STYLISTIC STRUCTURE IN CALISTRAT HOGAŞ'S WORK

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Abstract*: Through his work, Calistrat Hogaş, promotes, on the one hand, the traveller in love with nature and eager to test long walks and virgin paths stirring up his imagination, maintaining his inspiration and his feeling of freedom, and, on the other hand, creates a true poem, dedicated to nature, which, with infinite generosity, reveals itself to the one who wishes to know its greatness. Thus, the reader of Hogaş's work discovers on his trip through the Neamț Mountains, along with the teacher from Piatra, both pictures of nature and memorable portraits. At stylistic level, the diversity of images and artistic figures, as well as the alternation of popular language with the neologistic, stand out, thus emphasizing the poetic side of the writer, who, in an entirely original way, manages to surprise and render the beauty of the world and of life. Hogaş's work is full of colour, dynamism, humour and erudition, depicting to the reader images unique in the Romanian travel literature.*

Keywords: *style, expressivity, language, artistic image, artistic figure.*

The concept of ***stylistics*** appeared in the second half of the XIXth century and it has been attributed many interpretations and delimitations : "theory of style", in Novalis conception or, in the modern theory of literature, the science reuniting two fundamental areas, ***linguistic stylistics*** (Charles Bally) and ***literary stylistics*** (Leo Spitzer) (Got, M., 2007: 9).

At the beginning of the XXth century, Charles Bally instituted the term ***linguistic stylistics***, referring to the science studying "the means of expression of a linguistic community, from the point of view of their affective content, that is expressing sensitivity facts through language and the effect of language facts on sensitivity" [1], not taking into account, thus, ***the style*** of the object of study of this science and insisting on the ***social-psychological method*** of stylistic research (Corniță, G., 1995 : 8).

If Bally promotes ***lingusitic stylistics***, insisting on the specificity of the speech in relation to the paradigmatic form of the language[2], Leo Spitzer (1970) proposes the ***inductive-deductive method*** in the analysis of the literary work, creating the ***literary stylistics***, with an emphasis on the individual syle, highlighting, thus, the style of a writer.

Ștefan Munteanu considers that ***stylistics*** – whose objective is the study of the language, thoroughly – establishes the expresivity of the artistic language, understood as a double dependance relationship (Corniță, G., 1995 : 10) : "on the one hand, a relation between two forms of the elements of the linguistic sign (expressions and content) – and, at the same time, - a relation between this unit and the reality it designates." (Munteanu, Șt., 1972 : 122).

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[1] Bally, Ch., 1909 : 16 : ≪ la stylistique étudie donc les faits d'expression du language au point de vu de leur contenu affectif, c'est-a-dire l'expression des faits de la sensibilité par le language et l'action des faits de language sur la sensibilité ≫.

[2] *Ibidem*: ≪ l'étude de la language de tout le monde ≫

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On the other hand, the author of "Handbook of stylistics", Georgeta Corniță, underlines the functional character of stylistics, invoking the opinion of Ion Coteanu, who considers that this field implies "the study of the language in action (in a wide sense), being understood as all the verbal skills of a linguistic community historically established [...], the set of skills widening and narrowing depending on speakers and its particular needs of use" (Corniță, G., *op. cit.* : 11).

In the stylistic analysis, the two areas – ***linguistic stylistics*** and ***literary stylistics*** – become complementary, not opposed, since any text – literary or non-literary – "is a finite linguistic structure" (Got, M., *op.cit.* : 10) which "defines its identity through the specific convergence of the four constitutive dimensions [...]: phonemic dimension, semantic dimensions, syntactic dimension, stylistic dimension" (Irimia, D., 1999 : 28).

In its turn, the concept of ***style*** underwent multiple analyses, even from Antiquity, when it was considered, on the one hand, from an aesthetic perspective, the fundamental element of oratory art, and on the other hand, from an ethical point of view, a sign of good taste (Corniță G., *op.cit*: 12). Beyond these definitions, a modern interpretation of the style individuality belongs to Buffon, accordin to wich, "style is man himself"[1]. Thus, the style is, actually, an element defining the human condition (*ibidem*, 13), Ileana Oancea, in "The History of Romanian stylistics", underlining the idea that, through style, mankind is defined "in the whole complexity of its nature: in its reason, but also in its essential subjectivity" (1988: 114).

In her "Handbook of stylistics", Georgeta Corniță performs a synthesis of the interpretations of the notion of ***style*** belonging to Charles Bally, to Leo Spitzer and to Karl Vossler, indicating that the style belongs to the aesthetics : "for Bally, **the style** represents the individual aspect of the literary art, resulting from the artist's intention to create aesthetic effects, [...]", for Leo Spitzer, "the stylistic facts in common expression are also at the basis of the writer's language, and the facts of style can be found in the language of the common speaker, stylistics and style being notions that do not exclude each other, but versions of one and the same concept, and Karl Vossler, partisan of aesthetic stylistics, considers **style** as "individual use of the language", stating that "any linguistic expression must be explained as a free individual creation (born) from the own intuitions of the individual speaker. " (*op. cit.* : 13, 14).

