THE EXPRESSIVITY OF THE POPULAR LANGUAGE IN THE POETRY OF ANTON PANN

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Abstract*: Anton Pann never distanced himself from the evolution of the Romanian language. His work describes the spoken language of the epoch, comprising, depending on the theme and the purpose of evocation, both archaisms or words from other cultures, recalling its connection with the Balkan world and the terms of Bucharest slang or neologisms, thus marking the evolution of the changes in the Romanian literature of the time. The present study highlights Anton Pann's creation as an effect on Romanian literature.*

Keywords*: vocabulary, creation, versification.*

Anton Pann is a writer who left us a unique, original in a way creation, being a pioneer of this kind of writing. Because he had no models, Pann became famous for his personal manner, from which derived both victories and failures. The main act of his creation remains the so-called Romanian *poezirea*, the process of versifying different texts (anonymous or written by an author) which he heard in different places. Everything he heard, he transposed into a versified text, from here deriving either the occasional character of the texts or their prosaism. Thus we realize that in many works Pann's creation is rudimentary, but the world of his work is a living and authentic one, even if it is an elementary, sometimes archaic one. He was primarily interested in the words he used, but also in the impact that they had on the reader, although he was missing lyricism, especially romanticism. *Reading diligently in the book of life*, he writes simply and much, as he feels, without principles and prejudices.

Anton Pann does not avoid the occasional texts for world songs or social events, nor the acrostics related to autobiographical incidents, nor the proverbs, the sayings, the anecdotes and the riddles that he easily versifies. Almost all the literary works that made him famous represent a versified prose. Because Anton Pann is not a lyrical poet, his literary formula "is lacking in lyricism, that inner warmth, that warm life of the feeling, that dull sound but full of suggestive force which the depths of the soul give." (O. Papadima, 1957: 594). If we notice his qualities of a comediograph and those of a storyteller, as well as the fantasy and the colorful language, we overlook the placidity or vulgarity from *Spitalul amorului* (*The Hospital of Love*), Pann often confining to descriptions, enumerations, to a mosaic of moral details and reflections, with a rich and colorful vocabulary. The "frustrating and unprofessional character of inspiration" (P.Cornea, 1964: 108) explains the lyrical scheme, the prosody, the vocabulary used, the verbosity, the comic tone, the characters, the epic strategy and the language. The simplicity and the schematism and that verbal *buffoonery* remain a coordinate of Anton Pann's whole creation, confirming the conclusion of the literary historian. Of course, other qualities such as the critical and moral observation,

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the humor, the epic invention, the authenticity of some situations and characters, the dialogue that is what contributes to the history of our poetry as well as to the Romanian literary language. Some of the lyrics are melodious and full of energy, others are cold, pale with rare rhymes in which there is no lack of peasant humor, irony, allegory, erudition and joviality, wisdom and common sense, being put at the confluence of what is folkloric and clerkly, of what is urban and rural.

Pann had a special gift of writing poetry, of putting color and savour in his creation, improvising on a given theme a lot of variants. In this vast creation, the proverb remains a starting point, being illustrated by stories and anecdotes of an epic and rustic character resulting from the dialogue and from the language used. In almost all of Pann's works, we find the creation in verses, having a narrative support and an ethical scenography in the center, the poet being a perfect versifier. He uses a colorful speech, sometimes without versification, without any poetic intention, without rhythm and rhyme, so today's reader meets more the matter of the poetic act and less its form. In *Povestea vorbii* (*The Story of the Word*), even the maxims become distiches, we encounter synonyms, fluent dialogue, phrases, interjections, paratactic constructions, rich vocabulary (in archaisms, folkloric elements, slang and neologisms), the plasticity of many images, the dialogue and the monologue, all these representing important elements in Pann's creation.

In *Povestea poamelor* (*The Story of the Fruits*), he uses a lot of epithets in order to characterize an onion:

……Cum simți aceasta Ceapă totodată / Cum e din natură foarte veninată, / Se-mbracă îndată, iute, cu mânie, / Douăspre'ce haine puse de dimie, / Și cămăși atâtea albe, supțirele, / Îmbrăcând binișul roșu peste ele, / Pieptănă și barba-și albă și bătrână / Scuturând-o bine de pământ, țărână, / Pleacă necăjită-n tot-a ei putere, / Veninând văzduhul de catran și iere, / Pe pământ târându-și barba sa cea lată, / Sus în deal ajunse la crăiasa-ndată.//……

(POVESTEA VORBII/ THE STORY OF THE WORD, 1936).

