

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, RESEARCH, YOUTH AND SPORT  
**„VALAHIA” UNIVERSITY OF TÂRGOVIȘTE**

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**THE ANNALS OF „VALAHIA”  
UNIVERSITY OF TÂRGOVIȘTE  
LETTERS SECTION**

VOLUME X • ISSUE 2 • YEAR 2012

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**Valahia University Press  
2012**

Valahia University Press

• Accredited by the National Council for Scientific Research in Higher Education (CNCSIS)

Lt. Stancu Ion Str., no, 35, Târgoviște, 130105 tel/fax: 0245.206116

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<http://editura.valahia.ro>

**ISSN 2066-6373**  
**ISSN-L 2068-6372**

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**  
**35, street Lt. Stancu Ion**  
**Tel: 0245 / 211713**  
**<http://fsu.valahia.ro/annaleslettre>**

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# LE MYTHE DE PHILOCTÈTE, ALLUSIONS ET PARAPHRASES (XVIe-XVIIe siècles)

Tatiana Ana FLUIERARU<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *Modernity does not seem to be too interested in Philoctetes as mythological character, almost completely overshadowed by the dramatic character. This contemporary reality has made many to believe that Philoctetes' destiny is connected to that of Sophocles' tragedy, that before 1699, when Fénelon's novel "Les Aventures de Télémaque" was published, the archer was very little known. However, these allusions prove the hero's fame and the diversity of sources in terms of the myth of Philoctetes in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.*

**Key words:** *Philoctetes, Renaissance, the XVIIth century, Sophocles, Cicero, Ovid.*

La modernité semble avoir pris un intérêt médiocre à Philoctète en tant que personnage mythologique : seules deux monographies en l'espace d'un siècle lui sont dédiées, *Il mito di Filottete nella letteratura classica et nell'arte figurata* de Luigi Adriano Milani, parue en 1879<sup>2</sup>, et *Philoctetes and the Fall of Troy* d'Oscar Mandel, publiée en 1981<sup>3</sup>. Lors des dernières décennies, un regain d'intérêt semble se manifester en matière de mythe de Philoctète avec l'étude de Guido Avezzi, qui s'est proposé de systématiser les sources antiques de son histoire<sup>4</sup>, et les ouvrages de Carl Werner Müller qui, tout en s'intéressant au *Philoctète* d'Euripide, apporte

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<sup>2</sup> L. A. Milani, *Il Mito di Filottete nella letteratura classica e nell'arte figurata. Studio monographico*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1879, 111 pages. L. A. Milani (1854-1914) revient sur le thème de sa thèse de doctorat dans *Nuovi monumenti di Filottete e considerazione generali in proposito*, Estratto dagli Annali dell'Institutio Archeologico Germanico per l'anno 1881, Roma, 1882, 53 pages.

<sup>3</sup> Oscar Mandel, *Philoctetes and the Fall of Troy. Documents, Iconography, Interpretations*, University of Nebraska Press, 1981, 256 pages.

<sup>4</sup> Guido Avezzi, *Il ferimento e il rito. La storia du Filottete sulla scena attica*, Adriatica Editori, Bari, 1988, 187 pages.

des analyses et des interprétations originales du mythe antique<sup>1</sup>. Sotera Fornaro s'interroge sur le devenir de l'histoire de Philoctète au XVIIIe siècle<sup>2</sup> et sur l'usage qu'en fait Heiner Müller<sup>3</sup>, alors qu'Andrea Alessandri continue en quelque sorte la vision hybride d'O. Mandel<sup>4</sup>.

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Il faut se rendre à l'évidence : de nos jours, le personnage mythologique est si peu connu qu'il semble s'effacer derrière le personnage dramatique, ou même y trouver sa substance. L'assujettissement du personnage mythologique par le personnage dramatique est pourtant assez récent. Une grande partie des textes antiques contenant l'histoire de Philoctète a circulé pendant le moyen âge, bien avant que la pièce de Sophocle ne réintègre la culture occidentale. Oscar Mandel le présuait, sans pouvoir le documenter, même s'il semblait réduire le mythe de Philoctète à la séquence de l'exil lemniens<sup>5</sup>. Par contre, Andrea Alessandro tire des conclusions abusives lorsqu'il déclare le mythe « caduto nell'oblio durante i secoli del medioevo », le véhicule principal de sa récupération étant « nel 1502, l'edizione del *corpus* delle sette tragedie sofoclee superstiti data alle stampe da Aldo Manuzio »<sup>6</sup>.

Or, le mythe de Philoctète a pu vivre au moyen âge à la faveur de sa présence dans des textes appartenant à des auteurs aussi divers qu'Aristote, Cicéron, Ovide, Virgile, Dictys ou Darès. Même avant la redécouverte de la pièce de Sophocle, son histoire était là, sous la main, dans les textes des mythographes, des poètes, des grammairiens ; les ouvrages d'érudition, les traductions, les inventaires des bibliothèques, les *libri manuales* et autres florilèges renseignent sur son existence latente, sur la possibilité pour le public cultivé et les auteurs du moyen âge de le connaître, de décrypter une allusion au personnage mythologique, mieux encore, de lui permettre de faire peau neuve.

Déjà au XVIe siècle Philoctète est mentionné non seulement dans des ouvrages littéraires, mais aussi dans des textes non fictionnels - essais, disputes, remontrances, correspondance privée - ce qui est un gage de notoriété. Rappelons-

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<sup>1</sup> Carl Werner Müller, *Philoktet. Beiträge zur Wiedergewinnung einer Tragödie des Euripides aus der Geschichte ihrer Rezeption*, Walter de Gruyter, 1997, 355 pages. Le même auteur revient à la tâche dans une autre tentative tout aussi imposante de reconstituer la tragédie d'Euripide dans *Euripides, Philoktet ; Testimonien und Fragmente*, Walter de Gruyter, 2000, 368 pages.

<sup>2</sup> J. G. Herder, *Filottete*, a cura di Sotera Fornaro, Osanna Edizioni, Venosa, 2006, 112 pages, traduction de la scène dramatique de Herder, accompagnée d'une préface copieuse, *L'infinito dolore di Filottete* (Appunti su Filottete nel '700), pp. 9-59. Sotera Fornaro a préparé aussi un autre ouvrage, *Filottete in Francia nel XVIII secolo*.

<sup>3</sup> Sotera Fornaro, « Officina Filottete. In margine al 'Filottete' di Heiner Müller », in *Dionysus ex machina*, I, 2010, pp. 186-200.

<sup>4</sup> Andrea Alessandri, *Mito e memoria. Filottete nell'immaginario occidentale*, Editori Riuniti University Press, 2009, 219 pages.

<sup>5</sup> « In principle, the tale of Philoctetes remained available throughout the Middle Ages, since it could be read in Ovid and other well-known writers ; but I have found no reference to it in that period, when it might have become fair game for edifying allegories. » - O. Mandel, *op. cit.*, p. 123 ; « But concerning Philoctetes another remark can be made. As we saw in an earlier chapter, his special attribute was the long-lasting suffering on Lemnos that had reduced him to haggard wretchedness. » - idem, p. 124.

<sup>6</sup> Andrea Alessandro, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

le tout de suite, ce Philoctète « familial » est dans la plupart des cas le Philoctète des *Métamorphoses* d'Ovide ou de Cicéron (et d'Accius cité par Cicéron) ou bien le Philoctète des mythographes. Il est déjà suffisamment familier pour qu'on le découvre même là où il n'est pas. Ainsi, Jacques Chomarat révèle une allusion à Philoctète dans sa qualité de compagnon d'Hercule dans la traduction d'une des lettres familières de Cicéron entreprise par Étienne Dolet (1509-1546). La phrase « In Britannia non minus [sic !] φιλοθέωρον te praeuisti [...] »<sup>1</sup> est mal interprétée par l'humaniste :

Dolet, peu à l'aise avec l'humour, déchiffre étrangement le mot grec<sup>2</sup>, il y voit le nom de Philoctète et il incorpore à sa traduction un commentaire explicatif : « Tu [Trebatius] t'es montré en Bretagne tel envers César que Philoctète envers Hercule » (c'est-à-dire : fidèle et dévoué) ; quelle science, quelle ingéniosité dans le contresens !<sup>3</sup>

Le frère Juan Márquez (1564-1621), prédicateur de Philippe III, religieux de l'ordre de Saint-Augustin, avertit contre les risques d'une trop grande confiance en soi frôlant la vanité en citant Philoctète d'après Cicéron, *De finibus*, V, 11 :

Dieu vous gard de vous assurer beaucoup de vous mesme, & de vous esgayer parmy les occasions dangereuses, veu que la force de Samson fut assubiectie à une femme, pource qu'il ne s'estoit pas sçeu retirer à temps, & mesme la vitesse des oyseaux [...] que nous ne pouvons pas suivre avecque la veue, est quelquefois attrapee, pour ce qu'ils ne se sont pas sceus retirer assez à temps ; si bien que qu'ils ont accoutusmé de tumber aux pieds d'un chasseur gouteux, qui ne se peut remuer, comme Ennius dict de Philoctete, *Configebat tardus celeres, stans volantes*<sup>4</sup>. Et cela advient pour ce qu'ils se sont trop fiez en la legereté de leurs plumes, & pour ne s'estre voulus avancer lors que la fuite leur estoit facile.<sup>5</sup>

Même au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle Sophocle est ignoré en faveur de ses imitateurs latins. Cela ne veut nullement dire que la pièce de Sophocle soit totalement ignorée. À titre d'exemple cette remontrance de l'avocat général au Parlement de Paris qui contient

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<sup>1</sup> « [...] deinde quod in Britannia non nimis philotheohron te praeuisti, plane non reprehendo » - lettre VII, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Qui signifie « ami de la contemplation ».

<sup>3</sup> Jacques Chomarat, « Dolet traducteur des *Lettres familières* de Cicéron », in *Études sur Étienne Dolet, le théâtre au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, le Forez, le Lyonnais et l'histoire du livre. Publiées à la mémoire de Claude Longeon*, Droz, 1993, p. 94. Le texte tel qu'il apparaît dans l'édition de 1544 est : « tu t'es montré en Bretagne, tel envers Cesar, que Philoctetes envers Hercules » - *Les Epistres familières de Marc Tulle Cicero, pere d'eloquence Latine, Nouvellement traduites de Latin en François, par Estienne Dolet, natif d'Orleans*, 1544, p. 194. Philoctète est plus connu que Philoclès, mentionné par Plutarque dans sa *Vie de Lysandre*, XI ; ainsi, Pierre de La Primaudaye rappelle la décision avec laquelle Philoclès accepte sa mort, mais dans l'index apparaît le nom de Philoctète - *Académie française, en laquelle il est traicté de l'institution des moeurs*, G. Chaudière, 1577, pp. 28 a et b, respectivement table.

<sup>4</sup> Scaliger mettra *volatiles* à la place de *volantes*.

<sup>5</sup> *Les deux estats de la spirituelle Hierusalem militante et triumpante, sur les psalmes Super Flumina Babilonis, composé en espagnol par R. P. Juan Márquez de l'Ordre de saint Augustin*, Paris, Chez Nicolas du Fossé, 1607, p. 91 b - 92 a.

quelques phrases du *Philoctète* de Sophocle traduites en langue vernaculaire. L'auteur, Jacques Mangot (1556-1587), avait étudié le grec avec Denys Lambin (1516-1572) :

*ἀλλ' ἡδὺν γὰρ τι κτήμα τῆς νίκης λαβεῖν. Mais c'est une acquisition douce que la victoire, comment que ce soit par Verité ou par mensonge*, dit Ulysse, dans le *Philoctete* de Sophocle<sup>1</sup>. Tu dis vray, ô renard d'Ithaque (car ainsi l'appelle le mesme poëte dans son Ajax). Mais que respond la Sapience divine ? *Suavis est homini Panis mandacii, sed postea os eius implebitur calculo*<sup>2</sup>. & *Qui congregat thesauros lingua mendacii, vanus & excors est, & impingent ad laqueos mortis*.<sup>3</sup> Parquoy la resolution du jeune Neoptolemus, & la response qu'il te fait est tresbonne, & tresdigne de la race Achileïenne [...] *J'ayme mieux, s'il le faut ainsi, faillir à mon entreprise en bien faisant, c'est à dire, en disant vray, que vaincre meschamment en mentant*<sup>4</sup>. Dittes-en chacun de vous autant, & vous resoudez là, à fin que Dieu face la grace à voz enfans qu'il a fait à aucuns que vous avez veu entre vous, d'adjouster ce qu'adjouste ce brave fils d'Achilles *ἔφουν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐκ τέχνης πράσσειν κακῆς, οὔτ' αὐτὸς οὔθ', ὅς φασιν, οὐκφύσας ἐμέ*<sup>5</sup>.

Le *Philoctète* de Sophocle sert au Tasse de modèle dans la structuration de son couple de héros : comme pour la prise de Troie il fallait avoir Pyrrhus et Philoctète, il en était de même dans le cas de Jérusalem, il fallait avoir Godefroy et Renaud<sup>6</sup>. Pourtant, entre Renaud et Godefroy il y a un certain ordre de dépendance et de supériorité (« un certo ordine di dipendenza e superiorità ») qui n'existe pas dans le cas de l'autre couple, Pyrrhus et Philoctète. Le Tasse renvoie en plus à Quitus de Smyrne pour justifier le rappel de Renaud des Canaries par le rappel de Philoctète de Lemnos<sup>7</sup>, et à Cicéron<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Phil.*, 81 (« La victoire pourtant est douce à obtenir. »).

<sup>2</sup> Proverbes, 20, 17 (« Le pain du mensonge est doux à l'homme, Et plus tard sa bouche est remplie de gravier. »).

<sup>3</sup> Proverbes, 21, 6 (« Des trésors acquis par une langue mensongère Sont une vanité fugitive et l'avant-coureur de la mort. »).

<sup>4</sup> *Phil.*, 93-95 (« Mais malgré tout, prince, j'aimerais mieux encore échouer pour avoir agi loyalement que triompher par une vilénie. »).

<sup>5</sup> *Recueil des principaux poincts d'un Remontrance faicte en la Cour de Parlement de Paris, à l'ouverture du Palais*, par Jacques Mangot, Avocat du Roy en ladite Cour, Paris, par Fed. Morel, 1594, p. 40. La dernière citation, *Phil.*, 86-89 (« les mots qu'il me coût d'entendre, je répugne à les mettre en actes. Je ne suis pas fait, moi, pour agir en usant de vilains artifices »).

<sup>6</sup> Lettre à Scipion Gonzague du 14 janvier 1576 - *Classici italiani. Discorsi e lettere di Torquato Tasso*, vol. 38, Società de' classici italiani, Milan, 1804, p. 160. « E questo accoppiamento di due persone diversamente necessarie ad una impresa non è però sì nuova, che non se n'abbia alcuno esempio nell'antichità, perchè Sofocle nel Filottete finge, che maravigliandosi Neottolemo, che Filottete sia ricerca, come necessario all'espugnazione di Troja, e stimando d'esser egli quel Cavaliere fatale, a cui la vittoria si riservasse, gli risponde Ulisse, ambo sete necessari [...] » - *Classici italiani, éd. cit.*, p. 180. Remarquons l'utilisation sur la même page des deux noms du fils d'Achille, Pyrrhus et Néoptolème.

<sup>7</sup> « Se a Quinto Calabro Poeta greco et antico [...] è lecito, seguendo Sofocle, far che Filottete sia richiamato dall'isola di Lenno ; non credo io, che a me sia disconvenevole il richiamar Rinaldo dalle Canarie [...] » - *Classici italiani, ed. cit.*, pp. 180-181 (lettre à Silvio Antoniano du 30 mars 1576).

Mentionnons aussi les remarques de Giason Denores (1530-1590) sur la relation entre art et politique. Ainsi, Sophocle, animé de son intérêt pour le bien commun, « habbia fatto recitar la tragédie di Philottete, per riconciliar insieme Nicia vecchio con Alcibiade giovane ne'tempi pericolosi della republica, ne'quali si havea di bisogno dell'aiuto, & dell'opera dell'uno, & dell'altro unitamente »<sup>2</sup>.

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Les diverses allusions et autres paraphrases relevées pour les XVIe-XVIIe siècles visent des aspects du mythe de Philoctète aussi divers que les flèches héritées d'Hercule, son ensauvagement, sa souffrance lancinante, le parjure, sa sexualité, interprétés parfois de manière contradictoire, selon la source utilisée ou la vision particulière du commentateur.

*Les flèches de Philoctète* sont mentionnées dans des expressions proverbiales, dont certaines héritées probablement de l'antiquité, mais qui stimulent la plume des auteurs modernes. Ainsi, Martin Fumée, sieur de Genillé (v. 1540-v. 1590) commentant la stratégie d'une armée qui force « en fureur » ou décide de « tout quitter faute de confiance » se rappelle probablement la monomachie rapportée par Quintus ou Dictys et conclut : « C'est jeter en un coup toutes les fleches de Paris, puis demeurer nud à celles de Philoctete, vaut mieux mesnager pour durer, que tout despendre au coup pour un coup paroistre, puis ne plus estre, que pour se cacher. »<sup>3</sup> Les armes invincibles de Philoctète sont évoquées aussi dans le roman du même auteur, *Du vray et parfait amour, escrit en grec, par Athénagoras, philosophe athénien*. Une de ses héroïnes est bien placée pour parler des armes du héros : Charide, originaire de Mélibée, est une descendante de Philoctète ! Sa famille est en possession de deux des flèches de Philoctète « lesquelles avec l'arc il eut d'Hercules apres l'avoir fait inhumer ». C'est l'occasion pour l'héroïne de rappeler en bref l'histoire de son ancêtre : Philoctète s'est blessé avec une flèche « allant à la guerre de Troye », ce qui le contraint à l'exil, mais finalement il tue Pâris d'une autre flèche. La famille n'a pas hérité de son arc : « nous avons entendu, & ainsi le trouvons par nos anciens memoires, qu'il est gardé en ce pays d'Italie dedans un temple, qui a esté erigé en son honneur en la vile de Macalle »<sup>4</sup>. Charide connaissait donc les sources hellénistiques en matière de mythe de Philoctète (*De*

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<sup>1</sup> « E perchè il dolore è cosa aspra, amara, difficile a tollerarsi, e inimica della natura, si concede per opinione di Marco Tullio nelle *Questioni Tusculane* a Filottete il gemere, siccome a colui, che prima avea veduto Ercole nel monte Eta per la grandezza del dolore stridere e lamentarsi [...] » - *Discorsi dell'Arte Poetica e in particolare sopra il Poema Eroico, al Signor Scipione Gonzaga*, III, écrits vers 1567, publié en 1587.

<sup>2</sup> *Discorso di Jason Denores intorno a que' principii, cause ed accrescimenti che la Comedia, la Tragedia, & il Poema Heroico ricevono dalla Philosophia Morale, & Civile, & da' Governatori delle Republiche*, Padova, appresso Paulo Meieto, 1587, p. 20b.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Fumée, *Histoire générale des troubles de Hongrie et Transylvanie. Contenant la pitoyable perte de ruyne de ces Royaumes, & des guerres advenuës de ce temps en iceux entre les Chrestiens & les Turcs*, t. 1, Robert Foüet, 1608, p. 86. La première édition de 1594 ne contient pas ce passage.

<sup>4</sup> *Du vray et parfait amour, escrit en grec, par Athénagoras, philosophe athénien, contenant les Amours honestes de Theogenes & de Charide, de Phérécides et de Mélangénie* Paris, M. Guillemot & S. Thiboust, 1612, p.70. Le roman a été écrit en 1569 et passe pour une mystification.

*mirabilibus auscultationibus*, 107 ; Lycophron ; Euphorion, selon Tzetzès, scholie à Lycophron, 911) !

C'est pour indiquer combien douloureuses sont les blessures provoquées par les flèches d'Éros qu'on les compare à celles de Philoctète :

Vous voyez donc par l'employ si peu raisonnable de ces fleches, à combien de folles affections nostre esprit se laisse entraîner lors que l'Amour le gouverne, à quels emportemens il l'abandonne contre les loix de l'honneur & de la société, à combien de folles passions il expose nostre vie. Je pense, quant à moy, qu'il vaudroit mieux estre blessé des traits envenimez qui font crier si haut Philoctete dans les vieilles Tragedies, que des dangereuses fleches dont nous parlons [...] <sup>1</sup>

L'image aurait pu être reprise de Matteo Bandello (1485-1561) ou de ses traducteurs français. En effet, dans les *Histoires tragiques* on tombe sur la même comparaison entre les flèches empoisonnées de Philoctète et celles de l'amour, avec une particularité supplémentaire. Ainsi, dans l'histoire XI, *D'une jeune fille qui se lança et suffoqua dedans un puy, pour l'amour d'un Escholier que son père ne voulut luy donner pour mary*, il est dit : « les flesches de Philoctete, failloit que fussent appliquees à ceux qu'elles avoient blecé, pour les guerir, qu'aussi les traits de vos beautez ayans outré mon cœur, soient aussi son soulas, & consolation » <sup>2</sup>. Autrement dit, le remède est contenu dans le poison, ce qui est plus clairement exprimé dans la nouvelle *Un gentilhomme sienois se voyant mesprisé de celle qu'il poursuivoit, se pendit luy mesme de desesper* : « mais il semble que le trait d'une grande beauté est aussi inevitable que celui de la mort, en tant que se plantant en l'ame, il n'en sort point sans y laisser une playe aussi incurable que celle de Philoctete, faillant que le mesme trait soit la guerison du mal duquel il est, & la cause, & l'auteur, ainsi qu'en advient aussi de la morsure mortelle du scorpion » <sup>3</sup>.

Cette qualité qu'on prête aux flèches de Philoctète - guérir les blessures qu'elles provoquent, comme la lance d'Achille - est évoquée aussi dans un traité de balnéologie de 1600, l'auteur, un « médecin Espargerique », comparant « la bonté des bains de la ville d'Aix » aux armes du héros : « je suis étonné que vous n'ayez descourert [sic !] cette flesche de Philoctete, ce remede admirable de la hache d'armes de Thelephus. » <sup>4</sup> Plus tard, combinant les deux mythes, on a pu considérer que Machaon guérit Philoctète avec la rouille de la lance d'Achille <sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Le dialogue « S'il faut qu'un homme soit amoureux » dans *Les œuvres de Monsieur Sarasin*, Paris, Augustin Courbé, 1656, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> F. de Belleforest, *Le Septiesme Tome des Histoires tragiques, contenant plusieurs choses dignes de mémoire*, Lyon, Benoist Rigaud, 1595, p. 319. Première édition, Paris, 1582 ; d'autres éditions Paris, 1583, Emmanuel Richard ; Lyon, 1583, Estienne Plessier ; Rouen, 1604, Adrian de Launay ; Rouen, 1604, Pierre L'Oyselet ; Rouen, 1604, Pierre Calles ; Lyon, Pierre Rigaud, 1616.

<sup>3</sup> *Histoires tragiques, partie extraites des œuvres Italiennes du Bandel, & partie de l'invention de l'Autheur François*, par François de Belle-forest, t. IV, Turin, par Jerosme Farine, 1571, p. 309-310.

<sup>4</sup> *Traité des Bains de la Ville d'Aix en Provence et la manière d'en user*, par le Sr. De Castelmont Medecin Espargerique [sic !], Aix, Jean Tholosan, 1600, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Antoine-Joseph Pernety, *Dictionnaire mytho-hermétique*, Paris, Chez Bauche, 1758, p. 378. L'auteur renvoie à *Fables Egyptiennes et Grecques dévoilées*, livre 6, fatalité 2, mais dans les éditions que j'ai consultées il n'y avait pas de détails sur une telle guérison.

