in the Royal Court Church in Bucharest, then, in 1716 he became a grammarian, and since 1733 until 1750 he was a protopsalmist (Ionescu, Gheorghe C., 2003: p. 54; *Dicționar de muzică bisericască*, 2013: p. 750-754; Moldoveanu, Nicu, 1984: p. 56; Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, 1989: p. 202; Vasile Vasile, 1997: p. 71). His most important disciple was his nephew Constantin, protopsalmist in the Royal Court Church in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Șarban Protopsaltul (Sarban the Protopsalmist) was a remarkable composer, mentioned by Macarie

Ieromonahul (Makarios the Monk) in the Preface to the *Irmologhion (Heirmologion)* together with Arsenie, the monk from the monastery of Cozia (Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, 1989: p. 202-203). Here are some of his works that have been preserved: *Troparia for the Apprentices* voice VIII, a *Doxology*, voice V, translated from Greek after Neon Patron Ghermano and *Katavasia of the Palm Sunday* voice III, learned by Macarie from his teacher, Constantin (Ionescu, Gheorghe C., 2003: p. 54).

**Ioan sin Radului Duma Brașoveanu** was the disciple of Sarban the Protopsalmist, son of Radu Duma (guardian) of St. Nicholas Church in Schei Brasov (Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, 1989: p. 217; Ionescu, Gheorghe C., 2003: p. 65; Vasile Vasile, 1997: p. 73; *Dicționar de muzică bisericească*, 2013: p. 249). After he made his musical education in Bucharest, accompanied by a theological and philological culture, John sin Duma Brașoveanu returned to Brasov, where he worked as a school teacher and choir singer until 1775, the last year we have any news about him (Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, 1989: p. 218). His most important work is *Psaltichia românească (Romanian Psalter)*, completed in 1751 and now found in the Romanian Academy Library (BAR, Ms rom, 4305). “With some additions and some omissions, *Psaltichia românească (Romanian Psalter)* compiled by Ioan Duma Brașoveanu reproduces *Psaltichia rumânească (Romanian Psalter)* of Filothei sin Agăi Jipei” (Ionescu, Gheorghe C., 2003: p. 66). Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, who studied this manuscript, found the similarity with that of Filothei, after which it was copied, although Duma writes his manuscript during the reign of John Gregory the Prince and of Metropolitan Neophyte. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur says that there are also differences between the two Psalters, in the sense that Duma’s manuscript is more complete than that of Filothei. Establishing the similarities and differences between the two manuscripts, the illustrious Byzantinologist supposes that Ioan Duma has seen other manuscripts of Filothei from which he could copy *Songs of the Triodion* eight *Cherubikons*, etc., manuscripts which have not been preserved or maybe have not been discovered yet (Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, 1989: p. 219). It can be thus concluded that the psalm music was in circulation during Brancoveanu’s age not only in Wallachia, but also in Transylvania, in Brasov, where Duma promoted the same Brancoveanu-style music.

**Mihalache Moldovlahul (Mihalache the Moldavian-Vlach)** (18<sup>th</sup> century), a Romanian of Moldova whose activity takes place mostly in Bucharest. The reputed Byzantinologist Sebastian Barbu-Bucur studied the life and work of this great protopsalter and has published, since 2008, the most important work of Mihalache, *Anastasimatar (Anastasimatarion)* in three volumes. He was appointed by the royal decree of Michael Șuțu “teacher of Music” at the St. Sava National School in Bucharest. He is the psalmist and composer who opened new horizons for the musical creation, making a substantial contribution to the Romanianization of church chants through his creative interventions, anticipating the style of the Romanianized psalm creation of the future great psalm creators, Macarie, A. Pann, Ghelasius Basarabeanu, D. Suceveanu I.P. Pasarea (Ionescu, Gheorghe C., 2003: p. 76). He remains in the history of music as the composer of the first *Anastasimatarion* in Romanian, dated 1767, manuscript discovered in original in the Library of the Monastery of Great Lavra in Athos by Sebastian Barbu-Bucur in 1982. The manuscript is written in cucuzelian notation, the text is in Slavonic letters by Mihalache the Moldavian-Vlach, containing 257 leaves. According to Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, this

*Anastasimatarion* is very important for Romanian musicology because it is the most complete *Anastasimatarion* in cuzuzelian and hrisantic notation, the seven stichera of the Resurrection from the *Octoechos* are complemented with three *Podobia*, in the heirmologic style. Also, Mihalache the Moldovan-Vlach initiates the second stage of this first phase of Romanianizing chants (Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, 1981: p. 38). The heirmologic style of the *Anastasimatarion* was widely used by the Moldavian psalm creators and performers, but mostly in the creations of Mihalache and then of Dimitrie Suceveanu in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Example (cf. Sebastian Barbu Bucur *Mihalache Moldovlahul I Anastasimatar (Mihalache the Moldavian Vlach, Anastasimatarion)*, p.40)

**Podobia: Cea ce ești bucuria**  
Glas I  $\frac{3}{4}$  Pa f

Petru Peloponesiu  
Ms. gr. 576  
BAR. p.1  
EX.5

Μihalache  
z. 26, f.7  
1767

I.P. Pasirea  
1940, p.3

Τὸν οὐ - ρα - νι - ὠν τα - γμα - των, το α - γα λ λ ι - α - μα

Ce - ca ce ești bu - cu - ri - a - ce - te - lor ce - rești

τὸν ε - πι γης αν - θρω - πων κρα - ται - α προ σ τα - σι - α

și pre pă-mânt oa-me-ni - lor ta - re fo - lo - si-toa - re...

și pre pă-mântoa-me-ni-lor ta - re fo - lo - si-toa - re,

We can conclude that the Byzantine musical art lasted in various manuscripts found in our country, starting early in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and that it was taught in organized schools based on precise rules, written in Greek, according to tradition, and later translated into the national language in the great process of “Romanianization” which included our whole psalmic culture in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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## ***INTERTEXTUALITY, A SPECTACULAR CULTURAL COORDINATION OF SAMUEL BECKETT'S WORKS***

**Ana Cristina LEMNARU\***

**Abstract:** *Stylistically, Beckett's art makes sense when it comes down to a pure core of forms and ideas Beckett's theatre plays being appreciated only when their intertextual dimension receives the attention they deserve. As a result, the new type of character, as is the case with Beckett's protagonists, has no part in any future that can be imagined in the ordinary way, but is given to go over and over again through the same events through which it has been last. Moreover, the intertextuality cannot be reduced to the written text or the linguistic code. This type of intertextuality is peculiar to Beckett's texts that form the same class of texts and is manifested within the same genre, literary species, regardless of the time when the text was created. Also, an intertextuality relation at the level of the meaning is constituted between the variants of the same text, which appear in the individual process of creation. In this plan, it is necessary to mention that the changes that the writer makes are made at the level of the signifier and very rarely at the level of the signified. We discover that such a reading does not exhaust the problematic of Beckett's theatre plays, which, from a different perspective, will be closer to postmodernism than to the theatre of the absurd, appealing to aesthetic concepts such as that of intertextuality. This is a major concern related to the resources and the possibilities expressive to language, literature in general and theatre in particular we are particularly interested to emphasize in our article.*

**Keywords:** *postmodernism; intertextuality; absurd theatre*

Intensely used in the literature of the last decades, the concept of intertextuality knows multiple and varied attempts to define it and, as a result, it is applied in so many different meanings. Intertextuality is the creation technique preferred by postmodernists through which the text is always sent, quoting without quotation marks, taking over characters, symbols, fragments, famous phrases or simply rewriting other texts. If we choose to see Beckett as a modernist writer, others choose to approach him as a postmodernist one. His texts are then defined as a product of intertextuality, breaking free from the limited interpretations restricted by authorial intention.

It should be mentioned that structuralists believe in the ability of critics to locate and describe the meaning of a text, even if that meaning refers to an intertextual relationship of a text with other texts. Post-structuralists reject the idea that the origins of a text can be resumed. Thus, the theoreticians of the intertextuality were divided into two camps.

The first camp, of a structuralist nature, considers that the meaning of a text can be fully explained by describing the basic units that make up the text and their relation with other texts. The second camp, poststructuralist in nature, emphasizes the uncertainty of discovering the relationship of significant and significant.

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In our article, we start from the concept of intertextuality seen by researchers from different perspectives. It is not a central element of the text, but a trans-sexual relationship like others. And the text should not be evaluated in its uniqueness, since it is shaped as the product of a flexible relationship - manifest or secret – with other texts. The theatrical language uses, in a syncretic way, specific materials to the other arts; thus, possible interdisciplinary, inter-esthetic dialogues are built, which enhance the theatricality, when they are not excessive tools of pure visuality, but the very quintessence of the scenic mechanism.

This concept has aroused the interest of many researchers, being defined in various ways. The term was promoted in the scientific terminology as “the index of how a text reads history and inserts itself into it” (Kristeva, J., 1980: 267) and which refers to the process of producing the text. Thus, the intertextuality does not, of course, be reduced to a problem of sources or influences; the intertextuality is a general field of anonymous formulas, of unconscious or automatic quotes, made without quotation marks.

From the epistemological point of view, through the concept of intertextuality, the social dimension brings its contribution to the elaboration of the theory of the text: the whole language - previous and contemporary - enters the text, not through a detectable lineage, through a deliberate imitation, but through a dissemination, an image that ensures the text not the status of a reproduction, but that of a productivity. Language is repetitive at Beckett: words, phrases, and sentences are repeated endlessly. This technique not only emphasizes the monotonous repetitiveness of the characters’ actions, but also splinters the sense of linear progression, for everything ends the way it begins. Furthermore, this technique shows the characters’ inability to evolve and succeed.

The reader has a crucial role, the interlining of the intertextual relations being his task. In the nutshell, intertextuality is similar to the phagocytosis process in the world of living microorganisms, in the sense that one text encompasses and metabolizes many other texts. Both intertextuality and interculturality require the transgression of boundaries and contacts with otherness.

According to linguists, intertextuality cannot be synonymous with literacy. Intertextuality is an inherent property of all types of texts, not just literary texts. The scientific text is even more saturated intertextually. This particularity could be important in that intertextuality can transform a lot of hypotheses, which are not always aesthetically marked. Genette is concerned with the intended relationship between texts; thus, hypertextuality marks the domain of literary works whose essence is derived from their relation to pre-existing texts. As the theoretician himself points out, “above all, hypertextuality, as a category of works, is itself a generic, or, more precisely, transgeneric archetype: we consider the category of texts that completely encompasses certain canonical genres, such as the pastiche,” parody, which also touches other genres - probably all genres” (Genette G., 1997: 8). In his view, all texts are hypertextual, except that sometimes the existence of a hypotext is too uncertain to be the basis of hypertextual readings. In such cases, the critic reminds the reader that a hypertext can be read for its individual value or in relation to the hypotext.

Viewed from this perspective, every word in Beckett’s texts becomes a link, which sends the reader to another word / text in the hypertext network. Thus, the text becomes a

space of coexistence of all semiotic systems, of all idiolects and cultures, which generate the pleasure of the reading the text, but which at the same time cause the risk of dissolution in its texture.

The intertextual mechanism proposed by Beckett is conditioned by the perception in the text of the trace of the intertextuality. This trace appears as a mistake in relation to the norm, a foreign body that sends to the intertextuality, because it does not find explanation in the text. Intertextuality is a phenomenon that guides reading, which eventually governs its interpretation, and this fact gives Beckett's work a twofold approach, the word being understood according to the rules of language and the constraints of the context. Beckett goes beyond the linguistic and cultural boundaries by dispensing with narrative sequence, character development, and psychology in the conventional sense. Thus, the "intra-intertextuality of Beckett's oeuvre raises rather complex questions about the nature of his own literature". (Fitch, B., 1988: 23)

Intertextuality is a theory of conditions of significance. It has two sides: on the one hand, it highlights the connection of texts and denies the idea of textual autonomy and close reading forms; on the other hand, it admits the consideration of texts in their chronological seriality, as many contributions to the code that produces the varied effects of meanings. In this way, intertextuality becomes the relation between a text and the various significant languages or practices of the culture, ensuring the perception of the structures and meanings of a text.

Related to *All That Fall* and *Happy Days*, which choose a middle-aged female protagonist, we notice that Winnie's plight is more acute than that of Maddy's, for example and it is showed in a more abstract, purified symbolic structure. Maddy's movements were slow and the thematic of 'falling' appears in the plot. But Winnie's movements are very much reduced. Starting from the structural level of the text to which intertextuality occurs, different situations of intertextuality can be identified. An individual text may have in common with a subset of its intertextual elements of the signifier. Further along, the same course of such reduced presentations of trapped female protagonists appear in *Not I and Footfalls*. In order to the study the intertextual relations within the characters, variants of these theatre plays appeared. The female character in *Not I* takes a special posture and movement can be seen in "simple sideways raising of arms from sides and their falling back, in a gesture of helpless compassion". (Beckett, S., 1975: 15).

Beckett works on the body fragmenting it into his own visibility, thus causing an unprecedented dramatization. The extremely expressive face of *Happy Days* contradicts the forced inertia of the other dead part of the body, while the serious figure, without any characteristic is specific to his latest pieces, which render inertia, inactivity, lack of productivity. A dramatic work expressing a profound intuition should ideally be performed in a single moment, therefore the structure of such a piece expresses the entirety of a complex poetic image divided into a series of interdependent elements that give the viewer the impression of a static fundamental situations. The correspondence between voice, noise, light, music is what gives the rhythm of this extremely expressive creation, while the action is endlessly off-center, in the relative continuum of the scenic space inserting the stories, stories that constitute so many cancer interventions of the past in present. Content and form are confused. There is no action, but tension figures.

Beckett's world is empty, or rather emptied progressively (of objects, of food, of living beings, of nature), which gives the playwright a few extra accessories. The beckettian object has the role of a playing medium. Hamm's wheelchair, Nagg and Nell's bins, Winnie's handkerchief, the jug in which the character tries in vain, the three cubes, etc. it contributes to the subjugation of the character, although they can at the same time constitute a stab against the nothingness. (Indeed, from the last pieces it appears that what limits the word by the weight of the presence is the body itself.)

Therefore, our research implies the recognition only of those cases of intertextuality that are marked in the text. Thus, the intertextuality is based on the different types of reference assigned to one and the same sign. The intertextual reference in the text and the source text itself (or part of it) are one and the same sign, but that has changed its meaning. In this case, the text-sign becomes a reference itself, which determines us to qualify it as a double reference. The reference to the extra-linguistic reality will be mediated by the source text. Viewed from the perspective of inter-referentiality, the text acquires the role of space for the discussion of the references of other texts, thus constituting a transformative synthesis of their models of reality, which they reflect and, at the same time, open them to other virtualities, thus exercising a dual function: communicative and heuristic, which leads to a kind of profound reshaping of our mental stereotypes.

All those who lean on Beckett's work, notice an opposite aspect: in the transfigured image of the world of his theatre plays there is something that no show can play in its entirety. By the nature of its ephemerality, its unrepeatability, the theatre loses what careful, laboratory reading can reveal. For this reason, reading Beckett is a different and fatally necessary experience in its complexity. Intertextuality is undoubtedly the spectacular cultural coordinate of such a reading. More than the imprint of a scholarship and a way of looking at literature, the Beckett's intertextuality is the discrete closure of belonging to the culture of the old continent.

A kind of studied elegance of expression and action also gave rise to a somewhat decorative and artificial type of theater, which, however, could never be denied spiritual insight and interest in speculative problems. In this context, the new type of drama promoted by Samuel Beckett, especially by *Waiting for Godot*, was meant to be successful. More than the imprint of scholarship and a way of looking at literature, Beckett's intertextuality is the discrete consequence of belonging to the culture of the old continent. The distrust of the values of the day disturbs the epistemological principles and animates a true revenge of the spirit. Despair is the pretext of a total lack of meaning, in which quotes become the ruins of a cultural past. The ruins of expectation flood the scene in *Waiting for Godot*.

There is a strong sense of intertextuality in Beckett's *Endgame* and *Happy Days* too. An intertextual reading of these theatre plays considers Beckett's drama a continuous and coherent unity. Beckett brings to light the human living impasse and desperate struggle in the society of that time: stuck in this impasse, the human being can still wear the dignity.

In *Endgame*, all the ideas and feelings of the end of the world are in the closest form to the absolute. It represents the masterpiece of the end. Even today, over five decades and tens of thousands of pages of commentary. We sense his message and form. But the meanings remain united and inaccessible. Not only the characters, but the relationships are



indefinable. It is the theatre play of human bitterness, one of the most terrible apology in the dramaturgy of the last century. The relationship between the protagonists is the possible key to a semantic and human maze. The contrast between the gesture and the word, between reality and intention, intensely exploited in *Godot*, becomes here the dominant of the human condition.

However, Beckett's theatre plays have been increasingly discussed especially since the author began to be increasingly interpreted as one of the great names of contemporary literature. But Beckett has continued to remain an outsider: his work both attracts criticism, but rejects it, resisting it, in most cases. Beckett's message is obvious, and his later writings will confirm this orientation: words can do anything. But, equally, the opposite is true: often, they can do nothing. And if, therefore, fiction (imagination?) is unhelpful in the face of reality, however, only this fiction of helplessness can be real. In principle, Beckett now uses only minimal language resources to create dialogues for his plays.

But Beckett has often claimed that he himself experienced many failures, especially at the beginning of his career, if only to mention the case of *Murphy*, rejected by no less than forty-two publishers before being accepted. Situation resumed, in part, with *Watt*, of whom most publishers have stated that it is a text sprinkled with pessimism. Beckett's characters attempt to run away from themselves and are alienated from the world and their environments as in *Malone Dies*, viewed in terms of intertextuality. We approached the other characters of the Beckettian prose (Watt, Murphy, Mercier and Camier, Molloy, Malone) in their decayed trajectory, meaning that they will increasingly gain a perspective that would disengage them from the strain, biographical or narrative. It even dynamizes the notion of character. (The Unnamable is a non-character, for example.) It will remain a common voice for both late-prose and playwright characters. The couple Vladimir-Estragon was examined from the point of view of the similarities as which the expectation - a common motive at Beckett - imposes on them behaviorally. The expectation, which is otherwise projected in eternity, also concerns the Molloy-Moran couple.

His creations are remarkable for the mastery with which the author uses the technique of repetition, for the flair with which the dialogue is, unexpectedly, transformed into the most obvious ritual of the absurd, plus a series of subordinate notes, such as, for example, the violent moments, the way often unexpected and often unconventional expression that characterizes the protagonists and, especially, those scenes where the characters' inability to communicate is infinitely more important than the communication itself, so that in the end, one can reach the image of extreme isolation of a world, quite dreamlike. Thus, the vision regarding the agony of expression and the crisis of language is highlighted at Beckett.

If we consider the action in *Waiting for Godot*, we realize it is imposed by the desire of each character to impose its own series of sentences, the succession of which no longer follows a meaning or, if that meaning still exists, it is no longer revealed. As such, the stage action will only embody the absurd struggle of words, and the dialogue can no longer be perceived as such, then, perhaps, on a formal level. The disarticulation of the language makes the language as a whole understood only as an aberrant mechanism that triggers the external level of the action, ignoring the characters and their substance, destroying it, and thus abolishing their theatrical participation in the play's conflict. That is

why Beckett's readers will be able to reach the specific rhythm of this new type of writing or dramatic text only by accepting to submit without conditions to the true essence of otherness, which is the language and, above all, the language of the other. But the paradox remains impossible to be understood: we become aware of what we are only at the moment when we are able to understand that it represents, in essence, what we have never been able to achieve.

The dialogue of these texts can be provided by quotation, reference or reference and is of interest for the analysis we propose in the present study. In the case of using the quotation, a textual segment is incorporated into the structure of the signifier of the text, but this segment is functionalized by the structure of the signifier. The reference and allusion are updated in the structure of the signifier of the text, but refer to the source text as a whole. Also in an intertextuality relation, there is also a commentary text of the individual text, but the metatext character is dominant. The intertextual characteristics are subsumed within the grotesque voice of *The unnamable* too.

Performative theatricality, one from which one can start to crystallize a spectacular form, will be analyzed in the pages of *The unnamable*. As for *Molloy*, we dramatized it, resulting in a monodrama, which means that its theatricality worked, at least on the level of the stage requirements. The monologue but also the caption is underlined as defining marks of the theatricality. In the case of the caption, the behavioral scores of Molloy character were presented, as they appear in the dramatization. The captions are in perfect cohesion with the mental deconstruction to which his characters are subjected. Therefore, we focused on the amnesia of the character. The action itself is based on continuous and unforeseen obstacles. Moreover, the principle belongs to that tradition so dear to Beckett, considered as belonging to a marginal theatre, to a degenerate form.

The theatrical potential of *The unnamable* is remarkable for the complexity of the visual and body graphics. The one contains a lot of signs that would be useless to decipher through a semantic analysis, because its essence is in the experience of the word that shapes, like a painter or sculptor, the presence, the body and the voice of the actor. It is difficult, if not impossible, to speak of action or of narration in *The unnamable*. Therefore, the endless language activity becomes the main player of this long monologue. The architecture of the body space and the calligraphy of the voice captures the theatricality of this situation.

On stage, the gestural discourse is constructed by analogy with the linguistic discourse, but also through the sound indications, or the printing of the desired rhythmicity. Textual theatricality is also found in the vocal dynamics that can develop a sound universe that will be found later in the theatrical performance.

The most obvious situation to illustrate the concept of intertextuality is one in which a text is globally recognizable at the level of the form / meaning of another text. In this case, the source text is assigned a new meaning, which obviously implies transformations at the significant level of the text. Therefore, the signifier and the significance of a text acquire a new meaning, which restructures the signifier thus constituted, but in such a way that the pre-existing source text is recognizable as a whole. The target text contains sufficient formal indices to recognize all levels of the presented model. This is the case of the parody, in which the relation of the new text with its intertextuality changes fundamentally. The significance of this relationship can be even

diametrically opposed to that of the source text. Through the intertextuality relationship one can move from profane to sacred, from comic to tragic, from true to false and vice versa. Interpreted from this prism, intertextuality represents a mechanism of symbolization, symbolization or re-symbolization, because an already existing text-sign derives other meanings.

Echoes of intertextuality also appear in *Endgame* too, “the issue of word games and extra-textual references in Samuel Beckett’s theatre plays would require a complex study and could reveal their deeply human substrate” (Balotă, N., 2000: 393). Because however abstracted and diminished it may seem as a theatrical expression, the entire Beckettian play returns to the idea of man, and moreover, it is built and born only around this changing image, but nonetheless unrelenting in its essence. We would say, not only to see the pessimistic, black, schizoid side of the Beckettian thought, but to consider, first of all, that possible from the impossible and the constructive critical challenge launched by the reader-spectator by four characters who - denounces his own existence, in a never-ending game.

Always denouncing the uselessness of the expression, Beckett resolutely denies the existence of an expressive interiority. His theatre plays always mirror a decaying universe. One could almost say that, like a mythical creator, he destroys his own universe as he creates it. The study of intertextuality requires some explanations regarding the relation writer-text-reader, also specifying the type of text, which will subsequently constitute the working corpus of our article, as well as clarifying some visions with reference to defining the concept of reading, which comes to replace the one of reception. Beckett’s literary world is to a great extent permeated by “an existential nausea and the contemplation of the absurd, but his expression is also unique in its attempt at linguistic deconstruction of what was until the XX century considered as stable human identity” (Sultan, S., 2004: 421).

From the writer’s point of view, intertextuality is a way of asserting the authorial self in and through the dialogue with the texts of others: intertextuality is a way of generating one’s own text and confirming the creative individuality that is produced through a complex system of opposition relations, identification and concealment with the texts of other authors. The contemporary writer is, to a large extent, an imitator of earlier texts, and his originality depends on how he combines existing textual sequences. At the time of writing a text, the writer updates, through his textual and intertextual competence, a certain type, which is in accordance with his intention and the communication situation concerned.

Based on the research, we deduced that intertextuality is one of the triggers of multiple reading of Beckett’s texts. This category of the text conditions the plurality of meaning.

The multiple reading is understood, on the pages of the paper, as the totality of the perceptual, cognitive and metacognitive activities, of identification, interpretation carried out by the reader in order to understand, interpret and evaluate the multiple meaning of the text.

As the problem of the intertextuality classification continues to provoke permanent discussions, we have tried to separate the types of intertextuality and we have concluded that intertextuality can be: strong or weak, explicit or implicit, progressive or regressive, generated by the author or by the reader, intentionally practiced or involuntary.

If there is a word that defines the means of expression of Beckett's theatre plays, it is literality term. The disjunction of the dialogues signals the fissure of the human relations, the circularity and the monotony of the action shows us how humanity is circling or beating in place, the mutilated or progressively degraded body reveals, before the word or even in opposition to it, the character's failure.

The absurdity comes from a deliberate abandonment of the rules, a depreciation of the language that is nothing more than an element subordinated to a poetic image with multiple dimensions, which also simultaneously includes visual elements, movement and light, fusion of matter and form, poetry which comes from concrete and direct scenic images, the non-reality status of the visible corresponding to the reality of the invisible. Literality looks instead of saying.

In this sense, Beckett's theatre reveals itself as what it is: an enclosed space, actors who pretend to play a role, gestures and words without motivation that mobilize the time of representation, thus achieving its purpose, which is to cast a shadow doubt about the possibility of representing the world. Beckett never responds to his critics, believing that for an artist the only possible spiritual development is in the sense of depth, haunted the entire life by the misery of existence.

In conclusion, we could mention that the reflections on Beckett's intertextuality include the emission and the production of the texts. The researchers emphasize Beckett's role, because his literary culture and personal references can be identified in any literary text, but at the same time they value the role of the receiver, which needs competences to decode the marks of intertextuality in the reading process. Through the concept of intertextuality, Beckett's theatre plays are considered to be devoid of independent meaning and the act of reading is a navigation act on a network of textual relations. Interpreting the text, discovering the true textual meaning implies the pursuit of these relationships.

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## **HUMOR IN MEDICAL ADVERTISING**

**Valentina MARINESCU\***

**Abstract:** *As any type of advertising, ads at medical products have the role to create the consumption's needs. The advertisement for a certain drug or medicine tries to tell us a simple fact: by taking a certain product, the quality of our life will become better. More and Srivastava (2010) show that, before buying a medicine, potential consumers are also concerned about its aesthetic attributes, such as color, texture, taste and shape of it. A number of aesthetic attributes also increase the chance for medical products to be purchased – and this is the case of the appeal at emotions and humor used in advertising. The present paper is based on a research project in which we tried to identify the characteristics of the advertising of medical products in Romania and the way in which the appeal to emotions and humor is used in medical-related ads. The research methods used for this purpose were quantitative content analysis and qualitative content analysis. The sample consisted of forty-one advertisements for medicines and drugs broadcast at various television stations. The quantitative and qualitative results showed that the advertising of medicines and drugs - especially those targeted at children – had made appeal to emotions and humor. These advertisements focused on caring for the fragile health of children or on the ability of adults to cope with daily challenges. The paper opens the possibility of future research in which the influence of the pharmaceutical industry on the potential patients and on the doctors could be in-depth analysed (Moynihan, Heath & Henry, 2002).*

**Keywords:** *advertising; medicine; humor*

### **1. Introduction**

Like any type of advertising, ads at medical products (especially medicines and drugs) has the role of creating consumers' needs. The advertisement for a certain medicine, through the story in which the viewers can find themselves, tries to tell us that, by taking it our quality of life will get better. More and Srivastava (2010) point out that, before buying a medicine, the potential consumers are concerned about its aesthetic attributes, such as color, texture, taste and shape. Also, as the above-mentioned study noticed (More & Srivastava, 2010) all these attributes can make buyers recognize the brand name for the medical product and become loyal consumers of it. Several aesthetic attributes could also increase the chance of a medicine to be purchased – and this is the case of the appeal of emotions and the humor used in the ads for these products.

The present paper is based on a research project which aimed to identify the ways in which the appeals at emotions and at humor were used in the Romanian medical ads.

### **2. Theoretical framework**

According to its etymology, the term “advertising” is different from “publicity”: the first refers to “communication paid by a clearly identified sponsor”, while the second term refers to “messages which are not paid and for which the sponsor is not identified” (Goddard, 2002). In the case of medical products, advertising has the role to create the need for consumption. The advertisement for a certain medicine or drug, through the story in which the viewers can find themselves, tries to tell them that, by using it, there will be an

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increase of their quality of life. In Romania, according to the definition given by the National Agency for Medicines and Medical Devices (2015), advertisement for medicines and drugs is assessed as “representing any kind of information delivered through direct contact (door-to-door system), as well as any form of promotion aimed to stimulate the prescription, distribution, sale or use of medicines or drugs.”

From a strictly legal-theoretical perspective, the chance that an advertisement to be disseminated by the media depends is regulated by the strict norms of marketing. Before a medicine or a drug is placed on the market, an authorization must be obtained from the the National Agency for Medicines and Medical Devices (Agenția Națională a Medicamentului și Dispozitivelor Medicale, 2015). The same set of rules states that the advertisement at a certain medicine has to meet certain conditions in order to be made public (Agenția Națională a Medicamentului și Dispozitivelor Medicale, 2015): by its presentation, it should not mislead the audience, by praising certain active ingredients; it is prohibited any comparative advertising; the advertisement should focus on the rational appeal; the advertisement has to make a constant appeal to therapeutic indications contained the general guidelines (“Summary of Essential Information about the Product’s Characteristics”) approved for that medicine.

### **3. Elements of methodology**

In the present paper we have used two types of research methods: quantitative content analysis and qualitative content analysis. By definition (Chelcea, 2001):

“Content analysis is a set of quantitative-qualitative techniques of researching the verbal and nonverbal communication aiming to identify and describe objective and systematical the manifest and / or latent content con communication, in order to draw conclusions about the communication as a process of social interaction”.

From a quantitative point of view we have analyzed the frequency of the references to clinical studies of drug efficacy in a sample of advertisements. The total sample enclosed in analysis was made of forty-one advertisements for medicines and drugs. The sample was divided into several categories: advertisements that make vague references to clinical trials, advertisements that made no reference to clinical trials and advertisements that mention only the brand of the medicine.

At the qualitative level we have used the analysis scheme proposed by Popescu (2005). The analysis was centered on the ways in which different elements of (verbal, visual and plastic) languages had been mixed in the advertisements considered.

### **4. Analysis of the results**

#### *The appeal at emotions in the advertisements for children and mature audience*

A number of advertisements included in the sample have made appeal appealed to emotions - especially towards certain complexes that people have about their physical appearances.

The advertisement for the food supplement “Minimarțieni” aimed at children was presented as a food supplement containing an immuno-active complex, designed to protect the child’s immune system. In the initial frame of the advertisement we can see a mother worried about her child’s health. She is cutting oranges to provide them with the vitamins needed. As she prepares the fruit, a character portraying a little Martian appears and tells her

that she no longer has to worry about strengthening her children's immunity as there is the "Minimartien" syrup, a safe product, which contains only natural ingredients. At this moment we can see how the mother's face, from a serious one, becomes bright and smiling. The next image presents the mother as seems to end with her worries due to the fact that she can now treat her children with "Minimartieni" syrup. Also, the ad stress the fact that the mother can be assured about the risk that the little ones will reject the supplement, because the taste that comes close to that of the fruits will attract them. The dominant color in this ad is orange. We see orange on the mother's blouse, the background on which the little alien appears is also orange, and the color of the syrup is also orange. This color is frequently associated with good health, energy and vitality. But in the context of the advertisement, it can also symbolize care, protection or warmth. The name of the supplement undoubtedly made appeal to children. After seeing this spot, they can convince their parents to buy them.

A second advertisement that is included in this category is "Hemorrhoids". In this case, one could notice the appeal at humor. The exchange of responses between the patient and the pharmacist is comical due to the confusion over the name of the medicine. The phonetic similarity between the name of the medicine and the anal disease could lead to memorizing the name of the product. The name of the medicine appears five times in the ad and the name of the disease was mentioned four times. The simplistic framework in which the entire action of the advertisement takes place put a supplementary stress on the two characters and the funny dialogue between them.

The TV spot at "Hepatohelp" made appeal at professional success, at time spent with friends and the involvement in daily activities. But more than that, the advertisement suggests the special relationship between a person and his or her own body. The repetitive use of verbs "to thank" and "to understand" and also the voice from the background, which is warm and loaded with gratitude, all suggest the natural relation that has to exist between a person and his or body.

*"Thank you for helping me to keep all deadlines. And because you understand that my work day is 18 hours, not 8. I thank you for the long evenings with friends."*

The frames of the ad, arranged in a very rapid succession, and the activities in which the ad's characters are involved, are the main elements intended to transmit the alert rhythm of life, made of professional activities, family obligations, and relaxing activities with friends. The message is a simple one: All of these can affect the liver. There is only one reward a person can offer to his or her personal liver and this is the "Hepatohelp" dietary supplements. Those medicines will keep the liver healthy and provide it with the needed.

*Could advertisements for medicines and supplements to boost the messy eating style?*

"Colebil" is a medicine that treats dyspeptic disorders attributed to the deficiency of bile in the intestine. It is administered orally after the main meals. The advertisement at "Colebil" is very suggestive as regards two aspects: on the one hand, the unobtrusive and excessive administration of a medicine that is released without a prescription and, on the

other, the appeal at a disordered eating style. The spot depicts a woman who eats from several traditional Romanian dishes. Judging from the transfigured expression she has when she sees so many appetizing dishes, the lady is in the category of those who loved to eat. While the lady is eating, an identical woman, probably an inner voice, appears next to her chair, and warns her that she eats too much even though she has a liver deficiency. She ignores this identical person (“the inner self”), continues to eat and places a box of “Colebil” on the table. Then the second character’s voice calms down and lets him eat as much as possible because there is “Colebil” that can solve the liver’s problems.

*Do the ads for medicine and supplement favor addiction?*

“Magne B6” is a medicine that helps restore the optimal level of magnesium in the body. Low levels of magnesium could cause symptoms of irritability, muscle cramps or involuntary blinking. The ad for this medicine made a short presentation for all symptoms caused by the magnesium deficiency and the complications that these could bring in the personal or professional life. The first frame from the spot depicts a woman who appears to be a real estate agent and wants to convince a young couple that the apartment they are in is the one they dream of, but some involuntary and obvious spasms of the woman's eyes cause them to leave the location. After taking “Magne B6” she becomes more confident and manages to successfully conclude a contract with another couple. In the next two sequences there is a man struggling with muscle cramps that affects his sleep and a woman who is annoyed by the fact that her partner is not paying attention to the waitress in a hotel. Immediately after taking “Magne B6” both of them become optimistic and full of energy. The ad ends with a sentence that aims to transmit the idea that “Magne B6” is a pill which supports almost all aspects of daily life, it is “your daily balance”.

*The quantitative analysis*

Clinical trials are experiments made by health professionals in order to see if a particular medicine is effective and safe before being sold to the general public. The aim of such a study is “to identify any adverse effect and/ or to study the absorption, distribution, metabolism and elimination of the medicine for the clinical investigation in order to evaluate its safety / efficacy” (Centrul Medical de Diagnostic și Tratament „Victor Babeș”, 2019).

The results of the quantitative analysis we made show that 78% of the advertisements enclosed in our sample did not mention the fact that the efficacy of the medicine was proven in specific clinical trials. 12% of the advertisements considered (written or verbally) mentioned the name of the producer or the name of the country where the product was made. One could assess this mention as a guarantee of the product’s quality. At the same time, 10% of the advertisements analysed have mentioned that the efficacy of the drug was proven by clinical studies, but they did not make clear what kind of studies were used to prove the qualities of the medical products.



## 5. Conclusions

The present research project aimed to identify how the ads for medicines had made appeal to emotions and humor. The sample analyzed had as central themes the concern for the fragile health of the children or the human capacity to face the daily challenges. Here we can mention that, according to More and Srivastava (2010), before buying a medicine, any potential consumer is concerned about its aesthetic attributes (color, texture, taste and shape). Also, the studies (More & Srivastava, 2010) showed that all qualities of a medicine, especially the color, can lead to brand's recognition and, eventually, to consumers' loyalty. We can see that the advertisements included in our analysis emphasized these elements and creatively combined them with the appeal to emotions and humor.

From a quantitative perspective, the analysis has identified a number important of ads did not made any reference to clinical efficacy studies for the medicine, praising instead certain properties that it has. In order to increase the public's confidence, some advertisements have resorted to statements such as "the product is also sold in America" or "this product was designed according to a Swiss formula".

In our opinion this paper opens the possibility of future research in which one could study the influence of the pharmaceutical industry on the potential patients, as well as on the doctors prescribing the treatments by means of advertisements in mass media (Moynihan, Heath and David Henry, 2002).

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## **THE BOURGEOIS DRAMA. THE IMPORTANCE OF GEORGE LILLO'S DRAMA FOR DENIS DIDEROT'S WRITINGS**

**Carmen-Andreea ONEAȚĂ\***

**Résumé:** Notre travail se propose de souligner l'influence du drame anglais sur le drame français, en analysant les oeuvres de George Lillo et Denis Diderot. Il est très connu le fait que Denis Diderot veut identifier de nouvelles solutions pour innover le drame du 18<sup>ème</sup> siècle. Son oeuvre se basent sur la mimésis. La tragédie ou, plus exactement, le drame bourgeois, est la meilleure représentation du comportement quotidien de la classe moyenne. George Lillo commence à présenter, dans son oeuvre dramatique, la vie bourgeoise idéale. Plusieurs écrivains français ont trouvé leur inspiration dans les oeuvres de Lillo. C'est aussi le cas de Diderot. On peut voir que la littérature française et la littérature anglaise sont liées grâce à la contribution des écrivains antérieurement nommés, en ce qui concerne les images littéraires, les personnages et les idées qui mènent aux conflits et à la crise morale.

**Mots clés:** la bourgeoisie; le drame; la Révolution anglaise; Diderot; Lillo; l'influence

The 18<sup>th</sup> century is the century of decisive historical changes. France, which has always been a shining and powerful society, faces poverty, revolt, and extremist movements, leading to the decline of one of the strongest powers in Europe. It is obvious that France should overcome the decline and become again a rising political and social power on the continent. This is the social framework which facilitated the development of the French Enlightenment, the age of reason, fighting against feudalism, and looking for social progress. The Enlightenment and the so-called "savoir", according to the enlightened philosophers, is the way to social progress and equality, which were the main challenges of this theory. Among the theorists and advocates of the philosophic and literary trend, we find the so-called *materialists*, the ones who are considered to be "pregătitorii celei mai radicale revoluții burgheze care a zguduit întreaga Europă"<sup>1</sup> (Neagoe, F., 1970: p. 122).

In this context, drama needs to be revitalized, as the tragedy, which was so popular during the previous century, is overshadowed. Voltaire tries to improve this genre, due to his ingenious tragedies, the light English influence, and his strong willing and profound artistic conscience, but his attempt is not enough. It is certainly the time for a *new genre*, for a new approach, for a new and innovative dramatic scene. As a consequence, the most important changes of drama are promoted and applied, for the first time, by Denis Diderot, who, compared to Voltaire, feels the necessity to develop this *new genre*, the age of tragedy coming to its end. "The French dramatists made innovations in comedy only, for Voltaire had as it were monopolized the tragic stage, and would not hear of a *tragédie bourgeoise*" (Loyalty, R, 1913: 300). Diderot himself, in his theoretical writings, admits that he was strongly influenced by the English drama, mostly by George Lillo and Edward Moore's

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<sup>1</sup> O.T: "the most radical bourgeois revolution which shook the entire Europe".

writings, dramatists who are not so popular in England during their age, but who determine a turning point for the entire European drama in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

But neither France, as mentioned, nor England, keep away from the revolutionary and ideological changes, but, for England, they are not so violent and radical. The 1688 English Revolution opens new ideological paths for England, where the bourgeoisie enjoys an unseen rise and development. Once, the English drama was strongly influenced by the French dramatic writings. Nowadays, the English scene is characterized by authenticity, innovation and uniqueness, as it is based on an authentic conscience. The English literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> century is also the image of the Enlightenment philosophy and way of thinking, having an inner moral purpose when highlighting social deeds of the middle class. Though, the scene becomes, somehow, opposed to the aristocracy. The characters become more complex, having more than a dominant feature.

This study highlights the elements of George Lillo's writings which influenced the artistic approach of Denis Diderot when designing the new bourgeois drama, *Le fils naturel*, and the literary aspects comprised in the theory of the new genre, developed in the pages of *Entretiens sur Le fils naturel: Dorval et moi*, composing a real scientific doctrine which led to the innovation of not only the French drama, but also of the German and Italian literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

When it is about the development of the bourgeois drama, the social features are more important than the aesthetical ones. Revolutions encourage people to make changes, and the writers become the first line in the fight for social, political and intellectual progress of the society. Drama is not addressed to the narrow society, but to the entire one, to people, as it depicts a true and plausible universe, based on the real life. During the century, there is an emergent necessity to create a new genre situated between the tragedy of the upper classes, the classical dramatic writings and the comedy which did its best to understand and highlight the traits of the lower class. The authenticity and the need to promote a new realistic and sincere spirit lead to the development of drama, more exactly, of the bourgeois drama. The importance of the middle class in the society, the movement against the French classicism, and tendency to abandon the artistic rigor and also the "return to the Elizabethan tradition, produced examples of this middle-class tragedy which in the latter part of the century gave rise to the Drama"( Loyalty, R, *op. cit.*: 300). Actually, this literary phenomenon represents "o realizare teatrală a idealului burghez"<sup>1</sup> (Zamfirescu, Ion, 1973: 323). If we have to identify the common element of the French and English literature which led to a revolution in drama, we have to talk about the interest for truth, for nature, for realistic representations, aspects which are not so common for the dramatic tradition before the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Denis Diderot, a spirit full of determination, passion, having an anticipative thinking and a rational creativity, always searching for the truth, anticipates, as we mentioned before, the need for a change which has to respond to the contemporary social developments and, being strongly influenced by the English literature changes after the bourgeois revolution (which, in the declining France, it was on the point to start), brings a new spirit, going beyond prosaism, tragedy and comedy, beyond the classical aesthetics, the

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<sup>1</sup> O.T: "scene representation of the bourgeois ideal".

artificial, going down in the middle of people. He is an innovative spirit in philosophy, arts, literature, anticipating and speculating the age new tendencies, and promoting the authenticity and the real side of everything. “He found tradition insufficient, narrow, and artificial; he called for truth, nature, and morality, saw the possibility of a complete transformation of the stage, and looked for confirmations of his ideas in the examples of some independent playwrights at home and abroad” ( Loyalty, R, *op. cit.*: 197).

Diderot is, in fact, a representative character of the century, an imposing and revolutionary person, dedicated to the *Encyclopedia*, the most representative work of French Enlightenment. His philosophical, literary and theoretical work is a unitary one, as a reflection of his spirit. His religious, political and social opinions contribute to the progress, the Enlightenment era being a flourishing one, both from a social and cultural point of view. Proving a strong atheistic tendency and freedom of thought, he believes that religious dogmatism is in the path of natural morality. Optimistic, sensitive, but violent in thought, Diderot brings to his writings the same critical, social and artistic spirit, strongly supporting the moral value of art. Through his activity, he definitely fights against feudalism and absolutism, militating for freedom, which is, according to him, the only way to succeed against social injustices and inequalities. As a literary contribution, Diderot feels the need to create and promote a new type of theatre. The philosopher, on the one hand, and playwright, on the other hand, enjoys the attention of many exegetes of the time who definitely appreciated his novelty in writing and practice. Considered „adevărutul architect al dramei”<sup>1</sup> (Zamfirescu, Ion, *op. cit.*: 323), Diderot brings the theoretical and the aesthetic spirit together, in the same practical and powerful vision of his writings.