Continuing the ideas of Leo Spitzer, Tudor Vianu defines, from an aesthetic, modern perspective, the style of an author: "We call the style of a writer the set of notations he adds to the transitive expressions and which makes communication subjective, together with its own artistic interest" (Vianu, T., 1968: 31)

It is known that each writer, as any human, has, in essence, its own, unique and unrepeatable style – features that define, essentially, the originality of style – at least, with similarities determined, in fact, by outer aspects of the creative act itself, such as: literary or cultural currents, circumstances or historical, social, political, cultural events or even the writer's affiliation to a certain geographical area, respectively to a particular popular culture. Thus, it is natural that the work of writers belonging to the same literary/cultural current should have similarities, in terms of literary genres and species or in terms of recurrent

[1] Buffon: ≪ Le style c'est l'homme même ≫

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literary themes and motifs, similarities that can, as well, be determined by the writer's belonging to a certain historical period, marked by political, economic, social and cultural events. Language similarities can also be recorded at the level of language (regionalisms, archaisms, popular terms etc.), due to the respective writers' origins in a certain geographical area (Ardeal, Muntenia, Moldova etc.). All these, however, reduce or hide the originality and the uniqueness of the style of each writer, defined by that "something" deferring from one person to another. That "something" resides in "the author's soul and imagination", as Diana Ivan remarked (2006 :22), these being "the first distinctive marks that individualize a literary work" (*ibidem*), but also in the author's "judgment", more precisely "choosing the words, expressions or constructions that the language puts at his disposal in order to complete the personalization process" (*ibidem :* 22, 23).

The style of Calistrat Hogaș has given rise to various opinions from literary critics, being finally and without any doubt acknowledged its originality and uniqueness. Thus, his way of writing was compared to that of distinguished writers of Romanian and universal literature (Ion Creangă, Mihail Sadoveanu, Alexandru Odobescu, Geo Bogza, François Rabelais), keeping, however, its defining characteristics, such as : **linguistic colour** – rendered by combining the regional popular and neologistic registers of language, by the writer's references to mythology and Latin names and quotations, that, as a matter of fact, betrays the erudite character of the writing –, **narrative dynamism** – supported by dialogue, monolog and descriptive details creating the diversity of situations and the suspense –, but also **the comic** – generated by a sharp sense of humour and irony –, blended, in fact, with the writer's state of contemplation, dreaming and meditation.

Diana Ivan, in her book, called "Calistrat Hogaș. Cultural memory and stylistic configuration", stated that "literature, as any other art, involves a dose of artifice, of craftsmanship, product of labour, of will. The craft, when based on talent, shapes the style, as Buffon defined it, that seal able to assure the author's recognition to posterity" (*op.cit.* : 23). The author, invokes, in this context, the definition of style that Iorgu Iordan elaborated, considering the very aspects that individualize a literary work: "Style is different from one author to another, not only because each has its own personality, significantly different from the other, but also, that, generally, he wants to be different. [...] Thus style is, to a large extent, a product wanted, searched, artificial" (Ivan, D., *op.cit.* : 23, *apud* Iordan, I., 1975 : 11).

At the symposium held at "Calistrat Hogaș" Memorial Museum, in Piatra Neamț, on the occasion of the 170th anniversary of the birth of this writer, "a classic of travel literature", many cultivated people – writers, literary critics, museographers, University teachers – paid tribute to the writer from Piatra Neamț, making speeches meant to ensure the undeniable appreciation of his descendants, and a well-defined place in the Romanian literature (http://zch.ro/foto-calistrat-hogas-170-de-ani-de-la-nastere/). Among these, Cassian Maria Spiridon, President of the Union of Writers from Romania, Iași branch, insisted on the classical and erudite character of Hogaș's entire work: "Hogaș's entire literary work is erudite. There are things that, usually, if you are not familiarized with a classical culture, you risk not understanding what they are about" (*ibidem*). To this purpose, Lovinescu**,** (1928) intending to emphasize the uniqueness of his style, defines Hogaș's literature as "a heroic literature from an era when human was not so well differentiated from

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the divine, when people were almost demigods, when monsters swarmed around and the natural phenomena took part in the universal miracle [...]"**.** The same literary critic thinks that Hogaș's work is influenced by the "classical reminiscences" of its author – whose sources of inspiration are Homer's texts – interblended efficiently with the modern readings of the writer from Târgu Neamț, enhancing, thus, the artistic expressiveness of the writing. George Topîrceanu also considered that "Hogaș enters the literature with the barbaric and primitive, but impetuous and shining talent of an epic poet from Antiquity. The nature of its figures of style, fresh as flowers, his scholastic syntax, with long and balanced periods, the abundance of food and the natural tendency to give unusual proportions to the characters, all make us think that our author is the great grandchild, after many centuries, but in straight line, of Homer." (https://ro.wikisource.org/wiki/C._Hoga%C8%99:_Pe_drumuri_de_munte)