*L'usage impropre des flèches d'Hercule* était évoqué par les auteurs antiques dans des expressions proverbiales qui seront reprises par des auteurs des XVIe-XVIIe siècles. Ainsi, dans une lettre adressée à Volumnius, Cicéron compare son désœuvrement au désespoir de Philoctète confiné à Lemnos : « et si parfois encore Cicéron trouve de dignes paroles, il gémit, comme le Philoctète d'Accius, de voir 'que ses traits vont tomber sans gloire sur des corps de plume et non sur des corps de fer' » (*ad Familiares*, VII, 33)<sup>1</sup>. L'expression se retrouve dans la correspondance de Dominique Baudier (1591-1613) qui l'utilise dans une lettre de mai 1598<sup>2</sup> et la réutilise dans la lettre du 14 mai 1603 adressée à Cornelis van der Myle : « Sed quia nullum nostri pretium publice fieri video, coepi nescio quo modo plane mihi ipse displicere, ut non injuria cum Acciano Philoctete queri possim, quod haec tela pennigero, non armigero in corpore exercentur. »<sup>3</sup>

Thomas Girac (mort en 1663) rappelle lui aussi l'usage impropre des flèches d'Alcide, mais cette fois la source est Ovide. À l'occasion de la dispute qui l'opposait à Pierre Costar (1603-1660), Thomas Girac se demande : « N'est-ce pas faire, pour ne rien dire de pis, comme le Philoctete des fables, qui ayant en sa puissance les flèches du grand Hercule que les Dieux avoient destinées pour la ruine de Troye, ne s'en servoient qu'à la chasse des petits oiseaux ? »<sup>4</sup> François de La Mothe Le Vayer (1585-1672) - ou si on préfère chez Orasius Tubero, qui publiait son ouvrage à Francfort en 1506 ! - juxtapose le proverbe « aquila non capit muscas » à la même image d'Ovide : « c'est une honte de manier les choses hautes si bassement ; nous ne voyons pas que les Aigles s'amuse à prendre des mouches ; & il y a de l'indignité à considerer les fleches de Philoctete employées à tirer aux petits moineaux »<sup>5</sup>. L'expression ainsi complétée semble avoir du succès si bien qu'on la retrouve plus tard, altérée, chez Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) ; ainsi, voir « un génie aussi prodigieux que le célèbre comte de la Mirandole » travaillant « à confondre l'astrologie », revient à « employer les fleches d'Hercule à tuer des petits oiseaux, comme faisoit Philoctete pendant le siege de Troye, & faire battre une aigle contre une mouche »<sup>6</sup>. Guez de Balzac (1597-1654) utilisait lui aussi une

<sup>1</sup> Voilà la traduction de ce fragment par Dolet : « si i'ay rien mis en lumiere digne de mon nom, ie me deulz que ces dardz soient exercez sur ung corps portant plumes, & non armes, comme dict Philoctetes dedans le poete Accius, mesprisant la gloire de ce monde » - Dolet, *éd. cit.*, VII, 33, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> « [...] tam inutilitet disperdatur, sicuti apud vetercm Poëtam Philoctetes queritur, non armigero sed pennigero in corpore tela sua exerceri » - *Dominici Baudi Epistolae semicenturia auctae. Orationes et Libellus de Foenore*, Lugduni Batavorum, 1650, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 113 (I, XLVII).

<sup>4</sup> *Replique de Monsieur de Girac a Monsieur Costar, ou sont examinées les bévuës et les invectives du Livre intitulé Suite de la Defense de M. de Voiture*, Paris, chez Louis Billaine, 1664, p. 259-260.

<sup>5</sup> Le chapitre « De l'ignorance louable. Entre Telamon, Orasius, Melpoclitus, & Granicus François », dans La Mothe Le Vayer, *Quatre dialogues faits à l'imitation des anciens, Francfort par Orasius Tubero*, Jean Sarius, 1506 (probablement publiée au début des années 1630 ; d'autres éditions en 1647, 1671 et 1673), p. 52.

<sup>6</sup> P. Bayle cite Ovide, *Mét.*, XIII, mais aussi la leçon de Pierre Burman (« Il se couvre des plumes des oiseaux qui le nourrissent »), qui concilie Ovide et Cicéron, *De Finibus*, V, 11, 32 - P. Bayle, *Pensées diverses*, Rotterdam, chez Reinier Leers, 1683, p. 43. Une déformation comique de l'action de Philoctète chez Thomas Moore (1779-1852) : « Bientôt les orateurs de l'opposition auraient été

expression double pour déplorer l'usage impropre d'un objet merveilleux, appuyant sur le caractère proverbial de la comparaison :

J'avouë que si j'eusse esté capable du genre sublime d'escrire, j'avois de quoy le faire voir en cette occasion, & ce n'eust point esté, comme on a dit autrefois, employer les fleches de Philoctete à tuer des oiseaux, ni exciter des orages sur un ruisseau. Il ne doit pas estre permis de parler bassement de ce qu'il y a de plus haut au-dessous du Ciel [...]<sup>1</sup>

Chez Cicéron et Ovide Philoctète est contraint à l'usage impropre des flèches par son exil et son infirmité, chez Emanuele Tesauro (1592-1675) le héros est tout simplement incapable de s'élever à la hauteur de la mission qu'Hercule lui avait confiée :

La Saetta di Hercole, nelle mani di Hercole, era un Fulmine fatale contro a'Trojani : nelle mani di Filottete fu un Fulmine pazzo, che dalla mano inesperta gli cadde sul piè con tal dolore, che ne pasimò. L'Oro, non men che il Ferro, è un'Utile Instrumento : ma Inutile nelle mani del'Avaro : Pernicioso in quelle del Prodigio. Il sol Liberale hà l'Arte di bene adoprarlo.<sup>2</sup>

Philoctète qui ne fait pas le poids (au sens propre du terme) apparaissait déjà dans les textes médiévaux espagnols (deuxième partie de *La General Estoria*). Comme les compilateurs espagnols, Emanuele Tesauro s'inspire en le modifiant du commentaire de Servius : Philoctète se blesse parce qu'il est incapable de disposer dûment de l'héritage d'Hercule, alors que chez le grammairien la blessure est la punition de son parjure. Il ignore de toute évidence Lucien, selon lequel « [...] si

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réduits, comme Philoctète épuisant ses flèches terribles contre les oies de Lemnos, à épuiser l'arsenal de leur esprit contre les Graham et les Rolle du banc de la trésorerie. » - Thomas Moore, *Mémoires sur la vie privée, politique et littéraire de R. B. Sheridan*, t. 1, Paris, Arthus Bertrand, 1826, p. 309. Dans l'édition anglaise et française une note renvoie à la phrase d'Accius, « Pinnigero, non armigero in corpora tela exercentur. », citée par Cicéron. Une attestation inattendue chez un poète canadien contemporain de cette expression : « Aucun homme de culture ne se donnera le ridicule de chasser aux pigeons avec les flèches d'Hercule, comme faisait Philoctète pendant le siège de Troie. C'est faire battre l'aigle contre les mouches ! » - Marc Vaillancourt, « Présentation : l'Antiquité », in *Moebius : écritures / littérature*, n° 111, 2006, p. 7 (<http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/14179ac>). Il y a là double dérapage : d'une part on ne se rapporte plus à Ovide, mais à Sophocle lorsqu'on évoque les pigeons, d'autre part on déplace la scène de chasse de Lemnos à Troie.

<sup>1</sup> *Les Œuvres de Monsieur de Balzac, divisées en deux tomes*, Paris, chez Louis Billaine, 1665, livre VII p. 328. Philoctète chasseur apparaît aussi dans le traité de chasse d'Eugenio Raimondi, *Le Caccie delle Fiere*, Brescia, Bartolomeo Fontana, 1621, p. 6 (« Filottete compagno d'Ecole dilettavasi grandemente della Caccia de gli Uccelli »).

<sup>2</sup> Emanuele Tesauro, *La Filosofia morale derivata dall'alto Fonte del grande Aristotele Stagirita*, Torino, per Bartolomeo Zapata, 1670, p. 118, ch. *In qual modo se esercita la liberalità*. En voila la traduction française du passage : « La Flèche d'Hercule, entre les mains d'Hercule, étoit un Foudre, fatal aux Troïens ; entre les mains de Filoctete, ce fut un foudre mal conduit, qui de ses mains peu expérimentées lui tomba sur le pié, & lui causa une telle douleur qu'il tomba en défaillance. L'Or n'est pas un moins utile Instrument que le Fer : mais il est inutile entre les mains de l'Avare ; Pernicieux en celles du Prodigie. Le seul Liberal a l'Art de s'en servir comme il faut. » - *Introduction aux vertus morales et heroiques traduites de l'italien du Sr. Emanuel Tesauro et dediée aux heros du christianisme les Chevaliers de Malthe par le père Thomas Croset Récolet*, t. 1, Brusselle [sic !], chez François Foppens, 1712, p. 132.

l'on possédait l'arc d'Hercule, sans être en même temps Philoctète, seul capable de le bander et de viser au but, que serait-on, selon toi ? Un homme qui peut passer pour un bon archer ? » (Lucien, LVIII. *Contre un ignorant bibliomane*, 5). Scipion Dupleix se rappelle la remarque de Lucien lorsqu'il commente la mort du duc de Weimar de la sorte : « Il laissa au Comte de Guebriant son espée, ses pistolets, ses armes & son cheval de combat, comme tres-digne de s'en servir : imitant en cela Hercule, qui laissa son arc à Philoctete, comme seul assez fort pour le bander. »<sup>1</sup>

**La déchéance de Philoctète** serait pour certains une épreuve injustement infligée, pour d'autres, la punition légitime d'un parjure. Pour l'évêque de Gaète François Patrice (1413-1494) Philoctète abandonné, misérable, souffrant, couvrant son corps des plumes des oiseaux qu'il tuait de ses flèches est un exemple de résistance morale, dès lors qu'il a préféré subir pendant très longtemps tous les malheurs en plus de la solitude sans penser à se suicider<sup>2</sup>. Pour le très érudit Philippe de Mornay (1549-1623), Philoctète est une hypostase du juste qui subit un châtement immérité, et dont le désarroi est une nouvelle occasion de montrer sa grandeur. Dans le chapitre intitulé *La cause des reproches contre la Providence* de son apologie du christianisme il évoque le personnage tragique au destin malheureux auquel les dieux sauront mettre fin :

[Nous supportons] és Tragedies les cruautez plus que Barbares d'un Atreus, les impietez d'Ixion, & les lamentables cris du pauvre Philoctete : par ce [...] que nous estimons tant [...] du Tragique, qu'il nous attachera le meschant à la roüe premier que de laisser l'eschafaut, ou que les Furies le tourmenteront, & qu'au contraire Dieu exhaucera la voix, & les piteux cris du pauvre Philoctete. Et s'il semble quelques fois que Dieu se taist & laisse chanter aux autres leur partie ; devons nous point tant tenir de sa prudence qu'il sçaura bien reprendre à temps ? & s'il laisse les meschans se pourmener sur l'eschafaut, & les bons en prison ; qu'il a aussi pourveu à terminer les bravades des uns par un juste supplice, & les cris des autres par un triomphe ?<sup>3</sup>

C'est la même hypostase qu'apparaît chez Jacques de Fumée dans le chapitre *De l'espérance et desespoir* de son histoire de l'Ordre de Malte. L'auteur paraphrase un commentaire d'Aristote sur l'importance d'espérer et reprend à son compte les considérations du chœur tragique sur le sort de Philoctète. Le fait que Philoctète

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<sup>1</sup> Scipion Dupleix, *Histoire de Louis le Juste, XIII du nom, roi de France et de Navarre*, à Paris, chez Denys Bechet, 1654, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> *Francisci Patricii Senensis De regno et regis institutione libri IX*, Parisiis, Ioannis Charronius, 1567, p. 179 (livre V, ch. XXII, *De desperatione*). Même discours chez Tomás de Monzábal, *Primera parte del retrato del hombre feliz y humana felicidad*, Pamplona, por Carlos de Labàyen, 1618, p. 322.

<sup>3</sup> Philippes [sic !] de Mornay, Sieur du Plessis Marly, *De la verité de la religion chrestienne contre les Athées, Epicuriens, Payens, Juifs, Mahumedistes, & autres Infideles*, Anvers, Christofle Plantin, 1582, p. 240. Traduction anglaise sous le titre *A woorke concerning the trewnesse of the Christian religion, written in French: against atheists, Epicures, Paynims, Iewes, Mahumetists, and other infidels. By Philip of Mornay Lord of Plessie Marlie. Begunne to be translated into English by Sir Philip Sidney Knight, and at his request finished by Arthur Golding, Imprinted at London, [By [John Charlewood and] George Robinson] for Thomas Cadman, 1587.*

tombe de si haut fait de lui l'exemple parfait de la force d'âme de celui qui ne sombre pas dans le découragement :

C'est pourquoy les Poetes nous voulant faire cognoistre que peut la patience, force, & esperance de l'esprit, feignent Philoctete estre tombé de haut en bas, & decheu de sa premiere fortune : de riche estre devenu pauvre, de sain plein de cicatrices, d'honoré pour ses richesses abhorré en sa pauvreté, d'innocent coupable, de citadin exilé à tort, en eschange de grands palais habiter aux spelonques, de compagnon de grands hommes accompagné des bestes sauvages, & pour tout cela n'avoir jamais fait aucune demonstration de desespoir, ny faute de courage : mais avec force & patience d'esprit, de tout loüe les Dieux, portant toutes les incommoditez, disgraces & malheurs patiemment, plustost que faire violence à la nature, avec ignominie & dehonneur de sa vie passee.<sup>1</sup>

Par contre, dans son discours à l'occasion de l'ouverture du parlement de Provence Guillaume Du Vair (1556-1621) fait de Philoctète l'incarnation du parjure. Son destin malheureux à Lemnos devrait servir d'avertissement à tous ceux qui ont l'intention de faire de même :

Ils croient pouvoir impunément faucher le serment qu'ils ont fait aux loix & aux ordonnances. Hélas ! ne voient ils pas dans les tragedies ce miserable Philoctete, lequel s'estant obligé par serment à ne point dire où estoit le tombeau d'Hercules, pensa estre quitte de sa foi en le monstrant avec le pied ? Mais une des flesches que Hercules lui avoit donnees, tomba sur ce pied là, & lui fit cest ulcere douloureux & incurable, avec lequel il ne pouvoit ne vivre ni mourir : pour lequel il jettoit ces cris tant lamentables, qui ont si souvent retenti dans les theatres des Grecs, & qui ont esté si souvent alleguez par les Philosophes, pour exemple d'une impatiente douleur.<sup>2</sup>

On retrouvera cette image de Philoctète parjure, condamné à expier sa faute, au XVIIIe siècle aussi, chez Sophia Lee (1750-1824) : « for once in my life I was guilty of duplicity, and, like Philoctetes, found my equivocation furnished a terrible punishment »<sup>3</sup>.

**Le double discours.** Le geste par lequel Philoctète montre l'endroit de la sépulture d'Hercule explique l'origine de son mal (« pour le peché de son pariurement », comme disait Jean Lemaire). Emanuele Tesauro n'hésitera pas à qualifier Philoctète de renard prêt à trahir son illustre compagnon par son double langage :

E quella Volpetta di Filottète, havendo giurato ad Hercole moribondo, di non insegnare ad alcuno il suo Sepolcro : interrogato poscia da' Greci, ove sepolto fosse, gridò ad alta voce, *Io nol sò* : & battendo col piè la

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<sup>1</sup> Jacques de Fumée, *De l'origine, progrez, institution et ceremonies des chevaliers de l'Ordre de Malte autrement de S. Jean de Jerusalem*, Paris, chez Guillaume Auvray, 1604, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Œuvres politiques, morales et meslees du sieur Du Vair premier president au Parlement de Provence, comprises en cinq parties*, Cologny, Pierre Aubert, 1617, p. 278.

<sup>3</sup> Sophia Lee, *The recess, or Tale of other times*, vol. I, London, T. Cadell, 1787, p. 188 (Ière éd. en 1783).

terra, rivelò il luogo. [Filottete] parlò ad un tempo con la lingua, & col piede : il piede disse il vero, la lingua mentì ? l'uno e l'altro fù insieme Bugiardo, e Veridico ; ma non Verace : perche la Veracità non si accoppia col tradimento [...]<sup>1</sup>

Il est étrange de voir Philoctète emprunter les stratégies d'Ulysse, lui aussi qualifié de renard par Sophocle (*Ajax*, 103). Par contre, Madeleine Neveu, dame Des Roches de Poitiers (1520-1587), ne semble pas considérer le double discours de Philoctète comme une stratégie nécessairement blâmable :

Quant à ce que vous dites n'avoir rien de vertueux que le desir d'estre vertueux, il semble qu'en celà il vous plaise d'imiter la contenance de Philoctetes, qui monstroit avec le pié le lieu où estoient les sassettes de Hercule, affermant toutesfois qu'il ne le sçavoit point. Ainsi vous monstrez par vos louables coutumes que les effaits suivent en vous le desir de la vertu, bien que vostre modestie vous face dire le contraire.<sup>2</sup>

Pourtant, le pied ne porte pas chance à Philoctète, comme semble l'indiquer la fille de Madeleine, Catherine Fradonnet, dite Catherine Des Roches (1542-1587), dans un dialogue entre les parties du corps. Le pied exige plus d'honneur que la main :

Quel pié, hormis celuy de Philoctete, fait jamais perdre la vie à son maistre, où il s'est trouvé mille mains qui ont faict perdre mille vies à mille hommes, et beaucoup d'autres fussent peris par la faute de leurs mains si ma diligence ne les eust sauvez ?<sup>3</sup>

C'était façon de parler, le pied qui a servi à Philoctète à se parjurer n'a pas causé sa mort. Pourquoi alors que le venin de l'hydre a été fatal à plus d'un ? D'après Francesco Redi (1626-1697), Chiron et Nessos meurent parce que les flèches étaient fraîchement induites du venin de l'Hydre (qui est une vipère), alors que Philoctète se blesse « molto tempo dopo la morte d'Ercole : onde è credibile, che quelle saete avessero perduta grandissima parte della loro velenosità »<sup>4</sup>.

***Le thème d'une « impatiente douleur »*** intéresse aussi bien le domaine de l'art, de la morale que le domaine de la propagande religieuse, comme on a déjà pu le voir chez certains auteurs mentionnés ci-dessus. Les auteurs citent ou développent les

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<sup>1</sup> Emanuele Tesauo, *op. cit.*, p. 229, ch. *Ogetti della veracità*. Et sa traduction française : « Et ce jeune Renard de Philoctete aiant promis par serment à Hercule de ne découvrir jamais à personne le lieu de la Sépulture ; étant depuis interrogé par les Grecs où il étoit entré, cria à haute voix ; *Je ne le sais pas*, & frappant du pié contre terre il leur montra le lieu. [Il parla] en même tems avec la langue & avec le pié : le pié dit la vérité, la langue mentit ; l'un et l'autre furent également Menteurs & Disans-vrai : mais non Véritables, parce que la Vérité ne s'accorde point avec la trahison [...] » - *Introduction aux vertus morales, éd. cit.*, p. 254.

<sup>2</sup> Lettre 27, à un destinataire inconnu, in Madeleine Des Roches, Catherine Des Roches, *Les Missives*, Droz, 1999, p. 168.

<sup>3</sup> Madeleine Des Roches, Catherine Des Roches, *Les Œuvres*, édition critique par Anne R. Larsen, Droz, 1993, p. 220 (*Dialogue de la main, du pié et de la bouche*).

<sup>4</sup> *Lettera di Francesco Redi, gentilouomo Aretino, sopra alcune opposizioni fatte alle sue osservazioni intorno alle vipere*, Firenze, Nella Stamperia della Stella, 1670, p. 30. Francesco Redi mentionne les causes de la blessure de Philoctète, une flèche d'après Servius, la morsure d'une vipère, d'après Sophocle, Homère et Cicéron - idem, pp. 22-23. Son ouvrage a été traduit en anglais en 1673.

réflexions de Cicéron sur l'expression de la douleur, comme le faisait Montaigne ou, plus tard, Moïse Amyraut (1596-1664) dans son *Traité des religions contre ceux qui les estiment toutes indifférentes*<sup>1</sup>.

Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) fait allusion à notre personnage lorsqu'il évoque une souffrance physique bien réelle et personnelle, « la pire de toutes les maladies, la plus soudaine, la plus douloureuse, la plus mortelle et la plus irrémédiable », le tout dans un contexte philosophique empreint de morale chrétienne. Il est de l'avis d'Épicure qui « ne pardonne pas seulement à son sage de crier au tourmens, mais il le luy conseille »<sup>2</sup>, évoquant sa propre expérience de malade chronique qui ne voit aucun mal à tenter, comme le Philoctète d'Accius<sup>3</sup>, de soulager sa peine par quelque moyen que ce soit. Montaigne y expose une position implicitement polémique par rapport à Cicéron, appliquant à sa maladie et à sa souffrance les distinctions subtiles proposées par Épicure et Cicéron, la puissance et la durée de la douleur. Il préfère clore sur le mode comique ce débat qui risquait de privilégier trop l'expérience personnelle au détriment de l'approche philosophique. La Mothe Le Vayer ajoute aux remarques de Cicéron une citation d'Aulu-Gelle (*Les Nuits attiques*, XII, 5, 13) avant de conclure :

L'on peut estre touché d'un déplaisir, sans se desesperer, & souffrir de grandes douleurs dans l'une ou l'autre partie qui nous composent, sans estre impatiens tout à fait, sans estre inconsolables, comme le Philoctete des Tragedies, & sans jetter comme luy des cris qui scandalisent le theatre.<sup>4</sup>

La souffrance doit être décente, discrète, pour des raisons philosophiques, mais aussi esthétiques, nous enseigne ce sceptique. Elle peut aussi stimuler le sens du comique et vaincre la paralysie, comme il arrive dans le cas du «malade de la reine» selon le témoignage de Guez de Balzac :

Je dis enfin, que le Prométhée, l'Hercule, & le Philoctete des Fables, sans parler du Job de la Verité, disent bien de grandes choses dans la violence de leurs tourmens, mais qu'ils n'en disent point de plaisantes : que j'ay bien veû en plusieurs lieux de l'Antiquité, des douleurs constantes, des douleurs modestes, voire des douleurs sages, & des douleurs eloquentes ; mais qu'il ne s'estoit point encore trouvé d'esprit

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<sup>1</sup> « Pensez que cela eust fait grand bien au pauvre Philoctete quand il faisoit resonner & la mer & les rochers de ses cris si lamentables, & qu'il desiroit que quelcun le precipitast [du haut d'un rocher] qui luy eust dit, mon amy il n'y a remede, la destinée le veut ainsi, & c'est nager contre le torrent que de luitter alencontre. C'est ce qui le desespera qu'il n'i a point de remede ; s'il en avoit quelque esperance il ne crieroit pas si haut, & se soustiendroit de ces beaux mots d'Epicure, *Si gravis, brevis.* » - Moïse Amyraut, *Traité des religions contre ceux qui les estiment toutes indifférentes*, Saumur, Claude Girard et Daniel de l'Erpiniere, 1631, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> Michel de Montaigne, *Essais*, II, 37, *De la ressemblance des enfans aux peres*.

<sup>3</sup> Cicéron, *Tusc.*, II, 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Œuvres de François de La Mothe Le Vayer*, t. II, Paris, chez Augustin Courbé, 1662, p. 869 (*Petits traités ou Lettres - Des affilictions. Lettre CIV*).

qui sceust danser la Sarabande & les Matassins dans un corps paralytique.<sup>1</sup>

C'est un bel éloge des malades qui surmontent leur souffrance par la grandeur tragique et par le rire à une époque où on reproche déjà à Philoctète de remplir le théâtre de ses cris indécents, argument important pour lui interdire d'y accéder pour encore plus de cent ans.

Philoctète est connu comme une hypostase tragique de la souffrance si bien qu'on le distribue dans un texte dont il n'est pas le protagoniste, un passage des *Niptra* de Pacuvius :

Ainsi, Alcméon et Philoctete ne paroissent point rustiques chez Ennius & chez Pacuve, lors qu'ils figurent simplement, mais avec une vehemence convenable à leurs sentiments, les douleurs insupportables de leur esprit & de leur corps.<sup>2</sup>

L'auteur attribue à Philoctète les paroles prononcées en réalité par Ulysse, citées par Cicéron dans *Tusculanes*, II, 21 :

Entendez tonner la Fureur par la bouche de Philoctete, dont la constance est épuisée par les maux qui le tourmentent. [...]