Sympathiser of action instead of poetics and elocution, standing by the mimesis in literature, which is the source of genuineness in writing, Diderot combines the dramatic literary creation with the theory and genre innovation. Based on two independent movements, in France and England, Diderot elaborates the theory of a new dramatic genre, different from the classic tragedy and the 17<sup>th</sup> century comedy, organising a new drama system. *Le fils naturel* (1757) is his first drama attempt. The play is followed by its theoretical side, *Entretiens sur Le fils naturel: Dorval et moi*, and by *Le pere de famille* (1758), also having a theoretical side, *Discours sur la poesie dramatique*.

George Lillo (1691-1739) stands out in the English dramatic landscape not by the value of his work, but mainly by “noul suflu care o străbătea”<sup>2</sup> (Levitchi, Leon, 1998: 68). A lover of innocence, naturalism, reality and authenticity, he manages to bring to scene the emotion which induces a moralizing tendency. In particular, his literary activity is appreciated due to the contribution he has made to the development of the dramatic art, innovating the genre and becoming a genuine source of inspiration for the French dramatists, especially for Denis Diderot, whose theory is strongly connected to Lillo’s approach. He gives up versification in favour of prose, anticipating the elimination of prosaic constraints. He drops out the classical heroes, descends among the people, bringing to his scene real characters in real situations. His dramatic activity is recognized mainly due to 8 plays, the most important and valuable ones being *The London Merchant* (1731) and

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<sup>1</sup> O.T.: “true architect of the drama”.

<sup>2</sup> O. T. : “the new soul that crossed it”.

*Fatal Curiosity* (1737). The French public and critics consider his drama to have a strong emotional impact. Thus, it has been translated and adapted in several versions; it was a genuine source of inspiration for Louis Sebastien Mercier too, who, in 1769, wrote *Jenneval ou le Barnevelt français*. Mercier decided to change the end of this play, creating a happy one: the triumph of virtue against evil. This is the most important play, from an aesthetical point of view, written in the spirit of *The London Merchant*. Other translations or adaptations of the work, having not a great echo at the time, were made by Pierre Clément de Genève - *Le marchand de Londres* (1748), Anseaume – a musical comedy entitled *L'Ecole de la Jeunesse ou le Barnevelt français* (1764) La Harpe - *Barnevel, Drame imité de l'anglais en cinq actes et en vers* (1778). “The London Merchant este expresia desăvârșită a fatalității obsesiei. Drama este expresia valorilor burgheze [...] prin înfățișarea și sentimentele lui Thorowgood, cât și momentele de sfidare profeministă din piesă au o precizie a expresiei idiomatice care contrastează puternic cu poza adoptată în multe tragedii ale epocii”<sup>1</sup> (Zamfirescu, Ion, *op. cit.*: 238).

*The London Merchant* (1731) is a relevant example of the importance that the bourgeois society of the time has for contemporary drama, as the writers are increasingly concerned with illustrating social, religious and political authenticity, so as to educate and cultivate the virtue of the middle class. The aristocracy and the crown no longer arise the curiosity and interest of the literary critics and the public. *The London Merchant* perfectly highlights the fatality of obsession. The play is actually the „celebration of bourgeois values through the figure and sentiments of Thorowgood, [...] has an idiomatic directness which contrasts vividly with the rhythmical posturing of much contemporary heroic tragedy.” (Sanders, Andrew, 1994: 300).

The drama is inspired by an old popular ballad. Lillo wants his work to have a strong moralizing feature. The play is about revenge, temptation, falling into sin, manipulating one's feelings and thinking in order to commit murder. The play begins with the dialogue between the merchant, Thorowgood and the novice, Trueman, Barnwell's friend, showing respect for the queen and his peers, emphasizing the importance of keeping the temper, the measure in any action, without falling into temptation. In this way, he anticipates the dramatic action that follows. Barnwell is a young man, loved and respected by colleagues and his employer, the *London merchant*, and loved by the young and beautiful Maria. With a flourishing and happy life ahead, fate brings Millwood, this *Lady Macbeth* of Lillo, who lures him into immoral and dangerous actions. Barnwell, naïve and uninitiated, cannot resist, and acts according to the courtesan's plans, stealing his master and even killing his uncle. Full of remorse, he will end up paying with his freedom life for his deeds. Barnwell seals his fate, and becomes the bearer of dramatic guilt. Trueman and Maria try to repair the evil done by Barnwell, but they cannot prevent the crime introduced through Barnwell's long monologue in Act III. The end finds the two lovers in front of the scaffold, being sentenced to death for his actions. In the *Prologue to The London Merchant*, Lillo briefly reviews what bourgeois tragedy was until his work.

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<sup>1</sup> O.T.: “Through George Lillo, the bourgeois ideal will make a new and decisive step in drama. [...] The play has a militant duty to draw attention to existing or potential vices, also requesting the soul forces able to combat them”.

Another English bourgeois drama that influences Diderot's dramatic theory is *The Gamester*, written by Edward Moore. He decides to translate the play in French, but it is known in the French literary landscape not through his translation, but rather through Saurin's imitation of it, *Beverley*. (1768). Diderot's translation, *Le Joueur*, is more than a free translation, being influenced by Diderot's aesthetic sensitivity. Nevertheless, this *new genre* is received with interest and admiration by the French public, French critics, including Diderot, as a theorist of the genre, appreciating mainly the imaginary and the dramatic impact it exerts (Wilkshire, F. M., 1986: 206).

Strongly influenced by *The London Merchant*, Diderot writes *Le fils naturel*, the story of a young man of unknown origin, virtuous, and kind, Dorval, his secret love and his friendship with Clairville. The play is the expression of the dramatic theory regarding the *new genre*. The plot, like *The London Merchant*, is based on the contrast between feelings, passion and virtue. The motifs of the feeling of love and erotic passion are highlighted through the masculine character, Dorval, who is in love with Rosalie, who, in turn, loves him and his friend, Clairville, the French expression of Trueman, Barnwell's best friend. Moreover, Constance, Clairville's sister, secretly loves Dorval, just like Maria. In this amorous context, Dorval decides to leave his friend's house, having no reason, but his purpose is, in fact, not to betray Clairville's confidence and feelings. Clairville notices Rosalie's awkward behaviour, and asks his friend to help him find out what is going on between them. Indeed, Rosalie's feelings are no longer the same, confessing that she loves another man, who actually is Dorval. Dorval, crushed by contradictory feelings, decides not to tell Clairville the truth, the reason he invokes for Rosalie's attitude is the return of his father. The motif of the patriarchal figure, so appreciated and emphasized by Diderot, is also present in George Lillo's play - Barnwell's uncle, on the one hand, and on the other, in the merchant himself, Thorowgood. Dorval writes down his feelings for Rosalie, and, unintentionally, that letter comes into the hands of Constance, who thinks the text is addressed to her. Meanwhile, a surprise character appears. It is André, sent by Rosalie's father, to tell the adventures they had at sea, where they were taken prisoners, and miraculously escaped. Moreover, Clairville learns that Rosalie's fortune is no longer the same. However, Clairville is crushed by the doubt that has come to his mind: his friend, Dorval, is the cause of Rosalie's change. Here, Dorval's dramatic monologue is a profound one, wanting to sacrifice his own happiness and feelings for the happiness of Rosalie and his friend, even intending to give up part of his fortune and give it to Rosalie. The love between the two would be one marked by the suffering of Constance and Clairville, not being a blessed one, as it would be born of betrayal and tears. The dramatic plot is complicated when Rosalie's father announces his return, and Dorval decides to confess to Constance one of his greatest secrets, his illegitimate and unknown origin. Finally, Rosalie's father, Lysiamond, turns out to be Dorval's father, who recognizes him. The latter staying with Constance, and Clairville with his girlfriend, Rosalie.

Therefore, under the influence of the English drama, of the new dramatic attempts as an expression of the age illustrated by George Lillo, Denis Diderot not only exemplifies, in his play, what the new genre is intended to be, but also elaborates a vast theory on it, under the form of a dialogue between the creative self and Dorval, an imaginary character reflecting all his literary opinions. Denis Diderot not only exemplifies, argues and supports

the *new genre*, but also elaborates his own definition of it: „Et ce genre, comment l'appellerez-vous? La tragédie domestique et bourgeoise” (*Ouvres complètes de Diderot*: 121). In his opinion, this new dramatic genre is located between tragedy and comedy, taking over features of both genres, depicting any daily event and situation. It is also considered to be a *genre sérieux* (*Ibidem*: 135).

Comparing the two writings, we observe two main directions of English influence, namely the literary, artistic one, and the theoretical, structural direction. We start the analysis from the framework of the action. It takes place in a familiar, domestic environment, Thorowgood's house and, respectively, Clairville's house. It represents the environment of these characters, the framework of life directly illustrated.

The characters and the relationship between them represents the most important element of the bourgeois drama. Unlike the 17<sup>th</sup> century theatre, which promoted individualized characters, dominated by powerful features, capable of extreme moods and feelings, bourgeois drama brings to mind the man of letters, the philosopher, the merchant, the judge, the lawyer, the politician, the citizen, magistrate, the accountant and their families. It emphasizes not the characters construction, but their complexity, and the realism of the situations in which they act, adding the depth of the states in which they live: “La première, c'est qu'il ne faut point donner d'esprit à ses personnages ; mais savoir les placer dans des circonstances qui leur en donnent...” (*Ibidem*: 103). In order to create the real life in drama, the characters must belong to the middle class, the rising bourgeoisie, and the dramatic action must highlight the family and the social relations between people. George Barnwell and Dorval, the main characters of the two works, are two young people who fall in love and, thus, act in circumstances that can make them lose their virtue, betraying the trust and unconditional love of their friends. Dorval is between the desire to leave, to escape, and the confession of feelings, especially when he starts to believe that Rosalie shares his feelings. Instead, George Barnwell is blinded by his passionate love for Millwood, being capable of reckless actions, such as theft and even murder. In George Lillo's work, the recovery of virtue is possible only after death, after the divine judgment, while in Diderot's work, the final of the play restores the virtue of each of the characters. Millwood and Rosalie are the two female characters, the temptation, the source of the dramatic conflict and the stirring of the main characters. Rosalie cannot deny her feelings and, therefore, no longer believes in her marriage to Clairville. Millwood, this Lady Macbeth, is the cause of the disaster, the cause of George Barnwell's loss of virtue. The two characters are built in antithesis to Maria, respectively to Constance, angelic characters, with pure feelings of love for George and Dorval. The image of friend, of unconditional friendship, is reflected in the person of Trueman, respectively Clairville, who refuse to believe in the “fall” of Barnwell and Dorval. Millwood and Rosalie also enjoy the friendship and advice of Lucy and Justine. The patriarchal figure, so much appreciated and cultivated by Diderot, is found through Thorowgood and Lysiamond. Thorowgood is a special, individual character who forgives Barnwell whether he leaves home, steals, betrays, considering it's just a wandering moment. As we can see, the characters in *Le fils naturel* are built in mirror with those of *The London Merchant*, act in similar circumstances, live, feel the same, go from love, to regret, fear, anger, the desire to escape. Both George Barnwell and Dorval want to leave their homes and relatives. Maria and Constance suffer when the two men make decisions based on their

passion and feelings for Millwood and Rosalie. Thus, „nous empruntons nos expressions, nos idées des personnes avec lesquelles nous conversons, nous vivons” (*Ouvres complètes de Diderot*: 125).

In the artistic conception of Denis Diderot and according to the English drama, the dramatic action of the *new genre* does not have to highlight episodic characters. However, “ou, si l'intrigue en exige un, qu'il ait un caractère singulier qui le relè” (*Ibidem*: 138). This is the case of the surprise character, in the person of André.

As we can see, the theme of the two plays similar, namely virtue and its preservation despite the trials of life, despite the dramatic situations in which the characters should act: “Le mouvement nuit presque toujours à la dignité; ainsi, que votre principal personnage soit rarement le machiniste de votre pièc” (*Ibidem*: 138). The dramatic conflict ends with the triumph of virtue against evil. In *Le fils naturel*, Lysiamond's coming and the blood relations make Dorval and Rosalie realize that the feelings between them represent the inner love between brother and sister. In *Entretiens sur le fils naturel*, Diderot states that “tout passe ; mais la vertu et la vérité restent” (*Ibidem*: 127). As a secondary theme, in both *The London Merchant* and *Le fils naturel*, we have social life, family and friendship, love, and money. Here, the power of Dorval's sacrifice reaches new heights: in addition to the fact that he is able to give up his love in order not to betray his friend's trust, he decides to leave some of his wealth to Rosalie. Thorowgood shows wisdom, love, and forgiveness when he learns that Barnwell has stolen from his home. He strongly believes that it is only a temporary wandering, and Barnwell's good soul will make him overcome this existential turmoil.

In addition to the similarities regarding the characters, the dramatic action and the thematic approach, we identify many other similarities in the artistic realization, similarities that are the basis of the theory that will change the European scene from the foundations. In addition to introducing the novelty items identified in *The London Merchant* in *Le fils naturel*, Diderot also conducts a brief study on the innovation elements that the new genre brings, *Entretiens sur le fils naturel: Dorval et moi*. The most important step in gender innovation is in the form of the dramatic text. George Lillo gives up the classic versified structure, an element taken over by Diderot, who resolutely asserted that domestic tragedy, as he initially calls the new genre, excludes versification (*Ibidem*: 162). From his point of view, “le genre comique et le genre tragique sont les bornes réelles de la composition dramatique” (*Ibidem*: 136), being subject to the conventions and the rigor of the genre that only suppress the artistic value of the writing: “bienséances cruelles, que vous rendez les ouvrages décents et petits!” (*Ibidem*: 118)

Analysing in detail the events of the two bourgeois dramas, we observe the realism and the nature of the events, the everyday and the social of the time, which brings the play closer to the people, their feeling and thinking, the audience identifying the dramatic characters and situations with the daily reality: “Elle est plus voisine de nous. C'est le tableau des malheurs qui nous environnent. Quoi ! vous ne concevez pas l'effet que produiraient sur vous une scène réelle, des habits vrais, des discours proportionnés aux actions, des actions simples, des dangers dont il est impossible que vous n'ayez tremblé pour vos parents, vos amis, pour vous-même (*Ouvres complètes de Diderot*: 146). The truth and the real are the subject of the new genre.



Both *The London Merchant* and *Le fils naturel* have a simple plot, with events in the natural area that make it up, without ornaments, without theatrical hits, upsets or surprises: “L’art d’intriguer consiste à lier les événements, de manière que le spectateur sensé y aperçoive toujours une raison qui le satisfasse” (*Ibidem*: 88). Moreover, Diderot believes that “L’action théâtrale ne se repose point ; et mêler deux intrigues, c’est les arrêter alternativement l’une et l’autre” (*Ibidem*: 90). Thus, the action remains in the area of the real, the likely, in the domestic sphere, close to the daily life of the society of the century. Last but not least, we must emphasize that the two plots reflect the local colour and the colour of the time. Under the influence of the English stage and plays, Diderot believes that it is time to give up the ancient heroes, the characters and the utopian and exceptional situations, nature being the most suitable source of inspiration for new dramatic subjects: “O Nature, tout ce qui est bien est renfermé dans ton sein! Tu es la source féconde de toutes vérités!... Il n’y a dans ce monde que la vertu et la vérité qui soient dignes de m’occuper...” (*Ibidem*: 103).

To conclude, England was not a source of inspiration for France not only from a social point of view, but also from a literary point of view, as the innovative tendencies in drama of the English playwrights changed the landscape of the French dramatic attempts. George Lillo’s play is more than a dramatic writing. It is the source of the new dramatic theory, inspiring Denis Diderot to make a new attempt, to exemplify how drama should look like in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, it determined Denis Diderot to elaborate a comprehensive dramatic theory to guide the young dramatists how to write, how to create in order to appeal the public’s taste, spreading new beliefs and a new spirit.

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## **THE IMPORTANCE OF ICONICITY IN THE LUXURY WATCHES INDUSTRY**

**Dan-Niculae PODARU\***

***Abstract:** Carefully observing the universe of emblematical fashionable products (gadgets, jewelry, watches, cars, etc.) that we are surrounded by in our daily life and within society, it is obvious that top brands use and maintain design patterns that guarantee the continuity of product recognition amongst consumers. The iPhone, the Coca-Cola bottle, the Fiat 500 model, the Rolex watches are proof that the iconicity, the successful design of some products over time are the result of the merger between marketing and the semiotics domain with the scope of creating unmistakably recognizable objects at global level, perceived and valued in a similar manner by consumers, regardless of people's culture and national origin or geographical area. By conducting a detailed study amongst the most prestigious brands of luxury watches, I have noticed that graphic shapes, materials, symbols, suggestions/ideas, true connotations chains at a semiotical level are often used to define product design and to build the brand identity, elements that manage to precisely individualize the positioning of these products on the market.*

***Keywords:** iconicity; object semiotics; brand identity*

Many of my interlocutors ask me oftentimes what the tangible and practical side of semiotics is in the context of modern communication and the contemporary society *in genere*. Nowadays people wish to only learn and absorb practical things that can be immediately applied in their professional or personal life. To a certain extent, the mercantilism which is imposed by the consumption society will eliminate, although never fully, the less palpable universe of the theoretical or philosophical ideas. And I have pondered over this question, I have scanned the universe of advertising and the universe of fashion while attempting to identify the way in which theoretical semiotics can generate and influence the way in which cultural assets - and not only - can be used.

As I was looking for answers to these questions, I realised that most commercial hits - for instance the Fiat 500 that had been originally launched in the 50s and 60s became an iconic vehicle, which was quite exponential to the entire history of the automobile - rely on iconicity as Charles S. Peirce defined it. The reinterpretation of the Fiat 500 that was launched in 2007 confirms in a conspicuous manner that the car manufacturer could not have launched the modern remake of the old Fiat 500 without preserving elements of design and volumetrics that were able to generate a relationship of resemblance/iconocopy between the current model and the original one. Semiotically speaking, there is strong motivation of iconicity between the two car versions, the vintage one and the modern one, since the resemblance is obvious and not reliant on suggestion or allusive aesthetic expression alone.

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Looking into and scrutinising various areas of contemporary industries, I have realised that this sort of iconic construction in which recent products preserve a host of structural and design elements of some successful products of the past is mostly to be seen in the industry of luxury watches. We could say that a sort of creative self-plagiarism does exist in terms of design.

Moreover, I consider that in this permanent return to the past and tradition, the luxury watches industry positions itself in a manner which is different from any other manufacturing industry's, even imposing on itself to use in the construction of the relevant brands the iconic features of the past commercial hits that have been preserved and reused. Consequently, in a totally peculiar manner, we may say that the industry of the luxury watches may not exist and may not develop in the absence of the construction and use of the theoretical and analysis features that semiotics places at our disposal.

And since we are talking about icons and iconicity, I need to bring up the theory of iconicity in order to avoid any bias. As Pierce would put it, "an icon involves a resemblance with its object (photos or onomatopœia as icons of the speech)". (Drăgan, 2007: 207, my translation)

According to Daniela Roventă – Frumușani, an author who looked into Pierce's theory and classifications, "an icon refers to its object based on some analogy and on the fact that its features match those of the object to a certain extent". (Roventă-Frumușani, 1999: 87, my translation)

It is obvious that any usage of an old model to which reference is made through an old model in industry or fashion relies on the semiotic principle of iconicity that I explained above.

I would also like to bring up the definition that semiotician Thomas Sebeok established for iconicity: "A sign is said to be iconic when there is a topological similarity between a signifier and its denotata." (Sebeok, 2002: 73, my translation)

Analysing the universe of the luxury watch industry, we will note that the most famous brands, such as Rolex, Patek Philippe, Audemars Piguet, or Breitling, to name a few, launched decades back successful watch models that were quite representative and whose shape and compositional structure have survived the time and turned into iconic models that can still be found on the relevant markets.

One of the models that became commercial hits was the Rolex Submariner, which was launched in 1953, according to Rolex' official website; it was the very first waterproof watch, especially designed for divers who were able to use it as far deep as 100 m. In the meantime, as you could notice in the photos below, the structural and design changes that one could notice on the two models, the original one of 1953 and the current one, as relatively insignificant.



Photo 1: www.rolex.com (model from 1953)



Photo 2: www.rolex.com (current model)

Also in the case of the other above-mentioned watch brands, we will find an approach that is similar to the one of the house of Rolex: the Nautilus model (the Patek Philippe), Royal Oak (from Audemars Piguet) or Breitling's Navitimer that were launched between the 50s and the 70s have preserved their design and engineering over the decades, with some variations though that are quite difficult to spot. We need to clarify that these examples are just some of the host of examples that one could see by looking into the current spectrum of this particular industry.

We will also note that the universe of this sort of watch is built identity-wise based on images and values of the hegemonic sort that focus exclusively on the male public, suggesting connotations and symbols that are strictly associated to the areas of interest, activities and professions in which only men used to take interest in the past. Even though these brands do sell women's watches too, they are actually resized versions of the men's watches whose iconic design they fully preserve.

Unavoidably, the symbolic construction of the most representative brands of the watchmaking industry relies intrinsically on semiotic values and elements that I will try to present and deconstruct in the upcoming paragraphs.

I was writing above that the high-end watchmaking industry involves a hegemonic construction. The idea starts from the very definition of hegemony, which is a concept that Gramsci developed back in the 30s and that has been used in cultural studies too; he mostly referred to the

ability in certain historical periods of the dominant classes to exercise social and cultural leadership, and by these means – rather than by direct coercion of social classes – to maintain their power over the economic, political and cultural direction over the nation. (O'Sullivan et al. 2001: 160, my translation)

The high-end watchmaking industry is almost exclusively focusing on men who earn above-average incomes who will use watches as statements of their social standing. We may say watches have become genuinely ideological elements which men use to state their supremacy. This idea of using luxury watches to showcase somebody's ideology could also be supported by the findings of the research team that authored *Concepte fundamentale din Științele Comunicării și Studiile Culturale (Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies)*; according to the quoted researchers, "[...] hegemony naturalizes what is historically a class ideology and renders it into the form of common sense". (O'Sullivan et al. 2001: 161, my translation)

Therefore, we may infer that we are being persuaded and educated through the advertising campaigns and through the messages which the media send across so that we have developed the belief that watches are no longer timekeeping devices *per se*, but genuine statements of one's social statement and of the holder's relationship with the other members of the society.

Following up on the above-mentioned idea that the identity development of brands is unavoidably associated to the traditionally male-related areas of interest, we can notice that the logos of the leading brands that dominate the luxury watches industry are mostly correlated to elements suggesting masculinity. In the case of Rolex, the logo is a crown, a symbol which is unavoidably associated to the universal history of royalty, which is mostly represented by male archetypes. Also in the case of Patek Philippe, the main element of the logo is a stylised symbol that reminds us of the heraldry of the crusading knights of the Order of Calatrava, therefore the traditionally historical connection that refers to an exclusively male area is quite conspicuous.



[www.rolex.com](http://www.rolex.com)



[www.patek.com](http://www.patek.com)



[www.esquiremag.ph](http://www.esquiremag.ph)

Also in the case of Breitling, even if its extremely recent logo has been restyled and simplified, the logo had featured for more than 50 years a stylised anchor with wings on both of its sides, which are graphic elements quite representative for two of the best known areas traditionally served by men, aviation and the navy, with which Breitling has been and still is associated. You will notice in the left-side corner of the image above the old logo that had been used for a long time, while in the right-side corner you will the new logo, a stylised and slightly effeminate letter "B" that abandoned the traditional aviation and navy line. Actually, most collections that Breitling showcased in 2018 in 2019 bring forth watches whose aesthetic design is slightly changed when compared to the previous traditional models, and only time and history will tell whether such change will have a beneficial impact upon the brand. Or not!

Referring to the Breitling watches, *Gentleman, Ghidul etern al modei masculine* (*Gentleman: The Ultimate Companion to the Elegant Man*) notes that: "A pilot's Breitling watch is a well-known item of prestige. The popularity of the label often makes people overlook the fact that Breitling was originally made famous by watches that met the high professional standards of aviation." (Roetzel, 2009: 228, my translation)

So far I have reviewed a number of illustrative examples that connect intrinsically the graphics (logos) of this industry to traditionally and hegemonically all-male activities; in the upcoming paragraphs I will also be reviewing the symbolic connections between watch names and the historical significance of these terms. For instance, Patek Philippe's famous

Nautilus model is a straightforward reference to the famous submarine in Jules Verne's books, which was sailing under the command of Captain Nemo. The name of Rolex' Submariner is also associated to the navy and military action, and the picture becomes complete as soon as we have taken a peek into the name that Breitling gave to Navitimer, a watch designed for pilots, therefore yet another denomination taking us to the realm of aviation and the navy. Although apparently "Royal Oak", the name of a model made by the prestigious Audemars Piguet slides away from the navy and the military, the linguistic connotations of the model still take us into the areas of royalty and tradition, since oak is one strong long-living tree, which may infer - by association to royalty - the way in which these watches will survive the time and will be left to one's heirs, which also suggests an analogy between inheriting this exceptional watch and being assigned the royal duties.

For this essay, I have chosen only for exemplification purposes four prestigious brands of the luxury watches industry, but there are dozens of alternatives that could complement or replace my selection of brands, such as Ulysse Nardin that included an anchor in their logo and is traditionally associated to manufacturing timekeeping instruments used in the sailing area or Longines that chose a pair of stylised wings and has been traditionally associated to aviation. On the other hand, Hublot, a relatively new brand that hit the market in the early 80s makes yet another example that highlights how relatively unique the solution for building high-end brands in the watchmaking industry is; Hublot also starts the etymological construction of its name from elements and components of aviation or navy origin, more specifically the porthole (*hublot*, in French). Also Hublot's association to sports involves an all-male connotation too, since it is associated to Ferrari and the world of football.

A particular self-positioning manner in the luxury watchmaking industry comes from Richard Mille, a brand that attaches a great importance to using the latest materials and technologies (the so-called high-techs); the traditional models of other brands may weigh hundreds of grams, while Richard Mille will weigh 5 g, 10 g or maybe not more than 20 g. Another sort of particular conditioning in the case of this brand is the extremely limited series in which their models are manufactured.



[www.richardmille.com](http://www.richardmille.com)

Now, if we were to follow the description of the associations of the prestigious watch brands in *Gentleman, Ghidul etern al modei masculine (Gentleman: The Ultimate Companion to the Elegant Man)*, I will define this area if more specifically, considering that TAG Hauer is a brand associated to fast cars and motorsports in general, Omega to NASA's space programmes and the first moon landing, and Hamilton to the US navy and aviation. (Roetzel 2009: 228)

An addition to the male definition of these accessories and - to a certain extent - the highlight of an element which is being used in the semiotic analysis, more specifically the intertextuality, are to be seen in the shape of the luxury watches that we are talking about, *i.e.* Nautilus, Royal Oak, Submariner or Navitimer, which suggest the shape of an airplane's or ship's or submarine's porthole. As Angela Goddard, who teaches communication at the University of Manchester, puts it, "intertextuality refers to the way one text can point to or base itself on another." (Goddard, 2002:105, my translation)

With semiotics, text does not refer to written texts only, but also to the elements that form a picture, a painting, a photo, elements that are being taken over from somewhere else and used to construct another text. In our case, the design of the porthole may be taken over from photos or other archive images and transposed in the final form of the watch.



[www.patek.com](http://www.patek.com)



[www.piecesofship.com](http://www.piecesofship.com)

Also in the realm of intertextuality, Marian Petcu takes the definition of this notion even further and adds that intertextuality is "any text that is placed on the intersection with other texts that it quotes, processes or anticipates." (Petcu, 2014: 265, my translation)

Obviously this procedure may be used in any creative *milieu*, be it literature or cinematography, advertising, fine arts, fashion or object design.

As we may have noticed this far, the existence of such luxury accessories would no longer be possible if it hadn't been for their iconicity and their symbolic connections, connotations, which are as many elements that the identity construction of the brand images existing in this universe uses in a steady manner. Even the range of colours that is used to build the brands and the campaigns that advertise these brands rely on semiotic symbolism, since producers use colours and hues that are mostly associated to men or that are iconic for traditionally male activities and crafts, such as blue, grey, kaki, black.

Understanding that watches of this sort are not fashion items (with a quick turnover rate and highly perishable), but items that define *luxus* (whose time passes much more slowly and whose items are not perishable), I consider that one argument in favour of using unpretentious colours in designing and advertising watches may be better construed based on Ioan Drăgan's explanations:

We have generally noticed that clear and light colours are the best sellers (maybe due *inter alia* to the fact that light-coloured items seem bigger). In spite of that, the simpler the colour, the closer it is associated by buyers to luxury. (Drăgan, 2007: 370, my translation)

We may even state that - to a certain extent - a number of items and concerns that define contemporary masculinity and that men use in order to make social statements are centre stage to the male universe of the Western world. The life and preoccupations of a modern man will be essentially associated to sports, politics, the army, the weapons, cars and motorcycles, and their personal belongings; and in my opinion watches always come first. Of course, the different position and understanding of the role and value of one's items will be influenced by the culture, education, financial background, and age of every individual.

A book standing proof for that is *A Man and His Watch: Iconic Watches and Stories from the Men Who Wore Them* (translated in Italian as *Un uomo & il suo orologio*) published by Matt Hranek, a photographer and journalist. The book demonstrates the peculiar and quite unique connection that some men, who are iconic to today's society (scientists, researchers, inventors, artists/photographers, fashion designers, musicians, entrepreneurs/businessmen, collectors, or actors) have with their own watches. Many of them confessed to the writer that they had inherited some of their watches from family members or that they had them from their fathers. One of the protagonists of the book, editorialist and writer, Aaron Sigmond, remembers how his grandfather used to wear an Elgin watch for special occasions, which he used to safekeep in a box. When his grandfather died, Aaron inherited the watch, which - in his opinion - embodies all of this grandfather's life. Nowadays, the new owner of Elgin has admitted to wearing this watch - in his turn - only on special occasions too. (Hranek 2019: 64)

Such perspective demonstrates that the universe of luxury watches goes beyond the material universe, since it is loaded by emotional features, therefore it is placed in the universe of the goods that have a cultural value. For the time being, the symbolic value of these objects and their unique position on the luxury items market may only be supported by subtle and sophisticated advertising campaigns, with iconicity being oftentimes placed in the foreground, because if it hadn't been for iconicity, commercial hits could not be recognisable immediately at world level.

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## **SOCIO-CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF LAUGHTER AND SMILE AS WAYS OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION**

**Simona RODAT\***

**Abstract:** *Smile and laughter are universal means of transmitting nonverbal messages. Smile is a very complex expression capable to transmit a wide range of information, denoting a wide range of emotions and feelings, such as pleasure, joy, happiness, satisfaction, promise, sociability, amusement, but also cynicism, embarrassment, emotional pain, slyness, shame and sarcasm. However, the interpretation of the meaning of the smile also varies from one culture to another, or even from one subculture to another. Instead, laughter seems to have more universal human connotations and interpretations, because it is the expression of some basic universal human emotions, such as joy, cheerfulness, pleasure, happiness. Laughter is generally the expression of good mood, but, more than that, it can also cause good mood. That is why laughter is also used as part of some therapies. However, the vocal component of laughter, considered part of paraverbal communication, may have specific cultural determinations. For example, when people accentuate by laughing a certain vowel, they want to express, at least in European culture, different mental states and behavioural intentions, which are decipherable only when the codes of communication and their meanings are known. Significations and interpretations of laughter and smile are thus functions of the socio-cultural context. The present paper deals with these aspects, highlighting the social and cultural dimensions of these two suggestive components of nonverbal communication.*

**Keywords:** *laughter; smile; nonverbal communication; paraverbal communication*

### **Introduction**

Nonverbal communication is a significant part of human communication. It includes all messages that are not expressed by words and which can be decoded, creating meanings. Facial expression, eyesight, gestures, touching, artefacts, appearance, use of space and time, paralanguage etc. are all components of nonverbal communication, each of them having attached specific systems of symbolisation, as well as significations considerably dependent on the society and culture.

Nonverbal messages can repeat, contradict, replace, complete or emphasize the message transmitted by words. There exists evidence according to which people are more impressed by the implicit (non-verbal) than the explicit (verbal) information that they receive (Proverbio, Calbi *et alii*, 2014). Especially people's intentions and beliefs can be inferred from how they move their bodies or modulate their facial mimicry (Ekman, Friesen, 2003). Nonverbal communication has a huge arsenal of means of expression, which, in many cases, can be constituted in real nonverbal languages, whose elements have their own meanings and systems of rules and regulations. Most of the time, these languages accompany the articulated language, supplementing, accentuating, repeating or contradicting it, but sometimes they are used stand-alone, independent of the articulated language, being able to transmit messages without having to use words (Knapp, Hall *et alii*,

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2013; Santer, 2014). More generally, this type of communication allows the disclosure of emotions, organizes the representation of the self and locates the individual within his/her social activities (Caune, 2000: 41).

The face is the most expressive part of the body and its expression is an invaluable means of communication (Tran, Stănciugelu, 2003: 92). Usually the face, and especially the eyes and mouth, are most intensely watched during communication. Facial expression is also the most complex form of nonverbal communication, given that it reflects the emotional experiences of a person. Thus, facial expression fulfils an intrapersonal and interpersonal regulatory function.

The present paper addresses laughter and smile as essential components of facial mimicry, which is one of the most expressive and suggestive means of transmitting nonverbal messages. Also, because laughter is most of the time accompanied by sound elements, it can be as well regarded as a form of paraverbal communication. In the paper there are highlighted particularly the social and cultural dimensions of these two significant components of nonverbal communication.

### **Laughter as a mimicry means of communication**

Mimicry refers to that part of our face that moves: forehead, eyebrows, nose, cheeks, mouth, lips. The fundamental emotional reactions and expressions (joy, sadness, surprise, wonder, worry, fear, anger, etc.) are reflexively expressed, through innate neuromuscular mechanisms, common to all people.

The innate and universal character of the expression of fundamental affections has been emphasized since the late 1960s by Paul Ekman. Following a series of experiments conducted between 1967-1969, which also included a tribe from Papua New Guinea, investigated compared to a group in New York, Ekman concluded that there were similarities between the two groups both in decoding emotional expressions, and in using different expressions (Ekman, 2002: 377-382). These similarities have been explained by the author through the fact that each affect or emotion triggers a set of nerve impulses that activate certain facial muscles, and their movement leads to displaying an emotional expression consistent with the respective affective experience. This vision was not new, however, as Ekman was a successor to Charles Darwin who noted, as far back as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in his well-known work *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872, first edition; 1890, second edition), the universality of human nonverbal expressive means.

Yet, not every human nonverbal expression is universal, spontaneous and natural. As people's cognitive skills (perception, thinking) develop – even from childhood –, they learn and become able, through conscious control of facial musculature, to intensify, attenuate, neutralize or even deliberately compose certain emotional expressions, which are not always consistent with their actual feeling or experience. It is, however, about expressing complex emotions, which lends itself to such control required by social rules, norms and various circumstances. For example, happiness, sadness, annoyance, embarrassment, abashment can be alleviated or even hidden by the control of facial muscles, when the social situation demands it.

In general, laughter is considered to be the expression of some basic universal human emotions, such as joy, pleasure, gladness, happiness, which makes its connotations and interpretations universal human. The interest in laughter and smile is not new. The study of these expressions concerned both philosophers and scientists, who tried to understand their meaning and essence. Since the nineteenth century, Charles Darwin ([1872], 1890: 207) assessed that smile and laughter are universal and innate, and laughter seems, first and foremost, to be the expression of mere joy or happiness. This can certainly be seen in children playing and laughing almost permanently. In support of the idea that the smile and the laughter are innate, but also that they are ways of expressing moods, Darwin has provided a number of relevant examples, among them being the stories about the first smile and the first laugh of his own new-born children. As another argument to show the innate, but also universal character of laughter and smile, Darwin brought up the case of Laura Bridgman, who, due to early blindness and deafness, could not acquire any expression through imitation. And yet, when a letter from a beloved friend was communicated to her in tactile language, she reacted as all people do: she laughed and clapped her hands, and her cheeks flushed (Darwin, *op. cit.*: 207). This example shows, Darwin pointed out, that some emotional reactions, such as laughter, are not learned through imitation from other people, but are simply part of the baggage with which all people are born.

While the reasons for which people laugh are varied, the mechanism of the laugh is always the same: the sound of the laugh is produced by a deep inspiration, followed by short and interrupted spasmodic contractions of the thorax, especially the diaphragm (*ibidem*: 211). Hence the phrase: “laughter holding both his sides”. During laughter the mouth is more or less wide open, with the mouth angles pulled back, as well as slightly up, and the upper lip is somewhat raised. The retracted corners of the mouth can be best noticed in the moderate laugh, but especially in the big smile, that epithet showing how the mouth is enlarged. In addition to the zygomatic muscles and those controlling the upper lip, orbicular muscles above and below the eyes, which contract more or less, are involved when we laugh (*ibidem*: 212). Sometimes people laugh moving the whole body; especially in such situations, expressions such as: “to laugh with all one’s heart”, “to roll on the floor laughing”, “to laugh until one cries”, “to laugh until tears run down one’s cheeks”, “to laugh oneself to tears”, “to laugh out loud”, “to laugh oneself sick” or even “to laugh oneself to death” are used. However, all this has to do with the muscular contractions that accompany laughter and with the stimulation of the secretion of endorphin substances, which maintain and/or amplify the joy (Chelcea, Ivan *et alii*, 2005: 61).

Some studies have focused on assessing the intensity of laughter in humans. Claudia Schäfer (*apud* Prutianu, Danieluț, 2004: 231) has considered that we can evaluate the intensity of the laughter on a scale from 1 to 10 after the non-verbal manifestations gradually introduced:

- 1) First the smile and then bursting out laughing.
- 2) The mouth opens wider and wider.
- 3) The corners of the mouth move more and more sideways, towards the ears.
- 4) The nose is wrinkled.
- 5) The sound is getting closer to shouting or barking.

- 6) The eyes close “with tears” and the skin around them creates many small stripes.
- 7) The head falls more and more towards the back and the shoulders raise.
- 8) A swinging movement of the body appears.
- 9) The person is self-embracing, enclasping her/his body with her/his hands.
- 10) It triggers a certain way of foot stamping.

However, what is certainly universal and innate is the fact that laughter and smile are most often the expression of good mood and positive emotions (Ștefănescu, 2009: 96). Asked what he means by “being in good mood”, one child replied: “to laugh, talk, and kiss” (Darwin, 1890: 216). It would be difficult, indeed, as Darwin points out (*ibidem*), to give another definition “truer and more practical” of the term good mood. To all humans, the expression of joy and cheerfulness seems to be the same and is easily recognizable. Moreover, another universal phenomenon, which manifests “freely” to all people, is the accompaniment of laughter by tears (*ibidem*: 218). In fact, the other basic emotions – surprise, sadness, horror, anger, disgust – can also be read on the face of all people as well as joy (Chelcea, Ivan *et alii*, 2005: 65).

Laughter is the expression of good mood, but, more than that, laughter can also cause good mood. That is why it is also used as part of some therapies, especially for people living or working in a stressful environment or for persons having to overcome stressful situations, but also for children with chronic diseases, such as cancer or HIV/AIDS.

### **Laughter as component of paraverbal communication**

Paraverbal communication or paralanguage (the combination of para + language meaning “beside the language”) is a term that designates the vocal part of nonverbal communication. It can be understood in a broader sense, as in D. McQuail’s definition (1999: 88): “paralanguage includes acts such as laughter, crying, grumbling, yawning, hissing, whistling, etc., but also the features of the voice such as intonation, timbre, voice quality, accent, features whose variations are understood as reinforcing verbal meanings, or associated with certain significations”. But paralanguage can be also understood in a narrower sense, which takes into account only the characteristics of the voice: “the physical, vocal characteristics of verbal communication, that is, those elements of verbal communication that have no meaning established at the semantic and syntactic level (Watson, Hill, 1993: 137).

S. Chelcea, L. Ivan and A. Chelcea (2005: 81) consider that the more general meaning of paraverbal communication is expressed by the term “extralinguistic elements”, that is, all those manifestations (including laughter, crying, coughing, etc.) that carry information about the transmitter, about his/her personality and about his/her mood during the conversation. According to the same authors, the term paraverbal communication or paralanguage refers to: a) the phonetic characteristics of the voice – the intonation, the accent, the intensity, the timbre; b) laughter, crying, breathing; c) unconscious repetition of certain sounds, which often shows anxiety or worry; d) articulation of words; e) the rhythm, the flow and the structuring of the speech, the pauses during the speech.

Paralanguage is, through all these ways (voice indices) of transmitting information, an important means of nonverbal communication. It achieves multiple functions, from

communicating the emotional states of the transmitter, to providing the interlocutor with additional and diverse information about the social belonging of the speaker, about the level of education, the area from which he/she originates, but also about the intentions, attitudes towards the interlocutor and/or the situation etc. To the above are added also other vocal signals, such as small gasps of surprise, murmurs of approval or disapproval, mutterings of interest or encouragement of the interlocutor, sounds of “fill-in” (*vocal fillers* like “îî”, “ăă”) that many times betrays the speaker’s preoccupation with finding the right formulation, sometimes possibly his/her confusion or a more difficult ideation. Paralanguage is an important channel in direct, face-to-face communication, but especially in telephone-mediated communication, when we lack the visual non-verbal cues (mimicry, gestures) that complement the meaning of the message (Ștefănescu, 2009: 130).

Besides the emphasis on certain words, the intensity, the rhythm and the timbre of the voice, the grammatical and non-grammatical pauses, etc., the paraverbal communication also includes a series of sonic manifestations without verbal content: mumbling, hissing, yawn, smack (tchick), grunt, cough, belch (burping), whistling, sigh, moan, groaning, crying, but also the sonorous component of the laughter, which can be significant in communication. According to M. Bucă (1985: 247) the laughter can be (in terms of sound): sharp, bleated, humming, rumbling, chuckling, clear, convulsive, crystalline, snuffled, gurgled, stuttered, thick, guttural, hoarse, raucous, wheezy, roared, intense, intermittent, muffled, low, soft (quiet), clogged, murmured, melodious, neighed, squeaky, prolonged, shrunken, plangent, jerky, jumped, drily, syncopal, loud, proclamatory, shaking, broken, strident, reedy, thin, hissed, gleeful, noisy, rampageous.

As for the significance of the sound component of the laughter, it has specific cultural determinations (Chelcea, Ivan *et alii*, 2005). According to Vera F. Birkenbihl (1999: 196-198), in European culture, when they laugh, people emphasize a certain vowel, expressing, with an acceptable probability, different mental states and behavioural intentions. According to this author, the ways of laughing in European culture and their likely meanings are as follows:

- 1) Laughter “in A”: “Hahaha” expresses joy and lack of stress; it is the primordial, “healthy”, contagious laughter.
- 2) Laughter “in E”: “Hehehe” (bleated laughter) expresses contempt, mockery, a threat; it is not contagious.
- 3) Laughter “in I”: “Hihihî” (giggling) is often involuntary and expresses a malicious, restrained joy.
- 4) Laughter “in O”: “Hohoho” is associated with amazement and contempt; sometimes expresses a certain dose of mistrust.
- 5) Laughter “in U”: “Huhuhu” expresses fear and terror (and it could hardly be said that it is a laugh).

V. F. Birkenbihl points out, however, that it is difficult to classify laughter and that its interpretation must take into account the concrete situation in which people are laughing. Horst H. Rückle (1999) argues, instead, that the type of vowel, the degree of nervous tension, and the intensity of sound give additional information about the naturalness and content of the laugh. By containing a sound component, laughter can be heard even at a distance. It can thus have a stronger social function and draw attention to the person that

expresses some emotions. Both smiling and laughter are the most common responses to humour (Frank, Ekman, 1993).

### **Smile as significant way of expression in nonverbal communication and social interactions**

While the reasons for laughter are most often clear – the joy, delight, happiness, fun, hilarity, etc., in the case of the smile they are not so visible. Moreover, the smile is an expression or a gesture more complex and subtler than the laugh, and its meanings can be very different. Smiling can express positive emotions (Ekman, 1973), but also discomfort (Woodzicka, LaFrance, 2001), shame (Keltner, 1995), or even an unhappy state (Ekman, 2009). What all forms of a smile have in common is the facial expression that involves the contraction of Zygomaticus major muscle (Rychlowska, Jack *et alii*, 2017). But not all smiles are equal.

