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*The article reveals the relations between the poetry and criticism written by Ghe. Grigurcu, enumerating the stages of the poet's development in the constant shadow of the critic. The features of the poetry – refinement, delicacy, grace, elegant and focused writing, ineffable notations and abstractions – merge with the exigencies that the same author, as a critic, shows towards poetry in general.*

Although he was a couple of books ahead of the critic, the poet Gheorghe Grigurcu has always stayed in his dense shadow. The pronounced personality of the critic has been hiding, apparently forever, the more discreet personality of the poet, in spite of a strong esteem achieved by the first from the very beginning. Some critic authorities had launched suggestions that were more than flattering about his poetry. But these words had no effect since Grigurcu's notoriety as a poet continued to be a clandestine one. At least besides a strict circle of experts. While the critic is always present on the lists (no matter how short or hurried) made by the protagonists, the poet doesn't even appear on the most generous lists. As a matter of fact, not even on those that claim to be exhaustive. The poet's silent condition is in a flagrant contradiction with his ecstatic fame as a critic, as well as with the sentences of the critics who have openly expressed their enthusiasm from the start. There is no doubt that Gheorghe Grigurcu would have been a much more publicly preeminent poet if he hadn't been accompanied by such an overwhelming critic.

(Even) a surface perspective on the heavier pieces in the critic reception he had achieved as a poet reveals the contradictory status of the poet: the higher and exalted the sentences of the critics were, the more diaphone the poetic glory became, as if there was no determination between the two. And this incongruence is not supported by improvised critics but by the very famous personalities in the field. A year before his debut in '68 (*Untrandafir invata matematica / A rose learns Mathematics*), Stefan Augustin Doinas, for instance, was seeing in his poetry "one of the most advanced landmarks on the line of modernism". Later on, after his poetry had grown into several books, Doinas would recognize in it "a type of philosophic poetry of a great authenticity". "Lyricism and knowledge", "severe and very deep", "excelling /.../ in sentences of a rare metaphorical pregnancy /.../ in a gnomic style" were at the same time the high peaks of young poet Grigurcu in the perspective of Ion Negoitescu. This conclusion, drawn from the second book published by the poet (*Trei nori / Three clouds*, 1969) essentially covers the entire poetry published until (and including) *Cotidiene / Everyday* in 86. His profile from *Scriitori contemporani / Contemporary writers* reiterates the initial observation "Grigurcu's sensibility is connected to his thinking, his poetry being under the sign of reason". Grigurcu seemed to be "a poet of reference", "a necessary poet", "in the absence of whom our literature today would be like a piano keyboard missing a key" to Daniel Dimitriu in *Singuratatea lecturii / The Solitude of Reading*. He is also put on a significant position, among "Livresque and ironic poets" by Marin Mincu in his famous *Poetry and generation*. His poetry is defined here in the terms of a "filtering of perpetual essences" and of a "mysterious empowerment of significations", while his poetic vision appears as an operation by which "the intellect puts back /.../ the world in an innocent equation, rebuilding its ingenuity". In Ion Pop's *Pagini transparente / Transparent Pages*, Grigurcu's poetry proved to be "a representative creation for the present moment of Romanian lyricism". Ion Pop centers his commentary on "ingenio arts" and on "contemplative

rigor”, on the reading of the “understood” in things rather than on their “verifiable forms”. The structure of a dialectic oxymoron is deciphered by Cornel Regman (in *Latest critic explorations*) in the very heart of this poetry, beating in reflexive systoles and imaginative diastoles: “A sort of reflection, guarded by image; at the same time, an image alerting a thought”. Finally, I would also remind Nicolae Manolecu’s deposition for “the sovereign analogy” and for “crystalography”, as well as the change of perspective in interpretation from the music of the abstracts to the “concreteness of the sensation”. I cannot tell what other lawyers could have pleaded better for the cause of Grigurcu’s poetry. It would have been useless anyway. Because this poetry strictly addresses the intellectualist ghetto, where refinement is not simple pathology, but a condition of sensibility.

There is no doubt that Grigurcu’s poetry may be accused of a sort of self-congruence that is lead too far away. Maybe even of the