*Attachez-moy, tenez-moy bien, serrez les bandes de ma playe ; non, levez-en tout l'appareil. Ha l'insupportable douleur ! Couvrez-moy ; non, retirez-vous ; que tout le mondem'abandonne ; aussi bien l'on me fait mourir pour peque l'on touche à ma iambe.*<sup>3</sup>

**Une sexualité inquiétante.** Philoctète est persécuté par plusieurs divinités féminines - il est victime de Chryse, à laquelle il avait manqué de respect (Sophocle), de Junon, qui le punit pour avoir aidé Héraclès *in articulo mortis* (Hygin, 102), de Vénus pour avoir tué Pâris (Martial)<sup>4</sup>. Ceux qui possédaient une connaissance approfondie de la culture antique n'ignoraient pas les disputes autour de la sexualité de Philoctète : ils avaient lu l'épigramme de Martial, peut-être aussi l'épigramme d'Ausone<sup>5</sup>, assurément le commentaire au Thucydide I, 12, inspiré probablement d'une remarque d'Hérodote (I, 105 et IV, 67), et Hippocrate (*Des airs, des eaux et des lieux*, 22). En effet, il n'y a pas de femme ou de descendant dans l'histoire antique de Philoctète et même sa relation avec Héraclès est un épisode tardif, apparu lors d'un des recyclages tardifs de son histoire (Philoctète argonaute ; première destruction de Troie). Pas étonnant donc que dès le XVIIe siècle Philoctète soit mentionné dans des propos grivois, comme dans cette lettre que Niccolò Franco (1515-1570) adresse à Fabrizio Sappilone en 1541 :

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<sup>1</sup> Lettre de M. de Balzac à Monsieur Costar sur les œuvres de Mr. Scarron, in *Les Œuvres de Monsieur de Balzac*, divisées en deux tomes, Paris, chez Louis Billaine, 1665, p. 678.

<sup>2</sup> *La Poétique de Jules de La Mesnardiere*, Paris, chez Antoine de Sommaville, 1640, p. 392.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, p. 384.

<sup>4</sup> « [...] haissions Philoctète qui fut son meurtrier, comme s'il estoit le nostre », demande Hécube aux femmes troyennes - Georges de Scudéry, *Les femmes illustres*, seconde partie, Paris, chez Toussaint Quinet et Nicolas de Sercy, 1644, p. 307.

<sup>5</sup> Voltaire donne une traduction de l'épigramme LXXI d'Ausone dans son *Dictionnaire philosophique*, entrée *Lèpre et vérole*.

Perloch  ad un vecchio che moglie giovane mena, s  come ha fatto la vostra magnificenza, un [...] buon prencipe, ma non di quegli che sfamano l'Areino, devrebbe dir quello che contra un Philetete si dice.<sup>1</sup>

On ne se serait peut- tre pas attendu   ce que ce th me soit  voqu  lors d'une dispute opposant Thomas de Girac (mort en 1663)   Pierre Costar (1603-1660) qui tourne vite   un affrontement sans merci. Girac veut confondre son adversaire, faisant remarquer que la maladie des femmes n'est pas comme le pensent d'aucuns (y compris Costar) un trop grand amour pour elles, mais l' tat d'un homme eff min , violant « les loix que la Nature a prescrites » - l' tat de Philoct te incrimin  comme tel par Martial (* pig.*, livre II, 84)<sup>2</sup>. Costar ne se laisse pas faire et r plique qu'il avait utilis  le terme « molesse » par d licatesse et donne une traduction du d but de l' pigramme de Martial en fran ais<sup>3</sup>, le texte latin  tant cit  en note marginale. Pour faire montre de son  rudition, il ajoute ce qu'en disait le scholiaste de Thucydide : « ce H ros se voyant frap  de la maladie des femmes [...] & ne pouvant souffrir l'infamie qu'il s'estoit attir e par une impuret  si horrible, quitta son pa s & s'en alla bastir une ville,   la quelle il donna le nom de Mole e, pour marque  ternelle de sa vilaine passion »<sup>4</sup>. Pierre Guillebaud (1585-1667) - ou, si on pr f re, Dom Pierre de Saint Romuald - explique l'acharnement de cette d esse contre Philoct te se fondant sur les m mes sources antiques :

Cependant la Deesse Venus (ou pl tost un Demon de lubricit ) indign e contre Philoctete pour avoir mis   mort celui   qui elle se sentoit extr mement oblig e pour le jugement qu'il avoit donn  en sa faveur, luy envoya pour se venger de luy, un mal de femme que les uns prennent pour les hemorro des, ou pour les fleurs menstruales, & les autres pour certaine volupt , afin de le rendre lasche : mais Celie Rhodigin apres Pline semble avoir mieux rencontr , disant que c'estoit une mollesse & langueur que les Latins appellent *Malacia*, ou autrement *Pica*, qui fait desirer aux femmes enceintes de manger tantot de la cendre, tantost des charbon, & telle autre chose extraordinaire afin de s'en nourrir.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Niccol  Franco, *Epistolario (1540-1548)* : Ms Vat. Lat. 5642,  dition de Domenica Falardo, Forum Italicum Publishing, 2007, p. 85. L'Areino avait  t  pr sent  comme faisant « dei matrimoni tre volte il giorno, cosa che agli attempati non ist  bene, egli   pi  savio di voi perch , o marito o moglie ch'egli si meni, non gli dorme a lato pi  di due notti et mediante una dispensa havuta dal'Papo fare divorzo d'un punto in altro et cangiarsi non meno i mariti che le mogliere. » - idem, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> *Response du Sr. de Girac   la defense des  uvres de Monsr. de Voiture, faite par Mr. de Costar*, Paris, chez Augustin Courb , 1655, p. 173-174. Girac renvoie   H rodote, Thucydide et Hippocrate avant d'en venir   Martial.

<sup>3</sup> « Le fils illustre de Pean estoit mol & effemin . Il estoit facile & complaisant   tous les hommes qui le trouvoient beau. C'est par ce prodigieux d reglement que Venus punit la temerit  qu'il avoit eu  de blesser P ris. » - *Apologie de Mr. Costar   Monsieur Menage*, Augustin Courb , 1657, p. 199.

<sup>4</sup> Idem.

<sup>5</sup> L'auteur raconte la mort de P ris, « tu  par Philoctete fils de Pean, autrefois compagnon d'Hercule, car l'ayant appell  en duel il en fut bless    mort   coups de fl ches tinctes du fiel de l'Hydre Lernean [...] », arriv e en l'an 2820 « qui est 407. devant les Olympiades, & la 431. devant la fondation de Rome » - Pierre Guillebaud, *Abr g  du premier tome du Tr sor chronologique et historique du R. p. Dom Pierre de S. Romuald Religieux Fueillent*, Paris, Chez Fran ois Clouzier, 1662, p. 336. Premi re  dition 1642-1647.

Une telle interprétation qui transfère le châtement infligé au héros de la pathologie sexuelle à la pathologie nutritionnelle est encore plus humiliante pour un guerrier. C'est cependant cette interprétation du mal de Philoctète que retient Pierre Guillebaud, qui croit même que Philoctète est puni pour avoir maltraité Pâris le jour même de sa mort, « dequoy ayant honte, il abandonna son pays, & se retira en la Calabre, où ayant basti une ville, il la nomma *Malacia*, en mémoire de ce mal de Femme qui l'avoit saisi »<sup>1</sup>.

Il est d'autant plus étonnant dans ces circonstances de donner une progéniture à notre héros. Pourtant, une interprétation erronée de Marcus Manilius<sup>2</sup> est à l'origine d'une hypostase surprenante du héros : se fondant sur ce que racontent « Epiphane, & Philé Sapiens [...] du Pelican & du Lyon, sçavoir que la femelle du Pelican ayant esclos les petits tous morts, le masle se brusle les ailes & se fend l'estomach pour en tirer autant de gouttes de sang qu'il y a de petits, dont les ayant arrosez ils reçoivent la vie, & ainsi il arrive [...] que le Pelican est doublement père de ses petits, comme Philoctetes le fut de son enfant, lors qu'il le ressuscita de mort à vie, c'est-à-dire lors qu'il le delivra des serpens qui luy beuvoient l'esprit & l'ame »<sup>3</sup>.

**Le coléreux.** Le long exil à Lemnos, la solitude, la souffrance, l'abandon, tout cela explique la colère que nourrit Philoctète contre Ulysse et les Atrides, comme son entêtement et son humeur aigrie et irascible. Quelque chose de son destin l'apparenterait peut-être à Luther dont Melanchthon craignait les emportements, comme il l'écrit à son ami Camerarius :

Il tremblait lorsqu'il pensait à la colère implacable *de cet Achille*, et il ne craignait « rien moins de la vieillesse d'un homme dont les passions étaient si violentes que les emportements d'un Hercule, d'un Philoctète, et d'un Marius » [...] (Bossuet, *Histoire des variations des églises protestantes*, V, 1688)

Ce Philoctète coléreux est directement inspiré de la tragédie de Sophocle, que Melanchthon connaissait très bien.

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Les allusions et paraphrases citées ci-dessus peuvent paraître dérisoires par rapport aux œuvres littéraires et artistiques que le mythe de Philoctète a inspirées à travers les siècles. Elles sont par contre essentielles lorsqu'il s'agit d'établir la circulation

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<sup>1</sup> Pierre Guillebaud, *Trésor chronologique et historique*, Paris, chez Antoine de Sommerville, 1658, p. 292.

<sup>2</sup> « À quelle autre partie du ciel, ô Philoctète, serait-il possible d'attribuer [votre naissance] ? Teucer avec son arc et ses flèches écarta les feux qu'Hector lançait contre la nombreuse flotte des Grecs ; Philoctète portait dans son carquois le sort de la guerre et la destinée d'Ilion : réduit à l'inaction d'un triste exil, il était un ennemi plus redoutable que tous les Grecs armés contre Troie. Ce fut probablement sous la flèche que naquit ce père qui et le courage de tirer et l'adresse de tuer un serpent étendu sur le visage de son fils endormi et qui lui suçait le sang. L'amour paternel est un grand maître [...] cet enfant, renaissant une seconde fois, fut soustrait aux ciseaux de la Parque. » - Marcus Manilius, *Les Astronomiques*, V, 299-310.

<sup>3</sup> François Garasse, *La doctrine curieuse des beaux esprits de ce temps ou prétendus tels*, Paris, chez Sebastien Chappelet, 1624, p. 308.

du mythe aux XVIe-XVIIe siècles, de refaire le parcours sinueux de sa réception à cette époque-là, de noter les modifications par rapport à l'époque antérieure.

Ces mentions sont par ailleurs un gage de notoriété. Car il est inutile de faire une allusion ou de se livrer à des paraphrases si l'allocataire ignore la référence. Remarquons aussi la diversité des contextes dans lesquels il est cité, qui indique qu'il était présent dans différents circuits culturels. La diversité des sources dans lesquelles puisent ces auteurs est elle aussi instructive, certifiant qu'en matière de légende de Philoctète la pièce de Sophocle n'est pas la référence privilégiée aux XVIe-XVIIe siècles. Enfin, il faut remarquer que le surgen médiéval de l'histoire de Philoctète s'est étiolé, seules quelques réminiscences littéraires et iconographiques continuant d'en assurer pour quelques décennies encore la survie.

# THE CULTURAL ACTIVITY OF ANTIM IVIREANUL IN THE LIGHT OF THE ANIVERSARY OF 300 YEARS SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF ANTIM MONASTERY

Agnes ERICH<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *The Metropolitan Bishop Antim is well-known in the Romanian culture as one of the greatest printing craftsmen along with Macarie and Coresi. It was Antim Ivireanul who would improve the printing art in Wallachia, by founding new printing shops, thus creating a real Romanian school in this domain. This is why it would not have been possible for the monastery founded and designed by him not to have a printing shop, whose role was to print spiritual books, for enlightening people. And having the printing shop, he obviously thought of laying the foundations of a library, which, apparently, was the first Romanian public library to lend books as well.*

**Key words:** *Antim Ivireanul (Anthem of the Caucasian Iberia), Antim Monastery, printing press, library*

Antim Ivireanul may be regarded as one of the outstanding cultural personalities whom Wallachia has ever known. It is well-known that he used his knowledge in different areas, which led to his diverse concerns, almost all of them related to the church activity.

On February 5, 2013 we celebrated 300 years since Metropolitan Antim decided to build a monastery in Bucharest, to be precise a monastery to be named after his name, *Antim*. The works took until 1715 and the monastery was founded on the place where an old wooden church, dedicated to Saint Nicholas, had lain and where the Holy Chrism had been safely kept. The construction of the entire church complex was closely monitored by Metropolitan Antim, from the church to the abbot's dwellings, and the plans were drawn by the great hierarch himself.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting that above the main door, under the inscription, there is the Metropolitan's emblem, the snail, which is the symbol of faith and humbleness, and everything is enclosed in a laurel wreath, having a star over it<sup>3</sup> (Figure 1).

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<sup>2</sup> Two of them have been preserved inside the monastery up to now: the church's original paper layout, attached to the will concerning the monastery, and another parchment layout (1715).

<sup>3</sup> "The snail is the symbol of faith and humbleness. It represents poverty, as all its possessions are carried on its back, under its shell. The snail symbolizes silence; it makes no sounds, unlike many other animals. Another feature of it is that, in rainy weather, it easily comes to the surface of water. We may say that the snail is the perfect image of monks. Monks must be poor, like snails; they vow to accept absolute poverty, must love silence and need to ascend to God, by hearty prayers and tears." Visit the web: <http://www.doxologia.ro/imagine/emblema-sfantului-antim-ivireanul>



Figure 1. Antim Ivireanul's Emblem

The door of the main entrance itself (Figure 2) was sculpted by Antim Ivireanul, as well as all the stone sculptures of the iconostasis, pillars feet and borders. Apparently, the painting of the big church and chapel as well was done according to Metropolitan Antim's drawings.



Figure 2. The door of the main entrance

He left a will where he ordered that “a girl shall be given as alms a traditional Romanian blouse, dress, boots, a waist belt and 230 bani every year, as it was on the day of saint Agatha's celebration (the day they started building the monastery, saint Agatha was celebrated) that we decided to build a church, by God's will.”<sup>1</sup>

Professor Ion Nanu confirms that the hierarch made available his entire possessions for building this monastery, “to the praise of God the Holy Trinity, and to the honour and praise of all the Saints together, so that the monastery should be and bear the name of Monastery of all the Saints, to whom we dedicated it and in whose names we built it, so that people may celebrate holidays in it, praising and

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<sup>1</sup> Antim Ivireanul - The organization and arrangement of all the things that our humbleness wants forever and unalterably accomplished at our church in Bucharest, which was built to the praise of God and to the honor of all the saints. Apud. Antim Ivireanul. *Opere*. Edited by G. Ștrempel. București: Editura Minerva, 1972, p. 327.

forever honouring God's Saints with laudation and canticles, as they are God's friends and helpers and supporters of all the Orthodox Christians."<sup>1</sup>

From the inscription that can be read above the door, it comes out that the church was dedicated in 1715 (Figure 3):

“This Church dedicated to All the Saints,  
Was built by the wish of God and with everyone's efforts  
During the reign of Ștefan Cantacuzino,  
The bright ruler of famous Wallachia,  
By the archbishop Antim the Hungarian-Wallachian,  
From Iberia of Caucasus, as you can see on its foundation.  
In our quality of venerators of God,  
In our quality of sons of David and participants to the Saints' Church  
In Anno Domini 1715”<sup>2</sup>



Figure 3. The inscription that can be read above the door

Antim highlights that „with God's help, we adorned and embellished this church, on the inside and outside, with very many silver items and expensive habiliments, books of different sorts and with many other things that are used to embellish the honourable buildings, and in order to unalterably manage all things, according to our conscience and our right judgement, we wrote 32 chapters, where, in many details, we have given instructions for the organization of the monastery, as you can see from the signed church register [...]”<sup>3</sup>

Constantin Brâncoveanu's secretary himself, Anton Maria del Chiaro, describes Antim's foundation as a "magnificent monastery, having a splendid church, and being dedicated to All the Saints", being endowed with "precious holy habiliments for church services", and being "the church where he hoped to be buried".

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<sup>1</sup> Apud. Ion Nanu. *Un monument istoric de artă religioasă: ctitoria mitropolitului Antim Ivireanul*. In: *Revista B.O.R.*, 1961, p. 317.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cimec.ro/PaginiGazduite/Antim/home.html>

<sup>3</sup> Ion Nanu., *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

We should remember that Antim left a will (dated on April 24, 1713)<sup>1</sup> where he wrote some instructions concerning the monastery's organization and management. Thus, the will mentions the abbot's advice on the use of the monastery's possessions, the number of monks, their living in the monastery's cells, the fact that a certain number of poor children were to be educated in schools on the monastery's expense etc.

Metropolitan Antim is known in the Romanian culture as one of the greatest printing craftsmen beside Macarie and Coresi.<sup>2</sup> It is Antim Ivireanul who would improve the printing art in Wallachia by founding some new printing shops, thus creating a real Romanian school in this area. So, it would have been hard to imagine the monastery built and conceived by Antim without a printing shop, as well, having the role to print spiritual books to enlighten the people. In the will, he also mentions that "the printers should have the duty of passing on the printing craft from generation to generation, continuously, so that the craft may not die out in the country".<sup>3</sup>

As a printing shop was available, he obviously thought of laying the foundation of a new library, which, apparently, was the first public library that could lend of books as well: "should somebody need to borrow or read or write a book, or look something up in it, a written note should be written, signed by the borrower, with the promise that he/she will return it at a determined time, otherwise the book should not be lent, and make sure the book is returned."<sup>4</sup> We can notice that the library rules are not very different from the current ones, regarding the lending of books. Gabriel Ștrempel, in the monograph "Antim Ivireanul" shows that the library could not have been made up without Antim's printed books, and without the other books he possessed as well, as he called it "our library"<sup>5</sup>. Metropolitan Antim would constitute a real archive at the monastery, asking that all its possessions, including books, should be recorded in the "church register".

Antim Monastery may be regarded as one of the greatest Romanian religious achievements, and it fully bears the spiritual seal of its founder, Antim Ivireanul.

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<sup>1</sup> "Instructions for the foundation of the highly respected monastery of All the Saints, namely 32 orders, containing all the monastery's management and all the charity decided to be given to the poor and to the ones in need, on the house, in this monastery founded during the reign of the enlightened and honored ruler Constantin Brancoveanu Basarab, by us, Antim Ivireanul - the humble metropolitan of Hungary-Walachia, in 7221 <1713> AD, April 24, when we got the building of this church started.

<sup>2</sup> Antim Ivireanul, *Opere*, p. IX – X.

<sup>3</sup> Ion Nanu., *op. cit., loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 230.

<sup>5</sup> Gabriel Ștrempel. *Antim Ivireanul*. București: Editura Academiei Române, 1997, p. 344.

## BLENDING NARRATIVES INTO A HISTORICAL NOVEL: ROSE TREMAIN'S *MUSIC AND SILENCE*

Cristina Mihaela NISTOR<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *Rose Tremain's Music and Silence does its best to use intertextuality for a double purpose: to reveal other (hi)stories and create its own. The present article sets out to examine how the novelist manages to both preserve all the individual strength and charm of the original texts while, at the same time, adding rhythm and spice to her novel as a whole.*

**Key-words:** *postmodernist novel, intertextuality, intertext, history, historicity*

Winner of the Whitbread Prize, Tremain's 1999 novel *Music and Silence* can enter Bakhtin's fifth category of chronotopes, that of the 'chivalric romance' (Bakhtin *The Dialogic Imagination* 151-8). Nevertheless, what differentiates *Music and Silence* from other chivalric romances is the narrative game the author makes up. Thus, the novel proves as unconventional as any other postmodern novel (and, maybe, more original than most), playing with words and images in a most exquisite manner: by using intertextuality as a tool to order events and give meaning to the whole. Discussing history and fiction, Linda Hutcheon remarks upon the provisional character of any discovery about the past. The theorist also attributes this inability to 'know for sure' to intertextuality, to the chain of interdependence between texts:

What postmodern novels teach is that, in both cases [history and fiction] they actually refer at the first level to other texts: we know the past (which really did exist) only through its textualized remains. (Hutcheon *A Poetics* 119)

Tremain's *Music and Silence* does its best to use intertextuality for a double purpose: to reveal other (hi)stories and create its own. As far as the plot and the presentation of the historical reality are concerned, *Music and Silence* resembles Tremain's famous historical novel *Restoration* in at least one aspect: the fascinating portrayal of the two kings, Christian IV and Charles II. One of Tremain's most remarkable characters, King Christian IV behaves the way any monarch is supposed to behave: he is greedy, vulnerable, arbitrary, indifferent to others' pains, imaginative (when not bored out of his mind). Every once in a while, he seems wise and prone to philosophical thoughts, while discussing Descartes with his favourite musician, lutenist Peter Claire. Actually, the whole novel seems to revolve round the royal family, and all events focus on the Court of Denmark. Both plot and characters follow the rhythm of the whimsical decisions made by the King and his Almost Queen, Kirsten Munk. By meeting the characters, readers

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actually get to know the various texts that intertwine and compose this intertextual, musical novel. By choosing Denmark as the ‘battlefield’ for the war between music and silence, light and darkness, innocence and guilt, Tremain rewrites parts of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, focusing on the image of the ghost<sup>1</sup>, as well as on the philosophical conversations between the king and Peter Claire, his lutenist and ‘angel’ – all in one intertextual package. Obsessed since childhood with the idea of shoddiness, the King is subjected to a double haunting. The first image that haunts the mature King is the ghost of his best friend, who could not even write his own name (Bror Brorson) – inability which the King considers to be a most shameful type of intellectual impotence. The second haunting issue is a troubling<sup>2</sup> absence of philosophers. King Christian IV even connects his complaints about those two types of absence in his first dialogue with Peter Claire. He thus remarks that ‘Denmark is full of ghosts. Did no one warn you?’ (Tremain *Music and Silence* 4), then he rhetorically asks ‘Where are the philosophers? [...] No need to reply, says the King. For they are all gone from Denmark. There is not one left.’ (Tremain *Music and Silence* 5). If one were to logically connect the King’s lines quoted above, one might draw the conclusion that, actually, the philosophers are gone *because*<sup>3</sup> they have become ghosts that haunt their friend left behind, the King. Does that mean that readers should consider/read King Christian IV as a re-incarnation of Shakespeare’s Hamlet? With Tremain, this ambiguity is transformed into a rereading and a re-creating of both history and literature.

One of Tremain’s favourite intertextual games is that of rewriting Shakespearean characters. For instance, Peter Claire, the King’s lutenist and ‘angel’, falls in love with Emilia, the Almost Queen’s servant. Their love is hampered by both their masters, the King and his consort, Kirsten, who have their own agendas. On top of that, to complicate things further, a former lover of Peter’s, the Irish Countess O’Fingal, writes to him and follows him to Denmark. However, in spite of various attempts to keep him away from his true love, Peter Claire is allowed a happy ending<sup>4</sup>: he finds Emilia just in time to prevent her from drinking the poison she bought herself, and they live happily ever after. Rewriting *Romeo and Juliet* is more than obvious here, and Tremain does not hide her interfering<sup>5</sup>:

The one I had the greatest dilemma about was *Music and Silence*. It was a knife-edge: there was a moment when I thought ‘this story is going to end like *Romeo and Juliet* – they’re just going to miss. Emilia is going to lay herself down under the trees, take her pot of poison, and then Peter Claire is going to come riding by.’ But I couldn’t bear it. (Tremain qtd. in Rustin ‘The Guardian’)

There is some kind of over-saturation with Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* in the novel, and that is to be observed not only in the plot pattern, but also in the conversations the King has with Peter Claire, or in Countess O’Fingal’s diary. In

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<sup>1</sup> The ghost of Hamlet’s father is here replaced by the ghost of the king’s betrayed friend, Bror.

<sup>2</sup> From the King’s point of view.