In what the dialogue regards, not a few times, there were invoked texts such as *Sultanul și pescarul* (*The Sultan and the Fisherman*) (in the chapter *Despre făgăduieli și daruri* /*About Promises and Gifts*):

……Sultanul / de unde ești? / Pescarul / De unde mi-e nevasta. / Sultanul / Din ce țară? Care ți-e patria? / Pescarul / Patria omului este acolo unde-i bine. / Sultanul / Ai copii ? / Pescarul / Unul în poale și altul în foale ./ Sultanul / Ai vro stare ? / Pescarul / Proverbul îmi e dovadă: Ce e pe mine ș-în ladă. / Sultanul / De ce ești sărac ? / Pescarul / Sunt sărac pentru că nu sunt bogat. / Sultanul / Cum trăiești ? / Pescarul / Te uită la față și mă-ntreabă de viață. / Sultanul / Ești nenorocit ? / Pescarul / Norocul se ține după mine ca pulberea după câine. //……

(POVESTEA VORBII/THE STORY OF THE WORD, 1936).

Or *Despre minciuni și flecării* (*About Lies and Blethers*):

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… Un mincinos odată zise altui mincinos: / -Prietene, vezi tu turnul acel nalt și luminos? / -Da, acesta îi răspunse; și iar îl întrebă el: / -Dar vezi tu tocmai în vâru-i cum umblă un șoricel? / -Ce mai minciună cu coarne, -zise prietinul său- / Că eu abia zăresc turnul, necum șorecelul tău; / Însă îl auz prea bine cum umblă-n tropot, încât / Parc-ar bubui o toabă ș-ar avea copot la gât. / -Te crez, acel îi răspunse, văzându-se înundat, / iindcă nu-și găsise omul cu minciuni de-nșelat. / După proverbul ce zice; / A umblat cât a umblat, / Dar acum i s-a-nfundat.//……

(POVESTEA VORBII/THE STORY OF THE WORD, 1936)

Regarding the language of his work, Pann makes real lexical tournaments, based on puns, inner rhymes and strong-flavored words, extracted from the vocabulary which combines the popular language with the literary one. As a literary monument and as a versified paremiological anthology, *Povestea vorbii* (*The Story of the Word*) is "a comedy of pure words, and at the same time a human, integral comedy, made from impersonal, stereotypical observations, known in advance, in their derisive Chinese rigidity of a millennial wisdom." (G.Călinescu, 1941: 206-207). Essentially in Pann's work remains what Călinescu said:"the almost monstrous multitude of aphorisms on an essential idea." (G.Călinescu, 1941: 206). We find in Pann's work numerous elements of phonetic and lexical nature specific to the Wallachian idiom and the cursivity of the sentence in perfect agreement with the rhythm of the lyrics, which denotes a representative text for his creation:

…… Într-o zi Nastratin Hogea, ceartă c-un vecin având / use tras în judecată. Pentru dânsul jalbă dând; / Nastratin plecând să meargă spre a se înfățișa, / Băgă-n sân un pietroi mare și se-nfățișă așa : / Când pârâtorul de dânsul spunea câte îi plăcea, / Nastratin pe taină sânul își arăta și tăcea. / Judecătorul văzându-l că își bătea sânul plin, / Toată dreptatea o dete în partea lui Nastratin; / După ce jeluitorul fu d-aici afară dat, / Zise lui Nastratin Hogea : -Scoate ce mi-ai arătat. / El, scoțând îndată piatra, o puse cu cinste jos, / Și se trase la o parte cu chip prea politicos; / -Dar ce este asta ? zise judecătorul bătrân. / -Este darul, el răspunse, ce ți-l arătam în sân. // ……

(NAZDRĂVĂNIILE LUI NASTRATIN HOGEA/ THE MISCHIEFS OF NASTRATIN HOGEA, 1963)

The text shows that Pann uses the gerund to mark the continuity of the action, the Romanian imperfect tense shows the duration, the simple perfect tense - the narrative and the present tense – the dramatism. In general, he uses the pair rhyme. Although he has rhyme-gerund and others which are irregular, he has some difficult ones, too. Referring to Anton Pann, T. Vianu wrote: "So he writes with naivety, without improvement, without attention, that often replaces talent, but often with politeness and always with great fineness and goodness." (T.Vianu, 1965:49). In Pann's creation the dominant characteristic of the language used is its spoken aspect. Besides the numerous folkloric elements (chiup, cârpător, chisăliță, fedeleș, strungă etc.), we encounter a series of terms of Greek and Turkish origin, but also a large number of neologisms (duet, broșură, educație, editor, diplomă, magazin, octavă, patron, pompier, amorez, onorabil, picnic, pliuș, șampanie etc.)

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of Italian or French origin. Some terms were used only by the educated people and the others were rather popular.