Through the social-functional assessment of smiles, it was established that the different forms of smile serve basic social functions, such as expressing rewarding behavior, affiliation and social connections, but also social hierarchies and their negotiation (idem). Through the simulation-of-smiles model (SIMS), at least three smile subtypes have been delimited, each defined by its role in solving the major adaptive problems of life in society (Keltner, Gross, 1999; Niedenthal, Mermillod *et alii*, 2010; Rychlowska, Jack *et alii*, 2017): *reward smile*, displayed by individuals to reward others, but also themselves, and to communicate positive intentions and experiences; such smiles are symmetrical and are accompanied by eyebrow raising (Rychlowska, Jack *et alii*, 2017: 1263); *affiliative smile*, by which people signal appeasement, or by which they create or maintain social relations and bonds; these smiles are bilateral, too, and involve lip pressing; *dominance smile*, through which individuals negotiate their status within or across social hierarchies; such smiles are asymmetrical and involve nose wrinkling, and upper-lip and cheek raising (*ibidem*).

According to the studies accomplished by Rychlowska, Miyamoto *et alii* (2015) and Rychlowska, Jack *et alii* (2017), individuals associate distinct facial-expression patterns with reward, affiliative and dominance smiles. Also, different smile types convey different social messages, communicating positive feelings (the reward smiles), social connectedness (the affiliative smiles), or superiority (the dominance smiles). Thus, the social functions of smiles are divided by individuals in different cultures (Rychlowska, Miyamoto *et alii*, 2015) in three categories consistent with the distinctions proposed in the simulation-of-smiles model (SIMS).

Paul Ekman and Wallace V. Friesen (1982: 241) distinguished between “true”, “natural” or “congruent” smiles and “false” or “artificial” smiles. They identified 18 types of smiles that are not simulated. *True* or *congruent smiles* last longer and involve the participation of both face and eye muscles (Zygomaticus major and Orbicularis oculi). True or congruent/ natural smiles are also called *Duchenne smiles*, after French anatomist G. B. Duchenne, who observed in 1862 that muscle Orbicularis oculi is recruited into spontaneous, true smiles, but not in posed smiles (Jensen, 2014). True smiles are produced by the Zygomaticus major muscle, which, by contraction, pulls the corners of the mouth to

the ears and causes Orbicularis oculi to lift up the cheek and bring on wrinkles around the corner of the eyes, the so-called wrinkles “at the tail of the eyes” or the “crow’s-feet” wrinkles. In contrast, in the case of *false smiles*, only one muscle – Zygomaticus major – is contracted, while the muscle that closes the eyelids, Orbicularis oculi, is not (Zygomaticus major can be easily controlled deliberately by most of the people, in comparison to Orbicularis oculi, especially its outer part, which is harder or impossible to control). Therefore, false smile is a non-congruent type of smile (Frank, Ekman *et alii*, 1993). Such smiles, though “false”, can function as friendly smiles, being important as social markers (Jensen, 2014). Moreover, false smiles can be used to mask non-congruent emotions or to hide intentions that are not supposed to be known to others.

Another type of smile that has been analyzed and measured is *play smile*, which is expressed during play activities, such as role play or play fighting. This type of smile has social functions too, the most important being the signalling of friendliness and the fact that the participants in the game feel good together, in a state of relaxation and/or safety (Cohen, 2006). Some authors (e.g. Bateson, 2000) consider that, in game situations, such a smile is a marker among others that indicates that the activity is a play or pretence activity, and not a real one. Usually, play smiles are longer than other types of smiles, given the specificity of the play situation (Lillard, 2007). In such circumstances the participants to the game indicate with a smile that the role they play (in role play), or the threats to others (in play fighting) is/are not real, but pretended, so that the distinction between reality and pretence is emphasized by the long smile (Jensen, 2014).

A typology of smiles has also been made by Horst H. Ruckle (1999: 151-154). His classification includes eight types of smiles: a) *relaxed smile*, that expresses joy, love, appreciation of another, being free of tension and usually accompanied by the brightness of the eyes; it is characterized by extending upwards the mouth corners, from little to very much (“wide smile”), with the lips either stuck or half-open; b) *sweetish, honeyed smile*, that expresses kindness, the desire to please someone; it is marked by the stretching and thinning of the lips; c) *the snigger/ smirk* (stated also by the idiom “to laugh up one’s sleeve”), that appears in situations where the person has a hidden joy, but also when he or she is forced to restrain the expression of feelings; it can also indicate a will and is characterized by tensioned and tight lips; d) “*crooked*” *smile*, when one corner of the mouth is pulled down and the other up, can express a forced kindness, but also an internal conflict; e) *resigned, condescending smile*, that expresses one’s helplessness; it is marked by the forward brushing of the lower lip, being often accompanied by raising and shaking the shoulders and/or tilting the head to the right; f) *depreciative, ironic smile*, characterized by retracting the corners of the mouth slightly downwards, most often expresses disagreement, accompanied by a hidden, unspoken thought; it can also express agreement and disagreement at the same time; such a smile may be accompanied by a slight movement of the head, either from left to right or from top to bottom; g) *fabricated, tormented/ harassed smile*, that usually accompanies embarrassment or shame, appears and disappears quickly, being assisted, to some people, by the blush of the cheeks (“flushing of the face”); in this type of smile, the corners of the mouth are straight, and the lips remain glued, in a horizontal position; h) *the smile that expresses fear*, that appears as a reaction, often



involuntarily, to a sudden emotion of fear; in this case, the lips are drawn laterally, the mouth is slightly open, and the corners of the mouth are drawn to the ears.

## Conclusions

Beyond their innate nature, laughter and smile have significant socio-cultural dimensions, making them essential social markers. Laughter and smile serve basic and complex social functions, such as rewarding behaviour, bonding socially, and negotiating hierarchy. In other words, they are not just expressions with individual account, but they fulfil important functions in social interactions.

By smiling people are able to convey a lot of information and express a wide range of emotions and experiences, from joy, pleasure, satisfaction, happiness to promise, embarrassment, cynicism, all closely linked to the social context in which the individuals live. However, the interpretation of the meaning of the smile varies, too, from one culture to another or even from one subculture to another, the smile being the expression of emotions or feelings that lie on a continuum from the simplest, such as pure joy, to the most complex and subtle, like slyness, cynicism, embarrassment, shame, irony, sarcasm. Moreover, smiles can be not only natural, spontaneous, but also false and staged, that is, learned on a social level and used to transmit or, on the contrary, mask or hide certain information in different social situations.

Although laughter is, more than smile, innate and universal, being mostly a spontaneous expression of good mood or a natural reaction to humour, social life has led inclusively to the development of forms of laughter that are not an expression of a cheerful disposition, but learned, played or impelled ways to hide another state of mind, many times a joyless one, like shyness or shame, but also even anger.

Therefore, one should not be deceived by somebody's smile or laughter, understanding it unilaterally or simplistically. Individuals should not be "interpreted" solely on the basis of information transmitted by a unique communicative signal, including laughter and smile, but the entire communicative context in which the respective signal occurs must be taken into account. Furthermore, at least when they are known, correlations with the personality traits of the one who laughs or smiles should be made, in order to draw near to the true meaning of the message transmitted.

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## USE AND CONSEQUENCES OF HUMOUR AND IRONY IN THE ONLINE ACTIVITIES OF DIGITAL NATIVE CHILDREN

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**Abstract:** *Within today technologized and internet connected world, it is a known fact that children and teens are the most active users of technology, as Valkenburgh and Peter (2009:1) conclude: “adolescents are currently the defining users of the Internet”. Starting from studies and researches proving that children develop the sense of basic humour from very early age, from 10 - 15 months (Reddy, 1991, Johnson & Mervis, 1997), that the irony understanding appears later, after 6 – 7 years old (Loukusa & Leinonen, 2008), or even at 8 – 10 years old (Nielson, Gleider & Huyder, 2011), the adolescence being the age when are produced more ironic utterances through digital technology (Aguert M., Laval, et alii, 2016), this paper will focus on the use and consequences of integrating humour and irony in teenagers online activities and communication. Based on the studies and researches conclusions regarding the usage, producing and sharing of humour and irony within children and teens online communication this paper will point out the characteristics of online humour and irony they use or produce, but also its consequences, from the positive ones – ingroup cohesion and coping with embarrassing situations – to the negative ones – conflicts, violence and (cyber) bullying. Aiming to reveal the children and teens perceptions and representations of using in online communication humour and irony, this paper will contribute to the understanding of the special characteristics of digital native generation, opening the terrain for future researches.*

**Keywords:** *online humour and irony; cyberbullying; Z generation*

### Introduction

Humour, understood as “the ability to find things funny, the way in which people see that some things are funny, or the quality of being funny” (Cambridge Dictionary) is a specific human and social phenomenon that was studied by different disciplines, from psychology to philosophy and linguistics, but not so much by the sociologists, who were interested by it especially only when it became problematic, related with more important social issues like race and ethnicity, political conflict, social resistance or gender inequalities. There is no one sociological theory of humour, but different approaches and perspectives on humour derived from a more general social theory, integrating two main “classical” views on humour: superiority theory and conflict theory (Kuipers, 2008).

The “superiority theory” is connected with the sociological studies of social relations and also with issues like power, conflict or hierarchy and social control, being integrated within the functionalist researches: Radcliffe Brown in 1940, followed by Stephenson in 1951 pointed the social control function of humour, either like relieving tension in a strained relationship, or like norms transgression through jokes about stratification (Kuipers, 2008:369). Later, Powell in 1988, continued the idea, considering humour among “other possible responses to things out of the ordinary, and defining it as one

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of the milder forms of social corrective” (*ibidem*). Other point of views about humour point its cohesive functions, being a sign of closeness among those who laugh together (Coser, 1959, in *op.cit.*:370), or like an “ice breaker” between strangers, uniting people and creating a sense of union. The flip side of this inclusive function of humour is exclusion, of those who do not join the joke, or are the joke target, which lead to the corrective function of humour, all these – control, cohesion and correction – contributing to the maintenance of social order (*ibidem*:371).

The “conflict theory” see humour “as a weapon, a form of attack, or a means of defence” (Speier 1998, in *ibidem*:372) and was developed especially through analysing ethnic and political humour, mainly in oppressive regimes, where “the humour has positive reinforcing functions for the ingroup, but in the context of intergroup relations was more like a weapon: an expression of aggression and resistance” (*ibidem*:373).

Giselinde Kuipers (2008), through an in depth analyse of the history of sociological researches on humour found some constants in humours across cultures, like the similar object of humour - the taboos and deviance -, setting a boundary between “the normal” and “the abnormal” (Powell, 1988, in *ibidem*:383), or the specific techniques used to generate humour: reversal, imitation, wordplay. There are also great variations in humour, found in each culture, nation, community end era, proving the existence of a “local” sense of humour. (*ibidem*).

In the present-day researches on humour focus more on its “dark side”, considering that “every joke is an act of exclusion” (Billig, 2005, in *ibidem*: 387), and that humour is a game with “winners” and “losers”. Due to the expansion of mass-media and its growing importance in the creation and dissemination of humour, we assist to a great shift: people increasingly access humour through media – print, TV and internet – and not in face-to-face interactions. The researches results show that in digitalized computer mediated environment there are used and produced more humorous and ironical utterances than in face-to-face interactions, even is not yet fully understood why through internet are used and produced more humorous and ironical messages than in face to face interactions (Aguert, Laval et alii, 2016:202).

This is the starting point for the questions this article raises, how the mediatization of humour affects its interpretation and if the main functions of humour – maintaining social order, raising conflict or cohesion – transcend the online environment. The main target-group of this research article are the children and teenagers, because they are the most exposed to internet and digitalized humour and irony. Also, within this paper will be taking into account the difference between humour and irony, understood as a special form of humour: “a type of usually humorous expression in which you say the opposite of what you intend” (Cambridge Dictionary), but usually assimilated with “sarcasm”, the irony made in order to hurt someone’s feelings or to criticize something in a humorous way” (Cambridge Dictionary).

### **Actual social change and the “digitalized” humour & irony**

Nowadays social reality is flooded by technology, internet being the answer to any problem, request or information needed by anyone who have a smartphone. More than half,

exactly 57%, of the world citizens are now connected online – 4.4 billion persons, in April 2019 (Clement, 2019), from which 61% are smartphone users (Deyan, 2019), meaning a new social reality emerged in less than 30 years, when the Internet was just borne. The major and rapid changes brought by technology has induced “a new paradigm of communication”, as Thomas Tufte argue in his last book “Communication for Social Change” (2017), showing that the contemporary society should be seen and analysed through the lens of these excessive mediatisation induced by the Internet, but also through the power gained by citizens, who now have agency and are capable to act and react and made their voices heard (Tufte, 2017, p. 2).

In these conditions, as everything around us became more digitalized, children and teenagers, as actors with agency on the digitalized social scene should not be ignored as users and producers of humour and irony. The data shows that 95% of American teens (13-17 years old) had a smartphone in 2018, and 45% of them were constantly online (Andersen, Jiang, 2018); 88% of Germans 12-13 years old already have a mobile phone in 2017 (Orde, Durner, 2019); 89% of Czech children 11 – 17 years old access internet through mobile phone daily (Bedrošová, Hlavová, 2018); 89% Romanian 11 – 17 years old teens are using internet daily through a mobile phone (Velicu, Balea, et alii. 2018). These “digital native” children, Z generation, as named those generations born after 1996, which grow up already connected to internet and daily exposure to various screens, develop a set of particularities due to this always-online life, being hypothesized and demonstrated a “change in their brain structure” (Prensky, 2001), meaning that they think and process differently the information. “Digital Natives are used to receive information really fast. They prefer their graphics before their text rather than the opposite. They prefer random access (like hypertext). They function best when networked. They prefer games to “serious” work” (Prenski, 2001:1).

The researches about the relationship between children and technology prove there are many advantages, but also disadvantages of internet for them and the best solution is to develop their digital competences. The main benefits that internet and technology usage from the early ages bring to children are: enhanced cognitive abilities, like hands-eyes coordination, memory expansion, flexibility for searching, navigation and online multitasking (Carr, 2011:191), generally increased access to education and information, to interconnectivity and communication, manifest of creativity and agency, opportunity for the disadvantaged ones to equal chances (Livingstone, Davidson et alii, 2017, UNICEF, 2017). Also, it should not be minimized the risks that children encounter online as: exposure to cyberbullying, extreme violence and hate messages, sexting and pornography, encounters with strangers, doubled by psychological negative effects like addiction, anxiety and depression, decreased empathy and attention capacities (Livingstone, Davidsons et alii., 2017; Velicu, Balea et alii, 2019; UNICEF, 2017). All these risks are dangerous for children future development, but, regarding the usage of humour and irony, the empathy decreasing and the possibility of giving rapid, almost instant answer and feedback to a message, or any online post, without analysing the consequences lead to an increased risk for “bad jokes” spreading through online communication, meaning that cyberbullying, sexting, or harassing could more easily appear. Another inconvenient for the mediated communication is the lack of non-verbal signs and the ease of misinterpretation due to different understanding of the

same written message that also could lead to conflicts escalated and transformed in cyberbullying.

Even lots of researches were centred on children and teenagers relating with internet technology, not so many were focused on their use of humour and irony. It was demonstrated that these capacities – of producing humour and irony – are developing with age, humour appears even before irony, but starting from 5 - 6 years old, a child could understand and produce irony (Angeleri, Airenti, 2014:1). These capacities are developing over time, adolescence being the period when they are fully developed, as the researches shows (Aguert, Laval et alii, 2016:200). The research realized by Hancock (2004) proved, contrast to initial predictions, that in online communication there are produced more ironical messages than in face to face interactions, the only difference regards the feedback, which was generally absent in mediated communication, compared with face to face, but the comprehension of the messages was equivalent in both environment (Hancock, 2004:460).

Digitalized or not, the humour and irony have lots of forms and definitions in common, based on the main idea of being & making fun, and on some form of incongruity or contrast (Colston & O'Brien 2000, in Angeleri, Airenti, 2014:135) and both of them cover often a latent aggressive component, teasing in humour, and criticism in irony (*ibidem*). Especially regarding irony, the researchers classify the concept according to its two uses: exclusive irony - “expressing negative judgements about someone, or something – and inclusive irony - reinforcing camaraderie or solidarity” (Myers, 1981 in Aguert, Laval et alii, 2016:206). Studying the differences and types of ironical messages produced in computer mediated communication (CMC) by teenagers, it was demonstrated that in CMC are produced more inclusive ironical messages, and their prevalence increase with the age of teenagers. (*ibidem*:209), meaning that the main function of cohesion and group solidarity of humour and irony are mainly used in CMC interactions, according to these researches.

### **Methodology and results of empirical research**

Starting from the above-mentioned conclusions, that in online are used even more humorous and ironical messages that in offline communication and using the same classification of ironical messages, as inclusive and exclusive, the empirical research conducted within Romanian teenagers this year was focused on the increased usage of communication mediated through technology between nowadays adolescents and the fact that one of the undesirable and main negative effect present is cyberbullying, the bullying through digital technology – 33% of Romanian teenagers were victims in 2018 (Velicu, Balea et alii, 2019). The hypothesis of this empirical research are:

H1. Teenagers have a specific understanding of the notion of “funny” in online medium.

H2. If teenagers use exclusive irony through CMC it leads to conflict and became cyberbullying.

It is important to mention, that in order to adapt the study and interview grid to the age or respondents and according with the previous mentioned literature review the operationalization of the main concepts used, humour and irony, determine that: the term

“humour” was used as similar with inclusive irony, and the term “irony” was used in relationship with its negative connotation, as exclusive irony.

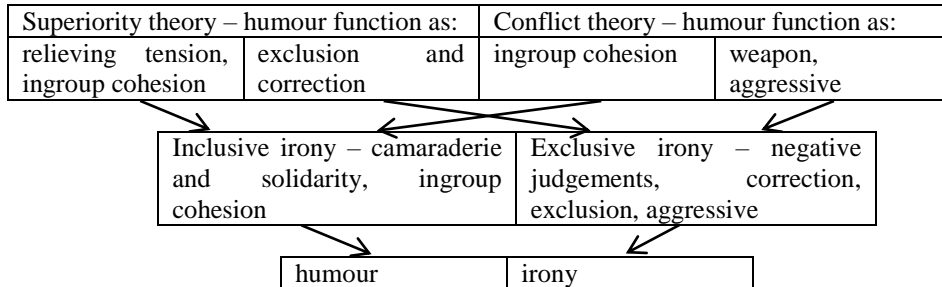


Figure 1: operationalization of terms humour and irony

This empirical research was conducted in April-May 2019 within a gymnasium school from Bucharest, through the qualitative method of interviews. There were conducted 31 interviews, with children 13 – 15 years old, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, using a semi-structured interview grid. The pupils were questioned about what are they doing online, what means funny online, if they receive, share, search or produce humoristic or ironical messages, if it happened to them, or to others to develop a conflictual situation due to ironic messages, and generally, if they consider that online irony could be understood as cyberbullying. Because there were obtained only 31 parent’s agreements, the interviews were conducted with these teenagers, 18 boys and 13 girls.

The results show that teenagers are mainly using internet for gaming and social networking, considering that this way they are having fun, the majority of them answering that “fun online” means to play games, talking and making jokes with friends, watching movies and series, only 4 of them mentioning also “meme” as a way of making fun online. They are generally searching online for humoristic content, especially on YouTube, and also share it with others, but very few of them said they are producing this type of materials. Regarding the connection between ironical messages, conflicts and cyberbullying, more than a half of them answered positive, telling that it might happened, or they really encounter such a situation, when cyberbullying occurred through ironical messages.

## Conclusion

As the previous studies show and this local empirical study confirmed, teenagers are using online humour and irony through all the means online environment provides: text messages, images and videos, sharing them through socialization networking or just searching online this type of content. Interesting is that the simple fact of being online means “fun” for them, proving that internet is perceived as a non-formal way of spending time, less related with educational formal activities. This could be a reason why ironical messages could be easily send and receive, without being “censured and controlled”, as a part of their leisure activities. Considering “fun” something that brings “pleasure, enjoyment



or entertainment” (Cambridge Dictionary) it is obviously that online environment has mainly these characteristics for children and teenagers, and because they are heavy users of internet they may generalize its positive, funny part, without taking into consideration the disadvantages brought by online environment for them. Also, adolescence being a period of change and development, “which is closely tied to irony comprehension and production” (Channon, Pellijeff & Rule, 2005 in Aguert, Laval et alii, 2016), the empirical study confirm that teenagers are interested to search and access online humour and irony. As a conclusion, our first hypothesis is confirmed, nowadays digital teenagers have a specific understanding of the word “fun”, being always related with their online activities, and not especially with humour. Future studies could search deep, to find if there are perceived differences between online and offline fun and humour for children and teenagers, trying to define more precise the “online fun”, because even it is used the same word, the type of activities and their consequences, are not similar.

Regarding the second hypothesis, this is also confirmed by the empirical qualitative research because more of 65% teenagers interviewed perceive irony related with conflict and cyberbullying, as a reason for appearing such negative outcome. Without explaining to them the literal differences between “humour” and “irony”, the simple usage of both terms, alternatively, relating positive and fun with humour – the inclusive irony – and the negative sides with irony – as the exclusive irony, made them conscious about the difference and to clearly associate the irony, with conflicts and cyberbullying.

Even this small empirical research has no representativeness, it gives important outcomes regarding the issues that digitalized environment brings to children, offering the opportunity to more in-depth research regarding the understanding, producing and sharing of humour through internet. Due to the new online and virtual technologies the possibilities for create and share humour and irony are huge, maybe that is why there are spread more humoristic content online than offline. It will be needed further studies to clearly delimitate the online inclusive and exclusive irony, in order to minimize the negative effect of the exclusive one and to potentiate the children creativity and imagination for produce inclusive irony and humour, due to its positive functions: increasing group cohesion and relieving tension, being a solution for increasing resilience, adaptation and inclusion, the group solidarity and cooperation.

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**THE SCULPTURAL LANGUAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF  
CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ARTS - IMAGINARY AND IRONY IN  
ARTISTIC RESEARCH. IRONY AS A MEANS OF TRANSLATING  
THE IMAGINARY**

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***Abstract:** Sculpture is already a specialized language in the context of contemporary visual arts and creative industries, in fact in any context that involves creativity, usage and interpretation of individual or collective imaginary. Irony is also a form of imaginary interpretation which cultivates, through sculptural objects, formal analogy, paradox, and even critical thinking and artistic research. Irony as a means of creative translation of imaginary has a long modern tradition in visual arts, including contemporary sculpture. Starting with the postmodernism of the middle '70s, irony mediates the imaginary to maximize the perception of artistic concepts and the impact on public and social perceptions. In any language, irony involves context and narrativity. In the case of sculptural language, narrativity becomes objectual, generated by material, form, transposition technique, texture, color, and contextually mediated by the concept. The contemporary sculptural object tends to be a statement, opinion and expression of the artistic imaginary - an absurd or metaphysical, aesthetic or anti-aesthetic object, but irony is already a constant because invariably appeals to the intelligence of the public, establishes an individual contact and is based on complicity of understanding message. The article shows consistent examples from the area of contemporary sculpture: artists, works and projects directly illustrating the privileged relationship, in the context of artistic research, between imaginary and irony in contemporary sculptural language; the case studies feature the examples of some famous sculptors throughout the post-war era and contemporary.*

***Keywords:** contemporary visual arts; sculptural language; irony and imaginary*

## **Introduction**

The article intends to promote the working concept of a contemporary sculptural language, evolved from Postmodernism, which asserts autonomy within today's cultural environment. Set in motion by individual imaginary it operates by irony as a means to influence the public perception on direct reality, on cultural, social and any other anthropological environments. This language of contemporary sculptural objects opened, in the last decades, the next level of aesthetic expression by passing over traditional artistic habits like implied duties to delight, instruct and moralize the audience and general public.

Moreover, it broadly rejected traditional concepts of artistic beautification and embellishment, those being perceived like a cosmetology, specific to state propaganda of traditionalist and authoritarian societies. Today's sculpture has new politics of representations and a new cultural agenda, which can be summarized as creating experiences by making artistic things. Not being a sharp defined domain, its practitioners may originate from various related fields operating within three dimensional creative

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applications, bringing original contributions through specific imaginary, artistic creativity, working concepts and fresh perspectives on cultural environment. This article is trying to link, as cause and effect, the status of the postwar and later postmodern irony with the main horror of the twentieth century: the Holocaust. It means that after the Holocaust, absolutely nothing could be regarded as serious, grave and untouchable, especially in a cultural context. And a cultural consequence of the Holocaust was that nothing has ever been as before, because the threshold of any human taboo has been crossed, the only option for future would have been the silence, as individual or as a group. **Basualdo** *The title Unland alludes to a work by the German Jewish poet Paul Celan (1920 – 1970). Celan is a key figure not merely for the position he occupies in Western poetry of the post-war period but because of his stance in relation to the Holocaust. He translated the experience of absence, the horror of the Holocaust, precisely through the disintegration of language and its structures. Do you think that there are equivalences between the way Celan treated language and your approach to the material work?* **Salcedo** (...) *Celan's poetry involves piecing together from ruptures and dissociations, rather than association and union. This is the way I approach sculpture. I concern myself with the disassembled and the diachronic.* **Basualdo** *Celan's contemporary, the Frankfurt school philosopher Theodor Adorno, felt that it was no longer possible to write lyric poetry after Auschwitz. There is an affirmative attitude in Celan's decision not to remain silent but to convert silence into some other form of expression. I think that attempt is a key aspect of your work.* (Princenthal, N., Basualdo, C., Huyssen, A., 2000: 25-26)

**Methods.** This article is based, from the methodological abundance of artistic research, on the analysis of art, media representations and objects: case studies, formal analogies based on published works and art albums, comparative analysis of artistic processes and artworks images, working concepts of individual artists and their perception in and over the contemporary cultural environment. Artistic research methods are similar to humanistic writing although more subjective from contemporary sculpture practitioner's perspective; by verbalization of research, presenting concepts, analysis, opinions and conclusions, the approach opens to criticism as being public and vulnerable. One particular theoretical tool is interpretational sensitivity, although is fully functional only on the basis of previous artistic experiences, at a professional level.

### **The concept of Irony in Visual Arts**

Irony and especially artistic irony could be considered postmodern by definition, and has become a language, with syntax and morphology, including for contemporary sculpture. Irony identifies and develops paradoxes, draws attention to issues and situations, and thus sensitizes socially. In modern and contemporary sculpture, irony functions as a language of objects, by associating forms, shapes, volumes, readymade objects and concepts, working on and altering the context. Duchamp can be considered one of the founders of irony as a language within the readymade sculpture, though Hieronymus Bosch has been doing this in the picture since the Middle Ages. Duchamp's *Fountain/Urinal* was at that time more than the postmodern irony that we perceive today, it was a huge scandal of that period, the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 1917 precisely. And yet Duchamp was right,

the Urinal is a superb object, its original destination was the irony, also the social context of the time and the artefact's implicit aesthetic qualities. In Visual Arts, irony is not just humor, it can get very serious.

### **Irony – a defensive mechanism**

Thus, irony has become necessary for balancing the social organism, as a defensive mechanism of post-war neurosis, best perceived in post-war Visual Arts, which coincides with the imposition of *modernism* and subsequent evolutions: *postmodernism*, *posthumanism* and *transhumanism* – shaping the Contemporary Visual Arts, which in turn cultivates irony also as an imprint of the projective techniques of modern psychology. Those who counteract to contemporary artistic irony should rather perceive it as a post-traumatic symptom that self-perpetuates in response to crises and tensions felt socially. It is also possible to perceive contemporary irony as a structural vector, correction and self-correction of individuals and groups depending on the social context. In contemporary visual arts, irony evolves in relation to society, social justice, political consciousness, militant environmentalism - or in this sense, irony becomes the basis of contemporary art but within the collective imaginary. Art is always representational and has acquired the literary device of satire somewhere in its path, turning it into irony, as a reference language of forms, volumes and symbols for the general reality and for the fluid ideas of society. Critics of postmodern and contemporary irony most often say that it went too far and became a bottomless form, decontextualized and outside of any rigorous, especially historical, references. People always need solid and rigorous benchmarks, it is obvious that not everybody has the capacity for intellectual exercises within freedom of expression, let alone access to the contemporary languages of the visual arts, including objectively. Because irony questions the norm, the law, the imposed reality and the canon - this also gives the subversive character of the definitive artistic discourse associated with modernity and the contemporary. The irony and the imaginary permanently assault the immutable reality - and this is probably a huge human quality that we can only access now.

Systematically modern and contemporary visual arts have appropriated the narrative techniques used in literary fiction. It is interesting that irony, regardless of the media / media through which it is propagated, is always considered a subversive mechanism, probably due to the original connection between art, politics / ideology and irony.

### **Irony – reality and individual expression**

In contemporary visual arts irony defines a dialogue between reality and individual expression - in fact, a dialogue between realities and corresponding perceptions - finally, the art object generates a new reality, of the sculptural form in this case. Any totalitarian regime is based on conformism and suspicion on any form of imaginary, especially irony. All forms of ideological censorship oversees all combinations of imaginary, creativity and irony, especially in the Visual Arts and literature. Even so, the irony is usually regulated within terminologies of satire and humor, finally channeled under the name of constructive

criticism. This could also be the explanations of socialist realism behind Iron Curtain Visual Arts, or even for the totalitarian preference of architectural brutalism: simple ideological rules, indisputable landmarks of direct reality, the emphasis on the creative craftsmanship capabilities, which keep away the subtleties of the imaginary and the ironic slips. In the Contemporary Visual Arts, the essential function of irony is that of translating the imaginary.

Within the context of contemporary Visual Arts, sculptural language is increasingly becoming a by-product of industrial and post-industrial culture of consumerism. The life cycle of objects and artifacts has been reduced considerably in recent decades, due to consumerism, which provides artists with considerable amounts of readymade objects that feed contemporary sculptural language. These objects and artifacts shaped the infrastructure of imaginary and artistic creativity, as a specialized, sculptural language and artefactual environment translated by and focused on irony and social commentary.

### **Imagination and irony translated by materials, readymade objects and technologies**

Another essential aspect of this contemporary sculptural language and its cultural context is that all readymade objects already contain high levels of imagination and creativity due to their design, technology and production process. All these average artefact qualities favor, in the context of contemporary sculpture, complex artistic techniques based on irony, such as juxtaposition, cultural appropriation and decontextualization. Materials, technologies and high-performance tools adaptable for sculptural transpositions are increasingly permissive and financially accessible to average artists. In the same cultural context of consumerism, the strength, size and visibility of contemporary sculptural language is favored by the level of artist's accessibility to materials, technologies and tools as never before in art history. Since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, within postmodernism, affiliation to an artistic movement is no longer a priority for an artist, as he is rather inclined towards expressing his own individuality and artistic vision. The second constant of contemporary sculpture, after the individualization of the imaginary and the articulation of a vision over the contemporary environment, is also of postmodern origin: the irony.

The irony is necessary and has to be, especially in the case of an individual artistic vision - before postmodernism the artistic discourse was rather argumentative or provocative, as an active part of a whole (an artistic movement), somehow on the post-war ideological and cultural logic of the struggle for a greater good. The artistic language has steeply evolved during 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, becoming a specific language whose decoding needs a certain level of visual and artistic education. In pragmatic terms, if the imaginary is the artistic product meant for contemporary consumption, irony is marketing: we consider that irony, so specific and even defining for postmodernism, has already survived to evolution of cultural trends and fully retained its *status quo* value for the Visual Arts.

### Study case: Brad Downey

One case study for contemporary translator status of irony for the imaginary of today's sculpture is the American artist **Brad Downey**. His artistic installations best defines the post-graffiti practice of contemporary urban interventions with readymade sculptural objects. The works and his artistic *modus operandi* are sometimes considered offensive, a sort of urban guerrilla artistic process, walking in balance on the thin red line between legal and illegal – or at least this is the perception of any city's law enforcement, so Brad Downey got arrested in several occasions. He usually improvise sculptures and installations using ready-mades objects, urban furniture and any kind of materials available in urban environment. All these objects are creatively de-constructed, re-arranged and photographed *in situ* due to the assumed ephemeral of the working concept. *Downey's spontaneous sculptures, on the other hand, only last as long as the public or officials care to allow (from 10 seconds, in the case of a cheekily placed plastic bottle that adds a phallus to an otherwise sexless Antony Gormley figure in Stavanger, Norway, to a few days. Some may still be in existence as I write).* (Jennifer Thatcher)

Regardless the illegal status of his work, there are constant amounts of humor and irony in Downey's sculpture, also in concepts and in the making process: he use to work dressed up and disguised as a construction worker, during Sunday mornings, apparently the best time of the week to perform illegal stuff in plain sight of the city. There is also an element of performance art in this disguise: nobody questions a construction worker during his supposed routine activities, not even the authorities, assuming he is working for the city.

Illegal or not, Brad Downey is working for the city, although making public sculptures without the support or approval from any institution. *Humor is also a key element for Downey, who often uses it as bait to catch the attention of the unsuspecting passer-by. He has the knack of creating apparently magical situations, as with Bike Hang II (Perfect Throw III), Essen, 2010, in which a bicycle dangles over the axis of a double-headed streetlight as if in a giant fairground game. We are all familiar with the phenomena of the single sneaker mysteriously hooked over an overhead power cable, but a bicycle? In another series, Downey places helium balloons inside anti-terrorist rubbish bins (clear bags, skeleton framework, almost like a basketball hoop) in Paris, so that now inverted rubbish bags float upwards – much to the delight of local kids, who then of course steal the balloons (mini Downeys in the making).* (Downey, B., 2011: 7-8)

Brad Downey is a textbook example for the liaison between artistic imaginary, social irony and contemporary urban sculpture. His main body of works consists of readymade urban furnitures and all sorts of artifacts and usual materials available in urban environment, which are constructed, deconstructed and re-contextualized according to his working concepts, creativity and opportunities. Nevertheless, some of his most famous works are interventions, photographically and video documented, with great impact on contemporary social and ecological agenda. The Shell intervention is a very smart idea and concept, simple and brilliant in the same time, realized via a linguistic and literary device meant to highlight the latent irony, to be artistically and free exploited, contained by a famous brand of petroleum products. *Downey made one of his most audacious and graphically striking works in 2007 when, in a moment of postmodern existentialism, he*



*managed to switch off the first letter of a neon SHELL sign above a gas station in his home town of Atlanta. Modern urban life can be HELL, but for the artist, the freedom and spontaneity it allows, even in small pockets, and the huge range of unloved and discarded materials available, continue to provide an endless source of curiosity and potential for a new, as yet uncodified form of public art. (Downey, B., 2011: 8)*

Graffiti and post-graffiti are still considered as *urban decay* by the city planners, although urban interventions are steady evolving into mainstream contemporary urban art, following the brilliantly marketed trend exemplified by *Banksy*. Theoretically, Brad Downey's urban interventions and *spontaneous sculptures* are illegal, reported to any city laws; to enter theoretical legality, the artist should work in a team completed with a lawyer and a local planning officer, and everything artistic and creative would instantly go down the drain. In fact, the illegal attitude of urban interventions and post-graffiti art is all about *DIY – Do It Yourself* attitude of the contemporary citizen artist, who doesn't trust the goodwill and good intentions of legal system and authorities. The major irony of this case study is that just theoretical illegality of urban interventions (post-graffiti urban sculpture) add the necessary pressure to build the artistic imagination, creativity, quality of the concept and public impact of the contemporary citizen artist. Although his art includes the aspect of urban guerrilla creativity, Brad Downey felt from the beginning highly responsible for the people's safety, within the context of his works, permanently adjusting and placing them as safe as possible. *I always try as much as possible to make sure the sculptures are safe to be around. No one has ever been hurt by my work. At least I have not heard of anyone being injured since I started making outdoor works in 1998. I make sure that my works are not placed, for example, where somebody would ride their bike at night or where somebody could trip on them. I would never want my work to harm anyone. (Downey, B., 2011: 93)*

The spontaneous sculptures of Brad Downey are in fact not so spontaneous, if it is taken into consideration the amount of *artistic research* – urban exploration, documentation, working concepts and backup team, photography and videography – involved prior and during the urban interventions branded as *spontaneous sculptures*. Yet, this activity is fully dominated by direct opportunities arisen within urban environment: urban furniture, infrastructure and maintenance materials and many others. However, is mandatory for the artist to systematically document the urban realities where his interventions will be performed. *Some might call Downey's sculptures illegal – which strictly speaking many are – but this risks fetishizing the illicit for its own sake. The fame and high auction prices commanded by certain street artists in the past couple of years are surely linked to this desire for the frisson of the underground and the risky to pep up an ailing art market. Yet, for a society obsessed with keeping its citizens under surveillance, it is incredible how much Downey and his collaborators are able to get away with under people's noses. Indeed, you notice that Downey has become more fearless in public over the years. Where once he took on the persona of a security guard or wore the high-visibility jacket of the anonymous worker, now installation shots show the undisguised artist casually moving street sculpture or re-arranging some road marking. (Jennifer Thatcher)*

### Study case: Erik Dietman

Erik Dietman and the sculptural object as equivalent to the language. A classic artist from the golden age of postmodernism, Dietman has the tricky ability to create sculptures, objects and installations which function also as equivalents to language, the third party involved beside imagination and irony. Most of his sculptures are widely ironic and results from mixing cultural icons and artifacts from various ages – usually witty, sometimes graves, yet highly aesthetic. We refer to the series of sculptural objects entitled, in French, *Injures* from 1994-1995, whose making and appearance is strangely similar to shamanistic artifacts and practices that substitute functions by objects, like the *voodoo* does. In this case, Dietman states that contemporary sculpture includes, beside imagination and creativity, the complex games of language and cultural irony. The works from this series contains kitchenware, mundane artifacts, ceramic containers, human skulls and bones, antique artifacts, chains, foundry residues and more; they prove the contemporary liaison between sculptural objects and language, the game of words based on imagination and irony, generating working concepts and autonomous sculptural language.

The title *Injures* perfectly describes the repulsive aspect of works, which are yet strangely attractive for the eye, due to heterogeneous nature of component artifacts and materials. *Si l'on cherche une liaison directe entre les premiers assemblages et les derniers travaux de Dietman, on achoppe inévitablement sur les INJURES, 1994/95. Ces travaux se caractérisent par l'hétérogénéité des matériaux don't ils sont l'amalgame: recipients, marmites ou faitouts de cuisine le plus souvent; comme si une main soulevé le couvercle de la jarred de Pandore, don't le contenu une fois venu au monde, se procréerait de lui-même. Dietman, de toute evidence, joue sur l'aversion qu'exerce l'idée du produit cuisine et inconsommable. L'aspect repulsive et repugnant de l'objet reflète dans tout sa plasticité l'intitulé de celui-ci. Chacun des objets désigné est à present en mesure – contrairement aux assemblages précoces de Dietman – de servir d'équivalent au langage: on est tenté de les traduire en injures, en maledictions. Dans ce sens, la confection de ces travaux s'apparente à certaines pratiques chamanistes où les choses on tune fonction substitutive. Aussi Dietman souligne-t-il que la prima idea d'une sculpture ne reside pas seulement dans l'imagination rêveuse ou l'aperception de l'univers. Elle peut aussi bien surgir d'un jeu de langage, d'un vers, d'un poème. Ce principe de metamorphose qui découle du trait d'esprit, de l'humour effréné de Dietman et de sa propension à degrader tout ce qui se veut majestueux et sublime, on la rencontre à chaque detour de l'oeuvre de l'artiste. (Exhibition Catalogue, 1996: 31-34)*

Any connection between aesthetics, imagination and irony is always tricky due to its level of critical thinking, within the model of disputed relation between sacred and aesthetic; the sacred could always be aesthetic, but the aesthetics are conditioned by time and cultural context; social and cultural validation is a particularly difficult process to anticipate. The contemporary sculptural object tends to be a statement, an opinion and expression mediated through imaginary; the sculptural object has many ways: absurd or metaphysical, highly aesthetic or anti-aesthetic. The irony is a constant and invariably appeals to the public's intelligence, establishes an individual contact based on the complicity of understanding the artistic message. Within any language, irony implies cultural context

and previous narrative. In the case of the sculptural language, the narrative, mediated by individual imaginary, is transformed into artistic object, rendered by material, form, transposition technique, texture, and color and working concept.

The language of the sculptural object has acquired original contributions from related creative fields and even unexpected areas of contemporary visual arts. These contributions made their way through the cultural trends and the autonomous artistic languages generated by the privileged relationship between the imaginary and the irony, as perceived within the contemporary cultural context.