<sup>3</sup> Italics mine.

<sup>4</sup> As are most of the characters in this book.

<sup>5</sup> In a providential manner.

fact, Tremain ironically has Peter Claire think, at one point, while attempting to write 'Emilia's Song': "Indeed, *not being Shakespeare*<sup>1</sup> appears to him, at this moment, as a not inconsiderable burden all Englishmen are forced to bear." (Tremain *Music and Silence* 123). This obsession with Shakespeare appears in the form of what Matei Călinescu calls 'textual haunting' (Călinescu *Rereading* xi), which, he says, 'is just one instance – but a very important one – of the larger phenomenon of intertextuality' (Călinescu *Rereading* xi).

Very ambitiously, *Music and Silence* rewrites and restores more than Shakespeare's love story: it mixes fairy-tales (*Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty*) with a mythical image (that of Pygmalion), and some perverse stories (in the style of Marquis de Sade). In this way, the novelist manages to both preserve all the individual strength and charm of the original texts, and add rhythm and spice to her novel as a whole. Thus, the novel illustrates most vividly Linda Hutcheon's observation, 'The typically contradictory intertextuality of postmodern art both provides and undermines context.' (Hutcheon *A Poetics* 127)

Most characters in the novel have their stories deeply rooted in fairy-tales, plays or similar types of texts. For instance, Emilia's story blends in itself more stories than one. Thus, her birth and childhood, together with her interest in snow<sup>2</sup> and her purity of heart make readers remember Snow White. That is even more obvious after the appearance on stage of the wicked step-mother, Magdalena, who is repeatedly called 'a witch' either by Emilia and her brother Marcus, or, sometimes, by the narrator of the story. When Emilia leaves for the Court, to become Kirsten Munk's servant,<sup>3</sup> the reader expects a change in roles, but that never happens. In fact, everything remains within the limits of the Snow White story, with a little change in the cast of the wicked stepmother: Kirsten replaces Magdalena. Somehow, it is here, at Rosenborg, that Emilia's fairy-tale is transformed into a drama: *Snow White* is changed into *Romeo and Juliet*, with the King and his Almost Queen for Montague and Capulet. The two royal manipulators feel the need to prevent the happy union of their servants for purely selfish reasons. On the one hand, the King clings by tooth and nail to his 'angel', who has multiple functionalities: Peter Claire replaces Bror and scares the ghosts away, plays his lute and soothes the King's pain. On the other hand, Kirsten has no other reason for her evil interventions apart from a pathological need to be considered the centre of the universe. The Almost Queen tries everything in her power to isolate Emilia: she intercepts Emilia's letters from Peter Claire, tries to persuade/force the servant to become her lover and live without men, takes Claire prisoner, and lies to him about Emilia when he comes looking for her.

Interestingly, Emilia's story is completed by a subtle reading of *Hansel and Gretel*, with Marcus, Emilia's mystical brother, in the supporting role. If Hutcheon is right and 'postmodernism signals its dependence by its *use* of the canon, but

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<sup>1</sup> Tremain's italics.

<sup>2</sup> She invents a song about it.

<sup>3</sup> Most likely, a sort of companion.

reveals its rebellion through its ironic *abuse*<sup>1</sup> of it' (Hutcheon *A Poetics* 130), then this third story that refers to Emilia's evolution is obviously a sign of rebellion against the canon<sup>2</sup> and an attempt at re-writing it. In *Music and Silence*, readers get mere glimpses of scenes from other stories or plays. In this case, we have Marcus/Hansel and Emilia/Gretel who try to find their way home, the wicked mother (Magdalena) on her deathbed, and everything returning to a sort of normality. Nevertheless, *Hansel and Gretel* is short lived, because Emilia's broken heart triggers the heroine's decision to put an end to her miserable life – and we go back to *Romeo and Juliet* once again. In Marcus, a 'mystical boy' who can understand and communicate with insects, animals and birds but otherwise seems indifferent and unresponsive to everyone except his sister, Tremain confesses to have projected, 'perhaps [...] the ghosts of the sons I never had!' (Tremain Internet interview <http://www.book-club.co.nz/features/rosetremain.htm> ).

Seemingly, in creating her most sympathetic and appealing characters (Peter Claire, Emilia, Marcus), the British author started from the clichés of fairy tales or other literary pieces, and personalized them by drawing parallels between fiction and her life (absent sons). Nevertheless, things must have been a lot different with the other type of characters, the ones whose existence could be proven by historical documents. There was a risk of not being able to accurately depict the 17<sup>th</sup> century and its most prominent characters; still, Tremain has managed to perform a trick and transform the dry historical images she got from books into strong fictional heroes, full of life and driven by passions and ambitions of their own. History is transferred into fiction, and the fictional world works its magic, helping readers understand history better. Hutcheon remarks that

It is a kind of seriously ironic parody that often enables this contradictory doubleness: the intertexts of history and fiction take on parallel status in the parodic reworking of the textual past of both the "world" and literature. The textual incorporation of these intertextual pasts as a constitutive structural element of postmodernist fiction functions as a formal marking of historicity – both literary and 'worldly'. (Hutcheon *A Poetics* 124)

One of the historical images that are brought back to the life of literature is that of Kirsten Munk, Christian IV's second wife, or, as she herself puts it, the 'Almost Queen of Denmark' (Tremain *Music and Silence* 430). Seductive and passionate, Kirsten is allowed to tell her own story in the form of different entries in her diary, thus keeping both her voice and the freshness of language intact. Tremain has confessed that, due to the language barrier in relation to her research on Kirsten Munk, she only understood the key elements of her character, and invented the rest. An important element in the game of the novel's intertextuality, Kirsten's diary reveals her unhappiness at having so many children (twelve, we are told in the book), her passion for her German lover, Otto, her fury against ageing and indifference or even malice towards all the people (servants or Court nobility)

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<sup>1</sup> Hutcheon's italics.

<sup>2</sup> And we can think of Propp's very strict morphology of the folktale to get a fair picture.

around her. Her style as a narrator, concerns, and descriptions resemble Marquis de Sade's and his perverse writings; surprisingly, it is this unabashed behaviour that makes Kristen so painfully real. Unafraid to confess to all her sins, and determined to find happiness, the King's Consort is selfish, hates music, children in general (and her own more than anyone else's), and proves a genuine man-eater. Indeed, de Sade himself could not have invented a more perverse and, yet, believable character.

Interestingly, Rose Tremain revives three other historical characters, apart from the King and Kirsten Munk, and rewrites their stories creatively – by inserting other fairy-tale themes. The 'Sleeping Beauty' image and atmosphere are preserved for the image of the King's mother, the Dowager Queen Sofie who:

when she was young and before she had begun her habit of scolding and cursing and hoarding money, loved to be rowed in a little boat to this island (Elsinore) and there sit in the sunshine and indulge in secret in her passion for knitting. (Tremain *Music and Silence* 10)

Queen Sofie's story is briefly told in that sentence above: in a world of men dominance, knitting induced in women 'an idle trance of mind, in which their proper thoughts would fly away and be replaced by fancy' (Tremain *Music and Silence* 10). Queen Sofie's habit (as a young woman) of hiding her passion for knitting proves good exercise for her later hobby. Once she falls out of love with her husband, she takes to hoarding money and gold, which she refuses to share with anyone. She never admits to having gold; consequently, when in dire straits, her son, King Christian IV, feels forced to melt the bed he was conceived in and make coins<sup>1</sup> out of it.

The (musical and) narrative counterpart of the old Queen is the Almost Queen's mother, Ellen Marsvin. Master puppeteer in the union between her daughter, Kirsten, and the King, Ellen senses the opportunity to enter the King's good graces again, in spite of her own daughter's falling out of grace. Thus, by remembering Pygmalion's myth, and putting it to good use, Tremain has her fictional Ellen Marsvin devise a plan. Ellen asks Kirsten for her Woman of the Torso, Vibeke Kruse, whom she persuades to go through some physical changes in order to look appealing to the King. Peasant-born and fat, Vibeke conquers the King by simply being there for his comfort – a good method to cure him of his destructive passion for Kirsten. Vibeke manages to invent or design certain devices that alleviate the King's pains, and she even surpasses her creator, Ellen, by intelligently responding to the King's spiritual, rather than physical, needs.

With its rewritten, intertextual stories, *Music and Silence* challenges the readers' imagination, their sense of history, and reminds them that they are living in postmodern times. Tremain depicts a historical atmosphere by using intertextuality as her main tool, as well as by re-creating certain characters while completely inventing others. Writing about the relationship between history and fiction, Hayden White states that,

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<sup>1</sup> A gesture that may symbolize his dissatisfaction with having been born.

In point of fact, history – the real world as it evolves in time – is made sense of in the same way that the poet or novelist tries to make sense of it, i.e. by endowing what originally appears to be problematical and mysterious with the aspect of a recognizable, because it is a familiar form. (White *The Historical Text* 208-9)

In a sense, Rose Tremain ‘solves’ a historical mystery (King Christian IV’s reign) by making it recognizable in the familiar form of fiction; with postmodern devices, she entrances her readers and educates them in both history and creation, by means of resourceful intertextual narrative games and a flexible, rhythmical style.

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# THE POLITICAL FUNCTION OF STUDYING LITERATURE IN COMMUNIST ROMANIA

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Cristina PIPOȘ<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** *The article sustains that teaching Romanian literature during the Communist regime has a political function. In the communist Romania, a single party holds the complete political power. The activities in all domains, including education, are controlled by the state. Subsequent to the Education Reform in 1948, teaching Romanian is subordinated to propagandistic objectives, rather than educational ones. The Romanian teachers play an important role in shaping the communist consciousness. The ideology is very present in the schoolbooks and has the function to indoctrinate young learners.*

**Key-Words:** *literature, Communism, ideology, curricula, methodology*

The establishment of the totalitarian communist regime in Romania brings major changes in the way the educational system is conceived. Romanian institutions, in their evolution between 1859 and 1944, are abolished by force and replaced by those of the Soviet model state.

After 1948, the Romanian Communist Party is facing the need to put in line the administrative, economic, cultural and educational state apparatuses with the new created power relations and the up to date ideology.

The education in People's Republic of Romania, according to the Constitution of April, 13 1948, becomes an exclusive activity of the state, and the 1948 Reform sets the educational process on scientific, dialectical-materialist bases.

One of the teaching methodologies of the Romanian literature published during the communist times summarizes the changes in the Romanian education: "After August 23, 1944 the new, popular-democratic and scientific realist educational system was founded, linking school to life, to production and, in this way, the compulsory public general education system was founded. Organizational factors have been prepared to provide the material basis of the new school and the appropriate curriculum. The Party's concern was reflected in the guidance of the activities taken to continuously improve programs, textbooks and teaching methods." [1]

All the textbooks published before 1947 are obsolete and, consequently, replaced by new unique books and new curricula designed by the Soviet model. In fact, the identical application of the new Russian school system had negative results on education.

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A major role will be given during the communist times to Romanian language and literature study in middle school, the subject having the role of massively contributing to the pupils' civic education. Moreover, in the curriculum of elementary schools, the Romanian language was the main object of study.

In the speech held at the Congress of Teachers of Romanian People's Republic (April 10, 1952), Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej says: "We must pay particular attention to the study of Romanian language in schools, forged by the people, through the efforts of dozens of generations, the classical and contemporary progressive literature, reflecting the aspirations of the people, its fight and its conquests, of Romanian history, showing people's long standing struggle for freedom." [2] The values promoted by the communist society are brought to pupils' knowledge through the literary texts they study.

Using a number of rhetorical questions the 1950 *Method of Teaching Romanian Literature in 5<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grades* emphasizes the role of Romanian literature in the spiritual growth of the communist pupils: "What is the contribution of teaching literature to the formation of pupils' scientific conception of nature and society, to their ideological, political and moral development, to the improvement of their thinking and speaking abilities? What must my lessons include to help the communist education of these 40-50 children in my class, who direct their gaze curiously at me, a new man to them?" [3]

Another method of teaching that was also published in 1950 highlights at the same time, the role of the Romanian literature in "educating real people, fighters that are aware of the building of a socialist society." [4]

The school in the communist era is a method of influence and manipulation of the pupils. The ideological message has a greater resonance as it is addressed to younger minds. They are more vulnerable, easier to be indoctrinated, more likely to be changed, less able to filter the received information.

The main goal of the Romanian language and literature as taught subject is, therefore, the pupils' patriotic and atheistic education. The other objectives that should be priorities (i.e. improvement of the taste and the habit of reading, improvement of oral and written skills in compliance with the rules of literary language, the formation of literary text analysis skills, the improvement of creating various types of compositions, etc.) were set only in the background: "The purpose of studying the Romanian literature in general knowledge school is the formation of the aesthetic taste, as part of the communist education of pupils." [5]

After 1962, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej cautiously starts to lead a nationalist policy, which will be continued by his successor, Nicolae Ceaușescu. The latter, discovers that "the call to the national feeling is an efficient mechanism of social control and personal dictatorship." [6]

Textbooks present passages in Romanian language and literature that serve the purpose of educating the pupils' patriotic spirit: "In the thematic area of patriotic education a special segment is held by the texts glorifying the P.C.R.'s struggle for social and national liberation of our people, its role as a much-tried and wise leader in the great work of building the new socialist life on the grounds of our country, lifting it higher and higher on the heights of progress and civilization." [7]

*The politicization of education is reflected in demagogic formulas and the teaching process undertakes an ideological training procedure. Linked to the social and political realities of the times, the methods of teaching highlight, after 1965, the year the new Constitution proclaimed Romania as a Socialist Republic, the crucial role of the Romanian literature in shaping the socialist consciousness: “The ultimate goal of teaching literature in schools should be the training and the development of socialist consciousness of the pupils’ new attitudes towards work and society, removing the influence of bourgeois ideology and the emergence of the new man.” [8]*

An utmost important role is given in the communist school to the training of the Romanian literature teacher because he/she has the task of forming/instructing young spirits. The efficiency of education and especially of the effective propaganda is given by the quality and quantity of knowledge that the teacher holds and the ability to transmit it, of his professional knowledge, emphasising the ideological one, the talent that he lays in the use of all the resources of the taught subject.

The majority of the teaching methodology books for Romanian language and literature published during the communist era, offer at least a chapter dedicated to teacher training and his role in the teaching of the subject. He is the one that controls and runs the process of training and education, he contributes to the overall goal (for over forty years) of school and that is the communist education of the younger generation: “The most important task of the literature teacher is to help pupils to deepen their understanding of the best works of our writers and the Soviets’, making our current literature and the Soviet literature, one of the basic weapons of communist education.

Literature accomplishes its high role of socio-political, cultural and artistic education of the people only when is inspired by the ideas of class struggle of the proletariat, by the great ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.” [9]

Although the steps made by the Romanian Communist Party in its policy together with those of the educational one are different during the over forty years of totalitarian regime in Romania, the details regarding the methods of teaching Romanian language and literature related to the role of the teacher aren’t much different. The ideological issue is strongly and continuously emphasised, binding professional evolution at the expense of understanding the freedom of teacher’s own opinions.

The literature teacher, through his education and training, ensures the quality of the lesson, the basic form of the educational process. His professional training involves acquiring the political and ideological message, methodical, pedagogical, scientific and comprehensive guidance in teaching.

The ideological dimension that involves the act of teaching a subject has been explicitly expressed by the General Secretary (since 1965) of the Romanian Communist Party, Nicolae Ceaușescu, “the teacher’s mission is not limited to the activity of knowledge giving, it requires both a great responsibility for shaping the personalities of the new generation of intellectuals and for shaping their civic

awareness, to cultivate among future specialists high ideals of freedom and social progress.” [10]

Nothing is left out of sight because on today’s efficiency of indoctrination will depend the future of the party tomorrow. Ideological suggestions of teaching Romanian literature in the teaching methodologies can be easily related to the one-party politics. If in the teaching methodologies issued immediately after 1948, the Soviet model is constantly present, after 1960, a stage reflecting Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej’s political views followed by Ceaușescu’s, we notice a distancing attitude from the Soviet Union with less influence of the Stalinist legacy.

Ceaușescu’s “suggestions” are euphemisms for his dictates: “The Romanian Communist Party documents, the Party’s General Secretary, Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu’s vision, include precise instructions on upgrading the educational process continuously. The fundamental principle is, of course, integrating education into research and production that is, with the practical work from the social point of view.

The creation of the man of the multilaterally developed socialist society, capable of becoming, in the future, the bearer of the design and implementation of communism requires permanent integration in the education of the today’s scientific-technological revolution acquisitions, not only in terms of expertise, but also under the same methodology and technology. In this framework, real modernization problems are required to be dealt with, in terms of both institutional and daily activity, in terms of improving the teaching and learning process to update the educational process in its constituent links.” [11]

These observations reflect that since 1948 education has had a different purpose, namely the formation of secondary and higher education staff to implement the party program in all the working fields. Ideological training of the teaching staff of all levels, regardless of age and grade, started in 1948 and will continue until December 1989.

The Romanian literature teaching methodologies published during the communist times are ideologically injected. They include step by step instructions, directives, and guidelines for the making of the new man to serve in the future the One-Party. Learning ideology is self-evident: “The steps of dialectical knowledge are widely known and captured by Lenin’s: from living contemplation to abstract thought and from this in practice.” [12]

The guiding nature of the Romanian literature lessons is overshadowed by their informatory and propagandistic nature: “Literary works from the reading books have a great educational influence on pupils. Many literary texts reflect the moral features of the new man, a builder of socialism, a work lover, a devotee to the people and the party, his courage, manliness, revolutionary optimism and his ability to overcome any difficulties.” [13] The propaganda message is out of place, excessively patriotic and puerile.

The “de-Stalinization” process that began with the death of Stalin in March 1953 was not the beginning of a liberalization of the educational policy or an abandonment of ideological orthodoxy.

After a trip to China and North Korea, Ceaușescu suddenly abandoned all reform efforts and decided to restore full control of the Communist Party over culture and society. [14]

Ceaușescu's "Theses" from June 6, 1971 which, according to the author, had to contribute to the improvement of the political ideology and cultural education, lead in fact to the strengthening of the party's influence in humanistic and scientific fields.

Despite the frequent changes that will take place in education during the more than forty years of communist regime in Romania (in the curricula, textbooks, the methodological guidelines etc.), one element remains constant, the perfect control of everything, the presence of ideology to saturation.

In conclusion, the basis of studies that make up the methodical teaching manuals is the guidance given by the party documents regarding the role and the tasks of Romanian language and literature in school, the materialist-dialectical conception according to which all the phenomena of Romanian language and literature must be filtered in the learning process.

All deviations from the rules of the totalitarian state represent a mistake, and the party controlled teaching system is primarily focused on ideological education. One-party monopoly is expressed not only in politics, but also in the literary life. A literary work has a social and an educational function, its purpose being the communist education of pupils by means of their aesthetic art of writing.

The education in communist Romania has the function of indoctrination. The training of the pupil's critical thinking, creativity and spontaneity is not at all taken into account.

The covers of the teaching guiding books hide a deep forgery regarding propagandistic information because there is no alternative to what communism proposes and imposes and that is a secularized religion.

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# JOHN STEINBECK'S *THE MOON IS DOWN* IN ROMANIA. TRANSLATION, THEATRICAL ADAPTATION AND PROPAGANDA

Diana IOSIF<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *Published in 1942, and designed as anti-Nazi propaganda, John Steinbeck's The Moon Is Down chronicles the military occupation of a small town by the army of an unnamed nation (presumably German). When the book came out, it ignited a fierce debate in American criticism over the writer's soft portrayal of the invaders, and his effectiveness as propagandist. Still, the work quickly achieved widespread popularity, which is testified by the impressive number of translations in various languages. This paper examines three 1944 Romanian "rewritings" of the novel (the anonymous translation (Nuits sans lune) serialized in the newspaper Semnalul (The Signal), Felix Aderca's version, and Mihail Sebastian's theatrical adaptation) seeking to reveal the factors that governed their production.*

**Key-words:** *John Steinbeck, The Moon Is Down, propaganda, Romanian translations and stage adaptation*

Written and conceived as a work of anti-Nazi propaganda, John Steinbeck's *The Moon Is Down* (1942) tells the story of a small town invaded by troops of unspecified nationality, with the moral message that free men will always win in such struggles. The novel was greeted by a vehement controversy over the writer's sympathetic portrayal of the invaders, and implicitly over his credentials as an antifascist and patriot, as most critics were arguing that a more belligerent tone should have been taken. Still, the book, which was issued in agreement with the US secret services [1], quickly achieved widespread popularity, and was greatly admired in countries under German dominion, where resistance groups risked their lives to distribute it. The novel's reception in Romania is no less compelling, and we thus aim at gaining insight into the factors that governed its selection, translation and stage adaptation.

A useful theoretical framework for our analyses is provided by André Lefevere, who holds that the selection and reception of a writer's work in a different cultural space is performed under certain constraints and for certain purposes. Control factors act both from outside the literary system ("patronage"), exerting their influence in the service of power through the ideological, economic, and social component, as well as from within the literary system, through critics, reviewers, translators who "adapt, manipulate the originals they work with to some extent, usually to make them fit in with the dominant ideological and poetological currents of their time" [2]. The translation scholar thus stresses the need for greater

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awareness of who rewrites, why, under what circumstances, and for which audience. The present paper responds to André Lefevere's challenge by focusing on the constraints and influences under which the novel *The Moon Is Down* was translated, adapted, edited and hence rewritten in Romania in 1944.

Shortly after the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1944, the first Romanian version of *The Moon Is Down* was serialized in twenty-eight installments (September 2, 1944 – October 7, 1944) in *Semnalul* (*The Signal*), under the headline *Nuits sans lune*, indicating that Marvède-Fischer's 1943 French version of the novel had served as translation material [3]. The analysis of the two texts reveals that the Romanian one closely and literally follows the French version. As a result, the translation in *Semnalul* contains distortions, and even howlers. To provide only one telling example, the French phrase "saper leur moral" [4] (for Steinbeck's "fight their nerves" [5]) is rendered "să le săpăm moralul" [6]. The Romanian rewriting was obviously produced in haste to serve as propaganda at a time when our country was undergoing radical political changes. Its propagandistic role is also testified by the publication in *Semnalul*, a newspaper that had been closed down in 1940 by the royal dictatorship, and reappeared on September 1, 1944 to promote an underlying political agenda. Despite the space constraints (it was a four-page paper), the anonymous translation was included on every second page of the periodical, which covered at the time World War II political and military news subsumed within Communist propaganda. Thus, the patronage system that would rapidly consolidate itself to regulate the distribution of literature and promote the Communist ideology appears to have already been displaying its power.

Another issue that should be given due consideration is the authorship of the serialized translation in *Semnalul*. In 2002, Ioana Pârvulescu touched on this matter in *România literară*, propounding the idea that it is Mihail Sebastian's translation [7]. Still, this hypothesis is difficult to support on closer examination. *The Moon Is Down* had indeed garnered the interest of the renowned Romanian writer and playwright, but he wrote the theatrical adaptation of the novel (*Nopti fără lună*) in 1944, using Marvède-Fischer's French translation. Actually, the confusion may have stemmed from Mihail Sebastian's *Journal*, in which he made no mention of the translation printed in the *Semnalul* newspaper, but he did modestly refer to adapting the novel for the stage as to a translator's work. On December 18, 1944, he noted: "I spent an irritating afternoon at the Barașeum, where there are panic rehearsals of *Nopti fără lună*. The premiere is the day after tomorrow, but nothing is ready. (...) I myself am quite calm. All I did in the end was the work of a translator. But if it had really been my play, I too would probably be caught up in this mad panic" [8]. Nevertheless, one month earlier, on November 19, the Romanian playwright had written: "I have made a play from *Nuits sans lune*" [9]. All in all, the serialized translation was clearly undertaken by an unprofessional, as there are no aesthetic criteria governing its production, so it is difficult to ascribe it to such a gifted writer as Mihail Sebastian.