Underlining Hogaș' "exuberant" style, Lovinescu, in the "History of the Romanian contemporary literature", warns the reader "to be cautious, carefully pulling all stylistic flowerings of the son of the dean from Tecuci, the Latin teacher from Iași, from the sublime text of the Homeric bard three thousand years ago". Actually, this "stylistic flowerings" are constituent parts of a mix of classical and contemporary literature, Homeric expressions – as in the following sequence: "and when I overturned on some wide burdock leaves, my inconsistent polenta and I started to cut from it as hungry as a wolf, I made sure that greater discoveries than those of Kepler or Copernic can exist" (Hogaș, C., 1988 : 174) – and Latin quotations – such as : "Sententia compos voti !..."[1] (*ibidem*) or "Alea jacta est…"[2] (*ibidem* : 176), proving the scholastic character of Hogaș's writing.

Indeed, Hogaș's work abounds in references to the classical literature, giving the writing a special, unique character, of a travel diary, recreational, but also informative. Through his book, the writer proposes to his readers a journey of knowledge, challenging them to discover the world, physically, spiritually but also culturally… Reading "On mountain roads", a book for all ages, anyone can feel the savour of a holiday book or of an adventure book, with an obvious scientific and cultural load, with a double role: to inform and to amuse the reader. Thus, not few are the situations and the moments when the traveling writer, impressed by what he lives, make reference to classical Antiquity: "We set, so, in an antique way on the soft and blooming grass and we started our sparkling feast. Alecu Master was prouder than a king and I expected him to tell me that Lucullus was a beggar and that Labdacus was a lousy chef [...]" (Hogaș, C., 1988: 28).

Hogaș's book is characterized by a rich vocabulary and a fluent expression, features that converge to "a nuanced speech, whose main virtue is the lack of monotony, of platitude" (Ivan, D., 2006: 15).

An obvious feature of Hogaș's style is the easiness of the traveling writer in associating, in his speech, "without ostentation" (*ibidem*), different lexical registers. Thus, blending or alternating regional language (*jăchilă*[3], *brusnat*[4], *chisnovat*[5]etc.), archaic or

[1] Horațiu, "Poetic Art" : "The peak of desire"
[2] "The die is cast"
[3] backpack
[4] chubby
[5] prankish

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popular (*slobod*[1], *jivină*[2]etc.) with neologic language (*fripturi anahoretice*[3], *covrig fosil*[4], *miros heteroclit*[5], *apologia jirului*[6] etc.) determine the colour and the savour of Hogaș's work, aspects implying, at the same time, the pleasure itself of reading his travel diary.

Through his style, Hogaș demonstrates that he has "an exquisite sense of language" (Ivan, D., *op.cit*.: 14) and that he assumes the linguistic responsibility, categorically and incontestably, thus gaining the right to be considered a modern writer, "although, objectively, he belongs to the XIXth century" (*ibidem*).

Being an admirer of legendary times, Hogaș renders, "in a gigantic and fantastic vision" (Ivașcu, G., 1937), through detailed descriptions, under the sign of hyperbole and personification, images of nature evoking those times, reminding of Homeric epics:

> And, between the four boundaries of the infinite, the blind vastness trembled alternating short periods of darkness and bluish light under the instantaneous quick flashes of the heavenly fire... the entire heaven was boiling under the trembling expansion of thunders, and the terrified earth trembled soundly, up to its deepest foundations, under the loud sequence of lightning strokes which occurred shattering in the dark, like huge bombs of fire, and crumbled, as if blowing in a drop of dust, the tops of bold rocks of the most imposing of its mountains... (Hogaș, C., *op. cit*.: 225-226)

George Ivașcu underlined the idea that this fantastic vision of nature, populated with elements of ancient mythology has its origins in "the pantheist interpretation of the universe", of Hogaș, and in "the animism that animates all" (*op.cit.*).