### **Study case: Sarah Illenberger**

In this regard, *Sarah Illenberger* is a case study relevant for the ability of the individual imaginary to create contemporary cultural icons with subtle irony accents while developing creative concepts commissioned by world renowned brands. Designer, photographer and illustrator, she is using her creative abilities as craftswoman and set stylist to put together works with astonishing sculptural qualities. Always original, her creations illustrates prestigious magazines and maintain the public image of famous brands, within contemporary cultural context. *It is hard to say what is more fascinating about Sarah Illenberger's three-dimensional illustrations: her unconventional ideas for depicting objects and information or the incredible accuracy with which she executes them. Undoubtedly, it is the contrast between the simplicity of materials she uses and the complexity of thoughts she puts into every single project that makes her work stand out. The Berlin based illustrator, designer, craftswoman, photographer, and set stylist depicts totems with tires, ecotechnology with flowers, and the world's most complicated chili con carne recipe with laboriously crafted paper ingredients. Sometimes her choices of materials seem so logical, and yet no one has ever come up with them: a collage made of various cold cuts embodied the cuts of meat from a pig, and a pomegranate is converted into a grenade. Symbolism is the central theme in Sarah Illenberger's work, and her oeuvre is never short of humor.* (Klanten, R., Schulze, F., 2011: 3)

For many decades now, the artistic use of imaginary and postmodern irony become a language more and more popular, as creativity started to make the difference in all activities of postindustrial world. Contemporary art is also very popular and publicly debated even until the creation of a British parody to the world renowned *Turner Prize: The Turnip Prize*. In the best tradition of educated and brilliant British humour, the Turnip Prize tends to ridicule the controversial high profile official prize; however, there are unexpected cultural side effects: it popularizes the contemporary sculpture and encourages individual creativity and imaginary, within a deeply critical and ironic popular artistic environment. *The Turnip Prize is a spoof UK art award that satirizes the less well-known Turner Prize. The prize started in 1999, when Tracey Emin's **My Bed** (1998) was nominated for the Turner Prize. Residents of Wedmore, a small village in Somerset, were astounded when the shortlist was announced and started their own competition in the belief that they would be able to produce deliberately bad yet better modern art. The competition hinges on one crucial question: **We know it's crap, but is it art?** Competitors submit entries of ridiculous objects posing as contemporary art, mostly made from junk and oft-titled with puns. Credit*

is given for entries featuring the best puns and for those displaying **considerable lack of effort**. The winner is awarded a turnip impaled on a rusty six-inch nail. (Weeksz, R., Prideaux, T., 2016: 7)

Obviously, most of the works (they would best be called objects or *artifacts*) are naïve or just funny, although some of them shows certain artistic and sculptural qualities – witty and smart objects, streaming educated irony and artistic opinions, besides certain levels of skills, abilities, imagination and creativity in contemporary Visual Arts, from a popular perspective. The main elements of contemporary sculpture language are present, as elements of know-how related of working concepts and transposition techniques, as the authors noticed the prevalence of readymades, assemblage and objets trouvés – which are indeed the main artistic techniques of choice for the contemporary sculptural language. *One of the most remarkable aspects of the Turnip Prize, aside from highlighting the very best in naïve talent, is its entrants' often beautiful usage of **objets trouvés**. Indeed, it may be more accurate to describe the findings as **assemblage**, echoing André Breton's 1934 definition of so-called **ready-mades** as **manufactured objects raised to the dignity of works of art through the choice of the artist**.* (Weeksz, R., Prideaux, T., 2016: 42)

### **The urban art of post-graffiti and street craft; Imaginary and irony within the contemporary language of creativity**

It must be mentioned that both terms, *post-graffiti* and *street craft*, while they don't overlap perfectly, are still the two faces of the same coin: contemporary urban art, the 21<sup>st</sup> century alternative to the one once considered as urban decay – graffiti art. Both terms actually refer to the spatiality of the urban art work; *post-graffiti* means two-dimensional works, usually murals, direct descendant of classic *graffiti*, while *street craft* is about sculptural language, sculptural object, urban inserted sculptures and artifacts, urban interventions. *The twilight of the 20th century saw a creative explosion of street art, which flooded the space occupied by tag-based graffiti. Figurative, even decorative, two-dimensional street art drew inspiration from sources often unvisited by earlier street artists. References to art history, current affairs and famous images required a certain degree of semiotic savvy from the accidental audience, offering light-bulb moments on the street through unexpected experiences.* (Kuittinen, R., 2015: 6-7)

The postmodern sculptural language modernize and democratize transposition materials: it switch toward cast iron, concrete, unconventional material, due to aesthetic and also cost reduction reasons. Priority is the originality of the concept, the creativity of the vision and of transposition technologies, the coherence of artistic language, the insertion in the urban environment which it prefers to complete and enrich, not to dominate or to format it by aggressiveness and prevalence of imposed and aggressive ideas. *Street craft is generally less bombastic than graffiti art. By filling gaps between spaces, its makers create a kind of intimacy of experience. Some of the sculptors working on the streets create such small-scale work that their discovery is strictly for the sharpest passers-by only. These modest artworks are more than just sculptures; they build entire narratives and make a nothing into a something.* (Kuittinen, R., 2015: 8-9)

There is another great difference between classic graffiti and contemporary post-graffiti and street craft, the internet and social media. The creative language of urban contemporary arts evolved throughout the last decades at levels of coherence unseen so far, due to on-line common ground of urban artistic communities. Postmodernism introduced the concept of *global village*, the internet made it a contemporary reality. Due to on-line activity of street craft makers, the language of contemporary urban sculpture developed the needed coherence to evolve and mature as an autonomous artistic language with the creative specifications of a parlance. *The web is now littered with street-art archives, some older than a decade, the images long outliving the original artworks, Some of these websites keep evolving, while others stop being updated and become static documents of past street art. This online interaction takes many guises. Some creative put together packs of instructions and materials to inspire others to make art. Others solicit suggestions for new locations or themes. A certain accessibility and communality are a vital part of the practice, in a way that was not possible before social media. This conversation then becomes an element of the art.* (Kuittinen, R., 2015: 12)

There is a certain amount of public fear and unrest related to contemporary visual arts, mainly about the new aesthetic languages that challenges the traditional cultural establishment. Obviously this unrest is deeply related to internet and social media which spreads instantly and worldwide the artworks and artistic languages resulted from free and democratic use of creativity and imaginary. Usually, the artistic levels of ethics, morality and legality are the same as those imposed by the online browsers, search engines and social platforms. As democratic access to aesthetic opinion and artistic production has grown significantly over last decades and social media instantly display powerful and witty artworks, these ideas, concepts, social comments, ironies and attitudes could become game changers within establishment policies. *As intellectuals used reason to challenge existing systems of ethics, government and religion, artist sought to emancipate art from the need to instruct, delight or moralize.* (An, K., Cerasi, J., 2017: 14)

The beginning of this artistic contemporary language was made by Marcel Duchamp and his famous piece of public restroom – *the urinal*, which is anyway a beautifully design and crafted, industrially produced *readymade* sculpture. Undoubtedly, Duchamp made a statement and needed a show to demonstrate the time was right for a cultural paradigm shift and a new artistic language; the scandal of rejection and traditional public outrage proved to be the right context for the foundation for the contemporary sculptural language. *When Marcel Duchamp submitted a urinal signed **R. Mutt** to the Salon of the Society of Independent Artists in New York in 1917, the committee rejected it on account of not being art. Duchamp's presentation of a readily available, mass-produced object as art was simply preposterous. This **readymade**, as he called it, flew in the face of the centuries-old idea of the artist as a skilled creator of uniquely crafted, handmade objects.* (An, K., Cerasi, J., 2017: 26)

Imaginary is always mediated by words, although artists develop the ability of thinking in images, a sort of daytime creative dreaming. Artworks usually have titles, and also texts are generated about, by artist, critics, managers, gallerists and general public on social media; all this texts, words, comments, opinions summon up the narrative of the object generated by imagination and translate the original idea and concept towards intended

public statement - irony, social comment, aesthetic opinion. This body of texts could also represent the starting point of an artistic research process, implemented by the artist or any other party involved or interested in the matter. Some artists, like sculptor **Franz West**, integrate linguistics within their creation, as performative parts intended to increase the public's desire for dialogue, to favor his the complicity to irony, to aesthetic nonconformity of sculptural language and playful scenario. *But traditional linguistics also come into his art in many ways. For example, West gave his works not only titles but also, in many cases, accompanying texts. These were intended to provide additional stimuli to dialogue, and were considered integral to the respective works. Therefore they are not only prominent in West's works on paper, but often also appear next to the sculptures. West's use of language is highly creative, and draws on an awareness of its many ambivalences, which he continually refers to and plays with. His sophisticated and inventive use of language is a special quality of his art. It also shows his general wit and humor, which is succinctly philosophical (in the sense of Sigmund Freud's understanding of the joke as something that transports messages from the unconscious) and never mere buffoonery.* (Exhibition Catalogue, 2016: 85)

Contemporary sculpture emphasize the workflow of creation, which usually don't stops once the objecte is complete and left the studio. Every time it's displayed and exhibit, each time it's photographed, included in an art album, written about and commented within social media, layers of informations adds the artwork shaping the narrative and completing the workflow.

One of the undisputed stars of Contemporary Visual Arts, Ai Weiwei is setting the trends of today's sculptural language. Collector of Chinese antiquities, he acquired significant skills and expertise in the field, translating this abilities into the creative process of his art, with highly original results, on the edge between ethics, sculpture and performance art. By using Neolithic vases from his own collection, the artist dared to upcycled them by dipping in bright colors, turning them into dust and inscribed on the global brand of *Coca Cola*. Highly debatable and controversial, these original artworks introduced concepts like the permanence of artistic language, regardless of linear history and its values. *The creation of forgeries interests him since the same skills and traditions used to create the originals are used to create modern versions. The question of authenticity is, therefore, central to this body of work. By extension, he is also interested in value: is a Neolithic vase dipped in paint or ground to dust more valuable as a contemporary artwork than as an original? In China, which is so marked by rapid change and development, Ai exposes the tension between old and new. Ai produced the first Coca Cola Vase in his ongoing series in 1994. The logo of the ubiquitous soft drink is emblazoned across the vase, blurring notions of history and global branding.* (Exhibition Catalogue, 2015: 155)

## Conclusions

In Contemporary Visual Arts, the irony identifies and exposes a reality different from the widely accepted appearance. The artists and artworks empower the public audience to notice and appreciate irony as a moment of clarity, a shared truth about the level of difference between appearance and reality.

Since Postmodernism, irony is the mainstream of Contemporary Visual Arts. It may be considered as a marketing strategy, although any artistic method does it at some point. In the end, besides any excesses, irony is healthy and positive, keeping the awareness about any issues and support innovation and evolution. Irony is already part of a language transcending artistic movements and likely a universal constant of artistic creativity. Contemporary sculpture has the diversity of any language, not only to describe but mainly to explore the cultural environment and transform perception over reality.

The wide diversity of the contemporary sculptural objects ensures the existence and autonomy of this artistic language based on irony as one of the means to translate imaginary into direct reality. Although sometimes contested as being excessive or offensive, mainly within traditionalist and authoritarian environments, imagination and irony still ensure the autonomy and cultural impact of sculptural language in Contemporary Visual Arts.

Irony doesn't just cover the cultural environment, reality or social mythologies but also its own output of artistic objects: concepts, shapes, materials, textures, colors. Irony that mediates the contemporary sculptural language criticize its technical procedures, technologies of artistic transposition and workflow habituses. Contemporary artistic irony is a form of intense, dire self-awareness, even cynical disbelief about institutions and widely accepted realities and truths.

As a literary device irony works as a juxtaposition of words which say one thing and means something else, usually the opposite; this suddenly cause dissonance, incongruity of meanings and generally unrest within perception: the basis of any humor, jokes and satire.

When applied to Visual Art, the literary device of irony becomes trickier but much more effective and perceived, due to direct involvement incultural environment. Occasionally, the gentle and sober classical irony slide to satire and even further to offensive, subversive and mockery, a risk worth taking just to maintain the freedom of artistic expression.

Irony of contemporary sculptural language is also a key to bypass a severely limited audience of fellow practitioners and art consumers and acces the public attention, particularly through internet and social media. A witty and contemporary meaningful artwork has a way to induce a smart complicity within individuals form the public, offering them opportunity to join, appreciate or even criticize an idea, concept or cultural trend. An instant gratification for the artist is any posting on social media, followed by comments – the dialogue is open, the artwork has effects.

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## **THE LAUGHTER OF ABRAHAM AND OF SARAH**

**Roger Cristian SAFTA\***

***Abstract:** The presence of laughter, irony, humour, as well as of other forms of humorous manifestation in the Holy Scripture has elicited ample and thorough commentary, especially in the modern period. Although the biblical text seldom gives the opportunity to identify such passages, biblical textual criticism has endeavoured to identify and highlight them. One of the clearest examples of laughter in the biblical canon is that of the laughter of Abraham and Sarah when God promises the birth of a child, of Isaac, whose name can be translated as “laughter,” or “let God smile.” The laughter of Patriarch Abraham and of his wife Sarah differs from one tradition to another. On the other hand, the Holy Apostle Paul allegorically interprets the image of Patriarch Isaac, linking it to the Person and the work of Christ.*

***Keywords:** laughter; Abraham; Isaac; Sarah*

### **Laughter in Holy Scripture**

Laughter as a specific human manifestation is present under various forms in the text of the Holy Scripture as well, although its sense and meanings are not comparable to profane ones. Holy Scripture is the word of God, and its meaning is therefore directly and unequivocally linked to divine realities: it is not an *entertainment* book, but rather a living and working presence in the world of God. Therefore, when we study the scriptural meanings, it is compulsory to refer to the tradition and teaching of the Church. Its proper or textual meaning is intertwined with the spiritual, allegorical, symbolic and moral one. There is a close connection between Scripture, Tradition and the Church. In this sense, the true meaning of the Scripture is preserved and revealed only in the Church, through the Holy Spirit, in the light of the Holy Tradition (Gheorghe Gîrbea, 2007: p. 229). This is why any scriptural interpretation outside the Church is meaningless. This is the Church’s teaching about the Holy Scripture and the meaning of its interpretation.

However, the presence of laughter in the scriptures is sporadic, slightly more nuanced in the Old Testament (the form γελᾶω – *a râde* appears fifteen times (M.A. Bailly, 1935: p. 393), and the form παίζω – *to entertain*, twenty times), whilst in the New Testament it does not appear almost at all, except in the Gospel of Luke, in *Beatitudes* (Luke VI, 21, 25). Generally, in the Holy Scripture we find no references to laughter in the present sense of the notion (Radday, Yehuda T., 1990, p. 22); moreover, we could even observe a reluctance, even an aversion, towards laughter in general. It is true, however, that in the pages of the Scripture we may find some ironic references to different attitudes, persons or things, but in no case are they intended to entertain, but to change attitudes or highlight certain aspects. In this sense we will discover irony in the case of Samson who kills a thousand Philistines with a donkey wedge (Judges XV, 15); we will understand that irony is not a moral attitude, as when the prophet Elisha is mocked by a few children who

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shout to him: "Come on, bald man, come on!" and, later on, they will find their death torn by a bear (IV Kings II, 23-24). We will also find ironic attitudes in the book of Job, where Job's friends try to make him blaspheme the name of God. One of Job's answers shows the ironic attitude he adopts in relation to the words of his friends: "No doubt you are the people, and wisdom will die with you!" (Job XII, 1).

Yehuda Radday systematizes some comical situations in the Hebrew Bible, citing several authors, but all these situations are purportedly funny, being related to subjective perceptions and forced interpretations of events, which he clearly points out, and also argues against such interpretations that he categorizes as absurd (Radday, Yehuda T., 1990: p. 29). For example, he cites an author, whom he does not name, who deems it funny that in some Old Testament situations women are frequently listed alongside cattle (the example in Acts XIV, 16 which he gives as an example is not conclusive, as both the Masoretic text and the *Septuagint* speak of assets, not cattle). Micol, the daughter of King Saul, speaks in the same manner about Cain (II Kings VI, 20: "When David returned to bless his house, Micol, Saul's daughter, came to meet him and said, «How honoured is the king of Israel uncovering this day, in the sight of his female and male servants, just as a common man would do»"), as caricatures, or it is humorous that God turns into a tailor for Adam and Eve. Another author believes that the parable about the poor man's sheep (II Kings XII, 1-4), the appearance of God to Moses on the burning pyre (Exodus III, 2 etc.) and Abraham's intervention to save those in Sodom (Genesis XVIII, 23-33) are other funny or humorous episodes (Radday, Yehuda T., 1990: p. 26).

Another author talks about the killing of King Eglon by Aod (Judges III, 14-26) as a kind of farce, and in reference to the incest of Lot's daughters giving birth to sons who are considered to be the founders of the rival Jewish people, the Moabites and the Ammonites (Gen. XIX, 30-38), he says that this is a nationalistic laughter.

The Old Testament laughter is mainly related to the laughter of God or of the people directed against the enemies, thus related to that joy of the man who obtains victory over the enemies (Psalm LII, 6, Job XIX, 7; XXII, 19), but is also associated with unbelief or the mocking laugh. We can state that this laughter, present under the form of irony or superiority, has a moralizing meaning. It is generally considered that no humorous references can be found in the poetic books of the Old Testament, these being more prevalent in prophetic books, especially in the form of irony (Landy, Francis, 1990: p. 102). Despite the fact that several studies dedicated to biblical humour find different situations more or less amusing, or seek to substantiate their hypotheses at the morphological, semantic or functional level, the existence of biblical humour cannot be certified. The structure of the text and its purpose impede such an approach, as evident from the relevant comments of the Jewish and Christian tradition.

Biblical laughter has nothing to do with the connotations of profane laughter, both in Antiquity and in the modern world. Although it may be somewhat associated with the theory of superiority, specific to Antiquity (Miruna Iacob, 2017: p. 554), the laughter in the Old Testament texts exceeds this meaning through its spiritual dimension.

## Abraham's Laughter

A special situation in the Old Testament is depicted in the scenes when the laughter of Abraham and Sarah is spoken about (Acts XVII, 17, XVIII, 12). Although it initially seems to be a laugh of unbelief, it turns into personified laughter, Isaac (because the name Isaac, *yit'chaq* in Hebrew, means *laughter*) through God's intervention. The child receives the name from God: "Your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will name him Isaac" (Genesis XVII, 19). The personification of laughter in Isaac actually shows his transfiguration through the work of God: this is no longer the unbelieving laughter of Abraham and later of Sarah, but that joy brought about by the state a person blessed by God. The chosen people go through Abraham and Isaac to that blessing of God, that promise or covenant of eternal joy: "«As for Ishmael, I have heard you. I will certainly bless him; I will make him fruitful and will multiply him greatly. He will father twelve tribal leaders, and I will make him into a great nation. But I will confirm my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time next year.!»" (Genesis XVII, 20-21). Profane laughter is transformed by the work of God into the joy of blessing, or into sacred laughter (Keun, Ahn Sang, Venter, Pieter M., 2010: p. 1). This laughter is no longer related to human feelings, sentiments and judgments, but it is that overwhelming presence of God in man, which means sacred joy. All the names in the Old Testament have a clear, distinct meaning, well anchored in sacred history; nothing is accidental. In the same sense, we can also interpret Isaac's name as *laughter*, but always in connection with the work and presence of God, Who gives it. We notice that God changes only the name of Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac's name remains unchanged, as it is given directly by God. In the Old Testament books, the name is always related to the person who bears it, expressing that person's work and purpose. Saint John Chrysostom considers that "name is an indication of virtue" (Saint John Chrysostom, *About Empty Glory and How Parents Should Raise Their Children*, 49, 2016: p. 363). Scripture most often mentions this aspect, starting with the first people, Adam – *earth* and Eve – *life*. In general, biblical names are classified in propositional (which, in turn, may be verbal or nominal) and epithetical, but are also divided into theophoric and secular (Skolnik, Fred (Ed.), 2007: p. 764c). There was a firm belief that the name determined the destiny of the human being; that is why names with historical or factual resonance were used, while names with unfortunate associations were avoided (*Ibidem*, p. 767): "The memory of the righteous is for blessing, and the name of the wicked will be cursed." (Solomon's parables X, 7).

The change of the name from Abram – *father is raised* - to Abraham – *father of many nations* - clearly denotes his mission or vocation (Douglas, J. D. (Ed.), 2008: p. 113; Skolnik, Fred (Ed.), 2007: p. 281a). Isaac's name seems to be derived from the Hebrew word *sahaq* – *laughter* (Skolnik, Fred (Ed.), 2007: p. 33b). But the etymology of the name Isaac is not so clear, although the popular variant, meaning *he is laughing* or *laughter*, is predominant (*Ibidem*). Another etymological variant proposes the form *Let Elohim smile* (Arieşan, Claudiu T., 2009: p. 11). Clement of Alexandria is clear when he says: "The name «Isaac» can be translated as *laughter*" (Clement of Alexandria, *The Pedagogue V*, 21, 3, 1982: p. 178). Likewise, Philo of Alexandria considers the name Isaac to be translated as laughter or happiness, joy (Philo, *Quaestiones Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesim III*, 53,

1953: p. 255). In Genesis XVIII, 6 Sarah explains the name of Isaac: “So she laughed to herself: «After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I have delight?»”. On the one hand, Isaac-*laughter* is Sarah’s laughter, obviously a laughter of joy, or joy for the unexpected birth of a son, and on the other hand it is the laughter of the others, a laughter of those who will hear about this birth and will laugh, just like the laughter of Abraham (Genesis XVII, 17) or even that of Sarah (Genesis XVIII, 12). The explanation that Sarah formulates renders this dualism of the understanding of laughter as sacred and profane. Sacred laughter is a laughter of joy, of happiness and is directly linked to the work of God, and on the other hand, we have the profane laughter, of the one who is sceptical, and which produces no effective joy.

Prior to the appearance of God - the Holy Trinity at the Mamvri Oak, God is shown to Abraham with whom He has made His covenant by circumcising, and at the same time changes his name from Abram to Abraham and to his wife Sarah, from Sarai to Sarah: “Your name will no longer be Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I will make you the father of many nations” (Genesis XVII, 5).

At the same time, God tells Abraham that he will have a son with his wife Sarah, a son that will be named Isaac. This covenant of God will cause Abraham’s distrust, the latter being uncertain about the birth of a son as he and his wife were rather old:

“God said to Abraham, “As for your wife Sarai, do not call her Sarai, for Sarah[e] will be her name. I will bless her; indeed, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she will produce nations; kings of peoples will come from her.” Abraham fell facedown. Then he laughed and said to himself, «Can a child be born to a hundred-year-old man? Can Sarah, a ninety-year-old woman, give birth?»” (Genesis XVII, 15-17).

The translators of the *Septuagint* in Romanian remark the interpretation of some Fathers of the Church according to whom Abraham’s laughter is related to the words of Christ: “Abraham, your father, was glad to see My day and he saw it and rejoiced” (John VIII, 56), which turns Isaac’s birth into a foreshadowing of the Incarnation (*Septuagint I*, 2004: p. 90). In this interpretation Isaac - *laughter* is that joy of the gospel (Good News, εὐαγγέλιον), he is laughter as a state of joy; Isaac is the type of Christ: on the one hand he is the promise of God to Abraham, just as Christ is the promise made by God to the first people after their removal from Eden, and on the other hand Isaac is the laughter of joy, just as Christ - Messiah is the joy promised by God. The message of Christ after Resurrection is “Rejoice” (Matthew XXVIII, 9). Approached in this manner, Teodor Baconsky’s conclusion: “we can assume that Jewish Messianism led to the first condemnation of laughter” (Baconsky, Teodor, 1996: p. 92) seems hasty. Moreover, Epiphanius of Salamis interprets the birth of Isaac in the sense of a prefiguration of resurrection, that is, of eternal joy:

“Abraham, an old man, was offered a child, *although his body was already dead*. From the dead God gave hope, for the *belly of Sarah* was completely dead; and *that which was outdated and on the verge of disappearance*, the common spring of women having already dried up, again gained power at seeding, and the old woman became pregnant [as] a young woman. And Isaac was given to his father as restored to life from death.

By handing over to the father the living child restored from the death, God proclaimed the hope of the resurrection.”

Abraham’s laughter is therefore not a laughter of unbelief, but rather expresses astonishment at such a promise (see Philo, *Quaestiones Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin III*, 55, 1953: p. 256); it is a joy that requires confirmation, a disposition between the real and the ideal. Abraham “falls to the ground” (καὶ ἔπεσεν Ἀβρααμ ἐπὶ πρόσωπον – Rahlfs, Alfred, 1979: p. 22) in front of God, which is a sign of faith and submission. Abraham laughs as a means of testing God: he challenges Him to a reconfirmation of the covenant. He does not voice his laughter (which is an inner one, as is the thought of the physical impossibility of the birth of a son at the age of 100) but his words are the expression of an inward restlessness provoked, on the one hand by faith in God and in His promises, and on the other hand, by his strong convictions that told him that a man of such age could no longer have children. It is, if we may say so, the attitude of man in the face of wonder: a mixture of joy, fear, mistrust and faith. Feelings are antinomian because wonder is an antinomian work. That is why Abraham utters the words “If only Ishmael were acceptable to you!” (Genesis XVII, 18), thus requesting a reconfirmation of this covenant.

### **Sarah’s laughter**

Then, God shows Himself to Abraham at the Mamvri Oak, under the image of three People to whom the latter offers hosting:

“«Where is your wife Sarah?» they asked him. «There, in the tent,» he answered. The Lord said, «I will certainly come back to you in about a year’s time, and your wife Sarah will have a son!» Now Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent behind him. Abraham and Sarah were old and getting on in years. Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. So she laughed to herself: «After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I have delight?» But the Lord asked Abraham, «Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Can I really have a baby when I’m old?’ Is anything impossible for the Lord? At the appointed time I will come back to you, and in about a year she will have a son.» Sarah denied it. «I did not laugh,» she said, because she was afraid. But he replied, «No, you did laugh.» (Genesis XVIII, 9-15).

Regarding Sarah’s laughter, there are different interpretations that are tributary to certain hermeneutic traditions. The Jewish tradition has the tendency to make a difference between the laughter of Abraham and that of Sarah, in the sense that they differ in meaning, nature and expression. Abraham’s laughter is a laugh of joy and optimism, whilst Sarah’s laughter is one of a lack of faith (Elisha, Yosef, *Both Abraham and Sarah Laughed, But Differently*: 2019). The same understanding of Sarah’s laughter is shown by Ambrose, who declares: “Sarah laughed because she was contested for her disbelief.” (Ambrose, *Letter LVIII, 14*, 1994: p. 242). This different understanding of laughter is also due to the fact that God makes no reference to the laughter of Abraham, while for Sarah’s laughter He refers directly to her, admonishing her because she laughed. There are also interpretations that regard both manifestations of laughter as being identical, as a lack of faith, but which bring no insult to the power of God. Another approach speaks of Abraham’s laughter as marked

by “understandable scepticism”, and of Sarah’s laughter - “choked with denial” (Whedbee, J. William, 1998: p. 80).

There is certainly a difference between these two laughs, given in God’s account of them: while Abraham’s laughter causes a hardening and a reiteration of the promise (“But God said, “No. Your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will name him Isaac. I will confirm my covenant with him as a permanent covenant for his future offspring”. – Genesis XVII, 19), Sarah’s laughter is admonished and highlighted, so she will deny that she laughed. Sarah’s denial will lead us to the denial of the protoparents, those who cast the burden of error upon God Himself. On the other hand, Sarah felt inconsiderate in front of Abraham because she had not borne him an heir. For this reason, Sarah will drive away the servant Hagar, the one who will give birth to a son, Ishmael, to Abraham, at the initiative and with her consent:

“Sarai said to Abram, “Since the Lord has prevented me from bearing children, go to my slave; perhaps through her I can build a family.” And Abram agreed to what Sarai said. So Abram’s wife Sarai took Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife for him. This happened after Abram had lived in the land of Canaan ten years. He slept with[b] Hagar, and she became pregnant. When she saw that she was pregnant, her mistress became contemptible to her. Then Sarai said to Abram, “You are responsible for my suffering! I put my slave in your arms,[d] and when she saw that she was pregnant, I became contemptible to her. May the Lord judge between me and you. »“ (Genesis XVI, 2-5).

Sarah is very likely to have long prayed to God to give birth to a child, and the fact that this prayer had not happened would have caused her to lose her trust in her and in God’s prone, as well. The old age she had reached gave her no hope for the birth of a child. Under these conditions, she hears the word of one of the Three Guests whom Abraham receives at the Mamvri Oak, telling her husband that this year, at this time, Sarah will have a child. But Sarah’s reaction is an atypical one, because it is not a denial, but a doubtful one: on the one hand she laughs, and on the other hand, she does not exclude this possibility: “So she laughed to herself: «After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I have delight?»” (Genesis XVIII, 12). Her doubt does not refer to the words spoken by the Guest, but to the idea of listening to her prayers (“will I have delight”) and the physical and biological possibility of conceiving and giving birth to a child (“I am worn out and my lord is old”). Considering these things as a whole, we cannot place disbelief at the heart of Sarah’s doubt, but rather the improbability of certainty. We can see the same reaction as Abraham’s, the same optimism doubled by fear, that ineffable fear in the face of divine power. Saint John the Chrysostom shows that this fear of Sarah was the reason for which she denied the laughter: “Fear shook her mind. Therefore, the Scripture, putting everything to her weakness, says “*Because she was afraid*” (John the Chrysostom, *Homilies at Genesis, XLI, 6, 1989: p. 87*). Abraham does not doubt, because the One who speaks to him is the God he has always obeyed, since the exit of his parents’ land from the Ur of the Chaldea. Sarah does not doubt either, because she trusts in God and her husband: she does not know the Three who receive the hospitality of her husband, but she trusts Abraham. Clement of Alexandria highlights this aspect by saying: “This was, therefore, the laugh of Sarah, when she was announced that she would give birth. She did not laugh, in my opinion, because she did not

believe what the angel had told her, but because she was thinking of the shame of a new relationship with her husband as a result of which she was to be the mother of the child.” (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromate VI, 101, 1*, 1982: p. 442). However, her inner laughter, the same as Abraham’s, is rebuked by the Guests:

“But the Lord asked Abraham, «Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Can I really have a baby when I’m old?’ Is anything impossible for the Lord? At the appointed time I will come back to you, and in about a year she will have a son.» Sarah denied it. «I did not laugh», she said, because she was afraid. But he replied, «No, you did laugh. » (Genesis XVIII, 13-15).

Philo of Alexandria also considers that there is no difference between the laughter of Abraham and Sarah, and the probable admonishment of Sarah actually seems to indicate praise rather than guilt (see Philo, *Quaestiones Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin IV, 18-19*, 1953: p. 290-292).

The one asked about Sarah’s laughter is Abraham, but Sarah, who was at the door of the tent behind him, will deny this laughter herself. The Scripture mentions Sarah’s state of fear, especially after the words: “Is anything impossible for the Lord?”. At that moment, Sarah realizes the dimension of the promise as divine work. Her denial marks a state of confusion and denial of her own thoughts for fear of the promise being withdrawn. She was afraid that her thought might be the cause of the loss of this divine promise. But God’s answer is implacable: “No, you did laugh”. This final and unequivocal answer shows that God is not looking at man’s face, but at his heart (Deuteronomy X, 17, I Kings XVI, 7, Luke XVI, 15, Revelation II, 23), He is the One who knows all, including the hidden thoughts of man.

### **Ishmael and Isaac**

Sarah will give birth to Isaac at an old age, which is a source of “laughter” for anyone who will hear about this birth: “God has made me laugh, and everyone who hears will laugh with me.” (Genesis XXI, 6). The interpretation of this laughter is many-sided, because, on the one hand, Isaac himself is “laughter” and, on the other hand, the laughter produced by God to Sarah is a laugh of joy, a laugh of the promised covenant; at the same time, this laughter, signifying the state of joy, is a state that is transmitted to all who hear it, because they get to understand that everything is possible with God:

I will make, she says, everyone enjoy the birth of my son. Great is the gift given to me by God; it exceeds human power. Who will not wonder, seeing me breastfeeding and cradling at such an old age, when I never gave birth to a child before? And marvelling at this, she too, being amazed by this, added: “*Who will tell Abraham that Sarah is nursing a baby? That I gave birth to a son at my old age!* ‘ This birth was above nature; that’s why Sarah says. «Who will tell?», Instead of: «Who will believe? Who could have thought? What mind could understand it? What judgment could explain this enough? ” (John Chrysostom, *Homilies at Genesis, XLVI, 1*, 1989: p. 87)

Again, this sacred laughter is in contrast to the profane laughter rendered in the same Chapter XXI by the laughter of Ishmael, the brother of Isaac from Hagar: “But Sarah saw the son mocking - the one Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham. So she said to

Abraham, «Drive out this slave with her son, for the son of this slave will not be a coheir with my son Isaac!» (Genesis XXI, 9-10). Sacred laughter is superior to profane laughter, it is the only one accepted, it is the promise of God. The chasing away of Ishmael, who was laughing at his brother Isaac-*laughter*, shows the superiority of laughter as a sacred joy, it has nothing to do with mockery or pure human mockery: it is from God, as a promise to a chosen and special nation. Ishmael's laughter is present only in the Masoretic text: "Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian - whom she had borne to Abraham - laughing" (*The Bible after the Hebrew text. Genesis*, 2017: p. 127). The Septuagint uses the term *παίζοντα* (Rahlfs, Alfred, 1979: p. 28): "Sarah saw that the son of Hagar the Egyptian, born to Abraham, was playing with Isaac, her son" (*Septuagint1*, 2004: p. 99). In *Homily VII on Genesis*, Origen speaks about Ishmael's *playing* with Isaac, which he interprets allegorically:

"Ishmael, the slave's son, is born *as a result of the flesh*. But Isaac, who was the son of a free woman, is not born *as a result of the flesh*, but *of the covenant*. Sara, who was free, generated a people that is not *a result of the flesh*, but was called to freedom, to that freedom through which Christ liberated it ... Sarah represents virtue. If therefore the flesh, represented by Ishmael, the one born *as a result of the flesh*, delights the spirit, which is Isaac, and finds joy with him in sweet scammers, if it seduces him with delights, soothes him with pleasure, then such a play of the flesh with the spirit offends Sarah, which is virtue, in the highest degree." (Origen, *Homilies on Genesis, VII, 2-3*, 2006: p. 279, 283).

Origen's interpretation derives from the words of St. Paul the Apostle: "For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and the other by a free woman. However, the one by the slave was born as a result of the flesh, while the one by the free woman was born through promise .... But just as then the child born as a result of the flesh persecuted the one born as a result of the Spirit, so also now" (Galatians IV, 22-23, 29). Paul uses the word *ἐδίωκεν* – to persecute, to oppress (Nestle-Aland, 1993: p. 500), which causes Origen to be amazed: "it amazes me then that the apostle called this game «persecution»" (Origen, *Homilies on Genesis, VII, 3*, 2006: p. 281). It is obvious that Paul, being a Jew, though he uses the *Septuagint* that speaks of Ishmael's play with Isaac (as Origen does), makes at the same time use of the traditional Jewish interpretation which envisages Ishmael's jealousy toward Isaac (Philip F. Esler, 1998: p. 214). In fact, Paul considers that Isaac is the foreshadowing of Christ: "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say «and to seeds, » as though referring to many, but referring to one, and to your seed, who is Christ" (Galatians III, 16). The Holy Apostle Paul clearly shows that he uses allegory in these words: *ἅτινά ἐστιν ἀλληγορούμενα* – *These things are being taken figuratively* (Galatians IV, 24). It is clear that the whole promise of Isaac's birth must be understood and related to the promise of Christ's birth: Isaac (*laughter, joy*) is the type of Christ, and Christians are the true descendants of God, because they are the children born of the promise.: "That is, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but the children of the promise are considered to be the offspring. For this is the statement of the promise: «At this time I will come, and Sarah will have a son»" (Romans IX, 8-9). Clement of Alexandria makes the same interpretation by saying that "Isaac laughed secretly; through his laughter, he prophesied that the Lord will fill us with joy, those who have been saved



from rottenness by the blood of the Lord.” (Clement of Alexandria, *The Pedagogue V, 23, 2*, 1982: p. 179). Generally, we will find in the works of the church fathers the parallel between Isaac and Christ in regard to his sacrifice by his father, Abraham, at the request of God: Isaac is the one without sacrifice, and Christ is the ultimate sacrifice, or Isaac carries the wood for his sacrifice, just as Christ carried the cross of crucifixion.

The explanatory note of the Septuagint in Romanian states that this play (in Hebrew *tāhaq* designates Isaac’s name) justifies the annoyance of Sarah because she presumes that Ishmael can take Isaac’s place. (*Septuagint1*, 2004: p. 99). This unlikely explanation, however, refers to the fact that through play Ishmael takes the place of Isaac, understood as *play*. However, the ambiguity of this fragment is worth noting because the Masoretic text leaves the impression that Ishmael is laughing alone, not necessarily of Isaac, which may indeed be an allusion to the usurping of Isaac’s son - *laughter*. A special interpretation of this fragment is carried out by St. Cyril of Alexandria who talks about the play of the two children in the sense that Ishmael is persecuting Isaac, and even drives him away. Allegorically, it is the Synagogue of the Jews (Ishmael) that persecutes the Christian people (Isaac):

“As the children were playing, he says, fighting each other: Isaac and Ismail. As for the type of game, I think it was a skeltering. Ismail was the one who was chasing, and Isaac was the one who was running away ... Notice how the children’s play is not without purpose in understanding the mystery. Because Ismail drove Isaac away. And that at one time the slave, that is, Ismail, shall persecute the free, that is, the faithful people in Christ, the blessed Paul showed, saying of Ismail and Isaac: But just as then the one born as a result of the body chased away the one born as a result of the spirit, now it is the same”(Gal. 4:20). But because Ismail is fighting against the free ones, the Jewish Synagogue is expelled “(Cyril of Alexandria, *Glaphy on Genesis III, 8*, 1992: pp. 88-89)

Sarah, the Scripture says, was sitting in the tent, or at the door of the tent, when she heard the word that proclaimed the birth of a child. This attitude of hers was considered by the church fathers and commentators of the Old Testament to be a coveted one, suitable for a woman who follows her man. The allegorical interpretations of the Alexandrian school highlight this. Thus, Philo from Alexandria states:

“The literal meaning seems clear, but the deeper meaning is perhaps the following. Virtue is behind the one who is virtuous by nature, not as a slave boy, but as a perfect administrator and governor, holding the reins in his hands, directing the whole soul and way of life. For those in the front do not see the last, while those behind the last can only see those who are near them. And the right place for virtue to stand is at the entrance; and entering into reflection is speech, and each of the senses is (entering) into a vital part of the soul. For when this is near, it must necessarily say and perceive what is right” (Philo, *Quaestiones Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin IV, 13*, 1953: p. 287).

The same direction of interpretation also includes the comments of Origen, who, speaking of the example of women who must follow men when they turn to the Lord, goes on to the allegorical interpretation, saying: “Thus, ascending one more step on the ladder of understanding, we name «Man» in us our rational thinking, and «woman» our flesh, which

is associated with it as to a man” (Origen, *Homilies on Genesis, IV, 4*, 2006: p. 235). Likewise, Epiphanius of Salamis interprets the good behaviour of Sarah, who was sitting in the tent, as being a model of courtesy: “she wanted to show her good behaviour as a model for those who really want to be pious, so that when they receive strangers, they serve them with their labour without showing their faces to men, because of their kindness” (Epiphanius of Salamis, *Ancoratus*, 39, 2007: p. 145).

## Conclusions

In the canonical books of the Holy Scriptures, laughter appears in different shapes and with meanings, however, related to the divine message contained within them, and thus, in particular, substantially to the meanings of profane laughter as a specific human manifestation. In a narrow sense, laughter can be somewhat assimilated to the theory of superiority, as a specific joy of the victor - as a result of divine intervention, or as a moralizing action, especially in the Old Testament wisdom books.

The laughter of Abraham and Sarah, which we referred to in this study, is an exception in which laughter appears related to biblical people in everyday context, and not to the theory of superiority or moralizing meaning. However, both the Jewish and Christian traditions, which often made references to and interpretations of Abraham’s and Sarah’s laughter, did not find here a profane manifestation, either as an expression or as a meaning, but they did relate laughter to faith in God and to God’s forerunner in the world. There have been several interpretations with reference to this laughter, but the most relevant is the one that sees the laughter of the two biblical persons not as a manifestation of unbelief, but on the contrary, as a manifestation of joy. This interpretation, which is shared by a large majority of the Judeo-Christian tradition, is especially supported by the fact that the name of Isaac, the child promised by God to Abraham and Sarah, can be translated by *laughter* or *let God smile*.

The Christian tradition in particular, starting with the Holy Apostle Paul, will interpret this aspect allegorically, so that Isaac - *laughter* is the image and prototype of Christ, the joy promised by God. Thus, the laughter of Abraham and Sarah represents the joy of seeing the promise beforehand, not only of the promise of a son - Isaac, but of the promise of the Messiah - Christ (cf. John VIII, 56). The relationship between Isaac and Ishmael, the two sons of Abraham the patriarch, one borne of his wife, and the other of a slave, will generate special allegorical interpretations of the Judeo-Christian tradition, especially through the Alexandrian tradition, starting with Philo of Alexandria and continuing with Origen, Clement of Alexandria and Cyril of Alexandria.

In the Christian tradition, laughter is not fierce or condemned, but only defined in the sense of good-will. Clement Alexandrine speaks of the fact that man should not suppress his natural state of laughter, but only laugh with good will; laughter, he says, must be educated (Clement of Alexandria, *The Pedagogue* V, 45-48, 1982: p. 256-258). Mention should be made of the fact that the Christian philoclastic literature condemns laughter, but here the references are to the profane laughter, the joking, ironic or mocking laughter.

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**SURGICAL PATIENTS' NARRATIVES  
RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS TESTING IN NARRATIVE  
MEDICINE**

**Ioana SILISTRARU\***

***Abstract:** The pretesting stage of the interview guide is an intermediate phase, to verify the quality of the collected data, to calibrate the interview guide and the research methodology if needed (Chelcea, 2001). The medical research area is extensive, but at the same time challenging to explore, though the researcher has to receive its validation from a "gatekeeper," in this case, a cardiovascular surgeon specializing in thoracic surgery. For the analysis, the collected data, both in the pretesting stage of the results obtained after mapping the interview guide and in the final phase of data analysis, we used various methods in combination, starting with the narrative review of the interviews, as a way of reflection on the information received, as stated by the authors of the study "Making sense of stories: A rhetorical approach to narrative analysis" (Feldman et al. 2004). Narrative data are experiences transposed into discourse and transcribed. Each interview contains the narrative elements we reflected upon and present in a revised way (as the essence of narrative analysis is to reformulate patients' experiences obtained in a medical context). At the same time, the qualified analysis of manually entered data was used, without the use of specialized software (coding, thematic organization of identified elements and conceptual mapping), participatory observation, ethnographic items, social documents (confidential access to patients' medical records and their medical history). For the present research, we choose the epistemological coding (Saldana 2009), which I consider useful to understand a phenomenon - respectively how doctor-patient communications take place and what are the problems encountered in the communication process, how can be identified, organized, and how they can resolve for the benefit of parents and physicians.*

***Keywords:** narrative medicine, patient, cardiovascular*

According to Saldana, the choice of the type of coding depends on the academic discipline you practice (Saldana 2009: 4), the theory used, and the framework of analysis. In this case, I consider the epistemological coding to be useful for a sociological explanation attributed to the phenomenon of doctor-patient communication in the field of cardiovascular diseases. According to Saldana, epistemological coding must rely on the type of research question and research hypothesis.

Thus, this type of coding is used with excerpts from patient' discourses, as the first round of coding, as defined by Saldana (Saldana 2009), by defining labels that do not have a specific direction but we can tag as "first impressions" of an open coding process (Saldana 2009). The tags are marked within the text with affiliate numbers.

Yes, so I have a disease that has been with me for 40 years (1). For 40 years! And you realize that my body has fought. I am 62 years old. My body also fought (2) while he

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fought, but now I am under the impression that it is starting to give up. Not mentally, I won't give up mentally. I will not give up no. I have to move on (3). But he is stubborn in his way. I had a heart C.T. scan on October 6th. And the moment the substance was injected, like that, I felt an extraordinary pain in my arm (4). It felt as if someone had cut my hand off from my wrist. And, of course, the doctor immediately stopped injecting the substance, saying that I was allergic to it. I swelled up a lot. I was given the treatment, of course, and everything for my first aid. Okay, I stayed in the hospital until I was not too long, but better, until recovered, I was able to ... And I also have big problems (5) with my legs, because I have had thrombophlebitis since I gave birth to the baby. And it is treated that I had surgery three times on both legs (8), but in the meantime I did, as I went, also thanks to the doctor, that I am not only a doctor (6) or a man, I -she's like a sister, as part of the family, that's how she treated me. That I did not open my mouth to say that I have something and her to say no (7). I mean, he got involved in my other problems, too. (V.M., 62)

- (1) life marked by illness
- (2) optimism, fighting the disease
- (3) perception of the future in the disease
- (4) trauma, traumatic interventions
- (5) additional diseases
- (6) medical professional
- (7) professional medical empathic
- (8) complex medical history

I: Yes. Yes Yes. But have you ever given up on a doctor because you didn't like it?

G: Yes, not once. It happened to me several times. Although he was listed as an excellent professional. Now what happens, you can be a good craftsman (15) in your field. Here, I give you an example, those who do coronary angiography or stent implants. From the profession, I do it correctly because it does the same thing all day, whether you like it or not, you gain skills because in this profession you have to have a little love (9) but also ability. That is, to have a steady hand, as the Romanians say. But if you don't know how to talk (10) with the patient and how to receive and convince him, it goes elsewhere. Now I have a choice. I have a choice now (11), so I'm not in the doctor's hands anymore, so to speak. (V.M., 75)

- (9) attention
- (10) communication
- (11) the patient chooses the doctor

We all make mistakes because we are human beings... no one wants to make mistakes, especially of a medical nature... I think, importantly, how to end the problem (12) generated by the error. Unfortunately, it seems that medical malpractice is one of the cases with a high percentage of deaths (13) in Romania. (S.C., 45)

- (12) responsibility

(13) medical error

If he gives me a prescription, I won't take it (14). I do not tell him that I would not take that prescription, but I go to another doctor and make a comparison between one and another. I'm still looking. We have gained both good and evil. I say there are good doctors, but few. "A.O.

(14) compliance

(15) perfection

An 18-year-old patient's case, V.B. from Buzau, interviewed after a vascular consultation, is analyzed further. The medical exposure of this young man, with congenital hematological conditions and spina bifida, began quite suddenly as all current health issues were identified within half a year. V.B. was exposed to a series of erroneous, insufficient, and dramatic diagnoses – at the hospital where he was initially admitted after complaining of pain in his thighs, and his mother was told that V.B. had a tumor and surgery was necessary. On the day the surgery was scheduled, the pain "went down into the shins, and so the doctors realized that there was no tumor, but a valve defect or a non-functioning vein" (V.B., 18, Buzau). Such a healing journey favored an interview in which references to "medical error", "communication of bad news", "compliance with treatment", "trust in the doctor", but also "relationship with family", "impact of the disease in the patient's daily life" were explored.