Fără îndoială că poezia lui Grigurcu poate fi acuzată de un fel de egalitate cu sine prea departe dusă. Poate chiar de orgoliul unei identități statice. Măcar în măsura în care elementele introduse în reacția lirică sînt de la început și pînă la sfîrșit aceleași, iar echilibrul lor e ținut cu strictețe. E vorba însă de un echilibru construit din suave dezechilibre, din pendulări ale acului sub presiunea gramajului delicat care favorizează, imperceptibil, pe rînd, fie hieratica ideală a realului, fie senzualizarea abstractelor. Poetul se poartă ca un hedonist al melancoliilor și privește lumea ca un estetician. Poate chiar ca un estetist ce contrage realul în rafinamente. Dar această privire estetizantă, care domesticește lumea în imagini, nu e lipsită de iritări. Epigrafiă și-a avut din capul locului contrapunctul în epigramatic. Mîinii fulgurante scutură mereu delicata pînză de păianjen în care sînt prinse boabele de rouă ale imaginarului. Iritările aduc prețiozitatea lui Grigurcu la incitanța expresionistă. Cu respirația scurtă, e drept, dar cu o pregnanță rezolută a imprecăției: “Atît de păguboase vremuri pentru pietrari/ cînd piatra se fărîmițează asemenea unei ciuperce uscate// atît de nerentabile vremuri pentru tîmplari/ căci lemnul se transformă-n rouă// atît de ingrate vremuri pentru fierari/ căci fierul se preschimbă-n frig polar// doar poeții provinciali se-ngrașă-n subsoluri/ aidoma guzganilor”. Astfel de elanuri atomizate ale resentimentului întrerup mereu reveria contemplativă, adăugînd o vivacitate nervoasă ceremoniei hieratizante. Gheorghe Grigurcu operează, alternativ, cînd nu simultan, o inducție a vitalului în virtualitatea conceptului și o inducție a ideii în senzual. Linia de miraj a ideii o reprezintă la el infuzia în senzual, pe cînd linia de miraj a senzațiilor e reprezentată de puritatea glacială a ideii. Fiecare din cele două limbaje trăiește beția convertirii, a transfigurării contrariante. Notația visează climatul ideației, iar ideația are febra senzației. Firește, cînd cele două căi nu devin una singură, poemele par angajate fie într-un protocol de epurare a realului, fie, dimpotrivă, într-unul de senzorializare a inefabilelor. Formula lui capătă atunci o tranșanță deliberată și se nutrește dintr-o violență premeditată a conceptului poetic asupra viziunii. Mai cu seamă în poemele tinereții e vizibilă o persecuție a realului, mînat cu sila spre fascinația ideii și spre canonul geometric. Egalitatea de sine a lui Grigurcu nu e, însă, un simplu immobilism. În interiorul unei hieratici se dezvoltă la el o dialectică, o progresie spre fenomenalitatea spectaculară a imaginației și spre concretețea involburată în diafanitate. Gheorghe Grigurcu, după cum au spus-o, chiar de la început, primii săi interpreți, participă la un mod intelectual al lirei. Numai că “intelectualitatea” sa poetică e coborîta în senzație, la fel cum senzația e ridicată în idee. Poetul trăiește, de fapt, într-o continuă exultanță imaginativă și intelectuală, în care imaginația se folosește de instrumentele intelectului, iar intelectul de vocația corporealizantă a imaginativului. Poemele nu sînt grefe senzuale pe idei și nici excrescențe ideale ale senzualului; ele sînt, de fapt, epifanii delicat-senzuale ale spiritului, pure ciocniri ale ideii cu senzația, ciocniri rezolvate în clinchete imaginative.

Inspite of an intellectual pressure over the sensibility and a conceptual contribution of the imaginary, the lyric ritual does not adore abstraction but only the stylistic manufacturing

of the concreteness. Elaborated fulgurations, in which the spontaneity seems to be the product of premeditation, of freshness and imaginative grace, the poems record the moment when the idea gets sensually imploded, or when it is in full efflorescence, focusing on the contraction of the text into an irradiant germ. The fulgurate principle of the imaginary meets the imperative rigor of discursive concision, and from their concentric pressure a lapidary lyrism results, made of purely vibrating notations. Grigurcu speaks almost exclusively in the poetic language of Laconia, practicing an ascent of the discourse as a strict utterance of the essentiality. His productivity comes from “erasures”, from an elliptic art, from a religion of concentration. “Irrelevant words” are systematically evacuated from this language of essentialness telegrams: “Și unul după altul capitulează cuvintele de prisos/ se desprind cum frunza de pe ram cum fluturile de pe frunză/ cum spiritul de pe buză”. This cold fervor of fundamentalism and lapidarity stimulates an expressivity that is loaded with the electricity of meaning and tensioned between glacial and ardent, rigor and formal fascination. Grigurcu’s expression is vegetally fresh, sublimed in its own formal purity. Together with the analogical principle of the imaginary, which is used with ostentation, Grigurcu’s poetry frequently uses figures of concentrated tension. The oxymoron is, obviously, the most preferred in this poetics of suave impact of the contraries: “Aduceți această cenușă sintetică pe care focul n-o cunoaște/ această cenușă străină de ardere rudă cu ghețării/ scornire demonică precum un țipăt fără sunet precum/ un text fără litere precum o ploaie uscată precum/ o neagră zăpadă încununând o albă țărână” etc. Intellectual and imaginative reveries, fascinations transposed into a grammar of refinement, Grigurcu’s poems, mixing in homeopathic doses the livresque refinement and the plastic perception are often pure suggestive escapes, metaphors where the imagination is exulting, and where there is to be found a gracility like the one in Ion Pillat’s one-verse poems: “deasupra spicelor coapte tremură aerul/ cum rîndurile unei scrisori nescrise”. Such redundant exercises speak about a constant concern of Grigurcu, that of finding a way to translate the ineffable. Grigurcu is a poet who lives from the awareness of the ineffable, he is the one who is always seeking a language of compatibility. His expedition in the ineffable, into the suave mystery of the poetics are exercises of translating the unspeakable, of comparing it. Many – if not the most – of his poems whirl, hypnotized, around this mystery of the poem itself. The themes of creation become more offensive, more voluntary and they engage the vision into speculation. The contemplation of the poetic becomes, therefore, not only an act of definition, but also one of problematization in which the suggestion sublimates a tragic meaning: “Poetul își usucă poeziile/ cu-aceeași sugativă ieftină cu care se usucă/ lemnul în pădure vîntul pe boltă osul în țărână”. The poetic concept, manufactured from suavity and in favor of the contemplation, has no visionary arrogance, but nevertheless it holds a certain sacrificial ethics. However domestic and calm, the poem ends-up devouring its creator, showing its romantic instinct: “Scrii și transcrii faci și defaci/ cuvinte monstruoase ca și cum/ te-ai juca fără păs cu un dinozaur/ cu un dinozaur ce te lasă să te joci cu el/ înainte de-a te mânca”. The suavities also contain dangers, and the poem is not an innocent occupation. Even the contemplation of the real increases the dramatic index of the vision, especially as Grigurcu reads the everyday existence as a simple epiphany of the metaphysical, building the poem at the confluence of direct notation with its mythic paraphrase. The domestic gesture provokes an imaginative and referential explosion, leading the real into the phantasmatic: “Se zvîrcolesc draperiile muiate în cadă/ cum piepturi și coapse și bicepsii în Stix”. The epigraphy that contracts the real is based in his case on a „precision” imagination („an imagination with the precision of the bullet”, says a verse), which turns the lyrism to definitions. This way, the mathematician of the ineffable betrays himself, trying to catch grace itself into a formula. Grigurcu’s definitions operate in a baroque fascination of the equivalences. However concise, concentrated and essentialized, his poetry is, in fact, one of paraphrasing the real. It does not