On the other hand, by likening his artistic enterprise to that of a translator, M. Sebastian probably meant that his task had been easier due to the essentially dramatic structure of *The Moon Is Down*. Since John Steinbeck's intention when

writing the work was to create a hybrid genre (the play-novelette) that would easily lend itself to stage adaptation, transposing this novel into the dramatic genre roughly meant compressing its descriptive passages into stage directions, and allowing the remaining dialogue to take command. Yet, besides the inevitable modifications entailed by adapting a novel for the stage, additional changes have been made by the Romanian playwright. Thus, whereas in Steinbeck's novel the invaders' nationality can only be inferred from references to England, the war in Russia, and the occupation in Belgium, Sebastian's play is 'uncensored.' Accordingly, "the occupiers" are called "Germans", "Nazis" and "Fascists," their "Leader" is identified as "Führer" or "Hitler," and even additional information is included. For instance, "un journal illustré" [10] ("an illustrated paper" in the original [11]) becomes "Berliner Illustrierte" [12]. Consequently, Mihail Sebastian had in mind a certain effect on an immediate audience at a particular time. Thus, the play was produced 'in conformity' with Romania's historical context, as it perfectly fitted in with the political, ideological and cultural changes occurring in those days.

Actually, Steinbeck's first draft of the play-novel was set in an American city under German rule. However, since the U.S. Foreign Information Service, which was in charge of the actual administration of propaganda in foreign countries, deemed this as possibly damaging to the war cause and destructive to nation morale, Steinbeck had to change the setting to an unnamed country, refraining at the same time from explicitly revealing the nationality of the occupiers [13]. Thus, by calling the invaders Nazi Germans, Mihail Sebastian may be said to have partly retrieved the original authorial intent. Significantly, the same decision was taken by the Dutch actor Ferdinand Sterneberg in his 1944 theatrical adaptation of the novel, who actually confessed having found Steinbeck's depiction of the occupiers "a bit flattering" [14]. Nonetheless, the Romanian playwright did not alter the American author's 'soft' portrayal of the invaders, although this was a recurrent critique at the time. To have depicted the soldiers as utterly evil would have meant of course to have misread Steinbeck's intention, i.e., to show that the Nazis were only human and that they could be defeated by their enemy's spirited resistance.

All in all, in considering the reasons for which Mihail Sebastian undertook the adaptation of this particular novel, we cannot leave aside the antifascist message of the book, the historical context marked by the horrors of dictatorship and Holocaust, and Sebastian's own experience as a Romanian of Jewish origin. Yet, it should also be pointed out that the theatrical adaptation was most likely produced by Sebastian on request for the Barașeum Theatre, where it was staged during the season of 1944-1945. According to the press reviews of the time, it was a great success, "the first theatrical performance of an anti-Nazi play in liberated Bucharest" [15], and, unfortunately, Sebastian's last work before his death in an accident. The play *Noaptea fără lună*, which is a masterpiece in itself, testifying to the author's great talent and literary craft, was included in the 1956 volume titled *Opere alese (Selected Works)*, which has not been reprinted since 1962. It is however fortunate that a 1980 recording of the radio play adaptation, featuring

prominent Romanian actors (Mircea Albulescu, Ion Caramitru, Mitică Popescu), is available on the Internet [16]. Furthermore, the broadcast of the play throughout the 1980s is evidence of its enduring appeal, detached from its strictly propagandistic nature.

At the end of 1944, when Sebastian was preparing his theatrical adaptation, a friend of his, the poet and novelist Felix Aderca, was working on a different translation of the novel (*Nopti fără lună*), which was printed by the “Forum” Publishing House. *The Moon Is Down* is actually the first book issued by newly founded “Forum”, which is further proof of the novel’s popularity in our country at that time. Compared to the translation in *Semnalul*, Felix Aderca’s version (whose source-text is the same 1943 French translation) is evidence of the translator’s concern to ensure high literary standards to his work. Nevertheless, reference to the German nationality of the invaders is made by the editor in the foreword to the book, which shows that, as argued by André Lefevere, “patronage is usually more interested in the ideology of literature than in its poetics” [17]. The author of the foreword also touches on the American writer’s sympathetic portrayal of the German soldiers, a leitmotif in the critical debate about the novel, and attempts to explain his decision by highlighting that the book had been written at the start of the war, i.e., before crimes were committed on such a vast scale [18]. The success of *The Moon Is Down* is finally ascribed both to its antifascist message, and its literary value, which is however only skated over, once more testifying to the pivotal role played by the political and ideological factors in the novel’s warm reception in our country.

After the obvious high level of interest *The Moon Is Down* aroused in Romania in 1944-1945, the book was consigned to oblivion for many decades. It was wonderfully retranslated in 2007 by Octavian Roske [19], as part of the RAO Publishing House’s larger project to create a Steinbeck collection. It is thus fortunate that the interest in this novel has not faded away, which indicates that, although explicitly written as a propaganda book, *The Moon Is Down* has transcended its condition.

#### *\*Acknowledgements*

This work was supported by the European Social Fund in Romania, under the responsibility of the Managing Authority for the Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-2013 [grant POSDRU/88/1.5/S/47646].

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- [2] André Lefevere. *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London: Routledge, 1992, p. 8.
- [3] Marvède-Fischer's 1943 version, published by Éditions Marguerat in Lausanne, Switzerland, had also stirred a heated debate at the time. After having been widely circulated (fact also testified by its distribution in the Romanian cultural milieu), the French Éditions Minuit labeled it as censored and thus justified the issue of a new translation titled *Nuits noires* (1944). The accusations of censorship, expressed by the Minuit editors in a brief note that accompanied the new version, were prompted by alleged cuts of Steinbeck's references to England, the war in Russia, and the occupation in Belgium, references which leave no doubt about the identity of the invaders. However, after all the years in which *Nuits sans lune* was thus labeled, in 2002, the translation scholar Jean-Marc Gouanvic proved that Marvède-Fisher's version had not been censored, and that it is actually a "hypertextual" translation (after Antoine Berman) of Steinbeck's text. For further details, see Jean-Marc Gouanvic. "John Steinbeck et la censure: le cas de *The Moon Is Down* traduit en français pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale." In *META*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2002, pp. 191-202. Available online at: <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/007484ar> (accessed October 2, 2011).
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- [13] Cf. Jay Parini. *John Steinbeck*. New York: Henry Holt, 1995, pp. 313-6.
- [14] Ferdinand Sterneberg qdt. in Donald V. Coers. *John Steinbeck as Propagandist: "The Moon Is Down" Goes to War*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991, p. 97.
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- [17] André Lefevere, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
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## SOME DEFINITIONS OF URBAN LEGENDS

Oana-Cătălina VOICHICI<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *Defining urban legends is not always easy. And this is mainly due to the various approaches to the genre, starting from the fact that folklorists have not yet agreed on using a single term to designate these narratives. The present paper aims to review some of these approaches. Jan Harold Brunvand, Bill Ellis, Gillian Bennett or Constantin Eretescu are a few of the researchers who have provided definitions of the urban legend that shall be dealt with this study.*

**Key-words:** *urban/contemporary legend, folklore, belief, truth, definitional characteristic*

Defining urban legends is no easy task, starting from the fact that folklorists have not yet reached a common point in terms of using a unique term to designate these stories and, hence, no unique definition of the genre.

The Anglo-American scholars, who were the first to approach the study of these narratives, have come up with a number of concepts, such as *contemporary legends*, or *urban legends* or *modern legends*; some others refer to them as *urban/modern myths*, to mention only a few of them.

We shall further review a few of these approaches. Let us consider first the American researcher Jan Harold Brunvand who defines urban legends as “all those bizarre, whimsical, 99 percent apocryphal, yet believable stories that are ‘too good to be true’. They are too odd, too coincidental, and too neatly plotted to be accepted as literal truth in every place where they are told” (Brunvand 2001: 112). The Professor insists that the legends are stories, therefore they have a plot, that is why he does not include in this category plotless rumours, gossip, bits of misinformation, etc. (Brunvand 2001: 112).

This view is shared by Bill Ellis, another expert on urban legends, whom Brunvand mentions in his *Encyclopedia*. In *Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music and Art*, Ellis describes the urban legend as “a narrative concerning some aspect of modern life that is believed by its teller but is actually untrue” (Ellis 1997: 495). Similarly, Tom Pettitt, who prefers the label “contemporary legend”, defines it as a short but complete narrative, told as true, as having recently happened to someone socially close to the narrator, even if not directly known to the narrator, about an incident which is quite unusual to arouse interest but realistic enough to be believable (Pettitt 1996: 8).

In his *Encyclopedia of Urban Legends*, Brunvand also notes Paul Smith’s attempt to define the genre. Smith had admitted it was difficult to formulate a quintessential definition of the contemporary legend (Smith 1999). This is due partly to the mutability of the genre, partly to the fact that not all specialists adopt a

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common principle regarding the material under study and not all agree on employing a single term (i.e. “contemporary”) to designate these stories. Smith states that many of the definitions rely on interpretations of a small class of contemporary legends, therefore they are not universal, nor do they apply to every such narrative. The author seeks to provide a holistic definition, one that should not contradict the already formulated definitions.

In his approach, Paul Smith starts from a definition of legend given by Robert A. Georges that offers a possible structure for creating a universal definition: "A legend is a story or narrative that may not be a story or narrative at all; it is set in a recent or historical past that may be conceived to be remote or antihistorical or not really past at all; it is believed to be true by some, false by others, and both or neither by most." (Georges 1971: 18).

Paul Smith compiles a list of definitional characteristics of contemporary legends, distinguishing between *primary* (those describing the nature of contemporary legends in terms of what they are or are not) and *secondary* (those which describe contemporary legends in terms of they may or may not be). These can be further divided in sub-groups, taking into account: narrative status, form, structure, style, dissemination, narrators, context of narration, content (theme, setting, principal characters, contemporaneity, etc.), truth, belief, selection, meaning and function.

Organizing the material according to these criteria, Smith produces a set of definitional characteristics of the contemporary legend, providing, in fact, a multi-faceted definition of the genre – an idea he had previously stated in *Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music and Art* (Smith 1997: 493-495). According to him, the contemporary legend is a short narrative, without a definitive text, formulaic openings and closings, artistically developed form. They vary in terms of structure, comprise a single episode or motif. Contemporary legends have a wide, sometimes international circulation, are communicated mainly by word of mouth, though they are frequently disseminated through the mass-media, e-mail, etc. Urban legends do not need professional performers; each of us may be a potential narrator, so there is no clear dividing line between the teller and the listener. As regards the question of truthfulness, urban legends are presented as describing real events; in fact, as Paul Smith claims and Brunvand remarks in his *Encyclopedia* (Brunvand 2001: 113), “a contemporary legend may or may not, in whole or part, be true. This may not necessarily be *literal* truth, but perhaps truth which comes from typifying life in the twentieth century”.

Contemporary legends do not have a single meaning; they may have different meanings for different people, in different contexts; likewise, they may have a variety of functions. Such narratives aim to inform or entertain or carry other messages. They validate our thoughts, beliefs, actions, deliver moralizing messages, justify our behaviours in certain circumstances. They express our fears, explain abnormal situations or strange attitudes.

Generally, Smith’s ideas are shared by the Romanian folklorist Constantin Eretescu. He does not claim to have found the perfect definition for, as probably every researcher in the field, he considers this genre extremely heterogeneous and,

hence, hard to define (Eretescu 2003: 23). In his study “Satul global și folclorul lui: legendele urbane”, he also starts from Robert A. Georges’ definition and states that the urban legend is either a narrative, therefore a text which contains at least one episode, such as a story, joke, memorate, paranormal occurrence and, often than not, a daily occurrence with unexpected development, or a text which comprises no narrative elements (rumours, linguistic blunders, puns, pseudo-scientific explanations or statements) (Eretescu 2007: 197). What is to be noticed is that the Romanian expert extends the class defined by Brunvand by including texts which are not narratives at all.

The folklorist also mentions the definition, less pretentious than Georges’ but equally vague, provided by Gillian Bennett. She defines the legend as a “genre capable of straddling the divide between fact and fiction, partaking of the nature of both” and also capable of “partaking of the nature of both narrative and conversation” (Eretescu 2007: 197). A conclusion that Paul Smith had also reached in his study – the contemporary legend is, first of all, conversation but “may be found embedded in other types of traditional discourse (eg., joke, memorate, dite, rumour, gossip, personal experience narrative)” (Smith 1999). The connection with rumour cannot be denied, as many scholars include it in the category of urban legends. Janet Langlois supports this idea: "Urban legend is also related to rumor, the passing on of unverified or unsecured information in statement form. Some scholars see rumor as incipient legend and legend as elaborated rumor, and so interpret these contemporary communication patterns in similar ways, regardless of whether or not their information is later verified, or whether or not they are believed by the people transmitting them." (Langlois 2008) Langlois sees the urban legend as a subtype legend that deals with modern situations and contemporary events.

To Gillian Bennett, what makes a legend be a “legend” is the difficulty to assign well-established features to it or to place it forever in this category (Bennett 2005). And this happens because legends are transmitted in different ways and in so many media. Furthermore, they pendulate between myth and folktale, on the one hand, and news and history, on the other, moving along this *continuum*, as the author calls it, “depending on the individual story and the whims or objectives of the individual storyteller who relates it” (Bennett 2005: xi). If myths are sacred narratives which teach the truths of a particular religion, and folktales are traditional secular fiction with protagonists and events belonging to the fantastic, if news is fact, providing information about real people/events in the times we live in and history does the same with the past, then where, along this continuum, Gillian Bennett wonders, could we place contemporary legends? Are they true, like news and history, do they carry symbolic truths, such as myths, or are fiction, like folktales? Hence, the difficulty the author refers to. Legends mix the genres, confuse the categories, are both sacred and secular, may relate fantastic or real events. And, although the fantastic is involved, the setting belongs to the world we are familiar with, the information transmitted appears to be of this world as we know it, occurrences and protagonists are presented as present-day.

Nevertheless, Bennett emphasizes that contemporary legends are not new or modern. They are traditional narratives, meaning that they have a structure (a beginning, middle and end), they are texts, not formless bits of discourses. They are “traditional”, that is they are recognizable because they have widely circulated in numerous times and places (Bennett 2005: xiii). Even if they have been adapted to suit the circumstances in which they are told and retold, their core remains the same. Therefore, Bennett does not consider most of the stories found on the Internet or in various anthologies to be legends: “Some may be or may become so: only time will tell” (Bennett 2005: xiii). Bennett is interested in that narrative which has been in circulation long enough to be immediately recognizable, to have acquired a history, one that carries folkloric themes and motifs and is, without a doubt, legend. According to her, the term *contemporary legend* she prefers to use has the advantage of emphasizing the topicality of the genre without restricting its applicability to a specific place or time.

The Romanian Professor Nicolae Constantinescu (Constantinescu 2009) provides an explanation regarding the name of this genre. Thus, they have been called *urban legends* from a spatial or socio-cultural perspective and *contemporary* from a temporal one. However, the texts transmitted are neither contemporary, for some of them may be identified in past times, nor are all urban, as they often relate to suburban or rural areas.

In addition, Constantinescu thinks that the contemporary legend should be defined *situationally*, in other words, what are the circumstances which make a real event or one considered as such become a “story”: when it is asserted that ‘the contemporary legend is an attempt to use traditional themes in a post-industrial context’, that ‘it borrows traditional themes and places them in present-day contexts’ and, further on, that ‘contemporary legends rely on traditional themes which they place in new material and moral contexts’, two terms, namely tradition and present, which are essential in understanding the category in discussion, are put together and, moreover, its twofold dependence on context is emphasized (Constantinescu 2009).

The urban legends are, therefore, simple in terms of narrative structure with, usually, one episode. The characters are common people, involved in difficult, puzzling situations that are resolved “by a sudden plot twist, at which point the story ends abruptly” (Brunvand 2001: 112).

Still, what is the origin of urban legends? We should believe Brunvand when he says it’s a mystery, especially since, as Eretescu noted, most of the attempts to trace the source of such stories have failed (Eretescu 2003). According to the American researcher<sup>1</sup>, some are updatings of older traditional legends, some were probably invented by an individual or another, and some may even have sprung from an actual incident. Many of them developed as people talked about some of their concerns, fears, etc. and mixed bits of fantasy with real incidents. Which brings us to the *truth* of urban legends.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.janbrunvand.com>

The issue of the *truth* of the urban legends is crucial in defining them, Brunvand remarks. To what extent they are believed by those who narrate them and those who listen and in what way the tellers claim these stories are true. Equally, is it necessary to de-bunk them, Brunvand wonders, and, if such a strange story proves to have described something that really happened, can it still be called *urban legend*? It is the American researcher who also gives an answer: "To some degree, urban legends must be considered false, at least in the sense that the same rather bizarre events could not actually have happened in so many localities to so many aunts, cousins, neighbors, in-laws, and classmates of the hundreds and thousands of individual tellers of the tales." (Brunvand 1981) Therefore, these narratives are believable, reshaped, exaggerated as they are transmitted further, with each teller adding a dose of sensational in order to make them more credible to others. They are validated by the usage of certain tools, such as introduction formulas, for instance *I heard it from a reliable source* or *A friend of a friend told me*, hence the acronym *FOAF* or *FOAFtale*, a more colloquial term used to designate this kind of stories, a phrase which points to the fact that the teller is never the hero, but a relative or a close friend. And since these sources are "known" to the teller, they are perceived as trustworthy.

Another way of authentication is the use of real names, places even events and, we could add, attributing the source to mass-media (*I read it in the newspaper*).

This brings us to the *circulation* of urban legends. As in traditional folklore, urban legends are transmitted orally. In addition, today, urban legends reach us much faster through newspapers, television, the Internet, which is not surprising since the urban people, the transmitters, are educated, relatively sophisticated, cultivated, know how to write and read, which both Brunvand and Eretescu agree on. Their circulation in writing gives much more stability of structure, of form and, consequently, fewer variations develop, as Brunvand puts it, the urban legend has "much less vitality as an oral-narrative genre"<sup>1</sup>.

Urban legends reflect and validate values, attitudes, fears, anxieties of society which cannot be expressed otherwise. The functions of these stories are as different as their tellers who relate to them and narrate them depending on their own purposes and views of life. Urban legends offer a moralising lesson, interpreted differently from one person to another, they trigger feelings of uneasiness, suspense, fear in connection to strange places (for example graveyards, forests, dark places), unknown or foreign people (belonging to other cultures, races,

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<sup>1</sup> In the Introduction to his *Encyclopedia of Urban Legends* (p. xxvii), Brunvand quotes the British folklorist Stewart F. Sanderson who, in 1981, in a speech held at the Folklore Society of London, said: "The modern legend constitutes one of the most, may indeed even constitute *the* most widespread, popular and vital folklore form of the present day and what strikes me as perhaps its most outstanding feature is the creativity, imagination, and virtuosity brought to its performance by all kinds of people..." Brunvand observes that, 20 years later, the urban legend has "less vitality as an oral-narrative genre", that urban legends have started to migrate from the realm of oral tradition to popular culture, where they have become standardized, stereotyped, transformed into commercial products and "repackaged in a number of ways".

ethnic groups, etc.), new technologies (computers) and so on, they represent us as we are with “our fears, selfishness and alienation” (Eretescu 2007: 203).

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# ***EVOLUTIONS IN THE RESEARCH ON THE RECREATION OF LOCAL SPACE AND TIME BY MEANS OF CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVES***

Cristina Lizeta FURTUNĂ<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *In defining oral narrative genres, folklore narratology starts from the idea that they are performances, namely series of successive actualizations of different combinations of epic schemes and evaluation formulas, being in a permanent interaction with the environment in which they occur. The first theoretical consequence of this approach of the domain is the need to establish the relations between “tale-telling” as a phenomenon and “tale” as the effect of this phenomenon. The present article examines the methodological perspective according to which the application of the performance theory imposes the recording of the narratives with all their contextual details with a relevant influence on the epic discourse.*

**Key-words:** *folklore, oral tale, epic discourse, narratology*

The most adequate landmark to approach a topic is given by the clarification of the historical evolution and of the present stage of the research in the domain of the respective topic. Starting from this conviction, we shall present the main contributions concerning the narrative in general and especially of the narrative on space and time, coming from the folklore creators themselves, theorists or historians. The folklore phenomenon is equally the result of each creator's talent and individual effort and the consequence of the folklore environment in which the creation is realized, of the ancestral heritage, of the influence of other creators and of its critics and receivers. On the other hand, any creator marks a step ahead in the development and improvement of folklore, of the concrete creation of that epoch and of the times to come.

The first recordings with texts-conversations as contemporary documents were initiated by Gustav Weigand (1888, 1892, 1895, and 1899). Then follow, in chronological order, the stories recorded by Densusianu, Candrea and Speranția in the anthology *Graiul nostru* (Our Native Tongue) (1906-1908), following a dialectological approach, but allowing O. Densusianu to write a theory on the contemporary dimension of the object of folklore: "The folklore must reveal the way different moments of life are reflected in the soul of the lower classes of the people, the way they feel and think either under the influence of ideas, beliefs, and superstitions inherited from the past, or under that of the impressions made on him by everyday circumstances."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ovid Densusianu, *Folclorul. Cum trebuie înțeles* in *Flori alese din cântecele poporului*, Marin Bucur editor, Editura pentru Literatură, București, 1966, p. 45.

Although it has not enjoyed the attention given to the traditional epic folklore genre, the personal narrative is later on mentioned as well by other exegetes or collectors of Romanian folklore under the name of *memorată* or *povestire* (tale).

As far as the genesis of the ballad (Romanian: *baladă*) is concerned, Petru Caraman wrote, in 1933, about a transitional folklore product situated between the real event and the birth of poetry and taking the shape of a tale (Rom.: *povestire*) in prose using a colloquial language, which reflects in it the highest number of realistic elements along with those related to the domain of fantasy<sup>1</sup>.

Other researchers interested in the same thematic area, namely personal narratives, are: Ioan Licea, V. Vârcol, Tony Brill, Ion Muşlea, and Ovidiu Bârlea. The latter also gave the definition of the *tale* (Rom.: *povestire*) in *Mica enciclopedie a poveştilor româneşti* : a narrative on contemporary facts, corresponding to the oral diary in verse (...). The tale (Rom.: *povestire*) brings forth events from the narrator's life, which are part of his experience or which he at least witnessed, directly or indirectly<sup>2</sup>.

O. Bârlea published, in 1966, in his anthology of epic folklore prose, a *corpus reus* of personal narrations, taken from the patrimony of recordings constituted at the *Folklore Institute* in Bucharest<sup>3</sup>. He highlights the difference between story (Rom.: *poveste*) – a generic term for all the forms of folklore epic in prose, and tale (Rom.: *povestire*) – only the contemporary narratives, presenting tribulations of living narrators<sup>4</sup>.

The research of O. Bârlea brings to light the fact that the first tales in Romania were typed by the brothers Artur and Raul Stavri and published in 1896-1897, in *Povestea vorbei*; a single text out of the four appeared here reproduces an actual tale<sup>5</sup>.

For the personal narratives definition, interesting are also his observations about the contemporary attributes of the *tale genre*:

Being a contemporary creation, the tale has an ephemeral existence, dying out with its creators or with its disappearance from their memory. One can guess that some tales have become part of the collective repertoire, undergoing certain changes to become legends or anecdotes. The folklore creators interviewed conceive the genesis of the traditional epic genres as follows: in the beginning, the happenings in the tale “happened” to someone, so they were tales, which, in time, have become part of the collective patrimony and “finally became story”.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Petru Caraman, *Contribuții la cronologizarea și geneza baladei populare la români, Partea a II-a, Geneza*, in “Anuarul arhivei de folklor”, București, 1933, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Ovidiu Bârlea, *Mica enciclopedie a poveştilor româneşti*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1976, București, p. 302.

<sup>3</sup> Ovidiu Bârlea, 1966, vol. III, 5 texts, p. 279-317.

<sup>4</sup> Ovidiu Bârlea, 1976, p. 301.

<sup>5</sup> Idem, p. 301.

<sup>6</sup> Ovidiu Bârlea, 1966, vol. I, p. 29-30.

The research was continued by Ion Șeuleanu, Maria Ioniță, Silviu Angelescu<sup>1</sup>. The latter details the definition of the story, showing the relation between the storyteller and the subjective perspective on the facts narrated.