Comorbidities also bring a specific discourse with the doctor, as most patients are familiar with medical language, due to previous experiences. Patients' narratives are explored through their relationship with their physician of choice, after seeing several other physicians, with whom they have been unable to establish a relationship based on trust and respect. The doctor who provided access to patients plays the role of a "gatekeeper" with whom patients judge previous medical experiences. Consequently, in interviews, the reference to 'gatekeeper' often appears in interviews, on which patients rule on the quality of the doctor-patient relationship, superimposed on the concept of 'ideal doctor' and 'ideal care'. The relationship with this doctor also generates a set of characteristics that can be extrapolated to the category "ideal doctor/good doctor". A list of desirable traits of the doctor can be identified during the narrative analysis to create an ideal framework for the therapeutic act. For example, if the patient has undergone complicated surgery or has ended up in the care of the doctor with whom he has established a partnership link in the management of the condition, after repeated attempts to find this partner in the doctor, a proportional relationship is sought in the way they attribute these qualities to him. Therefore, the more critical the suffering, the superlative the attributes of the ideal doctor. For example, V.M., a 63-year-old patient with recurrent, chronic conditions that have already lasted for more than 40 years in progression, talks about her physician as if he was a family member.

A detailed description of the difficulties the patient has experienced at some point produces a context that can be studied by healthcare professionals and healthcare workers to adjust the speech with the patient and his family. The literature indicates the benefit of narrative medicine, which contributes to the patient's comfort and compliance with

treatment, to increase the degree of confidence in the medical act. A successful therapeutic approach defines the purpose of narrative medicine as an academic discipline (Charon 2004). While technology, figures, analyses, everything that builds a clinical, evidence-based medicine, have taken the place of doctor-patient discourse and direct interaction in medicine, there is a need to bridge the gap between the two ways of practicing medicine (Charon 2011) is increasingly evident. This connection is narrative medicine, a discipline that is also medicine, but a medicine practiced with understanding and empathy (Charon 2001a) with "the ability to recognize, absorb, metabolize, interpret and be moved by the narratives of the disease".

"For it is not possible to immerse itself twice in the same river" (Vlăduțescu and Banșoiu 2002). The quote from Heraclitus of Ephesus describes the researcher's position in the research field's ethnographic approach. Parabola extrapolates to ethnographic research – "the same story cannot be told twice, because the context in which it is first narrated is irrevocably altered by the narrative act itself" in Georgakopoulou's opinion, which explains the social sequence in the location of the narrative act (Georgakopoulou 2002).

Although ethnography has received different interpretations of the same research approach over the past four decades, all definitions converge on a common element: ethnography, which involves immersing the researcher in the field, his direct presence in the studied sphere, a privileged position from which he can observe the phenomenon as the participants perceive it. According to Berg (2004), one of the most valuable qualities of ethnographic research is that it involves "extensive fieldwork with various approaches, such as participatory observation, formal and informal interviews, collection of social documents, filming, audio recordings, and many more." Also, Berg, in Chapter 6, dedicated to ethnographic research in the *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (Berg 2004), states that the distinction between macroethnography and microethnography is relevant in the context of research objectives.

### **Personal observations and notes of the researcher**

During the research, we collected personal notes, which bring the researcher's perspective, which could not be recorded in the patients' responses. Private notes are not subject to encoding at this stage of the research but can help set up a narrative path, complementing the additional qualitative element.

As such, macroethnography deals with the description of the way of life of a human group in its entirety, while microethnography focuses on particular segments in a broader social framework, emphasizing precise points in the social existence of subjects (Harrington 2003). During the pretesting phase, the critical point where the patients find themselves in illness is the equivalent of the loss of autonomy, identity, usefulness. For example, most patients interviewed for pretesting the interview guide claim that they were never seriously ill before the time of surgery, which is not necessarily true in the absolute sense but only in their perception. The medical history of the 18-year-old patient in Buzau contains several essential milestones, over which the patient, unfamiliar with the severity of the conditions, mentions them as details, in no way remarkable.



During the interview, there is also an episode where the patient reports neutrally, although it contains an element of drama. V.B. recounts the moment when he faced an anaphylactic shock due to an anticoagulant drug prescribed to him in Bucharest, on one of his visits to a pediatric hospital. The episode is also told through the prism of physical discomfort (itching, swollen limbs, burning sensation) and less through that of the psychological effect, of fear, although the young man was alone at home at the beginning of the episode and called himself an ambulance, advised by telephone by his mother.

How long have you discovered this problem? I guess you were younger.

Since February last year.

So it came pretty suddenly, huh?

It hurt my back on my left, and I had an X-ray on my spine, and it turned out that I had spina bifida and I thought that's why I sat at the computer once and when I came out, suddenly when I put my foot in the ground, my leg started to hurt.

And it hurts badly?

Yes, it hurt then. Now it doesn't hurt. It just hangs on for me, and I can't straighten my leg right. (V.B) "

All these elements lead to the decision to recalibrate the category "impact of the disease on the patient", which, for better definition, will subsequently comprise two sub-categories ("impact on physical integrity" and "impact on the patient's psyche").

Diagnoses of the patients interviewed range from severe diseases, which required complex surgery, mostly performed abroad, to surgically corrected vascular diseases with minimally invasive methods. Patients engaged in a semistructured interview with open questions, organized in five chapters. Using the semistructured interview, I tried to mainly follow how the patient perceives communication with his doctor as a therapeutic experience, associated with the benefits of biomedicine and allopathic therapy.

The second research axis concerns the patient's weighting scared versus "healer" qualities for the doctor with whom he interacts. This hypothesis, once verified as crucial in the doctor's professional development, can be translated into the education of medical professionals. One of the characteristic features of narrative medicine is, in addition to cultivating a harmonious and double-beneficial system in the doctor-patient relationship, the ability to be transmitted as a subject of study to those who are preparing for professions in the health system.

For the present research, the ethnographic approach of the land is one of those rare occasions to be a participant in the work carried out by the actors in the researched field, namely surgical patients with diseases in the cardiovascular sphere. Active participation in consultations and the operating block puts some difficulties and constraints in the collection of field data. According to the model described by Berg and Lune in "Research Ethics in Historical Perspective" (Berg and Lune 2012), the researcher who approaches a field in research must bend to the three principles "watch, listen and learn". Most ethnographic approaches involve entering the researched group and observing it.

In the case of the group of patients studied to carry out this research, the perimeter is extended to patients from all over the country, with a variety of diseases in the

cardiovascular sphere, with varying degrees of severity. Also, at the time of entry into the field, the patients subject to this research were "captured" at different moments of the therapeutic journey – the doctor first examined some of them; another part was examined post-operatively. From the first category, several patients recommend emergency vascular surgery, including the day after the initial consultation, other patients are recommended for surgery, but timed, depending on the severity of the disease. For patients in the urgent surgical stage, the research was done by observing the patient during the operation and immediately after waking him from sedation. A part of the patients was analyzed at all three stages of the therapeutic process – initial consultation, surgery, post-operative consultation. In such a context, the patient's anxiety in the course of therapy and willingness to answer questions was inversely proportional – the lower the degree of stress, the higher the patient's desire to participate in the research, a situation favored by the fact that I was a familiar person, encountered in the medical environment, but not assimilated with the doctor.

A 65-year-old patient, A.O., recalls that her experience with the medical sector has been, according to her statements, dominated by fear for her entire life. Vascular intervention is also the time when I met A.O. at the pre-operation consultation. Throughout the consult, during which he has marked the path of future incisions and explained in detail what intervention and anesthesia consist of, A.O. placed a particular emphasis on the feeling of fear. The technical aspects of the surgery could not be assimilated, nor did they seem to be very important to her. Exploring this feeling and how it has overcome it provides clues to the beneficial effects in doctor-patient communication. The patient begins the account with the first traumatic childhood episode, related to vaccination.

I had a fear of doctors! When I was little, I had some injections, and that's how I was afraid I was staying at my grandmother's, and my grandmother was holding me so hard that I was more fearful of that land than the injection. And I was crying; Grandma said why you're crying, I replied because you squeezed me so hard! (A.O.)

Thus, it seemed necessary and relevant in the subject of research to deconstruct the concept of fear in the face of a medical intervention, which gives way according to the interests of the patient's universe, which suggests as appropriate and the adjustment of the doctor's speech in preparation for surgery. In both patients' cases, the physical discomfort and amputation of personal autonomy, the inability to cope in everyday life or the fear of becoming dependent on another person, are the dominant elements in the description of the disease.

I got along very well (with the surgeon, n.n.) that encouraged me, immediately saying it won't hurt. I'm surprised when I saw how good it did on my feet. I thought it started to cut me on those lines, and I had a fear! I know what happened to me. And now I'm coming with love. More anesthesia in the spine, that was my greatest fear (A.O.)

The importance of knowing how the patient's life is affected by the disease is emphasized by Maria Valeria Marini in "Narrative Medicine. Bridging the Gap between Evidence-Based Care and Medical Humanities" (Marini 2011) in the sense that the attempt to improve the doctor-patient relationship and communication must take into account the barriers of spoken and written language, as well as the signals it transmits through subconscious language, in the Lacanian sense, in which language is the mirror of human

personality (Marini 2011). Thus, the analysis of language units, from the most elaborate to the minimum groups, e.g., gestures or pure sounds of approval or disapproval, in a sense indicated by Debra Roter in the RIAS coding system (Roter and Lason 2002) can be used to decrypt the story behind a patient's distinct narrative (Marini 2011). These, Marini says, are the expression of how patients cope with the disease, so narratives are dominated by emotions and full of personal anecdotes, beliefs, fears, hopes, or fantasies expressed in congruence with the baggage of knowledge and the private universe of each patient. Sometimes these narratives are such an extraordinary nature that they are so hard to accept as accurate, being, in fact, a kernel of truth in a false perception of reality (Shapiro 2011).

Thus, the patient V.B. confesses that he has concerns rather about how his life will go, in the context of the disease he suffers.

At the end of the day, you're right, but you think your life will go smoothly. But are you willing to do what the woman tells you? (*the doctor*) To get over it?

It depends on what he asks.

What's bothering you the most? What's bothering you personally?

Well, I have to go to college that I didn't want to do in the first place.

I'm trying to enroll in the police academy, you know.

And you think in the long run, your career isn't going to be right? Or do you think you can recover? That in the long term, life gives you all kinds of surprises. Know?

I thought if I didn't go to college, I'd work and I wouldn't be able to because of my leg. There's stuff like that.

And you need someone to tell you, give you guarantees. Not? You need someone to make sure things are going to be okay.

He'll tell me if I don't feel that way. It's not helping.

What would convince you that you have everything you need to move forward? Another doctor, another treatment?

It's not about another doctor. It's about, like, if I can get in where I want.

You need someone to help you with that certainty.

Probably, yes. (V.B.)

Also, in this context, the narration of a 63-year-old patient, retired on time from military aviation, permanently combines memories of military service with medical episodes. V.L. talks about unlikely events, such as mission flight with unacceptable voltage for a supersonic pilot. The patient also has an explanation – the "form" medical visit was fatal to a colleague, whom he recalls justifying flying in poor health conditions. In the analysis of V.L.'s narrative, one can follow the concept of "responsibility" that the patient transfers exclusively to the doctor or system, which is or is not performing.

I was going through medical examinations, so let me tell you one thing: I had a colleague at Borcea, he made the pilot medical visit, after about ten weeks he got sick, they took him to the hospital and told him he was on metastases with cancer. And at the medical visit, no one knew. He died of cancer, so the medical visit is... (V.L.)

The concept of responsibility shall be looked at when involving the patient in the therapeutic decision and keeping him and his family in the medical information circle while having informed decisions. Although the patient's involvement in the therapeutic decision is close to becoming the norm in many countries of the world, others also retain "the

paternalistic approach, which remains the preferred one, despite the obvious examples in the world" (Kon 2010).

I also flew with very high blood pressure, I was assigned challenging missions, and I had to go. The fact is, none of the doctors who have seen me found the problem... to solve it, yes. I've been recommended a lady doctor from (...), from (...), which unfortunately is not what the hospital used to be, now it's a mess. I saw a lady doctor there, who was head of cardiology, and she admitted me for about ten days, and she solved my blood pressure problem. (V.L., 63, former pilot)

During the analysis of patient narratives in the chosen field, the pendulum between the paternalistic approach and the patient's consultation in decisions produces qualitative effects that can be measured from doctor-patient communication and the latter's compliance with treatment. For example, patient A.O. essentially states that if the doctor does not inspire confidence, she will not take the prescribed medication, even if she buys it from the pharmacy. Interestingly, patients who have such "declarations of independence" indirectly link the "trust" that the doctor inspires and his ability to communicate in the patient's sense, without approaching him with superiority, haste, rudeness or lack of empathy.

The collaboration is, in many of the interviews, the "key" to achieving patient cooperation. During the conversation, this collaboration is essential for the therapeutic course, as long as the patient does not have the knowledge, cultural universe, or appropriate language to assess the quality of treatment. Ideally, the patient's involvement remains at the level of an informed decision and based on the information received from the doctor, i.e., based on communication (which may or may not have the necessary quality). Thus, the doctor remains the information source based on which the patient will have an informed decision on his treatment course.

I say if he's a good doctor, he has respect, but if he talks bad and misbehaves, he never speaks well to you again. If he gives me the prescription, I don't take it. That he didn't dare to argue with him, to contradict a doctor, that he taught her too much about the mini, that I didn't take that prescription, I didn't tell him, but I go to another doctor and compare one, the other. I'm still looking. We have learned ourselves and with evil and good. I say there are good doctors, but few." (A.O., 63 years old, bilateral vascular intervention).

In the case of the patient with deep vein thrombosis, the therapeutic proposal is to wear compression stockings permanently, throughout life. The importance of choosing a healthy lifestyle, with an accessory not comfortable for an 18-year-old, falls to the doctor, and the mission is not easy. How the patient accepts all the limitations that the disease imposes and is aware that only then can avoid definitive and debilitating consequences is due to excellent communication with the doctor. V.B.'s narrative describes how he accepted his doctor's proposals, which promised him that he would be able to lead a healthy life, with regular activities for a young man his age.

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## **THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN IDEOLOGY**

**Dragos Ciprian VIRSESCU\***

**Abstract:** *The fact that ideologies and culture have had great impact on women's lives in Muslim countries to a different degree of intensity can be easily understood under the perspective of the political influence posed on all three dimensions. The instrumentalization of religion by the state in order to carve the optimal ideology and further the optimal culture has placed a strategic place for women within society. The role of women turned out to be thoroughly strategic in the state-building processes, in the fight for power of the elites, in the struggle to win violent wars and in the symbolic, immaterial sphere of nurturing mothers. Consequently, gender relations have been manipulated and carved so as to meet the political strategies in constructing the national ideology desired. Complex patterns of analysis, namely constructionism and the sociology of power have been used to describe the construction of identity having politics as the main catalyst. Constructionism and the sociology of power represent the theoretical framework and the hypothesis of the essay.*

**Keywords:** *nation; religion; gender*

### **Gender according to historical ideologies in MENA region**

“The impact of Islam on gender and reproduction is largely a function of the political context in which these issues are defined” (Obermeyer)

Among the common features that the MENA region encompasses it is important to name the strong patriarchy-based society with religion at the core of culture, the transitional phase in development where tradition and modernity coexist and the multi-cultural and multilingual legacy left by history. Even though the political context of the region does not specifically favour the empowerment of women the last few decades were decisive in women's assertion in political, social, cultural and religious spheres. This assertion is not unanimous, as it was previously considered due to Western hegemony, and it is shaped by many manifestations: secular feminists- “women who do not articulate their gender rights discourse in a religious paradigm”<sup>1</sup>, state feminism- promotion of women's status and rights by state agencies, hybrid feminism as called by Ahmed Gosh- encompasses the diversity and variety of issues in real communities at regional, local, rural level- and Islamic feminisms- “women who are searching for a flexible and personal way of carving a model of life that might conciliate faith, rights, faithfulness to autochthonous culture and modernity.”<sup>2</sup>

The adepts of Islamic feminism believe in the values of equality guaranteed by the original Islam, which in time were altered by the patriarchs' interpretations that would suit best their jurisprudential needs. Furthermore, the Islamic feminism followers “not only

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<sup>1</sup> Margot Badran, *Feminism in Islam- Secular and Religious Convergences*, OneWorld Oxford.

<sup>2</sup> Vazan A., *The Women of Allah: A Personal Journey through Islamic Feminisms*, in *Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies: Alam-e-Niswan* Vol. 19, No. 1, 2012, pp.1-10.

reinterpreted the holy texts by applying new hermeneutics to them and claim their right to use the veil in a public space but they also fight for making changes in the family laws in their respective societies.”<sup>1</sup>

Lately, a fight against the Eurocentric mindset and the neo-Oriental approach in gender issues gained momentum. Accordingly, women’s effort to stand up for their rights and foster the right environment according to their personal beliefs and values are supported: “...women cannot be seen as passive victims. They must be seen in their multiple roles as secularists and political Islamic activists, veiled and unveiled, conservatives and liberals, and professionals and mothers. This changing view of women has exploded the myth of a single, stereotypical notion of an Arab woman.”<sup>2</sup>

The modern political history of the Middle East and North Africa region starting with the 19<sup>th</sup> century and through the 20<sup>th</sup> century has always been under the influence of Islamic politics, but with variations in intensity according to the ideology that governed- ideologies that were mostly nationalist and secular. However, the Islamic politics found two ways of manifestations: through reactionary conservatives- exercised by traditional positions of authority and patriarchy- and modern populist manifestation (Muslim Brotherhood). The affirmed forces were of mixed ideologies, but always nationalist, varying from liberal constitutionalism (Wafd party in the 1920s’ and 1930s’ which led Egypt to constitutional monarchy from dynasty), to fascism (1930s’ and 1940’s in Palestine, Egypt and Iraq), and to socialism inspired by the Soviet Union (pan-Arabism in the 1950’s of Nasser in Egypt, Ba’ath Party in Syria and the FLN in Algeria).

Religion became an important element in politics starting with the 1970’s inspired by the Islamic revolution of 1979 in Iran and following the failure of socialist Arab governments because of corruption and the collapse of the Soviet Union and communism.

The modern forms of Islamic trend were brought about by Muhammad Abduh in Egypt, al-Kawakibi in Syria and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, with reforms aiming at “new construction of Islam and science, rationality and a constitutional order”<sup>3</sup>, but failing to “deliver politically the utopia of a pan-Islamic renaissance”<sup>4</sup>. Abduh and Afghani “re-opened the gates of *ijtihad*, or independent reasoning/religious interpretation, questioning the orthodoxy of the clergy and the anti-philosophical leanings of the most prominent Islamic institutions”<sup>5</sup>. These modernists try to bring about changes in family law by clearly separating doctrines and religious rituals- which are eternal and not subject to interpretation- from human relations such as social, political, economic, cultural and educational matters which should be reinterpreted with the aim of keeping the pace of change. They were open to bring adaptations from other cultures as long as it raised the social standards. Among the desired changes were the statute of women in society through education, revision of divorce norms, seclusion and polygamy. The pursuit of conformity with the West was a strong feature meanwhile the survival of the nation was incidental. The

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Global Women’s Leadership Initiative, *Women in Democratic Transitions in MENA Region Final Report*, March 2013

<sup>3</sup> Zubaída S., 2011, “*The Arab Spring in historical perspective*”

<sup>4</sup> Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, *Islamutopia: A very short history of political Islam*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*



Western civilization became highly appreciated and well-known especially among the elites who embraced its norms as superior to the Islamic tradition.

The collapse of the Caliphate in 1924 and the rise of post-colonial states led to the emergence of modernist Islamists who created many forms of Islam which “were assembled to be suitable enough to function in the modernist mode, as agendas for socio-economic organisation, governance, cultural policies”<sup>1</sup>. The praise of independent reasoning put to question the sovereignty and authority of the clergy and raised the political discourse of men such as al-Banna (1906-1949), Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), Ali Shariati (1933) and Iqbal (1877-1938) superior to the clerical jurisprudence. This is how Modernist Islam turned to a more radical vision.

For Qutb, Islam ‘is a revolutionary concept and a way of life, which seeks to change the prevalent social order and remould it according to its own vision.’ In response to western imperialism and authoritarian states in the Arab world, Qutbian Islam did away with philosophy in favour of ideology. In a radical twist of meanings, ‘the word Muslim became the name of an international revolutionary party that Islam seeks to form in order to put its revolutionary programme into effect.’ Jihad was not the individual’s spiritual path to God. In the Qutbian discourse it ‘signifies that revolutionary struggle involving the utmost use of resources that the Islamist party mobilises in the service of its cause.’ Islam as revolution; Iran in 1979 experienced it.<sup>2</sup>

Even though for the modernist Islamists the utopian ummah (the whole community of Muslims bound together by ties of religion) had failed to be reached economically, politically, culturally and socially through Islam, the strong shift that was planned towards revolutionary action against western imperialism was strongly felt. Efforts were made to replace the trivial exegesis of Qur’an so much relied upon previously and to override the Islamic jurisprudence by creating much needed political formulations. The politics required to formulate ideologies capable of outreaching the necessities of the day, “almost as if Islam is what one makes of it”.<sup>3</sup> Women’s movements during the pre-colonization and colonization periods considered the emancipation of women an asset for social development. However, women had different aims during that period and believed that independence would bring about emancipation, so they enrolled in revolutionary activities combating the colonists. Women did not question their social status, but rather preached for their role and importance in society and waited for the so much sought after state independence and its effect- emancipation. During the colonial period they also undertook charitable and revolutionist activities, giving greater attention to nationalist rather than social goals. They even played a strategic role in the fight for independence from

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<sup>1</sup> Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, *Islamutopia: A very short history of political Islam*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

colonialism as under cover messengers, being able to infiltrate much easier than men in combat regions.

As for the religious sphere of the peoples' lives it should be noted that: "Politics apart, popular mentalities and styles of life were thoroughly secularised over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries. That is not to say that people lost their faith or piety (though this was much diluted for many), but that the confines of communal and local life, governed as they were by religious authority, ritual and calendrical punctuation of time, were broken with mobility, individualisation and the rise of spheres of culture and entertainment unrelated to religion, and subversive of its authority."<sup>1</sup>

Following the revolutionary stage, during the 1950's and 1960's changes were underlined by the creation of authoritarian states through military coups. These regimes were very popular especially that of Nasser in Egypt, who rose successful in nationalizing the Suez Chanel. Other military juntas such as Ba'ath in Syria and Iraq, the FLN (National Liberation Front) in Algeria, in Yemen different versions and Gaddafi in Libya took form and did away with pluralism and put an end to any social or economic groups of power. The insurance of social support, land reforms, jobs and bias to development on nationalist and militaristic grounds were the key values of the regimes that opposed through their ideology what they would call the fake and oppressive democracy. Also the Soviet support played an important role in their success. Once independence was obtained the socialist governments founded universal education and welcomed educated women on the labour market. Any effort from the West to urge Muslim countries in the capitalist system was countered, whereas in matters of family conduct and the role of women in society western patters were accepted. Women were given a strategic role in economic development through participation on the labor market and the raising of children was no longer seen as a solely home task, since nursery schools became an option. Amira al-Durra is recorded to have condemned Islam for the backwardness of society:

I see religion as a potent and very dangerous weapon, a double-edged sword. It is true that the backwardness of the Arab person whether male or female has many roots, but the fundamental root is religion. From it come the conventions, customs, and practices that dominate the Arab person. It has strong chains that pull backward, especially the Arab woman... she finds herself at times considered to possess half a brain and half the religion. At other times she is a rib from the ribs of man. In whatever she does she is evil, obsessed of that which is forbidden... unless we find a new modern interpretation from religion, and a way to distance religion from forming the Arab person, we will not be successful in changing the social structures.<sup>2</sup>

What broke the echo of success was the six-day war in 1967 when Israel came out as a winner and soon the military regimes enhanced actions that would lead to dynastic rule.

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<sup>1</sup> Zubaida Sami, *The Arab Spring in Historical perspective*, Oct 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, *Islam, Gender, and Social Change*, Oxford University Press, 1998.

Control and suppression by The Arab Socialist Party in Egypt, the Ba`ath of Iraq and Syria, the Jamahiriya of Libya brought down any potential political challenge and included any center of social and economic power or institution within the ruling of the regime. The decrease of Soviet influence gave way to American support with Ronald Reagan's administration and the petro-wealth prevalence removed the social pact alongside with socialism during the 1970's and 1980's when other changes such as investments and capital inflow gained way. However, during this period, when the husband gained just enough to support his family, "the goals proposed by various national leaders as to what society should achieve vis a vis women have been subverted by the traditions enshrined in the various national constitutions<sup>1</sup>". But impoverishment of population soon escalated because of war sanctions (in Iran, Kuwait) and because of the transfer of state wealth through privatization in the hands of a small elite group circulating around the dynastic ruling figures, which ultimately lead to corruption.

By the end of the 1980's military courts had gained unlimited prevalence, where networks of power easily surpassed any institutions of state or law.

The role of religion in the modern ideology of politics was undermined by the poetics of the nationalist regimes. The mobilization of people was made through discourses of "nationalist unity and, confronting the enemies, promises of economic development and future prosperity, of equality and dignity for citizens"<sup>2</sup>, and explicit opposition "to tribalism, ethnic or religious communalism and any form of primordial loyalties which subverted national commitment"<sup>3</sup> were features of the governments. The nationalist parties pushed religion out of state affairs, education or legal matters away from the traditional Sharia, but not entirely rejecting religion. While the lefties and Islamic supporters were suppressed, underground activities of social services and aid in goods were undertaken by Islamic networks and soon gained importance in the community and patronage founding.

However, the following dynastic dictatorships focused on a different ideology as nationalism and the development discourse had lost credibility by then and the American influence spread. Insecurity, impoverishment, and police harassment threw most of the population to a backup system of religious, tribal, familiar and regional communities created by religious clandestine associations. The regimes themselves encouraged these tribal networks and supported their leaders in creating a patronage relationship within communities.

The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is encompassed by the "survival unit"<sup>4</sup> which referred to the dependence an individual had on a master, network, community that would foster security, jobs and education. Religion would play an important role in these survival units. As the oil prices grew and revenues flooded the states, the population became more and more dependent on welfare aid. Women were favoured by legislation and patriarchal seizure lost its grip, while religion's authority curved. This is where the state attacked the tribal form, previously so much supported, however protecting the leader of the clans.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>2</sup> Zubaida Sami, *The Arab Spring in Historical perspective*, Oct 2011

<sup>3</sup> Zubaida Sami, *The Arab Spring in Historical perspective*, Oct 2011

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*

But starting with the 1980's military expenditure, sanctions and the US invasion in 2003 have drained state revenues and declined public services or social aid. This situation has biased the population to retake the tribal, sectarian and network underground resource seeking, but in a more drastically way. "The secularism of the regime was reversed into an official "faith campaign" (*hamlet al-iman*). Family legislation was ignored in favour of communal and religious authority; honour crimes were recognised and treated leniently if at all."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, secular, tribal and religious politics were handled as instruments according to the particular social, economic or political context by the regimes in power. During the socialist rule, the nationalist regimes took hold of any center of power, be it social or economic, and incorporated it. Later, during the dynastic authoritarian rule and US influence, the effort concentrated in corruption and the ideological development discourse fell out of interest, leading to police repression and ultimately to networks of patronage and religion affiliation. With the defeat of these regimes (after the invasion of Iraq) the gap of authority was filled with the leaders and patrons of the networks, eager for leadership.

The historical line presented in this paper has the aim to demonstrate that women were granted liberties and opportunities when the ruling elite found it convenient for the policies implemented and for maintaining power and the ideology. The main tool used in deciding the policies related to women in society appeared to be religion, either by reinforcing it within the traditionalist constraints or by reinterpreting Islam rendering the most feasible alternative. Thus, religion was introduced in the political sphere under a great range of methods, not only under the form of godliness and belief. Women were given liberty and education at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the elite focused on the Western cultural pattern, whereas later for the sake of nationalism and socialism they are included in the development plan and used to accomplish the nationalist unity which was a priority at the time. Women are seen as biological reproducers for the nationalist regime, and a viable element in the perpetuation of the national norms and as she is the one responsible for the education of the new generations.

To continue, I would like to emphasize the bond between nationalism and women and gender issues put forth in the policies conducted to develop ideologies where women are instrumentalised and given roles in society according to the political needs.

### **Nationalism and Gender**

The relation between nationalism and gender reveals how women were used in formulating ideologies with the aim of obtaining national cohesion.

Regarding the concept of nationalism, it is argued that it can be seen both as a goal, reaching statehood, and a belief- constructing community. Common descent, common past and present, traditions, construction of the sense of community and sovereign state-building are the main features and values that lead to the concept of nationalism. It is through ideology that nationalism seeks to define the unity of a community and the sense of belonging to a structure. Social policies were historically created and used to shape ideologies, to bring social cohesion and promote state interests. New born governments

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<sup>1</sup> Zubaida Sami, "*The Arab Spring in historical perspective*", Oct 2011.

supported the working class as far as creating national unity and a sense of allegiance and loyalty, in the detriment of a social pact that would embody citizen rights. These features reconstruct the sociology of power and the constructionist model for the MENA region.

Since it has been noted that the national state is a masculine institution, where authority and decision-making spheres are male dominated, the regulation of women's rights falls within men's responsibility, which defines the role of women within society through masculine lenses. Another link between gender and nationalism was noted by the way women are integrated into the nationalist agenda: either as representations of the nation, or as social actors. As representations of the nation, women bear complex symbolism in literature as mothers of the nation, as patriotic devotion, or as the nurturing mother.

The role and participation of women in nationalist culture and state participation as social actors was identified in five ways by the authors Yuval-Davis and Anthias: as biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities, as reproducers of national norms, as transmitters of the culture and perpetrators of ideology, as signifiers of ethnic/national differences, and as participants of the collective struggle in national, economical, political and military spheres. Being limited to these roles, women tend to accomplish their national participation through domestic or traditional means, which were assigned to them by the nationalists. Their responsibilities would encompass the education of children, supporting their husbands, and "serving as symbols of national honor".<sup>1</sup>

However, cases of nationalist struggle among women in conflict situations have been signaled throughout history, where women participated in violent conflicts either direct or indirect. Unfortunately, not once has happened that after independence and stability are obtained, women are again set aside or marginalized by the nationalist movement. One example can be the central role of women in the Arab Spring uprisings which is today strongly acknowledged, be it by protest, organizing, nursing, blogging or hunger-striking, and ultimately some paying the human cost for the demonstrations. Despite their efforts in bringing about change and standing up for their chance of a better life, soon after, women found themselves marginalized when time came to reap their benefits. Women's aspiration for democracy, equality, justice and the rule of law turned out to become victims of the Arab Spring. Another example would be the fight for independence of Algeria in 1962, when women were denied their gender equality rights as soon as independence was secured. These outcomes- where women found themselves marginalized- reinforce the believe that nationalism and masculinity not only go hand in hand, but also develop a strong bias towards constructivism and traditionalism, which in gender discourse is referred to as patriarchal system. Traditions are used as legitimate tools in nation building and sustain the masculine privilege.

One contradictory feature of the women-nationalism association was discovered in the inability of women to accomplish full citizen rights and remain under an equivocal statute: between the legitimacy of citizen rights and the persistence of cultural values. Women are expected to guard national values which are strongly attached to the patriarchal

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<sup>1</sup> Nira Yuval-Davis, *Women and the Biological Reproduction of the Nation*, 'Women's Studies International Forum'

characteristics. Thus independence for women is considered a threat to national welfare, while the rights remained uncontested masculine priorities.

Another contradictory issue was advanced by Tricia Cusack who argues that the disadvantages of backwardness were attributed to women, while men afford the privilege to grant the present and future of the nation.

Gender constructions of masculinity and femininity are thought to contribute to the process of defining national ideology and delineate women's and men's struggle within the nation. Many nationalists create an analogy between the family and the nation, where women are attributed the domestic activities subordinated to both men's assertion as the head of the family, and men's assertion on the political nationalist stage. This is where the notion of honor emerges, because women symbolically represent the mother of the nation, they traditionally carry the purity related to the honor of the family and further, of the nation.

Because of the difficulty of quantifying or differentiating gender relations a distinction between gender regimes was proposed: private and public patriarchy. Accordingly, a better investigation can be reached by referring to the different gender regimes while making reference to the policies of state, international organizations, and religious institutions.

Another discourse that strongly relates gender to nationalism is the nationalist policy of population control. Women are encouraged for the sake and interest of the nation to have more children either for military purposes, or for nation-building purposes. This pressure could be witnessed by the Israeli women who were persuaded to populate the state and support the Zionist settlement project. Ideologies and policies along history have been developed using the reproductive capacity of women to reach nationalist objectives, while strong campaigns of reproductive rights have emerged to raise awareness of women's struggle for emancipation, and further for the democratization of society.

## **Conclusions**

To conclude, I would like to point out the interconnectivity of the concepts discussed- culture, ideology, and gender- and the importance one has to the other in the process of construction and defining. In this sense, the two paradigms- social constructionism and the sociology of power- explain the process of ideology construction and with it the gender issues that arise.

Further, another key finding is the role of women and religion used as political resources in generating the perfect ideology. The manipulation of religion too can be considered a resource in defining gender norms, accepted by society.

Another finding refers to nationalism as the catalyst in choosing whether the religious discourse is theological or ideological. This idea also influences gender issues and settles the framework of society as either traditional or secular.

Lastly, women's roles in society can be varying to a large extent according to the image propelled by the ideology. Women can be embraced by society as nurturing mothers, as actors in the economic development program, as combatants, as exclusively housewife,

as non-citizens, or full rights citizen, depending on the political context and the promoted ideology.

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## **AFFICHE, HUMOUR ET FRANCITE : SAVIGNAC (1907-2002)**

**Caroline ZIOLKO\***

***Abstract:** This paper aims to bring together two topics, “visual communication” and “sight gag” to shed light upon a specific object: the posters created by Raymond Savignac, the famous French graphic designer (1907-2002). The aim is to identify in particular the graphic, narrative, media, and humorous performances of that production.*

***Keywords:** Poster; humor; Raymond Savignac*

Dès les années 1950, le dessinateur français Raymond Savignac (1907-2002) médiatise avec humour de nouveaux produits de consommation ; annonce ses expositions personnelles ; et même diffuse avec ironie ses positions personnelles. Il a ainsi produit plus de six cent affiches – célèbres pour leur langage visuel créatif, simple et prégnant – qui figurent aujourd’hui en première place dans le musée imaginaire de l’imagerie médiatique du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. L’information murale est utilisée dès l’Antiquité, mais ce n’est qu’au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, avec l’invention de l’imprimerie, que la page imprimée apparaît sur les murs des grandes villes occidentales<sup>1</sup>. Dès les années 1850, l’affiche devient un outil de marketing qui juxtapose des slogans promotionnels et des visuels souvent réalisés par des artistes – les plus connus étant alors Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) et Leonetto Cappiello (1875-1942) –. Dans différents pays, l’attractivité de ces images fonctionnelles<sup>2</sup> retient même l’attention des collectionneurs et des amateurs d’art moderne. Les produits de grande distribution adoptent des logos et des emballages personnalisés, voire même, à partir des années 1920, des produits dérivés promotionnels (calendrier, cendriers, boîtes d’allumettes...). Au cours du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, avec l’apparition de nouveaux médias, la forme et le contenu des messages publicitaires évolue. En 1922, la radio, et, dès 1968, la télévision diffusent en France les premiers spots publicitaires et inaugurent un véritable phénomène culturel.

En France, les affiches de Savignac sont particulièrement représentatives d’un graphisme et d’un discours novateur, évolutif et diversifié. Quels sont les arguments visuels et les thématiques caractérisant ces productions ? Cet affichiste différencie-t-il la promotion de produits utilitaires et celle de productions culturelles ? En quels termes annonçant-il ses expositions personnelles présentées à Paris ou en province ? Enfin, adopte-t-il le même type d’humour visuel pour promouvoir un produit et pour exprimer une idée ou une position personnelle ?

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<sup>1</sup> Le site du musée de la publicité retrace l’évolution des différents supports et moyens utilisés pour la promotion des produits de grande consommation : <http://www.museedelapub.org/>

<sup>2</sup> Dans *L’image/communication/fonctionnelle* publié chez Casterman, en 1980, Abraham Moles propose une approche fonctionnelle de l’image visuelle en faisant le point sur son rôle social.



L'analyse de contenu de trois cent affiches permet d'identifier les grandes typologies de cette production atypique qui, avec humour, cohérence et créativité, a marqué l'histoire de l'affiche et la culture visuelle contemporaine en distinguant, d'une part, la promotion de produits utilitaires ou de manifestations à caractère culturel et, d'autre part, les visuels exprimant le point de vue subjectif du graphiste sur l'art, la ville et la modernité.

L'interprétation du contenu humoristique de ces affiches emprunte les principaux repères et définitions proposés dans « De l'ironie à l'absurde et des catégories aux effets » (Charaudeau, P., 2013). Selon cette approche, ces observations permettent également de préciser – entre identité, situation, cible et thématique – l'effet produit<sup>1</sup> par ces affiches.

Savignac répond aux demandes d'annonceurs avec créativité voire même, dans certains cas, avec une certaine indépendance d'esprit. Il souhaite ici établir avec le public une connivence d'ordre ludique. Mais quand il réalise une affiche médiatisant une manifestation culturelle, il cible une connivence plus critique. Enfin, il adopte une identité professionnelle totalement différente quand il réalise, ses propres productions. Là, il mise sur une connivence cynique, ou de dérision.

Dans tous les cas, l'identité du produit annoncé transite par un style graphique prégnant et une image à travers laquelle le public identifie non seulement un produit mais une idée. Le discours visuel adopte une forme humoristique et, bien souvent, un propos décalé, ce qui induit une interprétation plurielle et l'évocation du service offert. L'identité du public ciblé peut également varier en termes de tranche d'âge, de profil socio-économique, de genre, ou de mode de consommation. Ce graphisme ludique dresse, le plus souvent, l'image d'un consommateur français demandeur d'un autre mode de vie et de consommation.

### **Affiches ciblant des produits utilitaires**

Le premier et plus important groupe d'affiches identifié concerne des produits de grande consommation. L'affichiste joue ici sur le gag visuel et la création de figures hybrides qui, entre anthropomorphisme et zoomorphisme<sup>2</sup>, mettent en scène de manière souvent incongrue le produit et le consommateur. Ces figures font sourire et rêver le public. Elles l'incitent ainsi à acheter et à consommer des produits utilitaires d'une grande banalité. Dans certains cas, Savignac utilise des références partagées et des symboles nationaux évidents qui caractérisent la culture et l'identité nationale françaises.

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<sup>1</sup> La notion générique d'humour est un ensemble de procédés et d'effets à l'intérieur d'une certaine mécanique communicationnelle. Cette approche convient parfaitement à l'interprétation du discours visuel décliné par Savignac, même si l'on distingue des nuances significatives entre les différentes thématiques abordées. Sont retenus également ici les types d'effets identifiés dans cet article et qui selon l'auteur « *dépendent [...] de la combinaison des composantes de la mécanique communicationnelle (identité, situation, cible, thématique) [...]* » (Charaudeau, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> La figure de l'animal permet d'évoquer ici le consommateur ou le produit à partir d'une démarche discursive qui utilise indifféremment le zoomorphisme ou l'anthropomorphisme pour proposer une imagerie attractive, drôle, et souvent polysémique. Ésope, Jean de la Fontaine, ou Walt Disney ont utilisé avec succès de telles figures hybrides pour traduire certains traits du caractère humain.

Ce discours décalé cible le consommateur et le produit mais aussi indirectement le rôle social de l’affiche et de l’afficheur. Car Savignac ne cherche pas essentiellement à convaincre, ou à séduire. Il formule une « connivence ludique »<sup>1</sup> et une certaine complicité intellectuelle avec le public. Ses slogans sont sobres, voire minimalistes. L’essentiel de la communication transite par un graphisme elliptique qui élabore différents mini-récits et inaugure un propos ouvert et un autre regard sur la consommation, le consommateur et le produit proposé. Cette nouvelle manière de conquérir et de fidéliser l’acheteur émerge dans la France de l’après-guerre alors que la consommation de masse parvient à conquérir de nouveaux profils de consommateurs, motivés par de nouvelles valeurs économiques et sociales.

En déclenchant le rire, ces affiches créent une certaine forme de complicité<sup>2</sup> autour d’une idée : elles participent, en termes de communication à la création d’un imaginaire interculturel et intergénérationnel. Mais elles ne dénoncent jamais l’attitude ou le comportement du consommateur. Elles formulent un regard positif, dynamique et joyeux ; et donnent à voir le produit de grande consommation comme un article ludique synonyme de satisfaction, de modernité et de progrès. Plus tard, le photographique déclinera, avec le réalisme d’une iconicité performante, un discours similaire dont Roland Barthes dressera entre 1954 et 1956, dans *Mythologies* (Barthes, R., 1957) un portrait corrosif de la publicité – avec les pâtes Panzani – ; de la photographie – avec le portrait de l’Abbé Pierre – ; de la littérature – avec Minou Drouet et les guides touristiques – avec le Guide Bleu –. Il évoque, à propos de Panzani, le concept d’*italianité*. Pour sa part, Savignac déclinera, l’imagerie d’une *francité* dynamique, conviviale et joyeuse qui valorisera l’identité des produits endogènes<sup>3</sup>. La complémentarité de l’image et du texte qui induit ici trois niveaux d’interprétation du message publicitaire. Dans un premier temps, l’image capte l’attention et la curiosité du public. Le gag visuel contribue à une interprétation rapide, simple et interculturelle. Dans un second temps, en ciblant un public plus complice, le dessin fait directement références à l’identité française du produit ou service annoncé. Dans un troisième temps, c’est un public plus averti encore qui découvre, au-delà message fonctionnel initial, un discours ouvert aussi interrogateur qu’informatif.

Ces affiches transposent ainsi la vie de tous les jours en épisodes surréalistes et joyeux. Cet humour est bienveillant, il ne tourne par le consommateur en dérision ; il ne cible ni l’apparence physique, ni le genre, ni le statut social. Bien souvent, l’affiche oblitère même pratiquement tout discours publicitaire attendu. Elle convoque le pouvoir symbolique du produit ; interprète sa fonction ; fait sourire ; rêver ; et transforme l’achat en

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<sup>1</sup> Différents types de connivence peuvent être établis : distinguant ainsi la connivence ludique, la connivence critique, la connivence cynique, et la connivence de dérision. Réf. [www.patrick-charaudeau.com/De-l-ironie-a-l-absurde-et-des.html](http://www.patrick-charaudeau.com/De-l-ironie-a-l-absurde-et-des.html).

<sup>2</sup> Les procédés discursifs de l’acte humoristique sont multiples et peuvent être juxtaposés afin de produire un certain effet discursif en fonction de la relation de connivence établie entre l’émetteur et le récepteur d’un même message (Charaudeau, *op. cit.*).

<sup>3</sup> Savignac a également créé, à la demande d’annonceurs étrangers, des affiches pour l’Italie : *Materasso granriposso Pirelli, Il Giorno* ; le Japon : *Toshimaen (Polar Bear), Toshimaen (Pig)* ; aux USA : *Life (You get information out of Life)*...

transaction ludique qui donne accès à une autre vision de la consommation. Celle d'un paradis perdu, enfantin et ludique, peuplé de créatures hybrides dont la forme et la mise en situation construisent, entre le réel et l'imaginaire, de mini-récits dont les interprétations dépassent, voire détournent, bien souvent le message initialement ciblé.

### **L'hybridation, anthropomorphisme et zoomorphisme<sup>1</sup>**

Le fil conducteur qui parcourt ces différentes affiches, c'est la mise en scène d'êtres étranges, burlesques et inattendus. Mi-homme mi-objet mi-animaux, ces figures font image et sens pour évoquer la fonctionnalité et la valeur symbolique des produits de grande consommation ; ou des services qu'ils procurent. Ce qui, dans cet univers onirique semble plus important que les qualités plastiques et techniques réelles.