The material used by Pann is rich and diverse with a lyrical overflow full of sayings and jokes, which explains the wide public audience over the years. "Anton Pann or Creangă, although both antonpannism and humulestenism are varieties of rabelaism, meaning of the savour of jovial erudition, hardly make a figure of scholars for the common reader, (...) an enormous joviality (brings them togheter) that suppresses the least important fact in a swarm of quotations. In no way is Anton Pann, an author of high value unjustly underestimated, a collector." (G.Călinescu, 1941: 207).The writer is able to distribute the popular language with the literary one, making up a comedy of pure words and at the same time an integral human comedy, made from impersonal, stereotypical, previously known, surprising observations in their total lack of novelty.

By linking the proverbs to each other, by combining them, he succeeds in giving a sometimes sad, sometimes bitter collection of the human comedy. In *Povestea vorbii (The Story of the Word*), *Floarea darurilor* (*The Flower of Gifts*) and *Pilde filosofești* (*Philosophical Parables*), we find examples of the combination of proverbs and the use for which they are given, while in *Fabule și istorioare* (*Fables and Anecdotes*), Pann develops the proverb in the title or in the motto, discussing about a whole theme, explaining the idea of the whole chapter, sometimes making reference to the last proverb in the series. *Nu este răsur să n-aibă cusur* concludes the series *Despre cususuri sau urâciuni* (*About flaws and abominations*), which is followed by the fable about the rose without thorns, but also without scent.

The story about the two liars belongs to the chapter *Despre minciuni și flecării* (*About Lies and Blethers*), this story being followed by the anecdote about the man's awkwardness in household chores that belongs to the chapter *Despre slugă și stăpân* (*About the Servant and the Master*).

The collection *De la lume adunate și iarăși la lume date* (*[Sayings] Gathered from Folk and Returned to Folk*) involves a more complex process than that of *Fabule și istorioare* (*Fables and Anecdotes*) because they belong to the phenomenon of supra-creation, where Pann doesn't add anything new, but his work, the poet becoming a genius that does not produce, but organizes and offers us a personal selection. Therefore, the productions offered are not a diversion, but an attempt to revive the sources of the most genuine life, where Anton Pann's poetry means action.

His anecdotes condemn some vices or highlight moral qualities. Anton Pann's allegory is evident in *Povestea poamelor și a legumelor* (*The Story of Fruits and Vegetables*), "(with reference to the Poricologus- a Greek satire of the 12th century, with the same title - *Povestea poamelo1r*/ *The Story of the Fruits*), a manuscript identified at Monastery From a Wood (where his love for Anica took him)" (I.Dan,1989: 189-157) which served him to write a satire.

Guince curse the grape :

…… Tu de lemn să fii spânzurat, de cuțit cârn tăiat și de voinic tânăr în lin călcat ". Blestemul se găsește și la Pann : „- Tu –n a ta viață, ca un blestemat, / Tot de lemne-n lume să ii spânzurat, / Soare să te arză, să te bată vânt, / Si să nu-ți ajungă trupul de pământ ; /

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Ochi ciori să-ți scoată ș-alte păsări mici / Și de bruma toamnei în bucăți să pici, / Și apoi în urmă prin cuțit tăios / Trupul său să ie dat de-acolo jos, / Și să n-ai pe nimeni a se umili / Ca să-ți tragă clopot sau a te jeli, / Ci cu râs, cu cântec a te arunca, / Cum și supt picioare-n danț a te călca…//……

(POVESTEA POAMELOR/THE STORY OF THE FRUITS, 1936).

Surprising effects in expression are also encountered in Anton Pann's *Despre conversație sau petreceri și glume* (*About conversation or parties and jokes*), in which he plays with the arrangement of the lyrics: change of meanings, synonyms of content and form, repetitions:

…… Vremea e a râde, vremea e a plânge. / Când să vorbește de râs, nu să spune pentru plâns. / Și când să spune de plâns, nu să vorbește de râs. / Iar nu / Râs amestecat cu plâns / Cum a zis una : / Bărbatul meu zace mort în casă și mă făcuși de râsei / Cu toate că / Moarte fără râs și nuntă fără plâns nu se poate .//……

(POVESTEA VORBII/THE STORY OF THE WORD, 1936).

Anton Pann, an active person among so many passive people at the time, writes his collection as a tree produces its fruit; once completed, his work tends toward collectivity that is believed to be its eternal vim. Pann considers himself close to the simple man through his writings, therefore he prefers ballads, legends, stories that have a fabulist character, proverbs and riddles.

In *Călătoria lui Moș Albu* (*The journey of Moș Albu*) the writer transposes the idea of the traveler-writer, in which we identify the character with the author, thus discovering a popular creation, one that belongs to Anton Pann. The writer classifies the characters as follows: Moș Neagu - is an inexhaustible source of popular wisdom that respects the old customs, Moș Popa signifies the simple man who opposes the luxury of the city, a Greek tenant Stan, young and cheerful girls. We notice in Pann's work a special comic language obtained by his attitude, by the reaction to one or more riddles, where the spirit of the character becomes eloquent in this way.