Ion Șeuleanu, prefacing *The Book of Stirrings (Cartea vânelor)* of Maria Ioniță<sup>2</sup>, which is a collection from the Apuseni Mountains, discusses about the undecided status of *the tales* (Romanian: *memorată*) in the specialized literature, situating the recollection of certain personal events in the genetic context of the legend and implicitly suggesting this type of belonging for several narratives included in this tome.

Silviu Angelescu in *Poetica legendei* details the definition of the *tale* (Rom.: *povestire*), making a connection between the narrator's status of main hero of the epic construction, the subjective perspective on the facts narrated and at the same time the speaker's intention to accredit the authenticity of the tribulations communicated<sup>3</sup>. Starting from the relation between this literary genre and reality, the author reaches some comparative definitions of the *fairy tale* (Rom.: *basm*), *legend* (Rom.: *legendă*) and *tale* (Rom.: *povestire*), considered as a development of the same proximal genre of the *story* (Rom.: *poveste*).

Compared on the basis of the esthetic criterion to the fairy tale (Rom.: *basm*) and to the legend (Rom.: *legendă*), the *tale* (Rom.: *povestire*) is considered a *marginal form of epic construction*.

The most significant contributions to the theory of the genre in the context of their integration in the international bibliography on this topic are interpreted by Nicolae Constantinescu in his paper of 1986 dedicated to the *tale* (Rom.: *povestire*).<sup>4</sup>

Nicolae Constantinescu speaks in favor of the folklore nature of the *tale* genre in particularly important works.

So, approaching the issue of the delimitation of the *tale* (Rom.: *povestire*) from the other narrative categories in prose of the contemporary folklore, N. Constantinescu mentions a specialization, in time, of "the folklore categories, which orient themselves, the selection and the organization of the reality data, in agreement to their *function* (social, cultural, esthetic, ludic), convergent, in a final analysis, with the *intention* or the *attitude* of the performer, and, one should immediately add – of the group!"<sup>5</sup> This demonstrates the need to study the folklore narratives, especially the tales (Rom. *povestiri*) about lived, contemporary tribulations, in their context, as complex folklore manifestations and not just like isolated (verbal) texts<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Silviu Angelescu, *Poetica legendei*, Editura Albatros, București, 1983, p. 231-255.

<sup>2</sup> Maria Ioniță, *Cartea vânelor*, 1982, p. 1-30.

<sup>3</sup> Silviu Angelescu, *Poetica legendei*, 1983, p. 231-255.

<sup>4</sup> Nicolae Constantinescu, *Povestirea (The Tale)*, in *Fișe pentru un dicționar de folclor (V)*, "Revista de Etnografie și Folclor", 31 (1986), Nr.1, p. 42-45.

<sup>5</sup> Nicolae Constantinescu, *Implicații teoretice în delimitarea categoriilor narative contemporane*, in *Memoriile secției de filologie, literatură și arte*, Seria IV, Tom X, Ed. Academiei Române, București, p. 99.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, p. 100.

Subsequently, the same author adds the fact that a particular feature of the personal narrative is that of owing to the context more than other narrative genres; its circulation and persistence are its conditions of existence, which get it close at the same time to the tradition of the folklore epic in prose, through narrativity, and also to the non-epic communications, such as description, recollection, narration, through their more vigorous referentiality.

Lately, numerous young researchers have been interested in the study of narratives. Some of them are: Cornelia Călin Bodea, Alexandru Dobre, Constantin Eretescu, Ioana Ruxandra Fruntelată, Sanda Golopenția, Narcisa Știucă, Laura Negulescu, Lorena Anton and Adelina Dogaru.

Cornelia Călin Bodea considers the *recollection* (Rom.: *memoratul*), which obligatorily supposes faith or folklore tradition, a subcategory in a relation of interdependence with the contemporary legend and with other categories, more or less related to folklore, such as: *rumor* (Rom.: *rumoarea, zvonul*), *gossip* (Rom.: *știrea*), *memory* (Rom.: *amintirea*), *happening* (Rom. *întâmplarea*).

The main topics described in *tales* (*povestiri*) are: family life events, military service, war and prisonerhood as an experience of victimization (O. Bârlea, N. Constantinescu, S. Angelescu), hunting adventures (N. Constantinescu) or encounters with wild beasts (O. Bârlea, N. Constantinescu) or mythical encounters (N. Constantinescu), sensational happenings within the boundaries of reality - crimes, lucky coincidences (N. Constantinescu), emigration for a job, romantic adventures (N. Constantinescu), successful tricks.

The first problem raised by the definition of the personal narrative is that the most stable elements of the definitions so far – the use of the first person (I, we) and the non- traditional contents – are in contradiction with the folklore status of the genre, whose first attribute should be a traditional and anonymous character.

Vladimir Propp has imposed the model of formal analysis based on the *narrative function* as minimal unity of the *fairy tale* (Rom.: *basm*), signifying a deed carried out by a character and well defined from the perspective of its meaning for the development of the action.

In the 1960s, the description and the classification of the narrative units was largely debated by the structuralist school, proposing “grammars” able to explain the generation of the narratives (be they oral or written) and the connection between them, due to stable transformation laws.

A series of young researchers have written works on this topic recently: Ruxandra Ioana Fruntelată, Narcisa Știucă, Laura Negulescu, Lorena Anton and Adelina Dogaru.

The author’s intention, through the ethnological study of war-related personal narratives, has been to prove the legitimacy of their preservation in folklore archives, as documents of mentality and expression as valuable as the traditional materials. The theoretical framework meant to assure “an opening for another group” of texts nevertheless revealed the perennial character of the oral narrative art and a part of the road – intermittently lit by cultural symbols – from experience to *tale*.

Circulating orally, any *tale* is at the same time act and result of communication, context and text. The time and the space of the uttering, the elements of the audience, the eventual interruptions or other contextual components can significantly change the shape of the narrative.

So, to define the oral genres, folklore narratology starts from the idea that they are performances, namely series of successive actualizations of different combinations of epical schemes and evaluation formulas, being in a permanent interaction with the environment in which they occur.

The first theoretical consequence of this approach of the domain is the need to establish the relations between “*tale-telling*” as a phenomenon and “*tale*” as the effect of this phenomenon.

From a methodological perspective, the application of the performance theory imposes the recording of the narratives with all their contextual details with a relevant influence on the epical discourse.

The book of Liliana Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu, *Narațiune și dialog în proza românească*<sup>1</sup> whose subtitle is *Elemente de pragmatică a textului literar*, refers, as its author shows, to the communication through literature, approached with the means coming handy from the conceptual theorists and the pragmatic methodology. It does not aim to formulate, from this perspective, a theory of the literary text, but to suggest a way of commenting on a category of texts: the narrative prose.

At the same time, the author mentions that the pragmatic research works use the material provided by colloquial conversations.

This is why we, too, will use several ideas from the book of Professor Liliana Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu in our work.

Such an idea is the author’s statement according to which the narrative text is one of the possible ways of access towards understanding the written or folklore literature, both as a product of the manipulation of certain construction techniques on a macro- and microstructural level, and especially as a product of a certain type of human thinking and sensitivity.

Dim. Păcurariu, in his book *Despre timp și space în literatură*<sup>2</sup> tries to present a series of reflections on the way in which time and space is conceived by certain authors in different periods of the historical development of literature, without the intention of presenting exhaustive examples<sup>3</sup>. He had in view, first of all, the tendency of concentration of space and time in the dramatic creations, the so-called time and space units, aiming to give a detailed understanding of this problem in a presentation.<sup>4</sup>

The author shows, quoting Ardengo Soffici, that the very dimensions according to which our sensations and our thoughts get shaped – space and time – are considerably modified. The formidable development of the speed of movement

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<sup>1</sup> Liliana Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu, *Narațiune și dialog în proza românească. Elemente de pragmatică a textului literar*, Editura Academiei Române, București, 1991.

<sup>2</sup> Dim. Păcurariu, *Despre timp și spatiu în literatură*, Editura Hyperion XXI, București, 1994.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Idem.

from one place to the next, on the ground or in the air, have produced a different effect; it is actually well-known that the one who moves extremely fast in his car or airplane has a notion of distances and duration much different from the one people had in the past. From here, it results that the same dimensions of the globe, established psychologically according to the effort made in order to measure its size are today significantly lowered; and this does not go without a perceptible change in the fundamental ideas concerning the world, and even of the metaphysical concepts. Certainly, the Earth is smaller for someone who can travel in a day the road that once required a journey of months; the hours no longer have the same duration as in the time of our ancestors.<sup>1</sup>

After a presentation of time and space in the work of some writers, since the Antiquity to the contemporary times, Professor Dimitrie Păcurariu pursued a higher goal, of evading from our ordinary space towards a space and time of youth with no ageing effects and of eternal life, as in some folklore fairy tales; or, an extension, beyond the terrestrial limits of our existence, towards far away spaces, situated at cosmic distances; in the past, as well as in the future, all evoked with a rich imagination by folklore writers or story-tellers<sup>2</sup>.

He speaks about eternal time, about eternal youth in the folklore fairy tale or the aspirations towards a long life in literature: Mircea Eliade, James Hilton and even science fiction literature and the voyage towards other planets.

At the same time, he speaks about the motive of the return in time, the theory of metempsychosis: M. Eminescu, Edgar Alan Poe, Théophile Gautier, Imre Madách, Liviu Rebreanu, presenting a parodic vision of this motive with Mark Twain or about the time machine and travelers in the future with H.G. Wells or other migrations in time: Mircea Eliade, Richard Matheson.

Ruxandra Ioana Fruntelată, in her book *Narațiunile personale în etnologia războiului* (Personal Narratives in the Ethnology of War)<sup>3</sup> highlights the fact that the materials used by her are those gathered during the research made from 1995 to 2004, initially as part of the National Center for the Conservation and Promotion of Traditional Culture (Centrul Național de Conservare și Promovare a Culturii Tradiționale) and later on under the aegis of the Chair of Ethnology and Folklore of the faculty of Letters of the University of Bucharest.

First of all, the author clarifies the process of constitution of an ethnological document, the delimitation of the present tales from some ampler tales, but also the definition of the personal narrative.

So, the author shows that considering its condition of factual tale (with a value of truth highlighted by its creators) of the personal narrative, we have continued our research through the systematization of the relations between history, experience and tale, focused on the theme of war. The way the personal narrative is created – applied to the war materials in the body of texts annexed – proves, using

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<sup>1</sup> Ardengo Soffici, *Meditații artistice*, trad. Florin Nicolae, București, 1981, p. 363, apud Dim. Păcurariu, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Dim. Păcurariu, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Ruxandra Ioana Fruntelată, *Narațiunile personale în etnologia războiului*, Editura Ager, București, 2004.

and updating the means of literary folklore, the narrative character of war memories<sup>1</sup>.

According to Ruxandra Fruntelată, the narrative is a contemporary tale in the first person (I, we), telling about an event in which the narrator – member of a traditional community –has participated as a protagonist or as a witness. It makes an epic synthesis of a significant experience for the community, it is part of the narrator's active repertoire and circulates in variants that are limited by the duration of the performer's life / of the memory of the group of listeners, enjoying a successful reception in the sense of the acceptance of the facts presented and of the role assumed by the narrator in the tale.<sup>2</sup>

Next, the author proposes a classification of the personal narratives on war, according to textual and contextual-functional criteria.

In the end, the author includes the individual's personal experience in the cultural, even narrative experience of the group, situating the personal narratives in the ethnology of war.

The book also includes an ample bibliography, followed by a body of ethnological documents from a direct source, preceded by the list of personal narratives on war identified by their position in the body of texts.

Finally, she also presents a personal confession, explaining the reasons of her research on personal war-related narratives.

Sanda Golopenția in *Intermemoria. Studii de pragmatică și antropologie*<sup>3</sup> groups together the revised and enriched versions of four studies: *Elemente praxiologice și pragmatice relevante pentru o tipologie a informatorilor* (1977), *Intermemoria* (1993), *Arhitecturi ale memoriei sau despre o bază de date a descântecului de dragoste românesc* and *Descântatul de dragoste în satul Cornova (Basarabia)*. What unites the enumerated studies – shows the author – is the preoccupation to find bridges and correlations between anthropology, pragmatics and semiotics, between theoretical reflection, the methodology of the observation out in the field and the electronic representation of its results by means of databases which I would like to see getting multiplied in Romania, between the Romanian multidisciplinary research out in the field of the years 1930 and 1970-1980, animated respectively by Dimitrie Gusti and Mihai Pop, and the American informatics researches of the years 1980-1990 concerning databases optimization etc.<sup>4</sup>

The book of Prof. Dr. Nicolae Panea *Antropologie a tradițiilor*, with the subtitle *Tradiția populară și mecanismele de reglare a mentalității* represents – according to his own words – an attempt of anthropological “reading” of a cultural phenomenon of the Romanian rural society of the recent years, the perception of a historical personality such as Tudor Vladimirescu by a series of village communities of Oltenia.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibidem, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Sanda, Golopenția, *Intermemoria. Studii de pragmatică și antropologie*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, p. 7.

In his studies, the professor tries to analyze the folklore phenomenon from a modern and integrated methodological perspective.

This work is structured into two parts, which differ through their character – the first being theoretical and the second, practical. The author aims to achieve a relation as natural as possible with the peasant society, taking into account its living and operating character. Such a situation imposes an adequate approach of the folklore culture, which could be translated by the idea of going over the restrictive character of the classical research<sup>1</sup>.

Professor Nicolae Panea aimed to grasp the specific understanding of Tudor Vladimirescu by some rural communities, to organize the information according to the *unconscious nature of the collective phenomena*, as Lévi-Strauss says, namely from an ethnological perspective and not *in relation to the conscious expressions*, again according to an expression of Lévi-Strauss, namely from a historical viewpoint. The author aimed to test the posterity of this hero in the places he was most connected to. For a start, the professor had in view the relation between the ideas of heroism, as they appear in the rural communities of Oltenia, and a historical personality of such a great reputation.

He wanted to realize a body of texts, made up of heterogeneous information from the perspective of the folklore genres, meant to help him evaluate the impact of the historical “phenomenon” Tudor Vladimirescu on the respective rural community.

The research works were carried out at Vladimir but also at Peștișani, Tismana, Padeș, Țânțăreni, Gura Motrului and Gorgova during surveys in the years 1986-1989.

The people’s stories and legends, their epical-lyrical songs highlighted a dimension of the here never imagined before.

The professor talks about the phenomenon of *mentality regulation* (Rom.: *reglare mentalitară*), a particular form of the relation tradition / innovation and, at the same time, a concrete form attempting the mediation between two types of societies already in a stage of sharpening of the conflict between them.

A theoretical book on this topic translated into Romanian is that of Mieke Bal, *Naratologia. Introducere în teoria narațiunii*<sup>2</sup>. The book contains a preface by Prof. Monica Bottez, a preface to the first edition and a preface to the present edition.

Mieke Bal is a member of the Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences of the Netherlands and teaches cultural criticism and theory at the University of Amsterdam. She has a very large sphere of cultural interests, from the biblical and the classical Greek-Roman Antiquity to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, to the modern literature and the contemporary art, to the feminist issues and the culture of the migrating populations. She is the author of an impressive number of books, of which we shall enumerate only those that we considered the most important *La complexité d’un roman populaire* (Paris, 1974); *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of*

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<sup>1</sup> Nicolae Panea, *Antropologie a tradițiilor*, Editura Omniscop, Craiova, 1995, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Mieke Bal, *Naratologia. Introducere în teoria narațiunii*, Institutul European, Iași, 2008.

*Narrative* (Toronto, 1985); *Lethal love* (Bloomington, 1987); *Death and Dissymmetry* (Chicago, 1988); *Murder and Difference: Gender, Genre and Scholarship on Sisera's Death* (Bloomington, 1988); *Reading "Rembrandt": Beyond the Word-Image Opposition* (Cambridge, 1991); *On Meaning-Making: Essays in Semiotics* (Sonoma, CA, 1994); *Double exposures: The Subject of Cultural Analysis* (New York and London, 1996); *The Mottled Screen: Reading Proust Visually* (Stanford, 1997); *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (Chicago, 1999); *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide* (Toronto, 2002); *Narrative Inside Out* (London, 2004); *A Mieke Bal Reader* (Chicago, 2006).

Mieke Bal is also an artist of the video camera, being the author of several remarkable films on migration.

In the narratological theory proposed by Mieke Bal what is impressive is the clarity of the discourse, the logical and convincing reasoning and the systematic thinking, as she establishes three narrative levels and continually makes correlations and correspondences between them.

These three levels are defined by the author in her introduction: the *narrative text* (in which an agent tells a story by means of the language, of the image, of the sound, of the architectural construction), the *tale* (a fable presented in a certain manner) and the *fable* (a series of events related logically and chronologically, caused or lived by the actors). Then, the author defines the notions involved in the definitions of the three levels: *event* (transition from a state to the next), *actor* (the agent, not necessarily human, carrying out an action) and *action* (causing or living an event). The three levels do not exist separately; they are mingled in the text and the un-trained reader does not distinguish between them, yet they can be analyzed separately when the analyst wishes to find an explanation for an effect or the other that the text has on the reader. The fable is made up of four components: events, actors, time and location, which the author specifically calls *elements* to distinguish them from the components of the other levels.

The narrative text is defined as the text in which a narrative agent tells a *tale*, the author defining the narrative agent as linguistic subject (so a function, not a person) expressing itself in the words that make up the text.

Another work is that of the young researchers Lorena Anton, Mihaela Barbu and Ioana Petrescu *Dincolo de hotarul satului (narațiuni contemporane despre migrația la muncă în străinătate)*<sup>1</sup>.

The authors present a series of mentions on the research out in the field, carried out in Bughea de Sus, a commune of Argeș County, by a team of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Bucharest, coordinated by Reader Dr. Rodica Zane, whose object of study were the personal narratives on going abroad to work, a characteristic phenomenon for today's Romania.

Laura Negulescu, in *Memoria colectivă și experiența personală în povestiri*, a paper appeared in the review CERC starts from the idea of Prof. M. Pop and Prof.

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<sup>1</sup> Lorena Anton, Mihaela Barbu, Ioana Petrescu, *Dincolo de hotarul satului (narațiuni contemporane despre migrația la muncă în străinătate)*, in CERC.

P. Ruxăndoiu from a study issued in 1976<sup>1</sup> that in our folklore, tale-telling continues to be to this day a living phenomenon, although it no longer has its usual scope, and in some areas it is beginning to become increasingly rare. The opportunities for tale-telling are still numerous and varied, anyway more numerous than it is usually believed.

Adelina Dogaru, Ania Moldoveanu and Georgiana Onoiu, in the paper *Povești și povestitori din Boișoara în pragul secolului XXI* talk about the Boișoara experience. The Boișoara experience is part of the research out in the field launched by Mihai Pop in 1968. Together with the pupils who were participating to the Folklore Club, during a time when the passion for traditional culture led to the elaboration of some of the most complex surveys on this topic, the professor laid the bases of these studies in Tara Loviștei, which he considers a “native area of the Romanian folklore”<sup>2</sup>.

The research carried out by the author in the years 2003 and 2004 aimed to investigate the folklore categories considered defining for Boișoara: legends, personal narratives, stories with animals or fantastic beings, especially with *zmei* (bad, ugly and massive characters), who are actually omnipresent in the minds of the people from Boișoara, although in increasingly diverse forms, species that Professor Pop himself had researched more than 30 years before that.

Out of the numerous phenomena investigated out in the field, the authors focused this time on tale-telling, a still quite representative domain for the practical research.

The authors bring to light the fact that at present tale-telling has come to acquire complex and particularly interesting forms, which can be studied from the perspective of the relation tradition-innovation, themes, and function changes but also as part of a system of connections describing the cultural context that produced them.

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<sup>1</sup> Mihai Pop, Pavel Ruxăndoiu, *Proza populară în Folclorul literar românesc*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, p. 249-277.

<sup>2</sup> *Folclor din Țara Loviștei*, 1970, p. 3.

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## TEXTUALITY AND AGENCY: THE DISPLACING AND DE-CENTRING FUNCTION OF POSTCOLONIAL WRITING

Angela STĂNESCU<sup>1</sup>

***Abstract:** In the aftermath of the massive nationalist and decolonisation movements which led to the dissolution of the British empire in the post-war period, the essentially monologic discourse of the Empire came to be challenged by the responding discourses of 'the other side', which inform the postcolonial literature in English produced by writers from Britain's former colonies. Postcolonial texts, which both respond to and contest the self-legitimising texts of the coloniser, inscribe a counter-history of the Empire constructed from the position of marginality. In other words, 'the writing of empire' is symbolically displaced by the 'writing in opposition to empire'. The present article examines the manner in which these discourses of marginality interrogate the dislocating agency of the oppressive centre and displace the mono-centric discourses of imperialism.*

***Key-words:** imperialism, postcolonial, coloniser, colonised, de-centring*

The very emergence of what is commonly designated today as postcolonial literature constitutes in itself an act of displacement. The term 'postcolonial literature' has been applied to the work produced by writers from the colonies of the former British Empire, who have been affected by the cultural dislocations inflicted by colonialism and have had to grapple with a shifting and ever-elusive sense of cultural identity and belonging. Postcolonial writing confronts the erstwhile imperial metropolis with a reversed image of itself, refracted through the perspective of its former colonial subjects, constituted as collective, oppositional 'Other'. For centuries, these people's knowledge of themselves and their world was shaped by the hegemonic discourses of the West, which mapped and described the world from a Eurocentric perspective. Europe's cultural hegemony was mainly entrenched through a negative articulation of difference, by which the cultural space of the other is perceived from a position of intrinsic superiority. The discourses of European imperialism, which represented the space outside the centre of the First World as both the discovery and the object of knowledge of Western culture, have been amply examined in Edward Said's seminal theory about 'Orientalism'. Said defines Orientalism as the discourse of negative 'othering', which becomes the foundational ideology of colonialist expansion. Indeed, the

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colonial enterprise is inseparable from the body of 'Orientalist' knowledge, which it drew upon in its inherently justificatory expansionist ideology.

Most importantly, colonialism propounded the theory and practice of its domination and rule of subjected territories and peoples via a massive body of texts, both political and literary. The cultural authority of the literary text was instrumental in disseminating the myths of Empire's civilising mission both at home and abroad. As Elleke Boehmer aptly demonstrates in an ample study on the politics of colonial and postcolonial writing, English literature functioned as one of the most important tools in the propagandistic apparatus of British imperialism, whose ascendancy was mainly the result of the validating and consolidating power of the written text. In Boehmer's view, it is through textuality that colonialism was both propagated and sanctioned, in that its hegemonic discourse was reinforced and sublimated through the circulation of images and myths sanctified by the iconic written inscription. In the century-old mythology of empire, writing functioned as an essential medium for self-empowerment and the dissemination of power discourses.

In the aftermath of the massive nationalist and decolonisation movements which led to the dissolution of the British empire in the post-war period, the essentially monologic discourse of empire came to be challenged by the responding discourses of 'the other side'. Ironically, it was the formerly ideological weapon of English literature that became the vehicle for inscribing the experience of the margins, predominantly through the work of diasporic ex-colonials from South-East Asia or the Caribbean, who sought a literary career in the more propitious cultural environment of the metropolis. Invariably, in their efforts to find an artistic voice and identity, these writers had to fall back upon the formative experience of living on the imperial periphery. Consequently, their texts, which both respond to and contest the self-legitimising texts of the coloniser, inscribe a counter-history of empire constructed from the position of marginality. In other words, 'the writing of empire' is symbolically displaced by the 'writing in opposition to empire' (Boehmer 1). Even if this intrinsic oppositionality is sometimes expressed obliquely, through techniques of indirection or understatement, as in the fiction of V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie and Timothy Mo, their representation of postcolonial subjectivity is undertaken from an unmistakably indicting stance. Their discourses of marginality interrogate the dislocating agency of the oppressive centre, and displace the monocentric discourses of imperialism by demythologising its idealising, self-glorifying myths about its civilising mission. However, in defining the inherent political agenda of this displacement of the colonial discursive ethos by the postcolonial text, one important distinction has to be made about the relevance of terms. Boehme draws attention to the fact that the term 'postcolonial' should not automatically be attached to a merely temporal designation of what Homi Bhabha calls the experience of the 'beyond', interpreted in terms of mere temporal sequentiality:

Rather than simply being the writing which 'came after' empire, postcolonial literature is that which critically scrutinizes the colonial relationship. It is writing that sets out in one way or another to resist

colonialist perspectives. As well as a change in power, decolonization demanded symbolic overhaul, a reshaping of dominant meanings. Postcolonial literature formed part of that process of overhaul (Boehmer 3).