Même si les thématiques et les produits sont très différents, d'évidentes constantes ponctuent le langage image que Savignac imagine, adapte ou réactive. Au niveau de la plastique de l'image, les composantes visuelles retenues s'affirment par leur prégnance visuelle, leur symbolique et leur inscription dans un code culturel ciblé. Les couleurs, correspondent principalement à des aplats de tons primaires ou secondaires qui, le plus souvent, différencient les composantes figuratives du fond neutre de l'affiche. La lisibilité de l'image correspond soit à un fort contraste de couleurs, soit au trait noir des contours et détails internes des composantes figuratives : personnages, animaux, objets. Ces deux approches peuvent coexister. L'équilibre et la lisibilité de la composition simplifie la perception de l'affiche ; assure l'identification du message, et enfin favorise la mémorisation du gag visuel pour l'inscrire dans la mémoire du public.

Trois grandes catégories thématiques sont identifiées. La plus importante concerne les produits de grande consommation. La seconde cible la médiatisation d'œuvres originales regroupées lors d'expositions ponctuelles. La troisième, quantitativement moins conséquente, regroupe des dessins originaux et un regard personnel plus critique sur certaines dérives de la modernité avec l'usage l'informatique et des nouveaux médias. Ces messages peuvent tous être très facilement perçus, identifiés et mémorisés. Le style humoristique cible un public indifférencié. Ils concernent soit la promotion de produits de grande consommation – le savon de toilette ; le stylo bille ; de produits ou de services d'intérêt public – la vente de billets de train SNCF à moitié prix – ; une simple injonction à caractère civique « Gardez la France propre ».

Ces figures hybrides évoquent l'univers surréaliste des contes merveilleux. Ils composent des gags visuels ; surprennent, amusent, et interrogent ; ils dédramatisent l'achat de produits utilitaires sans esthétique ni plus value particulière, ou un message quelque peu dogmatique. Entre le surréalisme et l'absurde, les savonnets *Monsavon*, le champoing *Dop, la quinzaine de la laine* (1951) ; *le pot au feu Maggi* (1962) ont ainsi été identifiés et médiatisés par des gags visuels qui permettaient d'oublier la banalité des activités quotidiennes.

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<sup>1</sup> La figure de l'animal permet d'évoquer ici le consommateur ou le produit en utilisant le zoomorphisme ou l'anthropomorphisme pour créer une imagerie attractive, drôle, et souvent polysémique. Ésope, Jean de la Fontaine, ou Walt Disney ont utilisé avec succès de tels procédés pour traduire certains traits du caractère humain.

Un gamin souriant, couvert d'une serviette de toilette, manipule un berlingot de champoing; tandis qu'un éléphant s'improvise arroseur. L'affiche signale : « *Dop Journée des enfants propres* ». Savignac juxtapose ici, sur fond bleu, les aplats colorés rose figurant, de face, l'enfant arrosé et, de profil, l'éléphant arroseur. Le blanc, de la serviette et de la mousse savonneuse qui couvre le crâne du gamin, correspond au message annoncé. Ce gag visuel semble provenir des *Histoires comme ça* de Rudyard Kipling.

Avec pour slogan « *Le bon potage ça c'est Maggi !* », Savignac réactive l'image des soupes de fabrication industrielle. Ici, il oblitère la figure du consommateur et dessine une soupière zoomorphe dont le couvercle à tête de coq se soulève pour boire, avec une paille, un bouillon de poule Maggi. Cette figure de coq-soupière n'oblitère pas totalement la figure du consommateur, elle l'invite métaphoriquement à déguster le produit de base des repas populaires français – un bouillon de poule –. Cette soupe industrielle trouve donc parfaitement sa place dans un récipient rustique et zoomorphe. Savignac s'emploie ainsi à promouvoir, en cette période d'après-guerre, la consommation de produits endogènes.

### **Valoriser les produits français**

Les couleurs et références figuratives de ce bestiaire multiforme évoquent selon le contexte, l'identité culturelle française, italienne, ou nord-américaine. Ce qui introduit, en filigrane, un regard consensuel sur ces territoires, produits, et mode de vie.

L'image du coq gaulois (Pastoureau, M., 1992 : 507-539) et la juxtaposition de couleur bleu-blanc-rouge (Pastoureau, M., 1989) qualifient ainsi, en termes de la francité l'identité d'un produit, d'un lieu, ou d'une idée. Dès les années 1950-1960, ces affiches vont ancrer des messages très ciblés, mais souvent très ouverts dans une mémoire partagée relativement éclectique. On retient principalement les messages annonçant : *Année du patrimoine* ; *Nuit de la chanson* ; *Concours général agricole 1956 à Paris* ; *France comes to Texas 1957* ; *France Joie de la table 1957* ; *Gardez la France Propre 1972...*

En 1995, pour l'inauguration du Stade de France, Savignac imagine une affiche montrant, dans l'axe vertical de l'image, un ballon de football en équilibre sur une chaussure de sport. La couleur verte de l'arrière plan évoque le gazon d'un stade. Le joueur est allongé sur le dos, jambe tendue. Dans un premier temps, cette chaussette de sport rouge et ce short bleu évoquent l'entraînement d'un joueur français. Mais on découvre alors, sur le quart inférieur de l'affiche, que ce joueur portant barbe et couronne repose sur une dalle grise où est gravé : Saint-Denis. Ce raccourcit comique fait ainsi référence à l'actualité et à l'histoire des lieux. Car Saint-Denis, ville médiévale et nécropole royale, située à cinq kilomètres au nord de Paris, abrite dans sa basilique plus de soixante-dix gisants médiévaux et tombeaux de la Renaissance. Devenue haut lieu de la révolution industrielle française et grande ville ouvrière, cette ville s'est dotée, en 1995, du plus grand stade de football français. Cet équipement de 80 698 places en configuration football/rugby réactive l'économie et l'image médiatique de la ville. En plaçant un ballon rond, au sommet de l'affiche et un gisant, à sa base, Savignac donne à voir les deux points d'attraction qui, aujourd'hui, font lien dans l'imaginaire partagé des Français. Selon les textes de l'ancien régime, le corps du roi ne

meurt pas<sup>1</sup>, cette évocation métaphorique peut être appliquée à l'état, à la République ou à toute organisation ou institution collective. Le football, sport largement apprécié et pratiqué ici depuis les années 1900, devait revitaliser l'économie et l'image de Saint-Denis. Au-delà d'un comique de situation, cette affiche évoque le haut lieu d'une mémoire partagée regroupant : le Stade de France – point de repère géographique et symbolique d'une culture vivante contemporaine – ; une basilique cathédrale – reconnue comme un incontournable élément du patrimoine national – ; et un lieu de mémoire, regroupant les tombeaux des rois et reines de France. Ce gag visuel d'une bienveillante ironie, laisse entrevoir diverses pistes d'interprétation ciblant l'intemporalité de l'attrait pour le sport ; ou le caractère fédérateur du football.

### **Autoparodie et annonce d'expositions personnelles**

Pour annoncer ses expositions personnelles, Savignac utilise également des gags visuels. Il adopte même une forme d'autoparodie joyeuse et dynamique mais, avec modestie et subtilité, il distingue les manifestations qui ont lieu à Paris ou à l'étranger et celles organisées à Trouville-sur-Mer et ses environs – où il résida à partir de 1979 –. Il donne ainsi à voir, d'une part, sa perception du marché de l'art et du statut de l'artiste ; et, d'autre part, sa relation quasi symbiotique avec la Normandie, ses plages, sa population et son mode de vie.

Ces expositions attirent, à Paris ou dans les grandes villes, des collectionneurs, des journalistes, des critiques et gens d'image. En province, le grand public est sans doute plus présent. Cette situation paradoxale permet à Savignac de réaliser, avec une grande élégance intellectuelle, des affiches aussi variées qu'impertinentes qui mentionnent ses expositions provinciales avec une certaine forme d'autodérision; et qui ciblent de manière directe ou métaphorique les particularités physiques de l'affichiste et les traits de caractère de sa profession. Ici aussi diverses figures hybrides articulent un surprenant discours imagé.

Debout sur un sol ocre, devant un mur jaune, un personnage en costume bleu et cravate rouge, s'incline respectueusement devant un public que l'on imagine placé en face de lui. Le haut de son corps est une feuille de papier à dessin enroulée sur elle-même. L'image de cet homme/objet annonce une exposition au Musée de l'Affiche à Paris. Mais rien n'indique si ce papier à dessin – ou cette affiche – va se dérouler et révéler le visage de l'exposant, ou si elle va se replier et oblitérer l'ensemble de son corps. Ce gag visuel résume avec lucidité et ironie l'anxiété que provoque toute reconnaissance médiatique, ou l'expérience amère de l'échange entre l'artiste et son public.

Les visuels annonçant des expositions organisées en Normandie, à Trouville-sur-mer – une petite station balnéaire très appréciée pour son calme et son climat, située à deux heures de Paris, où Savignac choisira d'être enterré – traduisent la grande complicité de l'affichiste avec ce lieu et son mode de vie. Cet ancrage territorial est perceptible dans les affiches Mais la forme et la signification de ce discours visuel par lequel il médiatise la ville, ses commerces, son environnement côtier, et ses manifestations culturelles peut varier.

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<sup>1</sup> L'historien Stanis [PEREZ](#) décrit dans [Le corps du roi - Incarner l'Etat de Philippe Auguste à Louis-Philippe](#), Perrin, Paris, 2018, les diverses manières dont le corps des souverains a, au cours des siècles, incarné l'État

*Savignac à Trouville Musée de Trouville Villa Montebello À partir du 3 juillet 1993.* Pour illustrer cette information, Savignac regroupe les indices visuels les plus évidents illustrant une petite ville côtière normande où un artiste parisien vient chercher l'inspiration. Au centre de l'affiche, un personnage simplement équipé d'une casquette, de lunettes de soleil et d'un grand carton à dessin, arpente la plage. Une mouette le suit en tenant deux pinceaux dans son bec. Á l'arrière plan, deux aplats de couleur suggèrent la plage de sable et le ciel normand. L'interprétation la plus évidente suggère que Savignac a trouvé le clame et l'inspiration sur la plage de Trouville, en compagnie des mouettes.

Ailleurs, l'affichiste utilise une métaphore visuelle surréaliste pour traduire l'intérêt des peintres régionaux pour Trouville et sa plage. Le littoral normand – qui s'étend entre plages et prairies – est ici schématisé par un triangle jaune inscrit dans une surface verte. Au premier plan, une palette surmontant deux jambes nues parcourt la plage. Sur cette figure anthropomorphe qui évoque un visage, vu de profil, on remarque deux pinceaux et on lit *Artistes du Littoral*. Ce gag visuel laisse imaginer le lieu et l'ensemble des exposants ; il suggère aussi une certaine *littoralité* partagée entre peintres régionaux.

### **Exprimer une critique sociale contemporaine**

Au-delà de la communication fonctionnelle, Savignac a produit quelques visuels relevant d'une expression indépendante, volontairement dépourvue de tout rédactionnel. Deux mains tendues émergeant des tours de la cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris dont la façade occidentale s'incline, entraînée par un flux noir et compact d'automobiles circulant pare choc contre pare choc. Cette affiche monochrome a été réalisée pour le Comité de Sauvegarde du site de Notre-Dame. Elle dénonce la pollution de l'air sur l'île de la Cité, à Paris, où, depuis la fin du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle, s'élève la légendaire cathédrale; et alerte l'opinion publique sur les conséquences d'un projet de voie express sur berge. Intitulé *Auto-défense de Paris*, ce dessin anthropomorphe, de 1972, propose également plusieurs niveaux d'interprétation. Roland Barthes préfacera, *Défense d'afficher* (1972), un ouvrage de dessins réalisés par Savignac qui, entre expression et communication, propose une vision très subjective du progrès technique – informatisation des données –, de la modernité et de la densification urbaine. Ce pamphlet très acerbe, édité par Robert Delpire, regroupe des compositions originales : "*Bibliosex, Douce France, l'Église bouge, les Grands Ensembles, l'Oncle d'Amérique, Pollution, la Télé*". (Choko, M. H., : 2005). Ici, l'affichiste met en scène des hommes-objets insolites et différentes constructions anthropomorphes. Entre connivence cynique, et connivence de dérision, ces derniers gags visuels sont très critiques. Ils ciblent un public déjà acquis aux points de vue mis en image sans concession, par un affichiste, dont le long parcours au service d'une imagerie publicitaire attractive a marqué l'humour visuel en France et dans le monde entier.

### **Pour conclure**

On constate que Savignac réserve une vision sombre et cynique à l'illustration de messages d'ordre civique, politique ou moral ; tandis qu'il met en scène avec un humour complice et bienveillant les messages à finalité commerciale ou culturelle –. Par contre, certaines affiches annonçant ses expositions déclinent une approche où l'autoparodie cible

sans complaisance son physique et son métier. Faisant ainsi de l'homme, de l'artiste et du monde un portrait drôle et critique qui est toujours d'actualité.

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## **QUELQUES CONSIDÉRATIONS SUR LA MISE EN SCÈNE DU DON JUAN DE MOLIÈRE**

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***Abstract:** Our paper proposes a presentation of the making of our representation of Molière's Dom Juan. We present here our idea as creator of this representation, which is the result of our personal interpretation of the classical text. We stress on the importance of choosing the play's cast, the scenography, the technical elements of the representation in order to obtain a unique product on the stage.*

***Keywords:** Don Juan; innovation; stage representation*

Avant de devenir une pièce de théâtre, *Don Juan* a été une légende populaire. Molière l'a reprise, l'a reconstruite et la fait adapter aux règles de la construction dramatique. Mais, il ne faut pas oublier que Molière aimait le rire, il aimait amuser le public et c'est pour cela qu'il a fait de son *Dom Juan* une pièce à visée comique.

Pour qu'un acteur puisse interpréter de manière crédible un personnage, il faut qu'il connaisse beaucoup de détails sur la vie de l'auteur, sur le personnage, sur le texte dans son ensemble, sur l'appartenance de celui-ci à un certain courant littéraire ou artistique. Il doit aussi s'informer sur le contexte social où l'action se déroule et sur les caractéristiques de celui-ci, sur d'autres interprétations célèbres du personnage, sur les représentations les plus connues de la pièce etc. Tous ces éléments constituent le travail de documentation qu'un metteur-en-scène doit mener avant de passer au travail proprement-dit sur le texte et sur sa vision d'interprétation, car tous ces éléments vont le conduire, en tant que créateur, vers une création unique et personnelle.

Le metteur-en-scène doit fournir à l'acteur un cadre dans lequel celui-ci fonctionne, sans toutefois lui limiter la liberté. L'acteur doit lui aussi créer, proposer des solutions scéniques, tout comme le scénographe, car la représentation de théâtre est une création collective, non pas individuelle, quel que créatif soit le metteur-en-scène.

### **Les personnages**

Le personnage de Dom Juan n'est pas une création originale de Molière, comme c'est le cas de Tartuffe ou de Harpagon. Dom Juan, quant à lui, est un personnage représentatif pour l'imaginaire collectif, il est donc proche du mythe. Dans notre vision de mise en scène, il n'est pas un séducteur, mais un révolté, un rebelle qui met en question tous les codes moraux et sociaux. C'est autour de cette idée que nous avons construit notre version de la pièce.

Dans la pièce, Dom Louis est le père ; mais il n'est pas simplement le père de Dom Juan, il est le prototype du père : universel, archétypal, éternel. Il représente l'idée d'autorité, de divinité, de continuité, de royauté. Ce n'est pas par hasard qu'il porte le même nom que les rois de France, dont Louis XIV, le Roi Soleil. Alors, comme c'est le même nom

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du roi et que Molière lui-même se trouve sous la protection du roi, l'auteur dramatique ne pouvait imaginer pour ce rôle qu'un personnage très moral, vertical, autoritaire et de bonne famille.

Le personnage de Dom Juan est un peu Molière lui-même, un peu de son âme et de ses convictions ; par contre, le père est éternel, ce que le fils ne peut pas être. Dom Juan, quant à lui, ne peut demeurer éternel que s'il meurt jeune. Le vieillissement n'est pas concevable pour lui, comme les relations maritales ou les enfants ne peuvent pas également l'être. S'il était tout cela, il ne serait plus proche du mythe. Même dans le film *Don Juan* de Jacques Weber, où Don Juan est vieux, il n'a pas perdu son charme, il est encore beau et son âge est presque celui auquel sa destinée devrait s'accomplir.

Sganarelle est le valet de Dom Juan et il est le quatrième d'une série de six personnages moliéresques du même nom<sup>1</sup>. Sganarelle a été créé par Molière, mais d'autres dramatiques l'ont gardé dans leurs versions : Edmond Rostand dans *La Dernière Nuit de Don Juan*, Charles Baudelaire dans *Don Juan aux enfers*, Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt dans *La nuit de Valognes*. Chez Molière, ce personnage est présent dans 26 des 27 scènes du texte, tandis que Dom Juan n'y est présent que dans 24, ce qui montre le poids du personnage dans l'économie dramatique.

Ce personnage est très proche d'Arlequin, de la commedia dell'arte ; en effet, il en porte le masque. Sganarelle a l'apparence d'un arlequin, mais Molière n'a pas voulu lui donner un nom à résonance italienne, surtout que sur la scène, c'était lui à l'incarner. Alors, il a inventé Sganarelle et il l'a fait entrer dans la conscience des spectateurs, tout comme il l'a fait reprendre par d'autres auteurs dramatiques.

### **La distribution**

« Etablir la distribution est un acte de création », disait le professeur Valeriu Moisescu<sup>2</sup> lors de son cours de mise-en-scène de théâtre. C'est une vérité : la distribution est essentielle pour la création du spectacle, elle ne peut pas être choisie au hasard. Chaque acteur doit faire un rôle adapté à ses capacités artistiques, aux besoins de la vision artistique du metteur-en-scène, à son fonctionnement dans le mécanisme du spectacle.

Par exemple, ce n'est pas la même chose faire jouer un acteur de comédie réputé dans une tragédie antique et faire jouer un connu tragédien dans le même rôle. Il s'agira, dès la distribution, de deux manières différentes d'approche du même texte et tout cela dépend de la lecture qu'en fait le metteur-en-scène : s'il veut en faire une parodie, il fera jouer un certain acteur ; si, par contre, il veut suivre la lignée antique, il proposera toute une autre distribution.

La distribution des interprètes dans un spectacle est l'apanage unique du metteur-en-scène et dépend seulement de sa vision. Le metteur-en-scène est le seul qui doit

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<sup>1</sup> Sganarelle apparaît pour la première fois dans *Sganarelle ou le cocu imaginaire*, ensuite dans *L'école des maris*, *Le mariage forcé*, *Don Juan*. Ensuite, on le retrouve dans *L'amour médecin* et dans *Le médecin malgré lui*.

<sup>2</sup> Valeriu MOISESCU (1932-2016) est un metteur-en-scène roumain, professeur des universités au département « Mise-en-scène théâtre », de l'Université Nationale d'Art Théâtral et Cinématographique de Bucarest. Il fait partie de la « génération d'or » du théâtre roumain. Il a reçu le prix UNITER à la carrière, en 1998.

choisir les acteurs avec lesquels il travaillera ; c'est d'ailleurs une manière de prendre ses responsabilités pour la production qu'il présentera devant le public.

S'agissant d'un acte de création, le choix de la distribution est un moment très important du processus artistique. Ce choix doit être fait tout en respectant la vision artistique du metteur-en-scène et suite à l'étude théorique déjà évoquée, suite à laquelle les idées et les buts sont fixés. Choisir la distribution n'est pas seulement choisir les acteurs, mais aussi tout le personnel artistique et technique qui travaillera pour l'objectif proposé. Avoir une bonne distribution conditionne une bonne représentation, une représentation unique. Il ne s'agit pas nécessairement de faire appel aux personnalités notoires, mais il est impératif qu'il s'agisse d'artistes authentiques, capable de soumettre leur orgueil au bien de la production, même en risquant des désavantages de leur image. En pratique, le metteur-en-scène aura plusieurs séances de discussions avec les artistes et leur exposera son idée sur la représentation, sur l'atmosphère et le contexte historique dans lequel il envisage placer l'action, sur les éléments scéniques les plus proches à la conception et sur ce qu'il exige de chaque interprète.

### **La conception du metteur-en-scène**

Commençons en éclaircissant une confusion souvent rencontrée dans l'usage des termes : celle entre *la conception* et *la vision* du metteur-en-scène.

*La conception du metteur-en-scène* représente, en essence, l'idée du spectacle, la manière dans laquelle celui-ci a été envisagé, ce que l'artiste veut transmettre par le spectacle, ce qu'il veut mettre en évidence – et tout cela d'après une logique très rigoureuse. Chaque personnage a son rôle bien établi dans le mécanisme imaginé, toutes les scènes fonctionnent ensemble au même propos, le spectacle, comme tout est subordonné à cette idée qu'est la *conception du metteur-en-scène*.

*La vision du metteur-en-scène* est la totalité des modalités d'expression à l'aide desquelles la conception est mise en pratique. Il s'agit plus précisément de ce que le metteur-en-scène réussit à transmettre de sa conception sur le spectacle, de quelle manière il réussit à transmettre, en pratique, aux spectateurs, ce qu'il s'est proposé. Il s'agit aussi des mécanismes artistiques et techniques choisis pour illustrer les idées et pour les faire claires aux spectateurs, notamment la manière dans laquelle les idées du créateur sont représentées devant le public.

Toute mise-en-scène essaie, d'une part, à suivre le texte dramatique et, de l'autre, de trouver de nouveaux chemins à suivre. Egalement, tout metteur-en-scène veut surprendre le spectateur par des aspects inédits, mais aussi il veut apprendre à découvrir dans un travail de collaboration producteur-récepteur.

*Dacă un regizor respectă prea mult textul el riscă să realizeze un spectacol fără culoare și strălucire, iar dacă intervine brutal, poate ajunge la exteriorizări exagerate și lipsite de poezie.* (Berlogea 1985 : 179)<sup>1</sup>

Notre spectacle *Dom Juan* a quelques éléments spécifiques que nous voudrions expliciter, pour en faire ressortir ce qui confère unicité à notre création artistique.

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<sup>1</sup> *Si un metteur-en-scène respecte trop le texte, il risque de produire un spectacle sans couleur et sans éclat ; par contre, s'il intervient de manière brutale, il peut arriver à des extériorisations exagérées et sans esprit poétique.* (n.t.)

1. Nous sommes partis de la prémisse qu'avant et après l'apparition du mythe littéraire de Don Juan il y a eu des hommes forts qui ont connu beaucoup de femmes, mais qui ne sont pas entrés dans la conscience universelle avec cette caractéristique. Cela veut dire qu'il y a quelque chose de tout particulier chez Don Juan, à savoir cette *unicité* qui le distingue des autres.
2. *L'unicité* de Don Juan dérive de son comportement, qui est *ex-centrique*.
3. Le comportement *ex-centrique* est actualisation d'une manière très évoluée de penser, d'un esprit évolué ou novateur ou, tout au contraire, d'une anomalie dans le *penser* et le *agir*. Selon nous, chez Don Juan il s'agit d'un esprit évolué, d'un avant-coureur, d'une intelligence supérieure, organisée et visionnaire.
4. Ce comportement *ex-centrique* déclenche une haine collective des autres, surtout parce qu'ils sont incapables de le comprendre.

Bref : Il s'agit d'un homme de bonne condition sociale, un seigneur, qui se fait remarquer pour sa beauté physique, qui plaît aux femmes, ayant une bonne éducation, un père bien placé dans le beau monde. Il réussit à dépasser le temps, devenant un visionnaire et qui, en comprenant son rôle, se sacrifie au final pour devenir le représentant de la libre pensée, de la libération et de la liberté tout court.

Voilà en quelques mots notre conception de mise-en-scène, l'idée de la représentation, celle qui allait être rendue sur la scène par les images et en subordonnant le texte à cette vision.

Pour la mise-en-scène de la vision du metteur-en-scène il se pose la question si ce dernier a le droit de changer l'ordre des scènes, des répliques, d'éliminer ou d'introduire des personnages ou s'il peut introduire tout artifice technique ou artistique qu'il juge nécessaire.

Notre réponse est affirmative et nous voulons réitérer ici que le metteur-en-scène est un créateur et qu'il a une lecture personnelle du texte qu'il représente sur la scène. Il n'y a rien à s'étonner. Chaque lecteur a une lecture personnelle du texte tout comme chaque spectateur a une image personnelle de ce qu'il voit représenté sur la scène.

*...înainte, în teatru, nu întrebai de regizor, deloc. Secolul al XX-lea este o epocă în care se vorbește mai ales de regizor. Nu pentru că actorii ar fi ignorați, că bineînțeles că nu sunt ignorați și avem fiecare actorii noștri preferați. Dar teatrul de valoare a fost revelat printr-o concepție regizorală, de unde rolul particular al regizorului.<sup>1</sup> (Lovinescu 2008)*

L'élément qui nous a intrigué le plus dans nos maintes lectures du texte a été la dualité du valet. Il disait une chose devant son maître et tout une autre chose à part. La question était : pourquoi aurait-il fait cela tout le long de la pièce ? S'il n'était pas à son aise avec son maître, il pouvait très bien se retirer ! Mais non, Sganarelle se plaît tout le temps, mais il n'abandonne jamais son maître. La solution que nous avons trouvée pour ce comportement inhabituel de Sganarelle, dans notre spectacle, a été l'idée que le valet était, en effet ... une femme. Une femme, donc l'une des nombreuses conquêtes de Don Juan et qui, ne pouvant pas accepter l'idée qu'elle puisse être délaissée, s'est déguisée en homme et s'est fait embaucher comme valet, pour rester tout le temps près de Don Juan. Dans cette

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<sup>1</sup> ...avant, dans le théâtre, personne ne demandait qui est le metteur-en-scène. Par contre, le XXème siècle est une époque où l'on parle avant tout des metteurs-en-scène. Et cela non parce que les acteurs soient ignorés ; en effet nous avons tous des acteurs préférés. Mais le théâtre de qualité a été révélé par une conception du metteur-en-scène, d'où le rôle spécial de ce dernier. (n.t.)

situation, tout comportement dualiste peut être justifié : si Sganarelle est en réalité une femme, il/elle est intéressée à ce qu'aucune autre soit près de son maître ; c'est pourquoi il/elle amplifie les défauts de Don Juan, de sorte que toute femme en soit éloignée.

Le personnage de Don Juan est aussi un qui ne s'encadre pas dans les normes. Dans la pièce, il ne s'agit pas d'un héros qui s'oppose à la divinité, il n'y a pas une réflexion sur cet aspect, mais sur le rapport d'un homme avec d'autres hommes. De plus, si l'on prend en considération le retour en force de la religion sur la scène internationale, le point de vue de Molière nous semble très intéressant.

Les questions de la première répétition et qui se sont d'ailleurs répétées pendant toutes les répétitions, sont essentielles pour configurer la représentation. Lors de la première répétition, les acteurs sont très curieux de faire connaissance avec la mise-en-scène et avec la conception choisie pour le spectacle. Ainsi, dans le cas des répétitions pour *Dom Juan*, nous avons été avec maintes questions – certaines, nous nous les étions posées nous-mêmes aussi, et nous avons essayé d'y répondre, d'autres inédites et pour lesquelles nous essayions de trouver des réponses qui ne contredisent point notre pensée initiale. Ces dernières mobilisaient une attention accrue et souvent, la réponse venait lors des rencontres suivantes.

En voilà quelques exemples :

- Qu'en est-il de Sganarelle après la disparition de Don Juan ? redevient-il un valet pour un autre seigneur ou bien il devient mendiant ou fou ?
- Quand, exactement, intervient le mendiant dans le spectacle ?
- Pourquoi Elvire le suit-elle ? L'aime-t-elle, ou bien elle veut se venger ? Est-elle jalouse, orgueilleuse ? Est-elle forcée par ses frères ?

Plus le travail sur le texte avançait, plus on découvrait de nouveaux sens, de nouvelles valences, les idées s'enchaînaient, on trouvait des trésors cachés. Tous ces éléments nous ont permis de reconsidérer la mise-en-scène, l'interprétation, l'image scénique, les personnages sont devenus de plus en plus définis, tout comme leurs relations et les situations scéniques. En ce qui suit, nous allons offrir quelques exemples de recherche sur le texte, qui nous ont eu un rôle très important dans l'éclaircissement de la conception du metteur-en-scène.

Nous ne sommes pas un metteur-en-scène qui sait tout en avant. Si cela était le cas, les éventuelles solutions proposées par d'autres seraient inutiles, car elles ne seraient jamais adoptées. Pour nous, chaque artiste doit être laissé libre à travailler de manière autonome, ce qui lui permet de créer, mais tout cela seulement après les discussions préliminaires sur la vision du metteur-en-scène. Cela assure un travail en communauté et non pas en dissension. Jamais un spectacle ne ressemblera à un autre, justement parce que, pendant les répétitions, c'est-à-dire pendant le processus de pure création, des voies différentes et qui peuvent ennoblir la pensée initiale peuvent se développer.

Cette pièce de théâtre est une relation de couples où chaque partie impliquée essaie de dominer, de guider, de conquérir, de posséder l'autre. Don Juan et Sganarelle forment le couple le plus connu, mais il y a aussi le couple Don Juan – Elvire, et le couple Don Juan et son père, Don Juan et le mendiant, Don Juan et la Statue du Commandeur. Si l'on élargit un peu, on découvre d'autres couples, tels Charlotte et Mathurine, Sganarelle et Gusman, Pierrot et Charlotte.

Cela est d'ailleurs une spécificité du théâtre classique : la construction par couples. La clé de notre pièce réside dans la confrontation entre Dom Juan et Sganarelle, cette scène où le maître affirme qu'il ne croit que dans l'arithmétique. Cela signifie que, même s'il vit dans la proximité de son maître, qui a des idées novatrices, Sganarelle ne pourra jamais comprendre ou, du moins s'astreindre aux commentaires insolents, parce que cela signifierait partager un minimum d'informations et être, lui-aussi, un peu visionnaire.

Il y a plusieurs aspects, selon nous, qui doivent être éclaircis à propos de ce spectacle, au-delà de cette problématique des couples. Pour nous, Dom Juan représente plus que le séducteur par excellence ; pour nous, son trait définitoire est le désir de liberté qui est si fort qu'il lui est impossible d'empêcher. La seule instance qui peut freiner ce désir de liberté est la divinité qui, à la fin, ouvrira les portes à Dom Juan, vers une autre, nouvelle et inconnue dimension.

Ensuite, il faut voir contre qui ou contre quoi s'élève Don Juan. Bien sûr, il peut être une sorte de *révolté sans cause* ; mais, cette généralisation ne fait autre que généraliser une situation, très présente à l'époque. Généraliser aurait des implications très profondes, certaines même très concrètes si l'on pense, par exemple, aux *-ismes* de l'art. Ces dernières traitent toutes ce sujet de diverses manières, concrétisant, en effet, une révolte évidente contre un sujet palpable de l'époque en question.

Dans la pièce de Molière, il semble que le père inspire la pitié, tandis que le héros, Dom Juan, inspire l'effroi et la terreur. Le père apparaît comme ayant une âme pure, une naïveté naturelle qui ne peut pas imaginer les ruses du fils. Egalement, le père serait toujours prêt à pardonner au fils, quoi que ce dernier fasse. Il semble avoir un langage authentique, honnête et franc, contraire, en cela, aux ambiguïtés du fils. Il représenterait, donc, l'honneur et les valeurs de la famille.

Voyons si dans notre spectacle ces présuppositions s'actualisent.

Alors : contre qui se révolte Dom Juan ? La cible de cette révolte serait, dans la version la plus pertinente, le père, qui est le père canonique. De sa part, le père peut se trouver dans de diverses hypostases :

- L'Hypostase de père. Il s'agirait, dans ce cas, d'une révolte en quelque sorte naturelle du fils contre le père : la confrontation entre les générations ou bien une révolte contre les conventions sociales. D'ici, l'on peut arriver même au complexe d'Œdipe, dans la lignée de Otto Rank. D'une certaine manière, Dom Juan est devant son père tel comme il est devant la statue du Commandeur, une sorte de miroir
- L'hypostase de roi. L'idée de départ est le renvoi déjà mentionné à Louis XIV ; il s'agit dans ce cas de l'autorité, de l'administration, des lois, de l'état dans son ensemble, de toutes les contraintes administratives des autorités
- L'hypostase de statue du Commandeur. Ici, il s'agirait d'une révolte contre l'histoire et contre la culture, c'est-à-dire contre tout ce que l'on apprend comme enfant : qui il faut chérir et qui non, qui il faut valoir et qui non, qui aimer, qui admirer, qui célébrer. Dom Juan se trouve devant son père comme s'il était devant un autre Commandeur

- L'hypostase de divinité. Par cela, nous entendons une révolte contre l'humanité en général, contre le destin, contre la mort, contre l'idée de surveillance et de jugement

C'est donc contre tout cela que notre personnage se révolte.

La démarche de la vie personnelle de Dom Juan est dictée par l'adoption d'un rôle de révolutionnaire des conventions et des faiblesses humaines. Ses actions de héros qui démasque ne sont que le résultat de la cohérence intérieure, suivant un chemin guidé par le besoin accru de connaître l'absolu, un chemin d'explorateur téméraire de l'existence, parfaitement conscient de ses actions et qui ne s'arrêtera que s'il trouve sa place, dans un délai temporel éloigné, peut-être dans vingt ou trente ans. La joie de vivre le fait aimer la vie consommée jusqu'à l'épuisement, jusqu'à la confrontation avec la mort.

Dom Juan représente la force suprême de la découverte par des efforts individuels des valeurs de la vie, en toute indépendance par rapport à la société et par rapport aux valeurs transmises par les ancêtres. Il ne peut pas reprendre la manière de vivre de son père, car il construit ses propres normes. Lorsqu'il observe que la guerre qu'il porte, en défiant son père ne produit que la souffrance du dernier et que la valeur moralisatrice d'une hypostase arrogante est incompatible avec ses explorations esthétiques, Dom Juan choisit de mentir à son père, en affichant le masque de l'hypocrisie, pour ne plus lui produire de la souffrance.

La rencontre, au dernier acte de la pièce, avec la Statue du Commandeur qu'il avait autrefois tué dans une altercation lui ouvre la possibilité de connaître l'absolu, la vie d'après la mort. C'est dans ce Commandeur en pierre, la statue immobile qui a bougé pour punir le courage de Dom Juan de penser que se coagulent toutes les forces de la Raison éternelle, de l'ordre et de la morale universelle. Cet immense morceau de pierre, dépourvu d'âme n'est le symbole des forces que Dom Juan a toujours niées.

Dom Juan n'a jamais déclaré de manière explicite qu'il soit un athée, il a seulement affirmé croire à la force de la raison et de ses sens. C'est pour cela qu'il se dépêche vers l'expérience ultime de la transgression de la vie, du dépassement des règles imposées par la matière. La confrontation avec le Commandeur ne l'effraie pas, même si cela signifie une compensation de son crime. Dom Juan est foudroyé au moment où il serre la main de la Statue ce qui est, selon Camus, un signe pour la nécessité de compenser les péchés, car il s'agit, en fin de comptes, d'une œuvre marquée par le christianisme.

*Le Dom Juan de Molière représente l'aristocrate qui revendique la liberté de suivre son impulsion et qui critique la régulation des désirs imposée par la société et par la religion. Comme tout libertin, Dom Juan se caractérise par sa manière particulière de manier le langage, par ce qu'il laisse entendre et attendre, par la façon dont il implique les autres dans son discours et par son art de toujours ramener son discours à soi-même. Le libertin utilise son discours pour séduire, pour secouer les consciences, pour s'assurer la maîtrise des situations. (Lefter 2007 : 65)*

Nous rejoignons l'opinion de Diana Lefter et nous considérons que cet explorateur de la liberté absolue ne peut être imaginé que comme un illuminé en quête de l'amour total. Une chronique d'une pièce de théâtre parlait d'un spectacle où à la fin, la situation était résolue par l'apparition de six femmes, toutes enceintes, signe de leur accouplement avec Don Juan. D'ici, nous avons compris qu'il serait bon que le mythe littéraire ne soit pas jeté

dans le tellurique, mais qu'il vaut mieux discuter sa valeur libératrice et / ou la rébellion et le besoin de liberté. Le metteur-en-scène doit donc se trouver dans une relation adéquate avec le texte dramatique, autrement dit il doit être un lecteur et un critique professionnel, capable d'identifier les vertus dramatiques, de les ennoblir et de les expliciter en partant de l'intérieur, du texte vers la représentation scénique qu'il construit. Le texte, d'ailleurs, offre des informations d'une étonnante clarté, qui ne se laissent pas découvrir à une lecture superficielle. Ce sont justement ces non-dits, ces informations cachées que créent une grande œuvre, car elles ouvrent la voie vers des lectures plurielles, donnant ainsi naissance à des représentations diverses et d'actualité.

Pour nous, Dom Juan se saurait être autre qu'un révolté, un combattant. D'ailleurs, il se caractérise lui-même comme un homme d'honneur :

*LA STATUE — Dom Juan, c'est assez, je vous invite à venir demain souper avec moi, en aurez-vous le courage ? DOM JUAN — Oui, j'irai, accompagné du seul Sganarelle. (p. 61)*

Dom Juan n'est pas un séducteur quelconque et c'est justement pour cela qu'il est irrésistible pour les femmes. Il est *extra-ordinaire* et il tend vers l'absolu. S'il quitte une femme, ce n'est pas parce qu'il ne la veut plus, car une belle femme est toujours désirable. Mais il en veut toujours une autre, quelque chose de différent. Il est un fou séduisant et sage pour lequel l'amour *libère*. Chaque fois, il tombe amoureux avec la même passion et lorsqu'il déclare vouloir épouser une femme, il le veut vraiment.

Ces grands amours sont, bien sûr, passagers, mais Dom Juan ne peut pas vivre sans amour. Il se nourrit d'amour et c'est par l'amour qu'il veut trouver la transcendance. Pour lui, chaque amour est unique et c'est justement cela ce que cherche Dom Juan : l'unicité, car il vit sa vie en *unicité*. Il est pareil à un vampire : il a besoin de tous ces amours pour se nourrir. Toutes ces naissances et toutes ces résurrections des amours sont, chaque fois, comme un baptême : Dom Juan redevient nouveau-né, sans pêché, innocent, prêt à un nouvel amour.

Dom Juan ne peut pas devenir vieux. Nous dirions, au contraire, qu'il cherche une mort grandiose et qui reste dans la tradition orale et dans la mémoire collective. En fait, la pièce de Molière n'est qu'une continue quête de la Mort, suivie par un homme libre et qui veut mourir libre, qui ne veut pas perdre l'instant de liberté où son rêve puisse s'avérer.

Les comédies de Molières ont inspiré, entre autres Tchekhov, qui donné à ses pièces le nom de *comédies*, bien que les textes aient été traités, généralement, en clé tragique. A ce propos, nous croyons que pour un metteur-en-scène il est élémentaire ne pas éliminer le côté comique d'un texte, mais, tout au contraire, de le mettre en évidence. *Dom Juan*, par exemple, est une comédie dramatique. La traiter seulement dans le sens de la comédie ou, au contraire, dans la direction du dramatisme, ce serait priver le texte, la représentation et le public d'une dimension importante, notamment celle qui rend ce texte universel.

En gardant le parallèle entre Molière et Tchekhov, on peut observer que la scène du Mendiant se répète dans *La Cerisaie*. Les deux scènes sont actuelles de nos jours et nous croyons que leur actualité existera tant qu'il y aura de la pauvreté dans le monde, c'est-à-dire toujours. Dans les deux scènes, le mendiant reçoit une pièce en or. C'est pour cela que, dans notre vision, il s'agit d'une scène clé du spectacle, même si, au premier abord, cela pouvait sembler une scène dont on pourrait se passer.

L'histoire des mises-en-scène avec *Dom Juan* ou *La cerisaie* démontrent que, si la scène du mendiant a été traitée d'une manière superficielle, le spectacle comme tout a été superficiel, dont il a échoué. Quant au personnage du mendiant, il a été traité de différentes manières mais, pour nous, il doit se faire remarquer par la pureté de sa pensée, par la simplicité et la profondeur de son discours ; il doit être proche d'un apôtre ou d'un Tirésias de la mythologie grecque. Nous le voyons donc comme un mendiant aveugle, ascète et pensif, qui refuse de jurer contre Dieu :

*DOM JUAN.*— *Voilà qui est étrange, et tu es bien mal reconnu de tes soins; ah, ah, je m'en vais te donner un Louis d'or tout à l'heure, pourvu que tu veuilles jurer. [...]*  
*LE PAUVRE.*— *Non Monsieur, j'aime mieux mourir de faim.* (p. 39)

### **Le décor et les accessoires**

Meyerhold remarquait que Molière a été un novateur qui a essayé de porter la représentation, du fond et du milieu de la scène, vers l'avant-scène, pour accroître l'effet d'illusion.

En fait, le décor sera construit d'une traverse de praticables, d'une hauteur d'environ un mètre, qui symbolisera un sentier, pour certains initiatique et pour d'autres une simple voie de déplacement d'un lieu à l'autre.

La boîte de scène sera noire, avec un fond argenté, fait de tôle galvanisée qui s'enrichit de beaucoup de reflets intéressants sous la lumière de scène. Pour changer l'espace du jeu, nous avons utilisé aussi un rideau noir, nécessaire pour l'entrée du Mendiant et de la Statue.

Sur ce décor imposant ou qui en crée l'impression, les personnages vêtus de couleurs symboliques doivent se découper parfaitement, tandis que la mise en scène doit créer des compositions picturales.

Il y aura, également, des aspects baroques dans le visuel de la scène, un certain symbolisme, des éléments qui rappelleront les églises et ceux-ci en contraste avec d'autres formes : définies, géométriques, classiques.

Nous avons toujours cherché que le décor ne soit pas absolument figé, mais qu'il puisse permettre des surprises qui puissent enchanter le spectateur. De cette manière, il y a, dans notre mise en scène, deux espaces très clairs :

1. Un espace extérieur, un lieu au bord de la mer, une plage, un village de pêcheurs, un espace qui permet le déroulement de l'action initiale du spectacle
2. Un espace intérieur, quelque part dans la maison (dans le château de Dom Juan), un espace où, d'habitude, on prend les repas

Pour les scènes d'intérieur, le décor sera ainsi transformé :

1. La traverse de praticables sera coupée, deux des praticables seront déplacés vers le devant, construisant la table, qui sera suffisamment grande pour amplifier l'importance du moment, qui est comme une Cène biblique
2. Devant le rideau métallique, du grenier on fera descendre un écran qui aura un double rôle : d'une part, il marquera l'intérieur et, de l'autre, il masquera l'apparition de la Statue
3. La table se caractérise par un élément très important : elle est placée sur des roues pour qu'elle puisse être facilement évacuée de la scène, au juste moment. Cela



créera de l'espace pour mettre en évidence la grandeur de la Statue et pour illustrer de manière encore plus évidente le conflit entre celle-ci et le personnage central, Dom Juan.

4. La Statue, quant à elle, a les mêmes caractéristiques : elle est placée sur des roues, un piédestal, en effet, sur lequel on construira un groupe statuaire avec les personnages de la pièce.
5. A la fin, du point de vue visuel et scénique, il y aura la traverse coupée, cette fois, par l'évacuation de la table dans les coulisses. La traverse apparaîtra donc comme un sentier sans fin, comme un vol arrêté, comme une aspiration brisée ; c'est justement ce qui se passe avec notre personnage.

Pour ce qui est des accessoires, ce seront les objets usuels pour un repas, une pipe pour le tabac aimé par Sganarelle, des épées pour Dom Juan et pour Dom Carlos et un bâton pour le Mendiant visionnaire et prophète, celui qui, par peu de mots, montre aux voyageurs le Chemin.