In addition to the painting description, Hogaș achieves, with the same skill and artistic mastery, using a multitude of stylistic devices – hyperbolic comparison, flourishing epithet, personification, enumeration – portraits defining true human types. There are, to this purpose, various eloquent examples, in his work, such as the following two examples:

> What the old lady understood under the nickname "my daughter" was, this time, a sort of female Quasimodo, for the creation of which the nature exhausted, generously, all its treasures of monstrosity... Thus, between large stiff shoulders, it was stuck, without any neck, a head as big as a bushel or, more precisely, a black, harsh fleece tangled with dirty yellowish straws of warm chaff, from which at that very moment he seemed to have come out; on the same line with the narrow forehead and under the two arches of thick eyebrows, cast, as if by a trowel and randomly, two white staring eyes, from which a hypnotic blocking has hidden any light; the nose, hidden and with its top bending to the ground, rose into the air only its huge and large hawses, above a mouth grinning to the ears; and beneath his thick, faded, fleshy lips pointing up and down, two rusty rare teeth; the canine teeth, bolder, stood over both humid and shiny corners of the lower lip; on the right and under the chin, hung heavily, up to the breast, a living pouch of warm knobby skin with yellow, purple and reddish spots... And if you hadn't known it was goitre, you could have said she carried a crippled and undergrown child. (Hogaș, C., *op. cit*.: 173); And Mr Georges, who had stayed twelve years in Paris did not smell only Russian skin... My nose had, until the evening, the

[1] free
[2] twerp
[3] anachoretic steaks
[4] fossil pretzel
[5] eteroclyte smell
[6] beechmast apology

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> great opportunity to delight itself near Mr Georges with the odour of raspberry comfiture, or with that of strawberry comfiture, or, finally, with the odour once cherished, of Patchouli. But anyway, Mr Georges was "flawless": short, fat and almost bald, he had his hair behind his ears skilfully combed as to cover his temples; his round and plump face had at the bottom of each ear a small band of brown hair, relic of once complete whiskers, later tortured by the merry scissors of some Parisian barber. The yellowish and pointed tip of his whiskers, scattered on his lips, arched symmetrically above the large nostrils of a curved nose; the fleshy, moist and red lips seemed to call fat food and warm kisses; the pale and lazy eyes denoted a sleepy mind; under his chin with freshly razed and powdered creases, a red knot dazzled the lookers'eyes; on his round full underbelly, a vest sat beautifully and roundly without crinkles; at the bottom of his trousers tight at the ankle, one could see Mr Georges' red, long and narrow duck booties; and from the polished horizon of his bald crown, his eye was glided into the air as from the desolate and void glare of a dormant water... (Hogaș, C., *op. cit*.: 143-144)

With a wide range of figures of speech (epithet, metaphor, comparison, personification, enumeration, hyperbole), the author creates various artistic images, meant to give the reader the feeling that he or she lives, at the same time with the narrator-character, each situation and sensation described. Thus, Hogaș's book has a stylistic wealth, reflected in visual images – nature places and portraits: "The flat land unrolled before us its green and beady endless surface; beyond its borders, the floating mists, as a sea tormented by the wind, fill the immense cup of the deep; [...]" (*ibidem:* 91); "She was a twenty-five-year-old woman with elongated face and very regular features; her nose, especially, right and proportioned, compensated for what lacked to her eyes which were too little, but black, vivid and sparkling; small mouth, black hair, agile body... " (*ibidem*: 76), auditory images: "The storm has changed into a tempest and thousands of fantastic voices whispered, whimpered and sighed with desolation and desert. Long flashes of broken and dazzling light scattered the depths, without interruption; the air was boiling with restless thunders, and the distant peaks of the mountains seemed to collapse under heavenly thunder strokes"; (*ibidem:* 95), olfactory images: "A smell of brandy greeted my nose"; "When we stepped in, I felt a stench made up of all fragrances on the earth that went up to my brain: one could not understand if it smelt of ground, rotten eggs, rank fat, salty fish, not tawed leather, spicy cheese, pickled cabbage ...it did not smell like any of these, yet, it smelt like all at the same time... " (*ibidem:* 82), and dynamic images: "Legions of fantastic shaped clouds, raising one by one their head with golden foreheads, entirely covered the sky between West and North; other clouds rose from the other parts of the sky and in an apparent rush, they came on wind wings to meet, above our heads, their Western companions [...]" (*ibidem*: 93)

Synthetic and suggestive, in describing Hogaș's style, is, certainly, the rhetorical exclamation of George Topîrceanu expressed in a few lines of a "hasty review" : "How brilliant in style, what an admirable sense of reality in the dialogues with peasants, what a deep and exuberant feeling of nature! His travel notes take you, with an amazing evocative power, to the Moldavian Mountains from a few decades ago, with their wilderness and forests, with the villages of valleys and the monks monasteries lost in the splendour of that charming solitude. Hălăuca and Ceahlău, Sihla, Durău, Râșca, Pângărați — all the wild beauties, adorning the great edges of Moldavia and make its admirers proud, pass before the absorbed reader. And how many memorable types, how many monks and peasants, how

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many delicate and powerful figures of countrywomen and bourgeois, how many different aspects of nature, how many stopovers and adventures, how many fish borsches and full moon nights! [...]" (https://ro.wikisource.org/wiki/C._Hoga%C8%99:_On mountain roads).

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