Thus, the essence of postcolonial literature resides in its oppositional character and revisionist, recuperative politics. In Rushdie's notorious definition of the counteractive impulse of writing from the colonies, 'the empire writes back to the centre' or 'the empire writes back with a vengeance'. Significantly, these formulations, punning on the film title 'The Empire Strikes Back', inspire the title of the seminal study on the theory and practice of postcolonial writing by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, which amply analyses the discursive counterplotting and displacing, de-centring agency of the 'decolonizing pen'.

Pioneered by Caribbean or Indo-Anglian writers of Naipaul's generation, and continued by subsequent waves of younger cosmopolitan migrants such as Salman Rushdie or Timothy Mo, this overhauling representation of empire from the perspective of the 'Other' has mainly been inscribed through the borrowed medium of the novel, which has proved a tool flexible enough to suit the often jarring tonalities of a composite cross-cultural discourse. Thus, the great 'novel of Empire' has found its replica in what we can safely call today the great postcolonial novel. The novel form has proved such an accommodating platform for the articulation of the colonial and postcolonial predicament by virtue of its inherent dialogism, seminally theorised by Bakhtin. The novel has thus become the arena in which the trauma of colonised subjectivity finds the most fertile terrain for its re-enactment, since the underlying narrativity of history best lends itself to the exploratory medium of the narrative genre. Chinua Achebe articulated this defining necessity of storytelling through a laconic but gnominically powerful formulation: 'stories define us'. Thus, these stories of the margin have come to outline, define and scrutinise the experience of coloniality as perceived by people deprived of historical agency, who, both during and after empire, had to orient themselves in what was often an incomprehensible and confusing political and social environment.

The 'voyage in' of the migrant postcolonial writer attempting to capture the inscape of colonised identity inherently pre-supposes a 'voyage out' for the Western reader, who has to sidestep his position at the centre of knowledge, and make room for the alternative, displacing knowledge of the marginalised 'Other'. The reading of postcolonial literature in English, which targets a pre-eminently British audience, becomes a spiritual voyage off the familiar routes of inherited, Eurocentric preconceptions and their attending discourses, requiring a conscious effort to understand the other's voice. For the Western reader, this pre-supposes a wilful act of self-displacement in, insofar as misapprehensions or misinterpretations of the author's message are inevitable within such a tenuous cross-cultural exchange, whose efficacy is entirely dependent on the dislocation of the centre's deeply-ingrained mental patterns and cultural schemata. Boehmer explains the process thus:

To give expression to colonized experience, postcolonial writers sought to undercut thematically and formally the discourses which supported

colonization – the myths of power, the race classifications, the imagery of subordination. Postcolonial literature, therefore, is deeply marked by experiences of cultural exclusion and division under empire...*postcoloniality* is defined as that condition in which colonized people seek to take their place, forcibly or otherwise, as historical subjects (Boehmer 3).

Place, in the sense of both location and status, is indeed a major experiential and imaginative category in postcolonial fiction, as it has to do with the colonised subject's quest for a place in the colonial or postcolonial re-mappings of cultural space, which presuppose an experience of displacement. As the colonial space was mapped and defined by the confiscation and appropriation of the other's place, the native cultural space is estranged from the colonised inhabitants themselves, because it is 'tainted', to use Naipaul's favourite term, by the coloniser's adulterating presence. Through the dislocation of the political and historical agency of the colonised, their place in the social and political formation of the colony is irredeemably unsettled and marginalised. Naipaul is among the first to define the colonial subject's alienating sense of displacement as the dystopian experience of the non-place, as the vacuum of non-belonging, where there is 'no relationship between man and landscape'. This phenomenon of spatial estrangement has become one of the key tenets of postcolonial theory, from the psychoanalytical study of the colonial psyche (conducted by Franz Fanon) to the ground-breaking theorising of a postcolonial literary paradigm (undertaken by the authors of *The Empire Writes Back*). Multifariously construed as the purpose, strategy, ideology, paradigmatic theme and metaphor of the postcolonial text, the concept of displacement holds together the system of cross-cultural signification represented by the body of work coming from various parts of the former empire.

The present study aims to argue that it is this fictional 'anatomy of displacement' that essentially unifies the diverse cultural locations and tonalities of the novels produced by writers such as V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Timothy Mo and Kazuo Ishiguro. Displacement as lived and textualised experience is revealed under manifold facets in their work, ranging from the inner exile or alienation of the colonised subject, to the dislocating effects of historical change, or to the disruptive experience of migration. Their fictions are explorations of the intricate psychological and existential experience of space and culture involved in the postcolonial subject's reassessment of his sense of belonging and identity. The foremost thematic concern of their fictions is the construction of a meaning of home for individuals plagued by an inescapable sense of homelessness. Even if this rootlessness of the self is often ambiguously and paradoxically construed as both marring and liberating, the concern with the historical, socio-political and psychological resorts and phenomenology of displacement remains crucial to their work. The authors of *The Empire Writes Back* posit the issue of displacement as the crux of all postcolonial writing, as well as of their comprehensive theoretical study:

A major feature of post-colonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. It is here that the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an

effective identifying relationship between self and place [has become]...the defining model of post-coloniality...The dialectic of place and displacement is always a feature of post-colonial societies...Beyond their historical and cultural differences, place, displacement, and a pervasive concern with the myths of identity and authenticity are...common to all (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2-12).

In discussing the central themes and imagery common to the work of Naipaul, Rushdie, Ishiguro and Mo, this study focuses on their representations of the psychic, existential and cultural homelessness denoted by the concept of displacement, as theorised by mainstream postcolonial theory and criticism. It aims to reveal the textual instantiations of the experience of displacement as a historically, ontologically and psychologically conditioned phenomenon, as well as highlight and analyse the motifs related to the central theme of displacement – alienation, exile, migration, non-belonging, in-betweenness, incompleteness, alterity and displaced identity. Emphasis is laid on the double significance and relevance of the concept of displacement for the intertwined realms of private and public experience, since the multifaceted displacements operated by colonialism manifest themselves at the intersection between personal, collective and national consciousnesses. Furthermore, displacement needs to be considered in its various manifestations – as estrangement or alienation from one's social and cultural environment, on the one hand, and as the more performative experience of migration, on the other. These sub-themes are interconnected in the work of the four writers under consideration. More often than not, their poetics of displacement combines this sense of internal exile within the native society, this experience of the unhomely in one's native space on the periphery of an alien empire, with the more literal deracination effected by migration. The textual approach to the theme of displacement as figured in the selected texts is sustained by the theoretical and critical framework of postcolonial theory and criticism. This analysis bridges the almost classical paradigms formulated in the theories of Said, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin with the more recent cross-cultural criticism and psychoanalytical perspectives of Homi Bhabha and of Gayatri Spivak's innovative study of subaltern subjectivity.

Bhabha's concept of the experiential space of the 'unhomely', a metaphorical term aimed to describe 'a paradigmatic colonial and post-colonial condition' (Bhabha 2000: 13), provides a particularly fertile premise for an analysis of the imagery of displacement symptomatic of the postcolonial novel. The novels of Naipaul, Rushdie, Mo and Ishiguro anatomise what Bhabha calls 'unhomely lives' (Bhabha 13), threatened by the 'dangers of the fixity and fetishism of identities within the calcification of colonial cultures' (Bhabha 13). The thematic and discursive project of their novels can be envisioned in terms of what the critic calls a 'negating activity', defined as 'the intervention of the 'beyond' that establishes a boundary: a bridge, where 'presencing' begins because it captures something of the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world – the unhomeliness – that is the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations (Bhabha 13). The metonymic private destinies enacted in these novelists' fables of

displacement are caught in the ambiguities of a dualistic notion of home. Their characters' composite sense of being at once homed and homeless is charged with contradictory impulses and tensions between negating and affirming their corner of the world, between departure and return, the utopia of the centre and the dystopia of the margin, domestic withdrawal and social engagement. Bhabha explains that 'unhomeliness' is a paradoxical state: 'to be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the 'unhomely' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres' (Bhabha 13).

The concept of displacement is not linked solely to the experience of spatial, geographic or cultural dislocation or relocation. It includes the psychic experience of alienation, which encompasses a spatial and temporal disorientation, translated into the instability of the self and its fragmentation according to its multiple spatio-temporal affiliations – to images of the wide world and its centre, to a time and space of a mythical culture prior to empire. The sense of displacement and unbelonging underlying the crises of selfhood figured in postcolonial fictions of identity is, in Bhabha's view, evocative of those cathartic moments of cultural negotiation in Henry James's fiction, which 'introduces us to the 'unhomeliness' inherent in that rite of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiation' (Bhabha 13). Bhabha describes such moments as paroxysmal experiences of the unhomely: 'The unhomely moment creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow and suddenly you find yourself...taking the measure of your dwelling in a state of 'incredulous terror' [in which]...the world first shrinks, then it expands enormously' (Bhabha 13). What exacerbates the predicament of those displaced by colonialism is the inseparability of their personal and national habitation of their world. The inherent split in their self-definition and construction of identity is induced by the flagrant incongruousness between their cultural, linguistic and national space, uncertainly mapped at the crossroads of other people's history. Both personal and collective identities become subject to the changes in the international nexus of power and the constant redrawing of spheres of influence, which engulf both individuals and communities in the torrential sweep of the times. Therefore the individual is rendered vulnerable to the double displacement of the micro- and macrocosm. Bhabha's description of this double displacement posits a formula which constitutes the staple of the fictional universes of Naipaul, Rushdie, Mo and Ishiguro: 'The recesses of the domestic space become sites for history's most intricate invasions. In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as is disorienting' (Bhabha 13).

The aim of this study is to identify the culturally idiosyncratic, yet ideationally concurrent perspectives and imageries through which these novelists represent the experience of private and public displacement, understood in all its experiential manifestations and its ontological and epistemological consequences: historical, geographic, cultural, linguistic, social, racial, ethnic, psychological and axiological. This research seeks to highlight the points of convergence and divergence between such diverse texts, which, for all their historical-geographical specificities and cultural diversities, coalesce in their 'profound revelations and

reinscriptions of the unhomely moment [which]...relates the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence' (Bhabha 15). I envisage a deconstructive textual analysis of the recurrent images, metaphors, leitmotifs and 'inscapes' through which these novelists envision the construction of a trans-cultural identity and belonging, through the strained dialectic between the home and the world, the national and the global, past and present, old and new. I propose to demonstrate that the multifaceted concept of displacement constitutes the shared existential and cognitive matrix actuating the cross-cultural discourses of these bicultural novelists, whose writing attempts to make 'the perplexity of the unhomely, intrapersonal world lead to an international theme' (Bhabha 16), thus integrating their interrogations of postcoloniality within the encompassing self-reflexive project of postmodernity.

## TRADITION AMONG TRADITIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON SOCIETY

Ion CROITORU<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *Since apostolic times up until the age of the Great Schism (1054), each local Church was able to express the unity of faith with the entire Christian world in the very language of the people who had received the new faith, in the beginning even in their own rite and through their own symbol of baptismal faith. During the Christianization of the Slavs emerged the theory of the three sacred languages (Greek, Latin and Hebrew) in the West, to which Slavonic was added in the East. The dogmatization of this theory had many consequences in the Western world, leading also to the spark off of the Reform. In the Eastern world, the influence of this theory was felt in conservatory circles, and affected the society and the cultural creations. Although the Romanian people was forced to accept Slavonic in worship, due to multiple socio-political and religious reasons, the Church and the Reign knew how to work together for the introduction of the Romanian language in worship and in the chancellery, with direct implications on Romanian society and culture. Of the three main branches of Orthodoxy, Greek, Romanian and Slavic, only Romanians have worship in the spoken language of the people, while the other two branches preserved, with few exceptions, the ancient liturgical languages (the Greek Byzantine language for the Greek world, Slavonic for most of the Slavic world), which created differences between the Church and the society, caused the impoverishment of the linguistic power of expression, the blending of Christian faith with the ideology of nationalism, etc.*

**Key-words:** *the theory of sacred languages, liturgical languages, traditions, the tradition-innovation conflict, the New Testament, Holy Scriptures, Holy Tradition, dogma, liturgical texts, worship, the Orthodox Church, society, nationalism.*

*But when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking (Matthew 6: 7)*

The verse 7 of the VI<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Holy Gospel* according to Saint Matthew the Evangelist can lead us to many meanings and interpretations, from the practices of those who worshiped idols, and said lots of words to them "from morning even until noon, but there was no voice, nor any that answered"<sup>2</sup>, to the simple words used in the Lord's Prayer delivered to us by the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, one can make parallel evaluations between the practice of the ancients who worshiped idols and the Orthodox worship, which

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<sup>2</sup> *III Kings* 18: 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Mathew* 6: 9-13.

springs from the *Holy Scripture* and the *Holy Tradition*, that are the two organs of God's Revelation. Moreover, a faithful can go from the general level, i.e. the outward forms of worship, to the personal level, that is to the spiritual realization of each individual human being and to the achievement of perfection through hesychia, following the call of the *Holy Scripture* and the Holy Fathers that "in the multitude of words there lacks not sin, but he that refrains his lips is wise"<sup>1</sup>. Here are many themes, and many more can be developed based on the in depth study of verse 7, but any interpretation must bring us to a conclusion directly linked to the point and purpose of the Orthodox worship, as it is expressed through the liturgical richness of the services and hierurgies accomplished in the Church. We should ask ourselves whether in the history of Christianity, and particularly, in the history of our Orthodox worship, we have been somewhat similar to those that "speak into the air"<sup>2</sup>, not because of the content of liturgical texts, but because of the fact that there has been no attempt to render through language "the tongue words easy to be understood"<sup>3</sup>.

This is an ancient theme, yet still current, which the Holy Apostles have dealt with since the beginning of Christianity. Later on, along the centuries, the whole Christendom was confronted with it, especially at the end of the first millennium, when the dogmatization of the theory of the sacred language occurred, first in the West, and then taken in the East, which had a direct influence on Orthodox people even until, we can safely say, the contemporary era.

A convincing and normative for the following centuries example from the apostolic period is the work of the Holy Apostle Paul, who received *grace* and *apostleship*, in order to call all nations, in the name of Christ, the Son of God and our Savior, "to the obedience that comes from faith"<sup>4</sup>. In his time, the Holy Apostle stumbled upon and resolved, among other issues, the language barrier, namely that of the transmission of Jesus Christ's teachings and, later on, the interpretation of sacred texts in the languages of the nations which received the new faith. We understand by his own admission that he could speak several languages: "I thank my God, I speak in tongues more than all of you"<sup>5</sup>. Speaking languages was certainly a gift from God, and "there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning"<sup>6</sup>, and that meaning goes not only to the heart, but also to the mind.

However, as far as this aspect is concerned, the Holy Apostle Paul makes a very important statement, namely that it is absolutely mandatory to understand the things spoken, regardless of the participation *in spirit* or *in the flesh* to that which is heard. In other words, aside from the perception of the spiritual meaning of the spoken words, it is required to actually understand them. For this reason, the Apostle Paul urges us: "anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may

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<sup>1</sup> *Proverbs* 10: 19.

<sup>2</sup> *I Cor.* 14: 9.

<sup>3</sup> *I Cor.* 14: 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Rom.* 1: 5.

<sup>5</sup> *I Cor.* 14: 18.

<sup>6</sup> *I Cor.* 14: 10.

interpret what he says. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful"<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the Holy Apostle Paul presents a duality, *spirit* and *mind*, that is *heart* and *understanding*, which are the two coordinates of living and participating in the mystery of deification of man through the beauty of liturgical life. But this beauty is not given only by the understanding *in the spirit*, i.e. the participation with the heart, but also by the understanding with the mind, that is by the way in which the complete man becomes a receptive vessel of the word that carries meaning. "So what shall I do?", wonders Saint Paul for us, and the answer becomes tradition: "I will pray with my spirit", that is with the spiritual and metaphorical meaning of words, "but I will also pray with my mind", that is I will use the proper understanding of the words, which allows the faithful to participate, body and soul, to the understanding of the richness of liturgical texts, as Saint. Paul says to us: "I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind."<sup>2</sup>

Following the text of Saint Paul, we notice that he asks naturally those who would advocated only the understanding of the words in the spirit: "If you may bless with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? Even though You, that is any of us today, may be giving thanks well enough, however the other man is not edified."<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, there is a difference between understanding *with the spirit*, that is the general and metaphorical meaning of words, and understanding *with the mind*, i.e. the perception of the actual meaning of the spoken word, which together lead to the spiritual building of the believer, to the understanding of the truths of faith, to living and impropriating the mystery of deification. In order to make us understand the meaning of this difference, the Holy Apostle Paul comes forth with a few images.

First, he uses the image of the annunciation of the state of war by means of a trumpet, alluding to our spiritual warfare by using the word in an understandable manner and in a spoken tongue. Thus, the Holy Apostle Paul asks himself: "If the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? And the answer is also addressed to us today: So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air."<sup>4</sup>

Then the Saint Apostle Paul stresses the importance of the *meaning* of the spoken word: "If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me."<sup>5</sup> In other words, the barbaric nature of the nations, which is evident through their "vain repetitions"<sup>6</sup>, is realized also at the level of the person who uses words without them being fully understood by the person who hears them. And the lack of

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<sup>1</sup> *I Cor.* 14: 13-14.

<sup>2</sup> *I Cor.* 14: 13-15.

<sup>3</sup> *I Cor.* 14: 16-17.

<sup>4</sup> *I Cor.* 14: 8-9.

<sup>5</sup> *I Cor.* 14: 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Mathew* 6:7.

understanding of their meaning leads to the lack of knowledge, namely to the state of insanity, in the sense of confusion and misunderstanding of the truths of faith. Therefore, the Saint Apostle Paul opens our horizon with the question: "So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers" (that is the contemporary man or the man who is still seeking, but of a different faith and tongue) "come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind?"<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion, the counsel of the Saint Apostle Paul refers to the general framework of speaking in tongues, but also to the personal expression of each. In the first case, he urges us to use an interpreter in all circumstances, which could be, by extension, even our own language: "If anyone speaks in a tongue, two, or at the most three, should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God."<sup>2</sup> Regarding the personal expression, which must be according to the mind of the faithful, and also to the perception with his spirit of the things said, Saint Paul, paraphrasing the verse 7 in the VI<sup>th</sup> chapter from Holy Evangelist Matthew, makes the following testimony: "But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."<sup>3</sup>

Based on the meanings and solutions given by Saint Paul, Orthodoxy was able to solve the problem of every people who embraced the Christian faith, which made itself accessible in language of the respective people<sup>4</sup>, and, as a result, Orthodoxy embraced the diversity of human cultures and traditions<sup>5</sup>, and knew how to remain free of any influence or ethnic limitation<sup>6</sup>, since in Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free"<sup>7</sup>. However, there were also cases of alteration of the Tradition, as, unfortunately, negative excesses were present.

I will give you the example of two moments in the life of two Orthodox peoples, the Slav and Romanian, yet with an extension on the Greek people as well.

When the "fullness of time"<sup>8</sup> made it so that the Slavic people on right of the Danube received the Word of God, beginning with the ninth century, the Patriarchate of Constantinople blessed the missionary work of Saints Cyril and Methodius in the language spoken by the Slavic people at that time. Thus, their translations imposed the church Slavonic language of the Orthodox Slavs as the fourth language of worship, but its introduction for this purpose has been

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<sup>1</sup> *I Cor.* 14: 23.

<sup>2</sup> *I Cor.* 14: 27-28.

<sup>3</sup> *I Cor.* 14: 19.

<sup>4</sup> For example, it is a known fact that from the first half of the first century, in the great monasteries of the Holy Land, the services were officiated in Greek, Latin, Syriac and Besa, the former being considered the language of the ancestors of the Romanians (Archimandrite Ioanichie Bălan, *Vetre de sihăstrie românească*, București 2001<sup>2</sup>, pp. 371, 380).

<sup>5</sup> Which by their nature and origin cannot be considered as absolute (Jean Meyendorff, *Orthodoxie et Catholicité*, Paris 1965, p. 88).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 87-88.

<sup>7</sup> *Gal.* 3: 28.

<sup>8</sup> *Gal.* 4: 4.

questioned by the Latin-German priests and bishops<sup>1</sup> in Moravia, which led to controversy of the three sacred languages: Hebrew, Greek and Latin or of the Pilatians<sup>2</sup>. Although rejected in Rome<sup>3</sup>, this *theory* imposed itself especially in the West<sup>4</sup>, and will constitute one of the causes of the Reformation, with some influences in the Orthodox East, by the extension of the *theory* to four languages, as *Slavonic* was added to the other three.

Even though the spoken language of the people had been used in the Orthodox Church<sup>5</sup>, and according to the Holy Fathers, the languages are natural and none of them is entitled to an absolute authority<sup>6</sup>, this *theory of sacred languages* was stratified in the Orthodox world and Tradition, continuing to certain levels until today. It is noted throughout history that the *Holy Tradition* of the Church, the second organ of divine Revelation, is always threatened by human traditions coming from different cultures or expressing certain historical moments. These traditions tend to monopolize the *Holy Tradition* of the Church, claiming its sacred status, but such an acceptance on behalf of the Church leads to the annihilation of *Holy Tradition*, which expresses a living and dynamic reality<sup>7</sup>.

The Romanian people experienced this negative aspect, and it was forced to accept Slavonic in worship, because of multiple socio-political and religious causes, from which it could be mentioned: the increasing Latin or Roman Catholic propaganda through the Hungarian kingdom over the Romanians from Transylvania (tenth-twelfth centuries); the desire of the Romanians to remain in contact with Byzantium, preferring the connection of faith, rather than that of language proposed by Rome.

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<sup>1</sup> That is Germans of the Roman-catholic faith.

<sup>2</sup> After the name of Pilate, who gave to order to have words written on the Holy Cross in these three languages, see Ioan Rămureanu, *Istoria Bisericească Universală*, București 1992, p. 208.

<sup>3</sup> In order to oppose to the *three sacred languages theory*, Saints Cyril and Methodius themselves went to Rome, where pope Adrian II (867-872) approved the Slavic translations of the *Holy Scriptures* and of the service books, as well as the use of Slavonic as the language of worship, see Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, I, București 1991<sup>2</sup>, p. 190; Ioan Rămureanu, «Unsprezece secole de la activitatea misionară a Sfinților Chiril și Metodiu», *Orthodoxia* 19 (1967), pp. 17-31.

<sup>4</sup> Pope John VIII, who was assassinated for his anti-German policy, and who also sent delegates to the Synod of Constantinople in 879-880, where the addition of the *Filioque* was convicted (P. Ranson, *Richard Simon ou de la caractère illégitime de l'augustinisme en théologie*, Lausanne 1990, p. 172, note 449), was favorable to the missionary work of Saints Cyril and Methodius [«Jean VIII (872-882)», in J. N. D. Kelly, *Dictionnaire des Papes*, Brepols 1994, pp. 226-227]; it was during his pontificate that, for the first and last time before Vatican II (1962-1965), the celebration of a Liturgy in a language other than Latin was accepted (P. Riché, «Jean VIII», în *Dictionnaire Historique de la Papauté*, sous la direction de Philippe Levillan, Paris 1994, p. 933). One of his successors, pope Stephen V (885-891), under the influence of German bishops and after the death of Saint Methodius († 885), prohibited in 885 the use of Slavonic in worship, dogmatizing the *theory of the three sacred languages* [Fr. Bougard, «Etienne V (VI)», in *Dictionnaire Historique de la Papauté...*, p. 636].