#### **Les costumes et le maquillage**

Dans le spectacle *Dom Juan*, dont l'idée principale est celle d'un personnage illuminé, tué finalement par l'impossibilité de ses semblables de comprendre son esprit, ces pensées doivent s'actualiser dans la vision du metteur en scène. Dom Juan doit se distinguer des autres ! Mais il ne s'agit pas d'une diversité quelconque ! Il doit être d'une autre manière, mais il doit s'encadrer dans l'idée du spectacle. Et alors, avec le scénographe, nous avons cherché cette manière différente.

La proposition du scénographe, que nous avons accueillie et ensuite enrichie, a été que tous les acteurs soient vêtus de blanc, de noir et de gris, tandis que le personnage principal sera vêtu dans des habits colorés.

Sganarelle, à son tour, peut lui aussi avoir dans les vêtements quelques touches de couleur, mais des couleurs peu prononcées, parce qu'il n'est pas au niveau de son maître, mais il en emprunte certaines caractéristiques. Mais la différence conférée par les couleurs n'est pas suffisante.

Pour rendre les choses encore plus claires, il faut aussi introduire une différence dans la coupe des vêtements. Ainsi, Dom Juan aura un costume modernisé, tandis que les autres seront vêtus comme dans l'époque du Roi Soleil et du classicisme français, le XVII<sup>ème</sup> siècle.

Dans la même lignée, les paysans et les deux jeunes femmes de condition moyenne porteront des costumes faits en tissus naturels, dépourvus de noir, qui est considéré comme l'apanage des nobles.

D'autre part, le costume de Dom Louis comprend beaucoup le noir, car il est un noble de rang ; la famille d'Elvire, ses frères, auront également du noir dans leurs costumes ; par contre, Dom Carlos, qui ne fait preuve d'intelligence, pour ne pas dire qu'il est sot, sera vêtu de manière exagérée, en accentuant l'idée d'armure, il sera orné pour bataille, tandis qu'au fond il est un lâche.

Le Mendiant est habillé négligemment, de manière asymétrique, mais il portera ses vêtements avec dignité, car il représente l'idée de divinité, de destinée, il est à la fois prophète et guide, celui à qui Dom Juan demande le bon chemin !

Un autre personnage spécial est Monsieur Dimanche, le bourgeois qui veut l'argent ; il est en quelque sorte le représentant du nouveau monde, qui veut sembler, sans beaucoup de succès, un aristocrate. Il porte des vêtements gris, seulement que sur son énorme chapeau apparaît un boa multicolore, signe des temps à venir et dont il est, sans le savoir, le représentant.

Un autre aspect important à remarquer et qui complète la vision sur les costumes des personnages, est la surprise dans leurs costumes, surtout dans ceux de certains personnages.

Sganarelle porte des pantalons qui, au juste moment, se transformeront en jupe ; cette image sera corroborée à celle des cheveux en vent, qui dévoileront l'identité : du valet en femme de chambre, de l'homme à la femme.

Dona Elvira montrera sa vraie identité dans la troisième apparition, quand elle portera une robe qui sera découpée au dos, de sorte que sa lingerie intime puisse être vue.

Un autre changement de costume, dans un sens destructif, sera celui de Dom Carlos, qui apparaît comme un héros et qui finit comme un fantoche.

Le père Dom Louis renoncera à la fin à l'habit noir, symbole de l'autorité, de la noblesse et aussi de l'autorité. Dom Louis renonce au vêtement noir au moment de la mort du fils, car c'est le moment où il retrouve ses sentiments paternels.

Dom Juan est un chevalier ; il sera donc vêtu dans des tissus qui rappellent le cuir et il portera des couleurs royales, fortes. Nous avons volontairement renoncé aux dentelles et aux perruques, demandées par les codes vestimentaires de l'époque, mais le motif n'a pas été celui de porter le spectacle dans le présent. Nous dirions plutôt que le spectacle est atemporel. Nous sommes intéressés que le décor du spectacle soit aussi imposant que possible, afin de souligner, par comparaison, la condition humaine, aussi bien que les motivations du châtiment de Dom Juan et l'envergure exacte de sa vaillance. Imposant ne signifie pas nécessairement chargé. On peut obtenir la grandeur aussi bien de la hauteur et d'un espace vide qui contienne un seul élément essentiel, ou même une figure de personnage découpé, en fin de comptes.

### **Conclusions**

Le théâtre de Molière en général et la pièce *Dom Juan* en particulier est une analyse extrêmement moderne de la dualité. Le personnage principal est toujours accompagné de son alter ego, Sganarelle, la pièce représentant ainsi un rapport entre un vainqueur et un vaincu, entre un séducteur et un séduit, entre le fort et le faible, entre liberté et contrainte sociale.

La tradition nous raconte comment Don Juan va dans le monde d'*au-delà* conduit, ou mieux dit trainé par la Statue du Commandeur. C'est le signe ultime de sa révolte et non pas un acte suicidaire. Le suicide aurait signifié renoncer à la lutte, sans savoir qui allait gagner la confrontation. Pourtant, on ne peut pas savoir ce qui s'est passé *au-delà* ; tout ce que l'on peut faire c'est constater que *ici haut* la légende et le mythe de Don Juan continuent, avec une extraordinaire vitalité.

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## **IRONIE DE L'HISTOIRE ET AUTO-IRONIE DE L'ÉCRITURE DANS YO, EL SUPREMO DE AUGUSTO ROA BASTOS**

**Diana-Adriana LEFTER\***

***Abstract:** Our paper proposes an analysis of the place and functioning of the initial pasquín in Augusto Roa Bastos' Yo, el Supremo. We try to demonstrate that this one functions in the same time as a text, being thus included in the narrated history, and as a metatext, offering a reading key for the whole novel. More than this, its ironic role seems obvious to us, anticipating Roa Bastos' ironic and sarcastic approach of Dr. Francia's political regime.*

***Keywords:** irony; dictatorship; wall poster*

En 1974, lors de son exil en Argentine, Augusto Roa Bastos publiait un roman à la fois contestataire et ironique, expression artistique de sa conception sur l'histoire et notamment sur la dictature. L'auteur lui-même le caractérisait comme une « anti-histoire », une « infra-histoire », voire une « trans-histoire » ; autant de concepts, d'ailleurs, qui définissent, dans la conception de Roa Bastos, le rapport du texte fictionnel avec l'histoire et avec ses propres lois de génération : “escribir una contrahistoria, una réplica subversiva y transgresiva de la historiografía oficial” (Roa Bastos 1978 : 78).

Le roman apparaît ainsi comme un texte s'opposant aux variantes « officielles » de l'histoire, des textes qui, malheureusement, sont marqués par le faux et par la mystification. De cette manière, le roman construit sa propre infra-histoire, ce qui est un phénomène de nature plutôt narrative, car il implique les lois de la narration/histoire et il accède finalement à la trans-histoire, c'est-à-dire « au statut de pure narration, sans que cela implique la rupture entre le texte et la référence historique » (notre traduction). ( Ionescu in Roa Bastos 1982 : 11).<sup>1</sup>

*[...] novela de la dictadura férrea y atroz, novela de pesquisa « policiaca », novela de la afirmación y autodeterminación del Yo, novela producta del hecho de dictar a vera voz lo que el supremo dictador ordena al amanuense. (Méndez 1975 : 71)*

Augusto Roa Bastos disait, d'ailleurs, que son pays, le Paraguay, est la victime de sa géographie politique et que sa réalité est si hallucinante au point qu'elle peut apparaître peu vraisemblable. C'est la prémisse sur laquelle est construite l'affirmation de Andrei Ionescu, dans la préface qu'il signe pour la traduction en roumain (la traduction est signée par le même grand hispaniste roumain) que ce roman propose un « réalisme hallucinant ».

La roman se présente comme un enchaînement et une superposition de textes et de narrations qui accompagnent la narration principale, assumée par le Compilateur, ce dernier

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<sup>1</sup> « [...] statutul de ficțiune pură, fără ca aceasta să implice ruptura cu referenții istorici ». [...] le statut de pure fiction, sans que cela implique une rupture par rapport aux référents historiques ». (notre traduction)

re-construisant l'histoire vécue à partir de textes de diverses natures, mais qui relatent les mêmes événements : des textes laissés par le dictateur, des documents officiels de l'époque, des travaux des historiens, des documents privés appartenant à des personnes qui avaient connu directement ou indirectement le dictateur : la *Circular-perpetua* (la circulaire perpétuelle), le *Cuaderno privado* (le Cahier personnel), les *comentarios del Compilador* (les notes du Compilateur), le *pasquín*<sup>1</sup>.

L'organisation du roman rappelle celle d'un traité scientifique, qui se propose de valider des affirmations en faisant appel non pas seulement au point de vue du narrateur, mais aussi à des documents historiques (des documents qui sont, dans ce cas, de faux documents historiques), aux opinions des participants directs ou indirects, affirmations conservées dans de divers types de documents. Ainsi, on trouve dans le roman des renvois en bas de page, spécifiques aux traités scientifiques, des citations dans le texte, des textes originaux insérés dans le texte principal. Autant de stratégies, donc, qui sont censées valider ou, au contraire, dénoncer le faux d'une position. De plus, il y a des instances distinctes qui assument la narration dans chacun de ces documents – le compilateur, le Dictateur, le secrétaire, divers autres personnages – offrant souvent des points de vue diverses sur le même événement historique raconté. Ainsi, au niveau interne du roman, on construit une histoire officielle du pays et du dictateur et une histoire vraie qui, souvent, vient contredire la variante officielle.

La démarche dans *Yo, el Supremo* s'avère donc ironique, car les textes qui se superposent et se croisent, tout en offrant des points de vue différents sur les mêmes événements, ne se complètent pas, mais arrivent à une invalidation, à une contradiction, le propre, d'ailleurs, de la dictature du docteur Francia : une distance entre le vécu et le perçu du dictateur et la réalité du pays.

Le roman débute avec le texte du *pasquín* trouvé sur la porte de la cathédrale et qui décrit minutieusement la manière dans laquelle allait être traité le cadavre du président, après sa mort et la destinée réservée à ses serviteurs loyaux. Le texte est marqué par une graphie différente et il est assumé à la première personne, sous la forme d'un décret présidentiel. Apparemment, ce texte porte les marques de l'émetteur, qui serait le même président-dictateur : les formules typiques d'appellation du dictateur, la récurrence des termes utilisés et les références claires aux aspects notoires du mandat présidentiel (la Place de la République, les serviteurs), le style et les techniques oratoires consacrés du président. Tous ces éléments peuvent mener à la conclusion que l'émetteur, voire le scribe de ce texte, serait le même président.

Le caractère profondément égocentrique du texte peut aussi le valider comme un produit du dictateur parce que, bien que profondément offensif envers le président, le texte place le dictateur, jusqu'à la disparition définitive du cadavre, au centre de la vie de la

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<sup>1</sup> Ignacio Padilla parle de la technique du *collage*, utilisée par Augusto Roa Bastos : [...] *construida a modo de collage, "Yo el Supremo" es un auténtico catálogo de la amplia gama de formas y tiempos que para contar ofrece nuestro idioma. Cronologías, pasquines, memorandos, cartas, testimonios anónimos, monólogos en tiempos dislocados y polifonías de voces que se contradicen constantemente para contar una verdad sin cortapisas, esta novela de la dictadura es tan exigente como gratificante para el lector.* (Padilla 2001 : 2).

communauté. Autrement dit, bien que mort, le dictateur continue à gouverner et à régir la vie politique et sociale de son pays.

De cette perspective, le pasquin peut être interprété comme une manifestation ultime du pouvoir, si l'on accepte qu'il présente un événement réel, à savoir la mort du président, une action posthume du pouvoir, donc. Par contre, si l'on accepte que l'émetteur est le président, mais que la mort n'est pas une réelle, le pasquin se transforme dans une sorte d'épreuve à laquelle tous sont soumis : population et fidèles du régime dans une égale mesure. Dans cette « lecture », le président pourrait vérifier et valider la loyauté de ses fonctionnaires, l'obédience et la peur de la population. Dans cette « lecture », le pasquin serait également une action de pouvoir.

Il faut aussi rappeler à ce point que le Suprême Dictateur considère qu'il y a une relation étroite entre l'émetteur / le scripteur des paroles écrites et la parole écrite elle-même et que tout intermédiaire peut fausser le résultat de l'écriture, qui s'éloigne ainsi de son émetteur :

*El dictador pone en escena de manera privilegiada esa modificación del sentido que es constitutiva del acto mismo de escritura, esa alteración radical que consiste en la paradójica ajenidad de la palabra propia.* (Ostrov XXXIX : 280)

De cette manière, le pasquin de la cathédrale incarne, de manière ironique, le paradoxe du pouvoir : il reproduit la graphie du dictateur, le type de papier utilisé pour les documents officiels, le style des décrets présidentiels. Ainsi, le motif pour lequel il existe le doute sur l'identité de l'auteur est justement l'éloignement entre le texte et son producteur. Alors, la négation initiale du Suprême introduit le doute sur « la main qui écrit » le pasquin ; dans le même temps, le Suprême ne met en doute ni le style, ni la provenance du papier, laissant donc libre voie aux spéculations.

Pourtant, pourrait-on concevoir qu'un Suprême Dictateur puisse mettre en scène sa mort pour mettre à l'épreuve ses loyaux, afin accroître leur peur ou pour valider son pouvoir ? Cette hypothèse est, selon nous, difficile à soutenir, parce que, quel qu'ait été le but de la démarche présidentielle, elle aurait impliquer l'idée de la mort du président, donc d'éphémère de son pouvoir, idée complètement inacceptable dans un système de dictature. Encore, lorsqu'il doit répondre au gouverneur de Villa Franca, pour infirmer sa soit-dite mort, le Suprême Dictateur confirme non seulement son existence, mais aussi son pouvoir exclusif sur sa mort et sur l'annonce de cet éventuel événement : « Cuando esto suceda, puesto que no soy eterno, yo mismo te mandaré comunicar la noticia, mi estimado Antonio Escobar ». (Roa Bastos 2001 : 9)

Encore, dans l'analyse du texte du pasquin, l'on doit considérer un aspect qui s'éclaircit à mesure que l'on avance dans la lecture du roman et qui est lié au pouvoir, avec ses deux volets : le pouvoir politique, de nature dictatoriale, capable donc d'influencer, voire de conduire la vie des autres, et le pouvoir des mots et de la mémoire, qui agit sur celui qui le détient. Or, le Suprême Dictateur de Roa Bastos assume ouvertement plusieurs discours qui sont autant de formes de manifestation du pouvoir : le dialogue avec Patiño, son secrétaire, la Circulaire perpétuelle, où le mot devient moyen de transmission du pouvoir politique dictatorial et le Cahier personnel, où le mot se transforme en moyen de préservation de la mémoire. Il en résulte une ambivalence, une polyphonie intérieure, une dualité du Dictateur où un *moi* critique est capable analyser, même de condamner les actions

du *moi* dictatorial et de la dictature en général. Alors, on pourrait supposer que la rédaction du pasquin fait partie de ce jeu *moi / lui*, dont le Dictateur parle plus d'une fois et qui marque une distance critique, ventriloque, entre l'instance dictatoriale, abusive, et celle critique :

*Ahora la mitad izquierda se arremanga en belfo de caballo descubriendo los dientes sin arrastrar en sus ondulaciones a la región derecha cerrada e impasible en las contrafrases. Conozco el truco. Yo mismo he aprendido a bifurcar la lengua. Fugar la voz. Superponer las voces de ventriloquia a través de los labios completamente cerrados. Juego de niños para mí. Arte que este mamarracho imperial no domina.* (Roa Bastos 2011 : 133-134);

*Yo debo cuidarme de ser engañado por el delirio de las semejanzas. Todos se calman pensando que son un solo individuo. Difícil ser constantemente el mismo hombre. Lo mismo no es siempre lo mismo. YO no soy siempre YO. El único que no cambia es ÉL. Se sostiene en lo invariable. Está ahí en el estado de los seres superlunares.* (Roa Bastos 2011 : 26)

Par conséquent, nous pensons que le texte du pasquin a un rôle prophétique et accusateur, faussement assumé en première personne, par un émetteur profondément critique à l'égard du régime dictatorial, qui est, peut-être le Compileur<sup>1</sup>. Dans cette « lecture », le pasquin nous apparaît comme une écriture accusatrice et ironique à la fois, un manifeste anti-dictatorial annonçant l'inévitable fin de toute dictature et l'effacement de toute mémoire liée aux régimes dictatoriaux de la conscience collective.

Dans le plan du roman et de l'histoire racontée par celui-ci, le pasquin fonctionne comme un déclencheur : la mort annoncée, suivie par la profanation et l'anéantissement du cadavre, met en marche une vraie intrigue policière, typique des services secrets, pour trouver l'auteur / le scribe dudit texte. Le long de cette enquête, le lecteur apprend, de manière progressive, l'histoire du pouvoir du président, devenu le Suprême Dictateur.

Alors, si le texte du pasquin est mis en rapport avec le texte qui lui succède – le dialogue entre son Excellence et un supposé serviteur – l'on apprendra en peu plus loin qu'il s'agit de Patiño, son secrétaire – l'hypothèse initiale sur l'émetteur du pasquin (qui serait le même Président) est invalidée. Le dialogue entre le Dictateur et son secrétaire dévoile le fait que le texte infâme avait été écrit par un détracteur du Président. Par conséquent, le pasquin ne peut être « lu » que comme un texte diffamant, qui assume de manière abusive et fausse la première personne du Président :

*El texto se conforma entonces como un espacio donde El Supremo disputa la propiedad del sentido y del territorio, tanto en la página como en la nación paraguayana.* (Ostrov : XXXIX : 275)

En fait, il y a deux autres écrits qui font écho à ce pasquin. Le premier est le texte manuscrit (la lettre manuscrite appartiendrait au Président) affiché sur la porte de la Casa de Recogidas y Huérfanas, transformée, le long du temps, en maison de tolérance. Si le premier pasquin, celui de la porte de la cathédrale, déclenche une investigation détaillée, l'apparition du deuxième ne pousse pas le dictateur à ordonner une enquête ; même plus, il demande à Patiño de faire arrêter toute enquête sur l'auteur du texte.

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<sup>1</sup> Un Compileur qui, à la fin, se dévoile sous le nom « Monsieur Roa ».

Le deuxième texte apparaît sur la porte de la cathédrale où gisaient les restes humains du Suprême : « Es conveniente recordar que poco tiempo después apareció una mañana en la puerta del templo un cartel que se decía enviado por él, desde el infierno, suplicando se lo removiese de aquel lugar santo para alivio de sus pecados ». (Roa Bastos 2001 : 255) Ni ce deuxième texte ne fait pas objet d'une enquête pour en trouver l'auteur.

Il devient donc clair que le premier pasquin a un double rôle, selon le plan où l'on se situe : dans le plan de la diégèse, il a un rôle déclencheur, justement parce qu'il instaure une énigme ; dans le plan extradiégétique, il fonctionne comme métatexte-conclusion de l'histoire qu'il introduit.

Antonio Pinio Méndez affirmait, à cet égard que la présence du pasquin de la cathédrale apparaît seulement comme un prétexte « para que, a partir de allí, nos presente en *Yo, el Supremo* » la intrahistoria del Paraguay decimonónico ». (Méndez 1975 : 71).

Finalement, le pasquin remplira sa prophétie, confirmant ainsi l'éphémère et le seul vrai pouvoir du Suprême : celui de décider sur sa mort, selon son propre scénario. Le feu rituel annoncé par le pasquin se produira, en effet, par la volonté du dictateur, il incendie son palais, au conseil de Patiño. De cette manière, le Suprême Dictateur devient le Suprême Défunt, illusoire confirmation de son pouvoir suprême. Alors, le deuxième pasquin attaché à la porte de la cathédrale apparaît comme une ultime confirmation du pouvoir du dictateur : au-delà de la mort, il est metteur en scène de sa mort et, après la mort, il continue à exercer son pouvoir occulte sur les Paraguayens, s'assurant ainsi une étrange forme d'immortalité.

Pour ce qui est du prétendu auteur du pasquin, le dictateur, Andrei Ionescu y voyait un personnage très complexe, celui qui lui rendrait des dimensions humaines « [...] trăsătura cea mai vizibilă și importantă în același timp a romanului este depășirea manihéismului care caracterizează operele mai vechi consacrate dictatorilor (Ionescu 1982 : 9)<sup>1</sup>.

A propos du même dictateur, Roa Bastos attirait l'attention, dans le journal *El País* de novembre 1978, que sa figure diffère de celle typique, consacrée, des autres dictateurs, dont l'unique but était la satisfaction de la sensualité du pouvoir. Par contre, doctor Francia, son dictateur, inspiré par le dictateur homonyme du Paraguay, a eu comme principal exercice du pouvoir la préservation de la souveraineté et de l'indépendance de son pays, ce qui le consacre comme un personnage historique dont la contribution à la construction de l'état moderne et indépendant du Paraguay est indéniable. Roa Bastos fait de son dictateur un personnage très intelligent, poussé par ses convictions politiques et parfois par des croyances occultes, cultivé, mais peu soumis aux passions érotiques, ce qui le distingue des autres personnages similaires du roman hispano-américain de la dictature. Le Suprême met son intelligence, sa stratégie politique, la cruauté envers les adversaires, au service de la mémoire, dans laquelle il voit la forme suprême de préservation de l'histoire – or, l'histoire c'est lui et par cela le constructeur et le détenteur de la mémoire suprême. D'ailleurs, c'est ainsi que le dictateur se définit : « Yo diría más bien que un Pentágono de fuerzas gobierna mi cuerpo y el Estado que tiene en mí su cuerpo material: Cabeza. Corazón. Vientre.

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<sup>1</sup> « [...] la caractéristique la plus évidente et, dans le même temps, la plus importante du roman est le dépassement du manichéisme qui caractérise les œuvres antérieures consacrées à des dictateurs ». (notre traduction)



Voluntad. Memoria. Ésta es la magistratura íntegra de mi organismo ». (Roa Bastos 2001 : 66)

Dans *Yo, el Supremo* l'accès à la vérité se fait donc par un compliqué jeu de la communication, qui résulte de la corroboration des niveaux co-textuels présents :

*[...] la lucha por el poder [...] se produce también entre las diversas voces y espacios textuales que pretenden monopolizar el sentido del texto novelesco total. En otras palabras, la novela no sólo exhibe un combate por el poder autoritario, sino también por el poder autorial. [...] esta obra elude la unidimensionalidad de relatar un acontecimiento ficticio para presentarse como perpetuum mobile, como movimiento permanente de textos que se desdoblan, dialogan, se invierten, se contraponen.* (Pacheco, 1986 : XVII-XVIII)

Par le jeu ironique des textes – superposés, enchaînés, enchâssés – une idée se fait donc claire : le pouvoir de la parole est supérieur au pouvoir de la dictature, tandis que le vrai dictateur est le maître des paroles, non pas le maître des gens. L'on voit ainsi que le vrai dictateur du roman de Augusto Roa Bastos n'est pas Doctor Francia, docteur le pouvoir fondé sur l'abus, la peur et les pratiques magiques est fatalement éphémère, comme le pasquin l'avait d'ailleurs anticipé. Le vrai dictateur est le Compileur, Monsieur Roa, celui qui garde et ordonne la mémoire, offrant ainsi, à sa guise, l'immortalité, mais aussi critiquant le pouvoir, influençant et formant le lecteur. Monsieur Roa, une mise à nu évidente de l'auteur, est le nom avec lequel l'ambassadeur brésilien Correia appelle le Compileur, dévoilant ainsi l'identité du dictateur.

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## CONSERVAR LA IRONÍA EN LA LENGUA META, ¿UNA MISIÓN IMPOSIBLE PARA EL TRADUCTOR?

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***Abstract:** Irony is many times strongly connected to the cultural environment and therefore, when translating a literary text, it is difficult to preserve the irony in the target language. This does not imply that preserving irony when it is based only on the lexical level is an easier process. The puns, for instance, represent a real challenge for the translators. Very often, translators find themselves in the situation of having to use a periphrasis or an explanatory note to achieve their goals, the latter being an “invasive” but sometimes necessary method of translation, the last and most hated technique used by the translators. In this article, we propose an investigation of the methods the translators use in order to be able to preserve irony in the target language.*

***Keywords:** traductology; literary translation; irony.*

### 1. Problemática de la traducción. La equivalencia

El origen de la traducción se pierde en los albores de la historia de la humanidad. Uno de los primeros testimonios materiales se halla en el antiguo Egipto: la famosísima Piedra de Rosetta, un bloque de basalto que un soldado de Napoleón descubrió durante la campaña en Egipto y en cuya superficie un mismo texto se encuentra en egipcio jeroglífico, egipcio demótico y griego, lo que permitió descifrar el significado de los jeroglíficos egipcios, gracias sobre todo a los esfuerzos de Jean-François Champollion.

No cabe duda de que la traducción existió desde siempre, las tribus más antiguas necesitaban comunicarse entre ellas y algún miembro aprendía forzosamente la lengua de la tribu vecina.

La reflexión sobre la traducción no ha tardado mucho en manifestarse, a pesar de no haber sido siempre muy rigurosa, según opina una insigne traductóloga: “a pesar de esta larga historia de la traducción y de su importancia, ligada a la evolución de la humanidad, la reflexión teórica ha sido quizás más pobre de lo que hubiera cabido esperar. En lo que se refiere a Occidente, todos los autores coinciden en señalar su inicio con Cicerón” (Hurtado Albir, 2016: 100).

Pero, después de dos mil años de traducción, es preciso señalar que muy pocas cosas parecen claras, o –para parafrasear a Sócrates–, sólo sabemos que no sabemos nada.

Virgilio Moya, otro ilustre traductólogo, no deja de manifestar en su libro *La selva de la traducción*, un hondo escepticismo con respecto a las teorías de la traducción, escepticismo que cualquier traductor comparte, al menos en parte. Virgilio Moya observa con razón que “los teóricos todavía no se han puesto de acuerdo en la definición del objeto de estudio, es decir, del concepto mismo de traducción [...] y hoy reina en el campo teórico de la traducción una desconfianza generalizada hacia cualquier intento de definición” (Moya, 2016: 12).

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Parece que en un solo punto están de acuerdo todos los que se dedican a la traducción o a la reflexión sobre la traducción: todos admiten que la traducción perfecta no existe. No podemos evitar la pregunta “¿Y por qué no existe?”

Tal vez porque no se puede separar la lengua de la cultura y “una traducción no concierne sólo a un trasvase entre dos lenguas, sino entre dos culturas, o dos enciclopedias. Un traductor no debe tener en cuenta sólo reglas estrictamente lingüísticas, sino también elementos culturales en el sentido más amplio del término” (Eco, 2016: 208). Virgilio Moya añade de manera aún más contundente: “la traducción de un texto no es tanto estatismo y comparación de lenguas como metamorfosis e interpretación, y para interpretar se necesita haberse enriquecido antes y no sólo con lengua” (Moya, *op. cit.*: 42).

De todos modos, la gran controversia situada siempre en la esencia de la traductología ha sido desencadenada por la elección entre la traducción literal y la traducción libre, por la superioridad de la primera o de la segunda, que a lo largo del debate han recibido varios nombres. Nada de esto es nuevo, sino observado y asimilado desde siempre: “Cicerón, al señalar que no hay que traducir *verbum pro verbo*, inaugura un debate que en el mundo occidental va a durar dos mil años; se trata del debate en torno a la oposición fundamental: el debate entre *traducción literal vs traducción libre*” (Hurtado Albir, *op. cit.*: 104).

El continuador de Cicerón es Horacio, quien recomienda “que no hay que traducir palabra por palabra e introduce el término *fidel* en el debate al plantear que «Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus interpres»” (*ibidem*: 105).

Con esto hemos introducido ya las dos nociones primordiales de la traductología: la fidelidad y la equivalencia. La fidelidad reinó durante siglos, pero actualmente está en desuso, los traductores y los teóricos de la traducción prefieren la equivalencia, noción mucho más compleja. Anda Rădulescu observa: “Il est évident que pour le texte littéraire la fidélité mimétique est tout à fait déconseillée, ne serait-ce que parce que les éléments lexicaux de deux ou plusieurs langues ne sont jamais superposables et que les règles de l'agencement des mots dans les phrases sont différentes d'une langue à l'autre” (Rădulescu, 2005: 84).

La equivalencia fue estudiada primero por Vinay y Darbelnet, después por E. Nida y R. Jakobson, y la lista de investigadores que han reflexionado sobre el tema es muy larga, a pesar de que muy pocos han deseado definirla.

La equivalencia orienta la traducción hacia la lengua meta, supone la traducción de un refrán por otro refrán (por ejemplo “Más vale ser cabeza de ratón que cola de león” por “Decât codaș la oraș mai bine-n satul meu frunțaș”, o “Haceos de miel, y os comerán las moscas” por “Cine se bagă în tărâțe îl mănâncă porcii”), y la traducción de una expresión por otra expresión (“Hace un frío que pela” por “e frig de crapă pietrele”), u operar el cambio necesario, cuando la expresión es parecida en las dos lenguas (“estar en el séptimo cielo” y “a fi în al nouălea cer”).

La equivalencia es “una noción de gran complejidad” (Hurtado Albir, *op. cit.*: 204), una noción cuyas fronteras resultan bastante laxas, y ha sido entendida de maneras distintas. Se han propuesto clasificaciones de la equivalencia, o se ha negado su utilidad. Según Amparo Hurtado Albir,

podemos utilizar el término *equivalencia* para referirnos a la relación establecida entre la traducción y el texto original siempre y cuando no lo identifiquemos con identidad ni con planteamientos meramente lingüísticos, e incorporemos una concepción dinámica y flexible que considere la situación de comunicación y el contexto sociohistórico en que se produce el acto traductor (Hurtado Albir, *op. cit.*: 209).

Virgilio Moya da carpetazo a esta controversia con su finísima ironía:

...el concepto de equivalencia, que de ser el principal y problemático parámetro para distinguir la traducción de la no traducción, como defienden las teorías tradicionales, ha pasado a ser algo real y nada problemático que se da por definición entre original y traducción, algo intrínsecamente natural a toda traducción. Tal vez el problema de la equivalencia sea uno de esos problemas que, según Umberto Eco, deben resolverse demostrando que no tienen solución (Moya, *op. cit.*: 12).

Más tarde no duda en añadir que la equivalencia “es un concepto más fugitivo que el color rojo” (*ibídem*: 42).

De esta manera, la traducción parece flotar en la neblina. No se sabe hacia dónde irá la teoría, pero a muy pocos les importa, ya que la práctica no la necesita, y está muy bien encaminada.

En cuanto a la ironía, en muchos casos esta tiene que ver con la cultura y, al traducir una obra literaria, es difícil mantenerla en la lengua meta. Esto no quiere decir que sea más fácil mantener la ironía cuando esta se basa solamente en el nivel lexical. Los juegos de palabras constituyen un verdadero reto para el traductor.

A menudo el traductor no encuentra una solución y se ve obligado a utilizar perífrasis, o notas explicativas, siendo este último un método muy “invasivo”, pero a veces necesario; es el último y más odioso recurso de un traductor.

## **2. Lo prohibido de Benito Pérez Galdós**

Hemos escogido estudiar la traducción al rumano de esta novela galdosiana, traducción publicada por la editorial Univers en 2018, con el título *Fructul oprit*, porque el autor maneja a menudo y de manera magistral la ironía para caracterizar a sus personajes.

*Lo prohibido* es “el retrato de una sociedad que utilizará cualquier medio para proveerse de dinero, pero, quizá por la misma razón, que carece de lo que el narrador [...] llama «esa impulsión moral» para llevar a cabo cualquier obra empezada” (Whiston, 2001: 107). La novela es el supuesto diario de los años pasados en Madrid por el protagonista, José María, hombre que se deja llevar por el temperamento apasionado, heredado de su padre andaluz, y desoye la voz de la razón, que le recuerda incesantemente la moderación y el despego de su madre inglesa.

Después de la muerte de sus padres, el hombre decide irse a vivir en la capital, donde conoce a su tío Rafael y a sus primos, tres mujeres y un hombre. Las tres mujeres están todas casadas, circunstancia que a José María le disgusta, ya que se enamora de una de las primas. Rico y generoso, el héroe estimula el gusto de Eloísa, la mujer que ama, por los objetos de arte y el lujo. Eloísa sueña con comprar todo lo bello que ve, y llega a tener una casa que podría convertirse perfectamente en un almacén de objetos de arte, o en un museo, y nada tiene que ver con un hogar familiar. Corrompiéndola con regalos, José María no necesita mucho tiempo para convertirla en su amante, a pesar de que al principio tiene que

lidiar con los remordimientos de la mujer, hasta entonces fiel a su marido. El marido engañado es un hombre joven, pero gravemente enfermo, cuya misteriosa afección no puede ser curada por la medicina de la época. Dentro de pocos años, Eloísa se queda viuda, pero a José María le invaden los escrúpulos de conciencia, a causa del aprecio que le tenía el difunto, y además, ya no se siente atraído por aquella mujer. El protagonista se da cuenta de que Eloísa, estando libre, ya no le interesa; ahora no deja de pensar en Camila, hermana de Eloísa, que está felizmente casada. José María deberá confesarse a sí mismo que le atrae siempre lo prohibido, lo que aparentemente no puede ni podrá tener. Lo que no debe tener.

Galdós caracteriza a unos de sus personajes de manera irónica, provocando la risa del lector. Hace que los personajes hablen de manera ridícula, confundiendo términos y empleándolos de manera errónea.

### 3. Conservar la ironía del autor en la lengua meta (LM)

Camila es pobre e invita a comer a su primo José María, para agradecerle un regalo que el hombre le había hecho, y le promete un gran banquete:

“Una gran comida, no te creas; verás qué cosa más buena y más *chic*... Rigurosa etiqueta, ya sabes. Habrá diplomáticos, algún ministro, toda la *jilife*...” (Galdós, 2001: 214).

Está claro que la heroína quiere decir *high life*, pero no habla inglés y deforma las palabras.

En la traducción se deforman las mismas palabras inglesas, pero de acuerdo con la ortografía rumana: “O masă extraordinară, n-o să crezi; ai să vezi ce lucruri bune și ce *chic*... De mare ceremonie, știi tu. Vor fi diplomați, vreun ministru, tot *hailaif*-ul...” (Galdós, 2018: 87).

El menú es igualmente hilarante: “Te daremos nidos de avestruz, fideos escarchados, pechugas de rinoceronte, jabalí en su tinta y *Chateau-Peleón*.” (Galdós, 2001: 214).

El DRAE aclara que “vino peleón” es “vino muy ordinario” y, por eso, en la traducción se ha utilizado el término “poșircă”, lo que, según el Diccionario Explicativo de la Lengua Rumana (DEX), significa “bebida alcohólica floja y de mala calidad”:

“Îți vom da cuiburi de struț, fidea glazurată, piept de rinocer, porc mistreț în suc propriu și *Château-Poșircă*.” (Galdós, 2018: 87).

Otro personaje, Barragán, es ridículo porque abusa de la expresión “partir del principio”:

...y yo le digo: «*Partiendo del principio* de que sea santidad eso de comer pescado en vez de carne, y yo lo pongo en duda; pero, en fin, lo admito; *parto del principio* de que... Yo digo: las personas delicadas ¿no deben estar exentas de cumplir esas reglas? Y no crea usted, tuvimos que llamar a Zayas. Dolores en la boca del estómago, vómitos. Al fin, paulatinamente se han ido serenando. Bien merecido les está. Yo, como no creo en esas teologías, comí en casa del amigo Lhardy buen pavo trufado, buenas salchichas y unos bisteques como ruedas de carro... Hola, Cristóbal, ¿pero ha visto usted hoy...? (Galdós, 2001: 453)

En rumano se hace un calco, traduciendo literalmente:

...iar eu îi spun: „*Plecând de la principiul* că a mânca pește în loc de carne e sfințenie, deși eu mă îndoiesc; dar, în sfârșit, o admit; *plec de la principiul* că... Eu spun: persoanele delicate nu trebuie să fie exceptate de la îndeplinirea acestor reguli?“. Să nu credeți că a fost o nimica toată, a trebuit să-l chemăm pe Zayas. Dureri în gura stomacului, vomă. În cele din urmă, *progresiv* s-au înseninat. O meritau din plin. Eu, cum nu cred în teologiile astea, am mâncat acasă la prietenul Lhardy un delicios curcan umplut, cârnăciori ca lumea și niște biftecuri cât roțile de la trăsură... (Galdós, 2018: 340).

Además, el personaje describe la comida en casa de su amigo de manera hiperbólica, lo que en rumano también se ha imitado, traduciendo literalmente.

El mismo personaje usa un lenguaje grandilocuente para criticar a los políticos de la época y ensalzar su propia sabiduría. Pero es inculto, no conoce el adjetivo „compacto“:

¿Ha habido malas noticias? Lo que ya sabíamos; otra sublevacioncita militar. Esto da vergüenza. Aquí no hay más que pillería, aquí no hay quien sepa gobernar. Yo fusilaría media España, y veríamos si la otra mitad andaba derecha. Porque vea usted -añadía tocándome ambas solapas y haciéndome retirar un poco, pues tenía la mala costumbre de echársele a uno encima-, si los hombres de negocios nos pusiéramos un día de acuerdo, todos *compatos*, y dijéramos: «ea, se acabó la farsa; desde hoy abajo la política de personas y arriba la de los grandes intereses del país... (Galdós, 2001: 453)

En rumano la palabra es muy parecida y se quita la misma letra que falta en español.

„Au fost vești proaste? Ce știam deja; altă revoltă militară. E rușinos. În țara asta nu mai sunt decât pungași, aici nu mai știe nimeni să guverneze. Eu aș împușca jumătate din Spania și am vedea dacă cealaltă jumătate merge drept. Căci, vedeți dumneavoastră, a adăugat apucându-mă de ambele revere și făcându-mă să mă trag puțin în spate, fiindcă avea prostul obicei de a se năpusti asupra omului, dacă noi, oamenii de afaceri, ne-am pune într-o zi de acord, toți *compați*, și am spune: „Gata, s-a terminat farsa; de astăzi încolo jos politica indivizilor și sus cea a marilor interese ale țării...“ (Galdós, 2018: 340)

Los demás personajes se burlan de los „solecismos“ de Barragán y los comentan entre ellos. Además, tienen razón en hablar de „solecismos“, ya que el DRAE define el solecismo como „error cometido contra las normas de algún idioma“. Cuando alguien quiere saber qué barbaridades ha pronunciado Barragán, otro personaje le contesta:

„Muchísimas. *Ha partido del principio* como unas cincuenta veces en quince minutos. Ha dicho que en la cacería del lunes comió *fiambre frío*, y que ha puesto una *pipa* en Flandes.“ (Galdós: 2001, 456)

Los errores son dos. En primer lugar, un pleonasma. El adjetivo „fiambre“ viene de „frío“ y el DRAE señala que se aplica a la carne „que después de asada, cocida o curada, se come fría y puede conservarse durante bastante tiempo“. El mismo sentido tiene si se nominaliza. En segundo lugar, la expresión correcta es „poner una pipa en Flandes“ y, según el DRAE, significa „conseguir algo de especial dificultad“.

En rumano se ha usado el sintagma „uscături reci“ -que, según el DEX, son „mâncare uscată, care se poate mânca rece (și fără o pregătire specială)“-, creando igualmente un pleonasma, y se ha empleado la expresión „a merge strună“ de manera

deformada, para obtener los mismos efectos hilarantes, aunque la expresión no tiene el mismo sentido que „poner una pica en Flandes” en español:

„O grămadă. A plecat de la principiul de vreo cincizeci de ori în cincisprezece minute. A spus că la partida de vânătoare de luni a mâncat *uscături reci* și că îi merge *strung*.” (Galdós, 2018: 342)

El siguiente error de Barragán es igualmente celebrado por los que le invitan a sus recepciones precisamente para reírse de él:

„Ayer -refirió María Juana, tapándose discretamente la cara con su abanico-, estábamos hablando de una mala compra que hice. Él quiso decir que me habían dado un *timo*; pero no pareciéndole fina la palabra, dijo que me habían dado un *mito*...” (Galdós, 2001: 456)

Esto ha provocado otra dificultad a la hora de traducir. La traducción literal no hubiera conservado el divertido juego de palabras y se ha creado otro, a base de los verbos „a escroca” („estafar”) y „a escorta” („escortar”):

„Jeri, a relatat María Juana, acoperindu-și discret râsul cu evantaiul, vorbeam despre niște cumpărături dezavantajoase pe care le-am făcut. El a vrut să-mi spună că m-au *escrocat*; dar nepărându-i-se prea fin cuvântul, a zis că m-au *escortat*...” (Galdós, 2018: 342)

Otra dificultad la ha supuesto el apodo de la esposa del señor Barragán, „No Cabe Más”:

„Severiano -añadió mi prima-, no conoce todavía a la señora de Barragán. Esa sí que es tipo. Venga usted a comer pasado mañana. Verá usted... Yo la llamo *No Cabe Más*, porque esta frase no se le cae de la boca, siempre que elogia algo; y ha de saber usted que no habla sino para ponderar sus cosas. *No cabe nada más* rico que las cortinas de su sala; *no cabe nada más* ligero que su berlina de doble suspensión; *no cabe nada más* elegante que el vestido que le ha hecho a Esperancita...” (Galdós, 2001: 456)

En rumano se ha usado „Cum nu s-a mai văzut”:

„Severiano, a adăugat vara mea, nu o cunoaște încă pe doamna Barragán. Aia chiar că e o figură. Veniți la masă poimăine. Veți vedea... Eu o numesc *Cum nu s-a mai văzut*, pentru că are mereu pe buze expresia asta, întotdeauna când elogiază ceva; și trebuie să știți că nu vorbește decât ca să-și laude lucrurile. *Cum nu s-a mai văzut* de frumoase sunt perdelele din salonul ei; *cum nu s-a mai văzut* de ușoară e berlina cu dublă suspensie; *cum nu s-a mai văzut* de elegantă este rochia pe care i-a făcut-o Esperancitei...” (Galdós, 2018: 343)

El narrador introduce el apodo de la heroína en medio de su relato, lo que plantea otros problemas, obligando a forzar un poco el sentido del discurso e incluso la expresión escogida en rumano para equivaler el apodo en la traducción:

„A duras penas podía el corsé contener aquellos pedazos tan exuberantes. Bajo este punto de vista *no cabía más*; estaba todo lleno, y parecía que toda aquella oprimida máquina iba a reventar como una bomba, haciendo destrozos entre los circunstancias. Como era de pequeña estatura, y además se había tragado el palo del molinillo, el mote que le había puesto mi prima no podía ser más adecuado, porque en efecto parecía estar diciendo en un resoplido angustioso: «*No cabe más*, y este palo del molinillo es excesivamente largo y lo voy a vomitar.»” (Galdós, 2001: 456)

La traducción es esta:

„Cu greu izbutea corsetul să țină în frâu bucățile acelea exuberante. Din punctul acesta de vedere, era plin până la refuz și părea că instalația aceea chinuită are să explodeze ca o bombă, lăsând să se vadă ce *nu s-a mai văzut* și provocând ravagii printre cei prezenți. Cum era mică de statură, iar pe deasupra stătea rigidă de parcă ar fi înghițit un băț, porecla pe care i-o pusese vara mea nu putea fi mai potrivită, căci părea într-adevăr să spună, pufnind cuprinsă de angoasă: «*Nu s-a mai văzut* una ca asta, bățul ăsta e prea lung și am să-l vomit.» (Galdós, 2018: 343)

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## DOCUMENTA Y LITERATURA

Sorina Dora SIMION\*

**Abstract:** *In our article we will present the history of the five-year exhibition of Kassel, documenta 13 organized in 2012 and we will follow Enrique Vila-Matas's footsteps, who was invited to this cultural and artistic event by the commissary Chus Martínez to be one of the protagonists of a living work of art, Writer in residence. A lot of the topics and of the slogans of documenta will be found in the network of the novel Kassel no invita a la lógica, published in 2014, and we can identify the impact of this experience both in its substance as in his novel discourse. We will analyse how Vila-Matas can relate to this aesthetic phenomenon, the art of making an exhibition from the inside and from the outside, because he does his performance, but he is also a visitor of the exhibition, we refer at the same time to the Avant-garde artists and to his relationships with them all through his literary voyage, to his contacts with the Avant-garde artists described in his 1985's novel, Historia abreviada de la literatura portátil.*

**Keywords:** *Documenta 13; Enrique Vila-Matas; Avant-garde artists.*

Para empezar, hay que poner de manifiesto que cada documenta es un reflejo de las ideas y la concepción de su director artístico, por lo que no es sólo un fórum de las tendencias actuales en el arte contemporáneo, sino también un lugar donde se ponen a prueba nuevos conceptos y estándares de configuración de las exposiciones. Cada documenta revela, a la vez, el arte de exponer o de la exposición. En cada una de sus ediciones, la documenta ha desempeñado un papel principal en la renovación del discurso internacional sobre el arte. En las últimas décadas, la documenta ha llegado a ser una institución, esto es, más que una simple visión general de lo que está pasando actualmente, y capta la atención del mundo artístico internacional cada cinco años con su “museo de los 100 días” (<https://www.documenta.de/>), afirmación que pertenece a su fundador, Arnold Bode. El discurso y la dinámica del debate específicos para cada documenta expresan, pero también contradicen y sorprenden los horizontes de espera que el público tiene sobre el arte, empujando los límites hacia donde nadie lo prevé.