Anton Pann often characterizes and defines the characters, for example, in the story about *Cei trei gheboși* (*The Three Hunchbacks*), where he begins with a micro-portrait of the humpbacked husband: his jealousy is as terrible as his appearance, and the lyrics also render this thing:

…… În Constantinopoli un om de neam prost, / D-ăi de care crește ca un copaci gros, / Sucit, în tulpină și strâmb, nodoros ; / Netrecut prin școală, ca și un lemn iar / Tăiat cu toporul, nedus la tâmplar. / El pe lângă alte neciopliri / Avea și asupra-și mai multe pociri : / Să lăsăm că-n spate era cocoșat, / Că nu e al firii lucru întâmplat, / Ci în celelalte, buze, nas, urechi, / Le avea-n mărime ca două perechi ; // ……

(CEI TREI GHEBOȘI /THE THREE HUNCHBACKS, 1936)

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The denouement, with the death of the three hunchbacks, as well as the moments of the adventurous corps removal, highlights the mockery of the jealousy. Anton Pann's irony is sometimes harsh, with a precise direction, his strategy of a moralist and satirical writer prizes more, in his anecdotes, the wisdom of the common man than the haughty generosity of the rich people. Much of the riddles were versified, Pann worked on the rhyme, striving to improve their form, to make them be as beautiful as a song or as a poem. Keeping unaltered the spoken language of the simple man, Pann sometimes allows himself to intervene, improving the expression and making it explicit, thus developing the writer's own rhythm. Anton Pann's tireless ability to concoct new epithets and nuances manifests itself not only in the moral sphere but also in the appearance of the sensitive world. The verse often becomes a discovery of the language resources through an associative mechanism ranging from alliterations to homonymies.

Each of Pann's stories or anecdotes has as its subtitle the motivation of its production. Pann concocted his creations and gave us the folkloric expressions that he used, inspiring himself from writing for people, leaving a precious testament. *De la lume adunate / Și iarăși la lume date* (*Gathered from Folk/ And Returned to Folk*) represents the author's conception about the source of his creation and the purpose of art. Anton Pann belongs to the allegorical poets, who illustrate an idea, and not to the symbolic poets, that, beyond appearances, refer to a vast and disturbing significance.

We encounter in his creation a series of poems that intentionally behave as texts that should be said not read, dealing with mimic effects, significant interruptions and intonation varieties. The metrification of lyrics, which is sometimes incorrect, the digressions with the role of brackets in the narrative luxury, the repetitions serving as a memotechnical reference are elements that contribute to the augmentation of the recitative character. The language is also full of spoken forms. In an article, "Rosetti noted a number of incorrect pronunciations: crastaveți- castraveți, dește,dești- degete, dotor- doctor, oauă-ouă, oiu-voi, tutulora- tuturora, vei va- vrei vrea etc." (Al.Rosetti, 1950: 48).

A special attention is paid to phrases and expressions, which, in many cases, appear in personal or unusual forms. We can classify the phrases according to a work by Florica Dimitrescu in three categories, which differ, depending on the degree of agglutination of the component terms and their ability of expressivity. We remark that in Pann's *Povestea vorbii* (*The Story of the Word*) there are used combinations of words with a much coloristic effect, indicating the fact that the work is part of the third category, as we notice:

……Toata lumea bea vinul, dar nu-și bea mintea. / Își înoată gura în vin până dă dintr-însul. /Gândește să nu mai lase în bute. / Umblă cu ochii logodiți. / Dacă nenai puterință, la ce chichirezi gâlceavă? / Toarnă, umple oalele, / Până-și udă poalele. // ……

(POVESTEA VORBII/THE STORY OF THE WORD, 1936)

It is obvious that Pann competes with the popular imagination in producing expressive phrases. The abundance of synonymous terms, the variety of nuances in the denomination of the same objects, the affective intensity of the combinations show an inexhaustible capacity of verbal invention, acting with the spontaneous nature of the writer's genuineness. Pann's vocabulary expands on a wide area and includes a remarkable

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chromatic variety. Its richness is verified by the aspects that the poet communicates in a determinant sector of reality. What concerns the author is the definition of gender and species rather than the detailing of the individual traits, the writer's art aims to find universal truths and typical characteristics.

If, however, the original purpose of Pann's creation is to transmit a teaching, on his way, the author finds so much pleasure and knows how to put so much color in the remembrance of the events and in the description of the human vices that his stories become, as in Boccaccio or Cervantes, some self-standing literary works, representing the real life in the most diverse ways. Old myths, legends and parables gain a new look under his pen; they sound natural, they happen in the Romanian world, they are authentic, so we are surprised to ascertain that they are found on all the meridians of the world.

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