<sup>5</sup> Since apostolic times up until the age of the Great Schism (1054), each local Church was able to express the unity of faith with the entire Christian world in the very language of the people who received the new faith, in the beginning even in their own rite and through their own symbol of baptismal faith (Jean Meyendorff, *quoted work.*, p. 91).

<sup>6</sup> See Patric Ranson, *quoted work.*, pp. 180-181.

<sup>7</sup> Jean Meyendorff, *quoted work.*, p. 96.

Of course, the adoption of Slavic language did not stop the usage of the spoken language of the people in worship, usage that was limited to the transmission of teachings not through the liturgical texts, but by preaching, confession and other spiritual needs<sup>1</sup>. In this way, we can understand why theological terms carrying theological meaning regarding the living of Christian faith are of Latin origin in Romanian, as it is the Romanian language itself, and not of Slavic origin, as somebody would have expected if she or he incorrectly claimed, following some historians<sup>2</sup>, that the Romanians received the Christian faith from the Slavs, fact which is farther from the truth<sup>3</sup>.

When the first books started to be printed in Romanian, in the second half of the sixteenth century, the book publishers had to find arguments for using Romanian language in worship. At that time, Slavonic language had been officially used for several centuries both in worship and in the chancelleries of the Romanian Country and Moldavia, even though this was a language that people did not understand, since it was foreign to them.

The promoter for using Romanian language in worship was the *Church*, through its people, therefore, the first printings in these language bore the blessing of metropolitan, as ecclesiastical authority, then the name of the prince, as secular authority of the theocratic state, but sometimes these authorities were not enough in the face of the conservatory reactions and the initiative of printing in Romanian had to be argued on other grounds. In fact, the series of printings, which began in the sixteenth century, were continued in the seventeenth century, and increased in the early eighteenth century, when the process of the introduction of the Romanian language was perfected, according to a well thought out plan: biblical texts were printed, then the liturgical texts used in worship, initially having the typiconal rules in Romanian, but the text itself in Slavonic; ultimately, the printings were entirely in Romanian. Oftentimes, printed texts were bilingual, Romanian-Slavic or Romanian-Greek, in order to convince the faithful of the orthodoxy and fidelity of texts translated into Romanian<sup>4</sup>.

Among the difficulties encountered, there was the reaction of the conservatory circles, both of Slavonic and Greek language. These saw the

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<sup>1</sup> N. Iorga, *Concepția românească a Ortodoxiei*, București 1940, pp. 8-9, 15-16; idem, *Istoria literaturii românești. Introducere sintetică*, București 1977, p. 38; V. Căndea, «Secolul al XVII-lea: biruința scrisului românesc (I)», *Limbă și Literatură* 7 (1989), pp. 177, 181; C. Bălan, «Cultura în Țara Românească și Moldova. 1. Societate și cultură, considerații preliminare», *Istoria Românilor*, V, București 2003, p. 866.

<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, theologians and religious writers today, perhaps faithful to or holders of certain information regarding the political and ecclesiastical history of the Romanians in terms of *the immigration theory*, whose objectivity should have prevailed in the face of the historical-scientific, philological and archaeological arguments, interpret the Christianization of Romanians as coming through Bulgaria, *see*, for instance, Timothy Ware (Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia), *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe*, București 1997, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the issue of the Christianization of the Romanian people, event which is considered and documented to have taken place in the Apostolic era, *see* references to Mircea Păcurariu, *quoted work.*, pp. 59-182.

<sup>4</sup> See Virgil Căndea, *quoted work.*, pp. 177-188 and (II), in *Limbă și literatură* 8 (1989), pp. 323-335.

introduction of the Romanian language in worship as a deviation from the Church Tradition, but their attitude was, in fact, the direct consequence of *the theory of sacred languages*. However, in order not to cause breaches and schisms within the Orthodox world, the hierarchs and those involved in the process of introduction of the Romanian language in worship sought arguments both in the *Holy Scriptures* and in the *Holy Tradition*, as well as in the reality of their times.

Thus, the deacon Coresi (c. 1510-1583), born in Târgoviște, printed, mainly in Brașov, in the context of the politics and confessional propaganda initiated by Lutherans and Calvinists, but having and benefitting from the assistance and help of Romanian Orthodox priests from *Saint Nicholas Church of Șcheii Brașovului*, several books which were necessary to conduct worship in Romanian: a) biblical texts: *Tetraevangheliar (The Four Gospels, 1561)*, *Apostol (The Apostle, 1566, but according to other sources, 1564-1566)*, *Psaltirea (The Psalter, 1570)*; b) teaching books: *Întrebare creștinească (Christian Inquiry, 1560)*, *Tâlcul Evangheliilor (The Interpretation of the Gospels, 1567 or 1568)*, having as an appendix a book incorrectly called *Molitevnic (Molitvelnic – Euchologion)*, which is, in fact, a *Carte de cântece și slujbe calvine (Book of Calvinist Chants and Services)*, *Evanghelia cu învățătură (The Gospel with Lessons, 1581)*; c) books of worship: *Liturghier (Missal) (1570)*<sup>1</sup>, etc.

In addition to this, we can mention a *Psaltire slavo-română (Slavo-Romanian Psalter, Brașov, 1577)*, which had a bilingual text in order to demonstrate exactly the fidelity of the translation. However, in the *Epilogue* of the book is argued the use of Romanian based on a verse from Saint Paul: "By the mercy of God, I, the deacon Coresi, if I saw that almost all languages have the word of God in [their] tongue, only we Rumanians do not – and Christ said, Matthew 109<sup>2</sup>: Let the reader understand; and again the Apostle Paul wrote to Corinth. 155: In church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue<sup>3</sup> - therefore, my brothers, priests, I have written this Psalter with response (otveat), as I have printed the Serbian (Slavonic) Psalter in the Rumanian language."<sup>4</sup> Thus, Coresi uses the text of verse 19 of 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, as an argument that he had previously used to print *The Apostle* in 1566/1564-1566<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See N. Cartoian, *Istoria literaturii române vechi*, București 1996, p. 102; Ion Gheție, Al. Mareș, *Diaconul Coresi și izbânda scrisului în limba română*, București 1994, pp. 38-39, 56-57, 67-79, 90-101, 124-125, 132-140; Ion Gheție, «Studiu introductiv», in Coresi, *Tâlcul Evangheliilor și Molitevnic rumânesc*, ediție critică de Vladimir Drimba, cu un studiu introductiv de Ion Gheție, București 1998, pp. 9-18. For a few critical editions of the Coresi printings, see Diaconul Coresi, *Carte cu învățătură (1581)*, publicată de Sextil Pușcariu și Alexie Procopovici, vol. I, Text, București 1914; Coresi, *Tâlcul Evangheliilor și Molitevnic rumânesc*, ediție critică de Vladimir Drimba, cu un studiu introductiv de Ion Gheție, București 1998; *Liturghierul lui Coresi*. Text stabilit, studiu introductiv și indice de Al. Mareș, București 1969.

<sup>2</sup> References to the Slavon language.

<sup>3</sup> See *I Cor.* 14: 19.

<sup>4</sup> Ion Rotaru, *O istorie a literaturii române*, I, Galați 1994<sup>2</sup>, p. 110; *Bibliografia românească veche*, I, București 1903, p. 64; George Ivașcu, *Istoria literaturii române*, I, București 1969, p. 105.

<sup>5</sup> Ion Rotaru, *quoted work*, p. 110, note 1.

To the biblical argument, the metropolitan of the Orthodox Church of the Romanians in Transylvania, Saint Simon Ștefan (1643-1656), added an argument which underlined the reality of their time, using in the *Preface of the New Testament*, printed in Romanian in Alba Iulia, in 1648, an image whereby he suggested how important it was that all might understand the words: "We all know very well that words must be like currency, for that currency is proper which circulates in all countries; similarly, those words are good which everybody understands."<sup>1</sup> The definition regarding the necessity of understanding the words made through a comparison taken from the domain of monetary circulation of the age (gold coins that were valid everywhere), made Saint Simon Ștefan famous in the Romanian literature, and his work of printing the *New Testament* in the spoken language of the people contributed, along with other facts, to the formation of the Romanian literary language.

The metropolitan of Moldavia, Saint Dosophtei (1671-1674, 1675-1683, † 1693), would use the argument of Tradition. Saint Dosophtei printed several books in Romanian, which were of paramount importance not only for the completion of the introduction of the Romanian language in Church, but also in terms of the contribution to the formation of literary language and in defense of the Orthodox faith against the Protestant and the Roman Catholic propaganda, through the direct access given to the Romanian faithful to the truths of faith contained in the liturgical and hagiographic texts. Thus, he printed in UnieŃ, Poland, *Psaltirea în versuri* (*The Psalter in Verse*, 1673), a large-scale poetic work in the Romanian language. This book was to influence for centuries the Romanian poetic creation, causing many psalms to infiltrate into carols and Christian songs, which are sung during the cycle of feast days dedicated to the Birth of our Savior Jesus Christ until our days<sup>2</sup>.

Metropolitan Dosophtei was also responsible for the translation and printing of the first books of worship into Romanian in Moldavia: *Acatistul Născătoarei de Dumnezeu* (*The Akathist to the Theotokos*, UnieŃ, 1673), *Dumnezeiasca Liturghie* (*The Divine Liturgy*, *Liturghier*, Iași, 1679, 1683), *Psaltirea de-nțăles* (*The Intelligible Psalter*, Iași, 1680), with a parallel text in Slavonic and Romanian, *Molităvnic de-nțăles* (*The Intelligible Euchologion*, Iași, 1680/1681), *Paremiile de peste an* (*Readings from Holy Scriptures during the year*, Iași, 1683), *Viața și petrecerea svinților* (*The Live and Feast of Saints*, in four volumes, Iași, 1682-1686), a work considered together with *Cazania* of St. Barlaam, Metropolitan of Moldavia (1632-1653, † 1657), the corner stone of Romanian literary prose<sup>3</sup>.

The books printed by Saint Dosophtei had the blessing of the *Church* and the endorsement of the *Reign*, and some of them also had the blessing of Eastern patriarchs, who used Slavonic and Greek as languages of worship, in order to avoid

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<sup>1</sup> Ibidem, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe*, II, București 1994<sup>2</sup>, p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> See I. Dianu, «Mitropolitul Dosophtei, mare cărturar, făuritor de limbă și cultură românească», in *Glasul Bisericii* 40/9-10 (1981), pp. 910-927.

that the effort of printing into Romanian be seen as an innovation<sup>1</sup>. In this way, these books were considered as normative regarding the teachings of the Church, and circulated in all areas inhabited by Romanians. However, in order to confer authority to these printings, against which some conservatory circles might have risen, Saint Dosoftei used certain means, including: a) biblical grounds invoked in the *Prefaces* composed by him, such as those in *Liturghier* of 1679, where he uses the verse from *Romans* 3: 29<sup>2</sup>, or in *Psaltirea de-nțăles* (1680), where he appeals to the classic text from *I Corinthians* 14: 19, saying that the *Holy Scriptures* published in a language which is not understood is like "a locked garden" and "a sealed fountain"<sup>3</sup>; b) the authority of Tradition in *Liturghier* of 1683, which could not be invoked, for example, by the deacon Coresi in Romanian translations, in an environment where the Protestant propaganda in the sixteenth century reeled off, bringing as evidence the answer given by Theodor IV Balsamon, patriarch of Antioch (1189-1195), to the question of Mark III, patriarch of Alexandria (1195-1209), if priests from Syria, Armenia and other Orthodox countries could serve in their own languages - the answer was affirmative, and it was based on the text from *Romans* 3: 29<sup>4</sup>.

The normal consequence of the effort to introduce Romanian language in worship had an important contribution for Romanians both in the literary field and in terms of deepening the truths of faith. Thus, the teaching of our Savior Jesus Christ was and is intelligible for any man who wants to reach the stature of the "perfect man"<sup>5</sup>, so that one might live not only the understanding with the spirit, but also *with the mind*, which brings many spiritual and intellectual fruits.

Unfortunately the same does not hold true where the tradition of sacred languages is considered as dogma; although rich in expression and valuable, but only for those dealing with them, in order to render the patristic and liturgical treasure, those languages are now without meaning for the vast majority of Christians. The paradox is that this theory was abandoned in the same place it arose, but it remains as a sacred tradition value precisely in Orthodoxy, although it does not belong to it.

The act of turning a language into a *dogma* expresses the tendency to identify *faith* and *nation*, that is limiting the Orthodox faith to nationalism<sup>6</sup>. But

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<sup>1</sup> Scarlat Porcescu, «Activitatea cărțurărească a Mitropolitului Dosoftei», in *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei* 50/9-12 (1974), p. 812.

<sup>2</sup> *Bibliografia românească veche...*, p. 225.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 224.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 263; V. Căndea, *quoted work*. (I), p. 183.

<sup>5</sup> *Efes.* 4: 13.

<sup>6</sup> In 1872, the Council of Constantinople condemned nationalism as incompatible with the Orthodox practice and teaching, identifying it rather with a sect. The language of the Council is explicit and rigorous: "We anathematize, disapproving and condemning nationalism, i.e. racial discrimination and national discords, fanatics and factions in the Church of Christ, as something foreign to the teaching of the Gospel and from the Holy Canons... those who permit such nationalism and, because of it, dare to summon unusual, racial and unlawful assemblies, we declare, based on the Holy Canons, as being alienated from the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church and, moreover, schismatics." - Ἱ. Καρμίρη,

Orthodox Christians are not identified by language, nor by the nation to which they belong, although these are gifts that confer upon them a certain identity, but through the faith they confess, and the language and the nation are enriched as gifts only as result of this confession. Without wanting to initiate a debate or accusations, we must stress that we cannot deny the reality of living in Christ, which is the only and true reality, in favor of the reality imposed as being real only on the level of human achievements. Any question can be placed on the orbit of one of the invoked realities, but the first concern is to make sure that, through everything we do, we report ourselves to salvation. From this perspective, any human action acquires a different value, and its effect over time is very fruitful. We see all of this also from the perspective of our ancestors' effort to render the truths of faith in the spoken language of the people. The example of the Romanians was hardly followed by the other peoples of the same faith. In this respect, the examples come from the Slavic and Greek worlds, two Orthodox peoples with a long and rich experience of Orthodoxy.

For the Orthodox Church of Russian expression, maintaining Slavonic meant keeping with the true Tradition<sup>1</sup>, although remaining in this position leads to the identification of the faith with the nation. This is a good thing as long as it enhances the values and creations of a people in the light of the teachings of the Church; however, when it is identified with nationalism, it is negative. This latter aspect creates artificial barriers both for those who want to know Orthodoxy, as well as for the Orthodox themselves, who, ceasing to be bearers of the light, hide it *under a clay pot*<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, they also cease to be dynamic and fulfillers of the mission and of the calling to be an "elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession", in order to "show forth the excellencies of Him Who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light"<sup>3</sup>.

In Orthodoxy, the mission is accomplished through that which the faithful is and represents, that means through the irradiation from within the man onto the outside, a reality that imposes implicitly the respect and admiration of the person next to us. Precisely at this point comes up the difference between the Orthodox meaning of the terms *mission*, *missionary* and the meaning of the same terms in the Western confessions, in which using these terms did not come as a fulfillment from within the man in order to convince on their own, but it started with a coercion from the outside towards an inner fulfillment, which would lead to the destruction of personality and the failures recorded by history.

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Τὰ δογματικὰ καὶ συμβολικὰ μνημεῖα τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, II, Graz-Austria 1968<sup>2</sup>, p. 1015.

<sup>1</sup> For instance, this tradition was so strong in the nineteenth century that on 24<sup>th</sup> of November 1824, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church suspended for three years (until November 26<sup>th</sup>, 1826) the printing and broadcast of the *Catechism* of Filaret, archbishop of Moscow, and the reason was not the content of the *Catechism*, but the fact that the sacred texts had been rendered in Russian and not in Slavon - Chiril Pistrui, «Cathismele Bisericii Ortodoxe Ruse», *Mitropolia Ardealului* 2/3-4 (1957), p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> *Mathew* 5: 15.

<sup>3</sup> *I Peter* 2: 9.

The Orthodox faithful is also exposed to these failures if he remains within the limits of nationalism, as his testimony becomes weak and ineffective before those who are seeking Orthodoxy, but who are the heirs of another expression of faith or tradition. Recently, one of them, the Englishman M. R. Bede Gerrard, who has come to embrace Orthodoxy in view of the authentic roots of his tradition<sup>1</sup>, expressed the difficulty encountered by the Westerners who want to get closer to Orthodoxy, as they are forced to embrace liturgical and spiritual traditions, sometimes with nationalist and particular colour, depending on the nationality of the Orthodox Church they want to belong to<sup>2</sup>. Finally, he ends his testimony with an example from his wife's and his personal life, as Westerners who embraced the Orthodox Church: "Life within the Orthodox Church is not easy for an adult who had previously had a vigorous participation in a Western Christian tradition. My wife and I became Orthodox together. She devoted herself deeply in the life of the Orthodox Church and learned ancient Greek and Slavonic well enough to participate fully in the services, and sometimes even to lead the choir. She enjoyed all the riches that life within Orthodoxy has given her, but she could not handle the problems that the both of us encountered: the denial of a Christian heritage and getting entangled in unfamiliar cultures and the mentalities that they often entail. Recently, after 13 years, she returned from the Orthodox Church to her Western Christian roots and we are learning together how to live our Interchurch married life fully. Based on this, the editor-in-chief of Σύναξη magazine asked me to write this text when I said to him: the greatest strength and the greatest weakness of the Orthodox Churches is nationalism."<sup>3</sup>

This aspect was also noticed by Father Dumitru Stăniloae, who highlighted the necessity to overcome nationalist barriers and to be open to catholicity (sobornost) and ecumenicity. Consequently, "after the national consciousness of the peoples was strongly emphasized within the Orthodox Church the nineteenth century, we reckon that our times demand that we underline their unity as peoples which are aware of themselves, but which are united in their common values, and foremost in the consciousness that they live in the same faith in God, Who works especially through the Sacraments and through their saints. If the whole Christianity has entered a movement of ecumenical convergence, why would the Orthodox Church not affirm its inner unity more powerfully."<sup>4</sup>

As a reminiscence of the identification between faith and nation, between language and faith, remains the current problem of using spoken languages in worship, if we consider that some Orthodox Churches of Slavic expression still use

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<sup>1</sup> Gerrard refers to the fact that local codes of ecclesiastic living have been developed in the British Isles, which had more in common with the Egyptian tradition than the European one, recalling that "the monasteries in Wales and Ireland have developed a pragmatic uninterrupted prayer, much like that of the achimite monks of Constantinople" - M. R. Bede Gerrard, «Η εμπειρία ενός βρετανού ὀρθοδόξου. Ὁρθόδοξη ταυτότητα καὶ πολιτισμός», Σύναξη 88 (2003), p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 70-73.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 74.

<sup>4</sup> Nestor, Arhiepiscop al Craiovei și Mitropolit al Olteniei, *Sfinți români și apărători ai legii strămoșești*, București 1987, p. 677.

old Slavonic<sup>1</sup>, just like the Orthodox Church of Greek expression uses Byzantine Greek, both languages being inaccessible for the vast majority of the faithful. The extent to which these languages are understood by the faithful of any of the Churches we mentioned is illustrated by an encyclical from September 1<sup>th</sup>, 2004, edited by the of remembrance worthy primate of the Church of Greece, His Holiness Hristodulos, who mentioned in it that "many young people do not understand the hymns, prayers and even texts that are being read"<sup>2</sup>; consequently, difficulties of understanding arose, which caused them to leave dissatisfied from the church<sup>3</sup>. Underlining that the issue of language simply has a pastoral character, in order to not be accused of breaching with the *Holy Tradition*, His Holiness Hristodulos initiated, for starters as an experiment and only within the Archdiocese of Athens<sup>4</sup>, beginning with the Sunday from September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004, the simultaneous reading of the original and the translations of biblical texts during the *Divine Liturgy* (the *Apostle* and the *Holy Gospel*)<sup>5</sup>. All other chants and hymns will remain in Byzantine Greek, because "the Church has studied the issue of a language reform and concluded that the translation of the hymns is neither feasible, nor desired, because every translation is far from being able to render the full meaning of the prototype<sup>6</sup>, but also because the Church's hymns are masterpieces of literature and theology, so that any intervention on them can be considered as desecrating our ancient language"<sup>7</sup>. Unfortunately, the initiative was abandoned at the insistence of the conservatory circles<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the Orthodox Church in Russia tackled the issue of understanding the liturgical language and the plan for Church Slavonic language reform is going to be prepared by a special Commission. This is considered useful not only in terms of the relationships between Church and society, but also for maintaining traditions, see <http://www.romfea.gr>, 2011-06-22.

<sup>2</sup> Χριστόδουλος, Αρχιεπίσκοπος Ἀθηνῶν, *Ἐγκύκλιος πρὸς τοὺς Πανοσιολογιωτάτους καὶ Αἰδεσιμολογιωτάτους Ἐφημερίους τῆς καθ' Ἡμᾶς Ἀγιωτάτης Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς*, Ἀθήνα 1 Σεπτεμβρίου 2004, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> Note that in the cities of Athens, the capital of Greece, and Piraeus, which today are united, there are nine Metropolis and the Archdiocese of Athens, and the latter contains only 144 parish churches, 126 chapels, 12 cemetery churches and 9 monastery churches - *Δίπτυχα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος*, Ἀθήνα 2004, p. 369).

<sup>5</sup> Χριστόδουλος, Αρχιεπίσκοπος Ἀθηνῶν, *quoted work*, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Regarding this statement, we have a different opinion, which can inspire many comments, but we will limit ourselves to say that rendering the sacred and patristic texts in the spoken languages does not imply a curtailment of their content, but an invitation to living the messages and the truths of faith that they contain. The practice of the Holy Apostles and of the early Church urges us towards this reflection, as they have not limited the expressing the word of God only to Aramaic, but rendered it in the languages spoken at that time. Precisely in these languages (Latin, Greek, Syrian, etc.) have been compiled those hymns, which express truths having the value of dogmas, but with the difference that in that age, those languages were the living organ of communication between people.

<sup>7</sup> Χριστόδουλος, Αρχιεπίσκοπος Ἀθηνῶν, *quoted work*, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> As I have been present to religious services at that time, I was surprised by some attitudes: the pericopes for the *Apostle* and the *Holy Gospel* were read with emphasis in ancient Greek, while translations were read in haste and without proper intonation; at the end of the *Divine Liturgy*, priests and psalm singers inquired the impressions only from elderly who went to Church more frequently, and ignored the youth and other members of the Church, as if aiming only at the negative responses to the initiative of His Beatitude Hristodulos.

In this context, we can better understand the effort and diligence of the hierarchs, clergy, monks and scholars in the Romanian Countries, either Romanians or of the other nationality, who contributed to the victory of worship in the spoken language of the people. It is their merit that during the seventeenth century and at the beginning of the eighteenth century<sup>1</sup>, they were able to overcome language barriers and traditions that claimed to be sacred at the rank of true Tradition, fact that allowed the transmission of the orthodox teaching to maintain its place at the root of the Romanians' identity and to determine the creation of the suitable framework for the great *hesychast revival* of the eighteenth century, led by abbots and Saints Basil of Poiana Mărului and Paisius Velichkovsky<sup>2</sup>, movement that began in Mount Athos, embedded itself and flourished in the Romanian Countries, and from there expanded up in Russia, reaching all the way to Alaska<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> It deserves to be noted that the scholar who made the greatest effort for including the Romanian language in worship was a hierarch of even another nation, namely Saint Antim Ivireanul, of Georgian origin, who became metropolitan of the Romanian Country (1708-1716).

<sup>2</sup> Mitropolitul Serafim, *Isihasmul, tradiție și cultură românească*, București 1994, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> See Virgil Căndea, «De Roumanie en Alaska: Les limites euroaméricaines du courant philocalique au XVIIIe siècle. Un épisode oublié de la christianisation de l'Amérique», in *Revue roumaine d'histoire* 34/1-2 (1995), pp. 55-66.