En la actualidad, estas exposiciones de las nuevas Vanguardias artísticas se pueden organizar gracias a Documenta und Museum Fridericianum gGmbH, una organización sin ánimo de lucro patrocinada y financiada por el Ayuntamiento de Kassel, el Estado de Hesse y la Fundación Cultural de la República Federal de Alemania. La historia de la documenta comenzó en 1955, cuando Arnold Bode (<https://www.documenta.de/>), pintor y profesor universitario nacido en Kassel, se propuso recuperar la conexión artística y el intercambio de valores estéticos entre Alemania y el resto del mundo, rotos tras la Segunda Guerra Mundial, y entrar en contacto con la escena artística internacional a través de la presentación del arte del siglo XX, desconocido al público alemán. Con este fin, fundó la Sociedad de Arte Occidental del Siglo XX para mostrar, en el museo Fridericianum, bombardeado por los aliados, el arte nombrado *degenerado* por los nazis, así como las obras de la modernidad

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clásica que nunca habían llegado en Alemania. La idea era plantar sobre los escombros obras artísticas famosas, como símbolo del triunfo de lo bello en contra de lo absurdo y el caos de la destrucción causada por la guerra y la irracionalidad de tal conflagración que siembra muerte y sufrimiento.

La segunda vez en su historia, la edición de dOCUMENTA 13 (<https://www.documenta.de/>), de 2012, fue dirigida por una mujer, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, que contó con gente de todo el mundo como colaboradores y su equipó fue liderado por Chus Martínez de España. La edición tenía un lema inédito (“El baile fue frenético, animado, ruidoso, retorcido y duró mucho tiempo”), se basaba en el no concepto y ecofeminismo y se organizó una exposición paralela en Kabul, Afganistán. Hubo varios emplazamientos y se celebraron eventos en otros lugares también: en los alrededores de Kassel, en Breitenau, donde funcionó durante la dictadura nazi un campo de concentración y trabajo, precisamente para sugerir que el arte puede cicatrizar o curar las heridas; Christov-Bakargiev supo conectar otras existencias también importantes para el programa de dOCUMENTA 13 con estos lugares mediante presentaciones que desvelaban las relaciones fluctuantes: en escena (Kassel), bajo asedio (Kabul), esperanza y levantamiento (El Cairo y Alejandría) y refugio (Banff). dOCUMENTA 13 propuso como temas: un árbol de bronce con una roca en la copa, con referencia al *arte povera*; el tema de la plantación de árboles o el anti-antropomorfismo, expresado en forma de semillas, manzanas y perros, así como personas y arte; o el tema de la ciencia. Algunas de las obras insignes fueron: las salas prácticamente vacías, acondicionadas sólo por una brisa fresca; una escultura de una mujer con una colmena en la cabeza en las afueras de Kassel, así como un perro con una pierna rosa; la escultura de chatarra industrial detrás de la estación principal de ferrocarriles; o la instalación de sonido incompleto al final de la plataforma del ferrocarril, basada en una pieza de Pavel Haas, compositor asesinado en Auschwitz en 1944. Se desarrolló también un amplio programa de eventos y películas, así como numerosas obras de arte vivientes presentadas como representaciones continuas.

Después de haber presentado, en líneas generales, el concepto de la documenta de 2012 en la cual participó el escritor, sale una pregunta legítima: ¿Cómo se refleja dOCUMENTA 13 en la novela *Kassel no invita a la lógica*, la novela de 2014 de Enrique Vila-Matas? Por cierto, no es el primer acercamiento a las Vanguardias, ya que, en 1985, el escritor barcelonés había publicado la célebre ya *Historia abreviada de la literatura portátil*, fruto de su propia experiencia y su inédito encuentro con los integrantes de las Vanguardias artísticas de aquel entonces, en la ciudad de París, núcleo neurálgico de las formas estéticas más adelantadas y no conformistas. El arte portátil, minúsculo, el arte *shandy* y la creación misma de la sociedad secreta, la vida *shandy*, el artista *shandy*, es decir, el *shandysmo* constituyen los nudos temáticos de la red novelesca. En cuanto al arte, los portátiles o los *shandys* tienen un espíritu innovador, gratuito y delirante y el resultado no puede ser más que una escritura divertida, gratuita y radical, características mismas del arte vanguardista, que, basándose en el juego, ofrece la dimensión aparentemente alegre, pero que, en su esencia, está llena de las tensiones del arte y del artista moderno. El resultado de este intento de los *shandys* de cambiar la percepción sobre el arte, los artistas y la obra de arte es la creación *del lujoso e inútil planeta shandy* y uno de los métodos, que les sirvió para llegar hasta tal planeta rara, es el viaje estático, un leitmotiv de la narrativa vila-

matiana al lado del *opio portátil*. Lo novedoso, lo inédito, lo inaudito y sorprendente invaden su obra en cuyo centro se sitúa el escritor.

Por lo tanto, Vila-Mata, en toda su obra y en numerosas entrevistas, como un leitmotiv, ha destacado su esfuerzo continuo de buscar lo nuevo, lo original, lo inédito, y, asimismo, de no estancarse en una fórmula estética, de evolucionar siempre, de situarse en la delantera de las búsquedas de los artistas, sintiéndose casi siempre de la Vanguardia. Se sitúa, por consiguiente, en las primeras filas de los siempre rebeldes y no conformistas *shandy*, o por lo menos de parte de los que no se conforman con lo que hay, sino que siempre están mirando hacia horizontes lejanos, para infringir cualquier límite y eliminar cualquier barrera.

El reportaje novelado del viaje al centro mismo de la Vanguardia (Vila-Matas, 2014: 45), esto es, la novela de la experiencia estética y de las experiencias vividas antes, durante y después de la documenta 13, es declarado, como se puede notar, un género literario híbrido, en la frontera entre lo periodístico y lo literario, entre el resultado del trabajo de campo, el ensayo y la creación de mundos ficticios. Hay más elementos de investigación y ensayo, en este caso concreto, ya que la tentación de reflexión e introspección y de autorreflexión entre campos distintos del terreno del arte, artes plásticas y literatura, es obvia; además, el debate o la polémica se construyen entre lo que es teoría y estética y las obras mismas, como práctica. El resultado es una remarcable e inédita compaginación entre el producto artístico descrito y la presentación, análisis e interpretación en contextos variables, ya que la visita se repite en distintos momentos de su estancia en Kassel. La contemplación, la emoción estética y la reflexión nos llevan a resultados o conclusiones diferentes, causadas también por los enfoques documentados y a la vez subjetivos, o bien, por esta mezcla. Por ejemplo, las consideraciones estéticas de Wittgenstein que destaca la necesidad del arte y del amor (*ibidem*: 36) y la interrogante de Kafka que no creía que se pudiera atar a una muchacha con la escritura<sup>1</sup> se completan con la reflexión del escritor: “Se escribe para atar al lector, para adueñarse de él, para seducirlo, para subyugarlo, para entrar en el espíritu de otro y quedarse allí, para conmocionarlo, para conquistarlo...” (*ibidem*: 44) Y es necesario agregar la “exposición” (entrecorrida, como le gusta al escritor poner de manifiesto lo que es relativo o discutible) de escritores o de citas: Robert Walser, los hermanos Grimm y Kundera.

Pero lo más repetido es el tópico del viaje omnipresente en la literatura hispana<sup>2</sup>, a la vez físico, efectivo y como trayectoria de viajes literarios en los libros de Camilo José Cela, *Viaje a la Alcarria*, y de Rüdiger Safranski, *Romanticismo*, como si fuese el viaje de un barcelonés camino al exilio. El viaje, como en muchas otras ocasiones en su novelística, tiene varios aspectos, o sea, es de formas diferentes: en este caso, existe el viaje efectivo, en avión, hasta el aeropuerto de Frankfurt, y después en tren hasta Kassel; el paseo por Kassel y por sus afueras para visitar las instalaciones durante su estancia y el camino hasta el

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<sup>1</sup> “Será cierto que uno puede atar a una muchacha con la escritura?” (*ibidem*: 44).

<sup>2</sup> Véase sobre el tema de la omnipresencia del viaje como topos, también en la narrativa moderna hispanoamericana: Poláková, Dora, “My heart made a pilgrimage. The topos of the journey in the Hispano-American modernist prose.” In *Dusk and Dawn. Literature between two centuries*. Voldřichová-Beránková, Eva – Grauová, Šárka (eds.). Prague: Faculty of Arts, Charles University, 2017, p. 406-420.

restaurante chino Dschingis Khan para presentar su performance, *Writer in Residence*; el vagabundeo literario y real, ya que le “gustaba ser una especie de paseante errático en continuo vagabundeo perplejo” (*ibidem*: 17); el camino o el viaje simbólico hacia el núcleo de las Nuevas Vanguardias artísticas y el intento de hallar, en camino, los lazos entre las artes diferentes; y, por último, pero no de menor importancia, el viaje en el pasado, facilitado por Duchamp, mencionado y citado varias veces y por otros representantes de las Antiguas Vanguardias. No vuelve sólo el leitmotiv y truco dispositivo o constructivo del viaje unificador de los planos y de los elementos macroestructurales, sino que el viaje se conecta con unos fines específicos para cada tipo de viaje. Y, según las afirmaciones del protagonista, estas metas son: abrir “su escritura hacia otras artes distintas de la literatura” (Vila-Matas, *op. cit.*: 16); también él “iba [...] a buscar el misterio del universo y a iniciarme en la poesía de un álgebra desconocida, y también a tratar de encontrar un reloj oblicuo y un restaurante chino y, por supuesto, a tratar de encontrar un hogar en mi camino” (*ibidem*: 45); al igual, vino a buscar el instante estético, a averiguar si tiene alguna lógica la performance con la que tenía que cumplir; y, por supuesto, rehacer el vínculo con el pasado y con el vanguardismo; y, no en el último lugar, definir el vanguardismo. Pero, sobre todo, caminar ofrece el espacio tranquilo, propicio para las reflexiones sinceras: “caminar despejaba el pensamiento [...] y ayudaba a decir frases más auténticas tal vez por estar estas menos elaboradas.” (*ibidem*: 143), así como lo ofrece la reclusión en la “cabaña para pensar”, es decir, la habitación del hotel donde estaba alojado.

Por otra parte, la conferencia es también un leitmotiv en la obra del escritor, y en este caso, pertenece al evento cultural, desprovista de lógica: es la conferencia sin nadie, y hasta las organizadoras afirman que harán lo que sea necesario para ahuyentar al público. La construcción de la conferencia y su desarrollo sigue, como siempre en su obra, las reglas de lo aleatorio y de la improvisación sobre la marcha. En este contexto, la presencia rara de la joven enlutada y rubia que parece no entender nada, tiene alguna relación con la aparición de una visitante o hasta de una parte integrante de la exposición. Es una imagen viviente de la que anuncia una catástrofe inminente, gritando que Europa va a pique. Se ofrece, una vez más, el cuadro de un paisaje moral ruinoso y de la cultura europea que se desploma, el derrumbe del viejo mundo siendo encarnado en esta joven rubia y enlutada que parece estar presente por todas partes en la exposición. Además, se produce una confusión, porque nunca se sabe si se trata de personas del público, de personas del público involucradas en la actividad de la documenta o de performance, de objeto de arte viviente perteneciente a la exposición. La sensación es de representación ininterrumpida. El rasgo parece lo ilógico, lo inexplicable y lo absurdo, algo que está siempre en contradicción con lo establecido y con la norma o con lo común, habitual. Romper con la tradición y reinventar todo son los retos de la documenta y son los procesos que Enrique Vila-Matas está analizando en los fenómenos culturales actuales: destaca, sobre todo, lo que llama la trivialización de la cultura, y el tema de la descomposición está asociada también con esta imagen de la joven rubia y enlutada.

Asimismo, la melancolía y la soledad, la tristeza del atardecer y de la necesidad de tener a alguien al lado cuando oscurece son los complementos necesarios y se agregan a los símbolos de la cultura y de la sociedad que decaen y en las que todo se trivializa. El atardecer llega a ser una frase motor de la novela, pero también ir hacia la nada y la tristeza de la persona que contempla el mundo desde un punto avanzado, tanto de su experiencia

como de su edad, están en antítesis con la juventud, la belleza y el optimismo de las jóvenes que aparecen a lo largo del evento: María Boston, Alka, Chus Martínez. Por otro lado, la joven rubia y enlutada pregona la muerte de Europa, y en su cabaña para pensar, el escritor, durante las noches de insomnio, tiene presente no sólo la imagen y la pesadilla de este derrumbe, y del hecho de que Europa estaba amortajada desde ya hacía mucho tiempo, sino también la pesadilla de la muerte o desaparición de Europa: “Una Europa que, al ser ya un trágico conjunto de despojos, nunca más lograría sentirse en el mundo de una manera buena y natural, en realidad ya nunca llegaría a sentirse en la Tierra en un sentido u otro, ni en ninguno” (*ibidem.*: 163).

La conferencia aparece en un espejo doble: lo que piensa el propio autor sobre la conferencia y lo que aparece, en resumen, en el sitio de la documenta. El autor habla al público (que en su mayoría después de tres minutos fue a buscar aparatos de traducción simultánea, ya que no hablaba ni en inglés ni en alemán) desde su cadalso hogareño, el restaurante chino, tratando de explicar, de un modo paradójico, sus motivos para venir a Kassel: para buscar respuestas al último misterio del universo; para iniciarse en la extraña álgebra desconocida; para encontrar un hogar en el camino, es decir, un hogar en un punto del desplazamiento mismo. A Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev la conferencia le pareció marciana y el resumen de la conferencia aparecido en Internet, en una versión del traductor Google, era así:

Cualquier análisis literario del evento de conferencia del escritor catalán podría solamente bastante decir que ha demostrado el potencial sin complejos de un evento lleno de recursos como el de Ständehaus, donde un insomne ha hablado para audiencia de exiguos oyentes que pedían auriculares de radio de onda corta. A medio plazo, se puede esperar que el escritor catalán publique desde barrotes cárcel su relato *flâneuresco* sobre pasos por Kassel y hogar chino y su infamante adhesión a brisa subversiva (Vila-Matas, *op. cit.*: 295).

Tanto la conferencia, como cualquier producción literaria las declara como intento de encontrar las fuentes del discurso primordial, un discurso fundamental y desarticulado y la angustia nocturna está potenciado la angustia de que nunca podrá lograr encontrar las fuentes del cuento originario después de una tan larga búsqueda. Una vez abandonada la obsesión por la literatura, al abrir su creación hacia otras artes y al adoptar la teatralidad de la Inframodernidad, se abren los caminos hacia el núcleo más antiguo del cuento o de la narración misma. El viaje hacia el centro de Europa y de la Vanguardia, representa el camino hacia su propio centro y hacia sus propias fuentes, como ser humano y como escritor, para encontrar la respuesta adecuada al misterio del universo, a la existencia humana, al arte y al arte de Vanguardia.

Kassel se transforma en un *topos*: no es sólo una ciudad que es la sede de la documenta, sino que es símbolo de una coexistencia de estilos o corrientes, un espacio en el cual lo antiguo, el barroco de la Orangerie y el neoclásico de la Ilustración del museo Fridericianum, y lo más avanzado de las Vanguardias artísticas europeas contemporáneas, a través de la exposición con sus instalaciones inéditas, cohabitan. Kassel es la síntesis de los elementos dicotómicos, es un lugar paradójico donde conviven y se unen el aroma romántico de los hermanos Grimm y de sus cuentos de hadas y todas las huellas del romanticismo alemán con el aroma duchampiano, lo estético y lo teórico:

Paseando por Kassel, no le quedaba a uno ninguna duda de que al menos allí estábamos todavía bajo los efectos de aquella transformación de mediados del siglo XIX (a los artistas les interesaban los intelectuales como destinatarios de sus obras – nuestra nota). En otros lugares, no. Porque casi en todo el resto del mundo lo intelectual había caído en picado y la cultura se había trivializado extraordinariamente. Pero en Kassel todavía quedaba cierto aroma romántico y duchampiano; era un paraíso para los que amaban las conjeturas intelectuales, los discursos teóricos, la elegancia de algunas especulaciones (*ibidem*: 99).

En esta ciudad de Kassel, de aroma romántico y duchampiano, el viajero recorre las afueras y las calles, visita el museo, las instalaciones, participa en las conferencias, encuentra gente y, sobre todo, reflexiona sobre el arte de las afueras y el arte que hace, que es proceso, el arte viviente de las nuevas Vanguardias artísticas que se manifiestan en un ámbito global: “A fin de cuentas, tantas horas viendo arte tan distinto de lo convencional me habían dejado muy buenas sensaciones.” (*ibidem*: 168) Y el eco de las palabras de Chus Martínez rellena la ausencia de una respuesta a sus permanentes preguntas, así que trata de vivir plenamente sus experiencias y volver a vivir sus encuentros con las Vanguardias en su juventud: “El arte hace, y ahí te las compongas” o “Ahí está la invitación al chino, es el arte lo que te pedimos, ahora a ver cómo te las compones.” (Vila-Matas, *op. cit.*: 100).

Reaparece el leitmotiv de que él es del lugar donde se halla, como el chino que encuentra un hogar en el camino, en este caso, es un kasselano más, reflexionando sobre todo lo que está viendo, viviendo o recordando, integrándose perfectamente en la atmósfera de la ciudad y en la exposición: “un humilde y lúcido kasselano melancólico que pasaba de noche las horas meditando sobre la soledad que se extendía sin tiempo en la luz inútil de su patria...” (*ibidem*: 162).

Los objetos de arte de Documenta 13 pertenecen al arte no convencional, arte de la intemperie y de las afueras, arte por hacer, arte que hace, la síntesis perfecta entre la obra y la teoría:

En Documenta 13 se habría visto muy anticuado una separación entre obra y teoría, pues allí, según todas mis informaciones, bajo el sello ambiguo de la innovación se veían muchas obras presentadas como teoría, y viceversa. Era el reino triunfal y casi definitivo del matrimonio entre obra y teoría. De tal modo que, si uno encontraba casualmente una pieza artística más bien clásica, acababa descubriendo que aquello no era más que una teoría camuflada de obra. Y a la inversa (*ibidem*: 100).

En la estación de trenes de Kassel, en el andén 10, el mensaje de la documenta (“Colapso y recuperación”) se transmite a través de la instalación de Susan Philipz, y en la memoria del Holocausto, durante media hora, se escucha en silencio la composición para cuerdas de Pavel Haas. Este autor checo la compuso para la orquesta de cámara del campo de concentración, antes de trasladarlo a Auschwitz donde murió, y los violines y chelos parecen llorar en la estación de trenes. Desolador y conmovedor, a la vez. Integrado en el grupo de unas treinta personas, el escritor queda conmovido en silencio:

Unas treinta personas ... siguieron con general emoción el concierto de violines y chelos y luego se quedaron inmóviles y pensativos, conmovidos, profundamente silenciosos, como recuperándose del colapso que les había provocado lo escuchado y también lo recordado, lo evocado, lo casi escenificado, diría que también lo vivido, porque no era difícil sentirse allí vulnerable y trágico como un deportado (*ibidem*: 88).

Lo que quiere comentar a María Boston lo está callando, pero se da cuenta de que lo político y lo histórico no se puede separar del arte más avanzado, mejor dicho, la investigación artística y la quimera de un mundo humanizado son inseparables. Él se queda mudo, por el rencor a María Boston a causa de una larga caminata por la tarde de su llegada en Kassel posiblemente para castigar la pregunta del escritor sobre “el perfume nazi y el arte de vanguardia” (*ibidem*). Además, prefiere estudiar las reacciones de los demás que se recuperaban anímicamente después de lo escuchado y nota la comunión intensa entre los desconocidos provenientes de todo el mundo, quizás, que viven el momento como si el futuro se acercara subversivamente y creara una conspiración en contra de la miseria moral y para dinamitar todo. Es una de las instalaciones que más destacan de la Documenta 13 porque reúne el pasado y el presente, bosquejando el futuro, llamando la atención sobre la guerra que destruyó todo y el destino de la ciudad de Kassel en la cual sobre los escombros plantaron árboles y organizaron una exposición que simbolizara el triunfo del arte y de la vida. Para no repetir los errores del pasado, hay que recordar siempre las heridas provocadas por estas catástrofes desencadenadas por los humanos, ya que ignorar y olvidar significa volver a cometer los mismos errores.

Otro momento de conmoción es el paso por el cuarto oscuro o el salón de Sehgal, instalación titulada *This Variation*, antes de ir al restaurante chino para sentarse en la mesa y escribir delante del público. Adentrarse en este salón y marchar a ciegas en la oscuridad produce sentimientos contradictorios y el autor escucha cánticos que se transforman de un Hare Krishna suave, en un reggae suave y sorprendente y suben en intensidad llegando a ser un foxtrot. Pero al mismo tiempo, hay fantasmas que están bailando y cogen por el brazo al visitante, llevándolo suave pero rápidamente a la extremidad del lugar en que se hallaban, despertándole un sentimiento de angustia. El autor no experimentaba esta angustia por la mañana, sino que lo dominaba por la noche y por esta misma razón evitó pasar por las mañanas por aquel cuarto oscuro. Este susto de muerte viene con la experiencia de un instante de iluminación, breve e intenso, desprendiéndolo totalmente del mundo, con “la sensación de haber captado la estructura interna de la vida, como si un relámpago la iluminase” (Vila-Matas, *op. cit.*: 108). Y al salir a la luz del día que casi lo hiere, se pregunta si la Vanguardia contemporánea podía asustar tanto, pero, al fin y al cabo, el resultado es beneficioso, ya que recobra su alegría matinal con mucha más euforia que en general.

Las instalaciones cuya descripción e impacto parecen importantes también son: *Untilled*, la estatua de Huyghe y la obra de Schneider, *The Last Season of Avant-Garde*, porque tienen estrechos vínculos tanto con la simbología de la Documenta 13, que recurre a lo zoomorfo y busca lo inédito e inaudito o insólito. La Documenta 13 no sólo quiere sorprender y sacar a la gente de la rutina del visitante de una exposición clásica al no respetar la lógica corriente de una exposición, sino que propone tendencias y obras vivientes de campos muy diferentes y en lugares distintos, rellenando tanto los espacios habituales de las documentas de Kassel, como también las afueras, o sitios no utilizados desde hace mucho tiempo.

El artista francés Huyghe había transformado una parte del parque Karlsaue, una parte de un jardín francés y clásico, ordenado, en un estercolero para la producción de humus, es decir, en un espacio en permanente transformación, un proceso en pleno

desarrollo, de construcción y destrucción, detenido en el tiempo y un espacio en el cual lo animado e inanimado conviven. Los dos perros, de los cuales uno de pata rosa, recorren esta parte del parque (el perro de pata pintada de rosa llegó a ser célebre), y el estercolero, en su conjunto, representa un símbolo de la Documenta 13. Además, el olor fuerte de humus recuerda la descomposición del Occidente, el agotamiento en muchos campos, no sólo en la moral. Al lado del estercolero, aparece la estatua de una mujer de cabeza llena de abejas, un inmenso panal con abejas vivas que zumbaban. Asimismo, el humo y la niebla envolvían la inolvidable instalación de Huyghe, un espacio especial y principal de la Documenta 13, una tierra muy extraña, rara, y como símbolo es una parte importante, significando una emoción llena de inédito.

*The Last Season of the Avant-Gards*, obra del berlinés Bastian Schneider, situada en el parque Karlsaue, en un ambiente que parecía venir del más remoto pasado, después de recorrer un sendero, sorprende igualmente: el visitante da con una casa pequeña, una construcción de piedra precaria cuya puerta verde y ventanas parecían protegidas por un sistema de alarma falso. Se podía entrar por una puerta trasera que daba a una estancia vacía y única y sobriamente amueblada, y en el interior había un caballete en el cual se veía una tela inconclusa de las batallas de Smolensk, de la segunda guerra mundial y hasta se oía el estrépito de la lucha. Y, unida al caballete, iba una máquina, una imprenta parecida a un antiguo teléfono de pared, que, al accionar un botón, emitía un papel que transmitía la impresión de que el artista contemporáneo ya no escribía para una determinada comunidad, sino que quería construir aquella comunidad, como en el caso de los grupos que se reunían alrededor de los altavoces de las instalaciones de Janet Cardiff o Georges Bures Miller.

El recorrido por Kassel y sus afueras, la visita de las instalaciones de la documenta, su *performance* en el restaurante chino y el concepto mismo de la exposición de que el arte hace y ahí hay que improvisar y cree e invente cada artista participante. Por supuesto, es lo que hace el escritor mismo, es decir, Vila-Matas, que se da cuenta de que la ciudad abre el campo de todas las posibilidades, ya que “al abrir sus puertas a las ideas de la vanguardia, estaba rechazando implícitamente cualquier invitación a la lógica” (Vila-Matas, *op. cit.*: 94).

Las preguntas del escritor sobre sus fines en cuanto a la participación a esta exposición se repiten obsesivamente a lo largo de la novela: vino a Kassel a buscar el instante estético único que aún no había encontrado en toda su vida; o vino para pensar y meditar sobre el mundo extraviado, para buscar el misterio del universo, para iniciarse en “la poesía de un algebra desconocida” (*ibidem*: 96); para averiguar cuál es la esencia o el núcleo duro del arte contemporáneo y para saber si aún existe Vanguardia en el arte; para investigar sobre Kassel y después escribir sobre su viaje; para conocer el estado de las artes y volver al entusiasmo de su juventud y para saber quién es. Y un largo despliegue de cavilaciones, dudas y preguntas lo acecha.

Pero, lo más interesante es describir la propia *performance* del autor, que pertenece a una lista de escritores invitados para participar a la documenta y sentarse en una mesa del restaurante chino Dschingis Khan para dedicarse a su quehacer: *Writer in residence*. Los demás escritores invitados a lo largo de los 100 días de la exposición fueron: Adania Shibli, Mario Bellatín, Aaron Peck, Alejandro Zambra, Marie Darrieussecq y Holly Pester. Durante los días en los cuales se queda en la mesita, el escritor inventa al autor barcelonés que era poseedor de dos temas: la incomunicación y la huida, un personaje llamado Autre o



Piniowsky. Después de la noche pasada en su habitación de hotel, adormecido, va en autobús hacia el restaurante chino, su cadalso, y al bajar mira los alrededores: la terraza cervecera llena de pensionistas alemanes a un lado de la carretera y al otro lado el restaurante chino (el más melancólico que había visto el autor) y detrás del restaurante, el parque Karlsaue. Este restaurante chino, Dschingis Khan, parecía un lugar propicio para las tardes llenas de ansiedades y melancolía y tan inadecuado para las mañanas llenas de alegría, quizás debido a la llovizna. En el interior, al autor le esperaba otra desilusión al mirar el ingrato lugar en donde tenía que sentarse cada día, un lugar nada acogedor de las afueras de Kassel. Tenía que sentarse en una mesa redonda y rancia y además no había publicidad de su presencia, sólo un letrero en la mesita y un cartel en la puerta del restaurante: “al fondo del mustio lugar que me habían asignado había una especie de camilla con un horrible florero y un gastado y ya envejecido cartón amarillo” (*ibidem*: 115). La indiferencia de los presentes que seguían con sus actividades cotidianas y la reacción de la alemana que lo abrazó y le gritó varias veces *writer, writer, writer* molestaron al autor que sólo pensaba en la Conferencia sin nadie, la única que podía garantizar, según él, su participación en la documenta, dado que en el restaurante chino no hacía nada. ¿Qué podía hacer ahí el autor, con su lápiz, su cuaderno rojo y su goma? ¿Cómo podría componérselas? Escribe algo sobre el abandono de la vida anterior en dos días y sobre la desaparición, inventa al escritor barcelonés Autre y empieza a escribir la nota autobiográfica de este, recuerda algunas lecturas y sobre todo comenta un pasaje de una carta de Kafka que tenía pánico a estar con alguien a la hora de escribir, considerando que toda soledad y todo silencio son pocos al escribir. Pero después se siente ridículo, ya que estaba esperando “que entrara algún cliente bien despistado en mi ruinoso comercio. ¿Comercio? Sí, el de un hombre de letras sentado en su propio cadalso.” (Vila-Matas, *op. cit.*: 124) Y hablando con Pim, que lo había acompañado, le pide que se fueran porque nadie venía a verlo y ante la reacción horrorizada de esta que destacaba la importancia del espectáculo, el escritor se las compuso con un tipo raro, hablando en catalán.

En conclusión, la única salida del escritor de la ilógica del lugar, al final, fue irse. Después de la angustia de la noche, el insomnio, pero también el excelente humor al despertarse después de haber dormido sólo una hora y tenido unas pesadillas horribles, piensa que en su cuerpo se cumple el lema de la Documenta: *Colapso y recuperación*. Y la conferencia no se aleja de la improvisación, de lo que significa actuar y ofrecer un espectáculo de performance en una línea *inframoderna* evidente que se aferra a lo viviente y desprovisto de lógica común, al teatro y a la representación en un escenario real: Documenta 13 de Kassel.

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## ASPECTOS ÉTICOS Y ESTÉTICOS DE LA SÁTIRA

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**Abstract:** *Essentially defined as a social critique presented in a humorous way, satire represents a dominant feature of human life, an artistic expression carefully placed at the merging point of two semiotic systems, the literary and the social, which is based on a clear set of moral values by which the follies of the society have to be judged, attacked and censured. The philosophy of satire has always combined the ethical purpose to reform the society with the aesthetical purpose to entertain the readers. Starting from the idea conveyed by the Spanish proverb “Riendo se va aprendiendo”, which implies that laughing leads to learning, the present paper is intended to analyse the functions of satire, its literary devices, as well as the strong connection between the social, political and cultural contexts in which satire is written. Another important focal point will be the triangular relationship between the satirist, the satire and the reader.*

**Keywords:** *satire; ethics; aesthetics.*

### 1. Introducción

Como decía el poeta romano Juvenal a finales del siglo I, es difícil no escribir sátiras - “difficile est saturam non scribere” (Satire I, 30). De esa manera, el poeta expresaba su deseo insaciable de disentir de la corrupción y la decadencia de sus tiempos. Desde las primeras obras satíricas, los escritores han manifestado su clara intención de reformar la sociedad y no solamente de entretener a los lectores.

La filosofía de la sátira siempre ha combinado el propósito estético de entretener con el propósito ético de reformar la sociedad. Partiendo de la idea que “riendo se va aprendiendo”, el presente trabajo se propone analizar las funciones de la sátira, sus recursos literarios, así como la conexión muy estrecha entre el contexto social, político y cultural al que la obra satírica pertenece. El enfoque del trabajo será también en la relación triangular entre el satirista, la obra satírica y el lector.

Para sostener los argumentos, nos referiremos a algunas obras de grandes escritores españoles e hispanohablantes, así como a diferentes ejemplos de la presencia de la sátira en las artes visuales, como en las historietas de Mafalda o en distintas caricaturas con clara intención moralizadora.

En primer lugar, empezaremos el análisis desde la premisa de que la noción de sátira tiene varios sentidos, lo que hace casi imposible establecer una clara definición. El concepto despliega varias características, como el humor, la ironía, el sarcasmo o la parodia, sin embargo, los ingredientes más importantes de una obra satírica son el sentido moral y la dimensión cómica. Por consiguiente, si conectamos todos los aspectos que las definiciones ofrecen para el término de sátira, podemos concluir que la sátira es una expresión artística situada en el punto de fusión de dos sistemas semióticos, el literario y el social, construida

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sobre una fuerte base de valores morales en virtud de que los defectos de la sociedad sean juzgados, atacados o censurados. La sátira es más bien un ingrediente que se puede añadir a cualquier forma literaria y que se diferencia de los otros por su carácter moralizador junto al propósito estético.

## 2. La ética y la estética de la sátira

El crítico literario Emil Draitser sugirió que existe una confusión terminológica en los estudios recientes, en cuanto a los conceptos de sátira, humor e ironía. Por supuesto que los tres términos están fuertemente relacionados, pero como el crítico sostenía, los académicos deberían prestar más atención en las cualidades comunicativas fundamentales de los diferentes géneros. Una obra literaria representa una modalidad de comunicación entre el escritor y el lector. La motivación interna del escritor, así como el contexto en el que escribe, el método que usa para llegar a los lectores y el público al que la obra se dirige, son los elementos que establecen la clara diferencia entre sátira, humor e ironía. Por consiguiente, una obra literaria humorística revela un punto débil de la naturaleza humana y la estrategia del escritor es la de un científico empírico que invita a los lectores a reírse juntos de las absurdidades de la vida. Por otra parte, el acto de comunicación satírica es diferente. La moralidad de la sociedad representa el enfoque de la observación del satirista, y el público está formado por los miembros de la sociedad. A diferencia de las escrituras puramente humorísticas, los textos satíricos no solamente entretienen a los lectores, sino también contribuyen activamente en la corrección de los defectos. Unas de las características más comunes de la sátira son la agresividad, la risa y el juicio, y varias veces funcionan como activadores de la sátira, ya que ella, como expresión artística en sí, es neutra. De esta manera, combinando esas características, el satirista vuelve el texto satírico en un arma contra los vicios de la sociedad.

En la literatura hispanohablante, algunos de los más grandes escritores se aprovecharon de la sátira en obras literarias como “El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de La Mancha” (1605) por Miguel de Cervantes, “Lazarillo de Tormes” (1554), los artículos de Larra como “Vuelva Usted Mañana” (1832), o las novelas “El Tirano Banderas” (1926) y “Luces de Bohemia” (1920) por Valle-Inclán. Como C. G. Peale decía, “la sátira no es un género propio. Se trata más bien de una categoría especial que atraviesa los géneros ordinarios” (Peale, 1973:208).

En cuanto al aspecto moral de la sátira, por ejemplo, en sus artículos, Larra critica duramente la evolución colectiva de España. Su actitud revela por una parte su descontento acerca de la mala organización de la administración pública, la carencia de educación, la lentitud y la pereza de la gente, y por otra parte su patriotismo, ya que se lamenta profundamente de esta situación. Su opinión sobre la sociedad española se desprende de sus artículos. Tomemos como ejemplo la conversación entre Larra y un extranjero que viene de Francia, en *Vuelva Usted Mañana*:

- ¿Qué os parece esta tierra, Monsieur Sans-délai? – le dije al llegar a estas pruebas.
- Me parece que son hombres singulares...
- Pues así son todos. No comerán por no llevar comida a la boca. (Larra, 2002:11)

Observamos como a través de la sátira, Larra trata un problema social. En este caso, el autor critica la pereza y la grosería de los españoles utilizando la exageración como recurso satírico.

Sin embargo, aunque los ataques de Larra contra la sociedad de sus tiempos dejan a salvo al gobierno, las implicaciones de su sátira lo declaran culpable. La crítica indirecta, a través de la ironía y del humor, es más profunda y pone en relieve la desolación de Larra ante la sociedad. Muchas veces, a pesar de la mordacidad de los ataques de Larra, ellos vienen siempre acompañados de la risa, por las técnicas que el escritor emplea: se burla de lo absurdo con algo aún más absurdo, o cuando quiere demostrar una idea, da argumentos de los que se desprende lo contrario.

En cuanto al aspecto estético de la sátira, a parte de entretener a los lectores a través del humor, varios textos satíricos emplean también parodia y carnavalización. Igual que varios otros satiristas, Larra también muestra una predilección por reflejar el mundo de máscaras que representa para él la sociedad española.

La sátira es como un espejo distorsionado: refleja la realidad, pero en forma de caricatura. Los aspectos negativos de la sociedad, los que se critican y se presentan con la intención de ser corregidos, son muchas veces exagerados, con una clara intención ética. Esta visión aparece en los trabajos de varios críticos literarios, así como Emil Draitser, que han comparado la estética de la sátira con los espejos distorsionados, las atracciones populares que se suelen encontrar en los carnavales. Draitser argumentaba que el satirista perturba a los lectores presentándoles la realidad reflejada en un espejo distorsionado, una técnica que permite a la gente que vea sus defectos pero que al mismo tiempo se ría de ellos (1994:xv). Por consiguiente, el propósito estético de la sátira se combina con el propósito ético, creando una obra literaria que educa y entretiene a la vez. La misma comparación aparece en la estética del carnaval de Mikhail Bakhtin. Tras haber analizado la obra del escritor francés François Rebelais, ha notado dos sentidos escondidos en el texto literario: el carnavalesco, como un modo literario definido por su desafío satírico a la autoridad – a la que Bakhtin la describe como una institución social –, y el realismo grotesco, considerado como modo literario cuyo principio esencial es la degradación (Clark y Holquist, 1984:297-299). Las nociones de “carnaval” y “grotesco” se interconectan varias veces en el estudio crítico de Bakhtin y se refieren a la interacción entre la sociedad, la literatura y el sentido del texto literario.

La estética del carnaval de Bakhtin tiene sus fundamentos en la sátira menipea, y que se caracteriza por atacar actitudes mentales en vez de individuos específicos. Según la teoría de Bakhtin, el carnaval representa el momento cuando todo está permitido, en un espacio social alternativo, de una libertad utópica. El carnaval elimina cualquier barrera impuesta por los rangos políticos, sociales y económicos, y las cambia por una visión de igualdad y de cooperación mutua. No obstante, el carnaval degenera en un realismo grotesco, ya que, libres de todas restricciones, los humanos actúan de una manera inhumana. Según Bakhtin, el carnaval solamente ofrece la oportunidad de revelar la verdadera cara de la persona.

El crítico afirmaba que las máscaras y los disfraces representan en esencia las identidades verdaderas de los individuos, las que generalmente ellos intentan encubrir. Como Tacu sostenía:

Bakhtin percibía la realidad como una libre manifestación y continua alteración, como un juego de máscaras donde el dialogismo prevalece y cada conciencia aporta un nuevo punto de vista. A la vez, el carnaval aspiraba a la idea de destruir la hegemonía de cualquier ideología. (Tacu, 2018:229)

No obstante, el escritor español noventayochista Ramón María del Valle-Inclán proponía una nueva visión del mundo y establecía nuevos principios éticos y estéticos, a través del esperpento, unos años antes de que Bakhtin revolucionara la teoría de la literatura con su filosofía.

Proponiendo la misma visión estética, Valle-Inclán definió la decadencia reflejándola en unos espejos cóncavos, creando un arte deforme y grotesco, de un realismo impresionante. Así como Bakhtin miraba el universo mediante la controlada alteridad del carnaval, Valle-Inclán lo contemplaba a través de los espejos. Ambas teorías percibían la realidad a la luz de un reflejo.

Con la intención de representar plásticamente la imagen de la realidad española, Valle-Inclán recurrió a los espejos cóncavos de Callejón del Gato, que transformaban las imágenes más bellas en objetos absurdos. Después, el autor invitaba a los “héroes clásicos” a pasear frente a ellos, convirtiéndolos instantáneamente en caricaturas de sí mismos. Valle-Inclán no solamente emplea el uso de los espejos al nivel metafórico, sino también los incorpora literalmente en sus novelas, para “dar la perspectiva desquiciada y distorsionada que corresponde al momento actual”, como decía Carlos Jerez-Farrán (1989:115).

En cuanto a la presencia de la sátira en las artes visuales, tomamos como ejemplo las historietas de Mafalda y las de Gaturro. Las historietas son representaciones emblemáticas de la clase media, de los problemas políticos y sociales de un cierto país o del mundo, y en ellas el humor constituye el medio necesario para comprender el fenómeno social. Sin embargo, la risa presupone una comprensión mutua del problema presentado y requiere que el público sea familiar con el asunto debatido. Llegamos así a la idea de que la sátira está estrechamente conectada al contexto social y cultural, y su suceso depende de esto.

Para que el público perciba una situación como ridícula, absurda o errónea, es necesario que tenga un sentido o una idea de cómo el mundo debería o podría ser. Implícita o explícitamente, el satirista intenta inclinar a los lectores hacia un ideal alternativo. En la siguiente imagen se puede observar una conversación entre Mafalda, que representa la clase educada, privilegiada, y Susanita, que encarna la clase media, de mente más estrecha. El efecto cómico aparece en el momento en que la ingenuidad de Mafalda contrasta con el cinismo de Susanita, que refleja la duplicidad de la sociedad y de la clase media, que se defiende como igual, pero que al mismo tiempo acepta las diferencias sociales.



**Ilustración 1 - Quino, Mafalda 1 (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor, 1966), Tira 134.**

Saliendo corriendo para lavar su dedo, Susanita se muestra incapaz de disimular su racismo, a pesar de que haya sostenido que no es racista. La muñeca negra, o el “negrito” de la historieta ilustra la exclusión social y simbólica de la raza negra en Argentina, pero a la vez alude a las masas populares, cuya irrupción en la vida política en 1945 los ha traído la etiqueta despectiva de “cabecitas negras”. El contraste entre Mafalda y Susanita es lo que genera la dimensión cómica, pero las diferencias no excluyen una identidad común construida en la escuela o en casa, entre las dos niñas.

Por otra parte, si la sátira está mal dirigida, o sea si el mensaje acuita a los que ya están afligidos, puede resultar ofensiva. Recordemos, en este sentido, la tragedia que ocurrió debido al semanario satírico francés Charlie Hebdo. Las visiones en contra de la religión y su posición crítica hacia el islamismo, catolicismo, judaísmo y el extremismo de derecha fueron los elementos que convirtieron el semanario satírico Charlie Hebdo en el objetivo de los ataques terroristas en 2015 y trajeron consigo varias víctimas colaterales. Por supuesto que los que no se habían visto directamente atacados por los mensajes satíricos, se habían aprovechado de la dimensión estética de las caricaturas. Pero en este caso particular, el componente ético fracasó, porque la sátira resultó demasiado agresiva para los que ya estaban afligidos.

Otro ejemplo que sostiene esta idea es la caricatura que la misma revista publicó después de que la tenista rumana Simona Halep había ganado el Roland Garros en París. La viñeta fue considerada racista porque el mensaje “Hierro viejo! Hierro viejo!” aludía al estereotipo de que los gitanos rumanos roban este metal en Francia. Si al principio los rumanos habían empatizado con los franceses que habían sufrido el atentado terrorista en 2015, cuando se volvieron ellos mismos en el objetivo de la sátira, unos años después, la perspectiva cambió y las reacciones resultaron negativas.

### 3. Conclusión

Podemos concluir que la sátira es un estilo literario que a la vez critica y entretiene, que tiene dos caras, combinando el propósito moral con el propósito estético. Sin embargo, siendo estrechamente relacionada con el contexto que ilustra y critica, la obra satírica puede resultar exitosa solamente si está anclada en una realidad reconocible. El tema de la sátira

debería reflejar los defectos de la sociedad en la que el mensaje satírico - escrito, visual o audio - ha sido creado, y no los fallos de una sociedad ajena.

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