know the vertigo of directness, always taking the mediated way of suggestion. The directness is, in the ceremony of equivalences, a rare and suspect surprise. It is deviated into the analogical and the latter remains a reverberation of the real. Even the most sensual “definitions” gain a delicate index, processing the impetuosity of the notation in vibrant arabesques: “Sîinii ei aprigi/ cum doi dobermani în lesă/ aproape cumiņi”. Frames of the real, caught through a filter that only reproduces the echoes in it, Grigurcu’s poetry provokes the imagination to define the real.

The poet’s last volumes, especially those after the 1986 *Cotidiene*, play in a rigorous project of transcription as transfiguration. The imaginative gesture is more carnal and it is usually based on the transformation of the idea into sensation. The poetry is thus moved on a tendency of concretizing, on an enthusiasm of arabesques. Grigurcu’s verses are always rituals of inelation, a sort of coding into a sensual hieroglyph. They are about defining the real, after it gets decomposed prismatically and re-synthesized. The sensual plasticity is often torn into virulent contours, containing grotesque violence but also a purifying function and a spiritualizing effect. It induces suavity just as it bolds the contours and sublimates in the very instant it transforms abstraction into plasma. An expert of lapidary paraphrases, Gheorghe Grigurcu introduces in an euphoric writing lethal doses of melancholy. Without being an illuminated one, his melancholy remains a solar one. It is a product of grace, not depression. Or, at most, of a depression transposed into grace. Even when it digs into bacovian matters, when the spleen overflows the word, the suavity reflex of the imaginary brings the existential drama into the accuracy of a drawing: “Bolnavă de pestă apa Jiului/ cum o turmă de porci// norii matinali miros a clor/ pînă și poezia crapă/ cum smalțul unui dinte”. The pillow of imagination is always between the poet and its own states, between the poet and the real. The imprecative tendency has an imaginative elegance that makes it a savior. Because its fundament remains the enthusiasm of suggestion, the poem conceived as an imaginative efflorescence. And the poet builds the sensual analogy of the states always leading them towards the extasis of a concrete image: “Și cum mai sfîrșie/ amintirile/ în unele dimineți/ cum oul în tigaie”. But this sensuality of the feelings is also an escape from their impact, a refuge into the imaginative equivalence. All of Grigurcu’s poetry exists in the spirit of analogy, activated from an ostentative candor of formal techniques. His world is, as it has been said, the world of comparison, of equivalences. The comparison works, obviously, with substitutes of the real, with substituents. It is a project of perfecting and intensification. It seems to be an apology of the real but it is, in fact, a criticism of the real. The poet reactivates, in this way, one of the strong meanings of imagination: that of expressing a fundamental fear, an existential discomfort, and of finding a compensation for these. Imagination is, in fact, a criticism of the real. In this perspective, Grigurcu’s poetry is a “criticism”, although it is apparently made of ineffable elements and suave beatifications. By his epigraphic formula, by the tenacity of perverting the real by contemplation into refined sensations, Gheorghe Grigurcu is a solitary. As solitary in poetry as is Targu-Jiu.

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