MIMETIC POETICS AND VISIONARY POETICS – CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

LAURA CHIRIAC

In diachrony, there are the following phases of evolution of esthetic thinking: classical poetics, then there is a beginning of dislocation of the classical values, which is the baroque (that represents an island of the beginning of the contesting of classicism) and then, modern poetics, which is set, in a somehow contesting way, by romanticism and it is crystallized with symbolism; then, there appeared post-modern poetics.

These epochs succeed in European literature and poetry; in Romanian cultured poetry, which appeared later, they are present in the 19th century, when a desideratum of originality existed. In this century (the 19th), there existed a syncretism of the poetical manifestations, in the sense that there appeared almost a superposition of classicism with romanticism and late romanticism (consequently, modernity).

In diachrony, the evolution of poetry is structured as a function of the types of poetics, which determines a certain way to poeticize (to structure the text).

In European poetry, one can discern a first poetical evolution, grounded in the way of thinking literature in relation to classical esthetics, substantiated in the antiquity and

BDD-A12888 © 2008 Editura Mirton; Editura Amphora
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.75 (2026-11-06 13:28:15 UTC)

transferred, with some elements of non-classicism (like the baroque esthetics), until the appearance of romanticism.

Classical poetics was structured, especially, on the Aristotelian principles and on the concept of mimesis (imitation), which will become a fundamental concept for western thinking. The literary image on which literature is based represents an embellished, ennobled copy of reality. We are talking about a creation which appears as a semantic-stylistic continuum, which comprises Vlahuţă, Iosif, Coşbuc, Goga – the most representative poets for the literary conscience of that time, creation which is dominated by epithets of the "traditional" type, achieving predictable combinations, based on compatible, in general, associations between the two elements in contact. The epithet expresses, most often, an evident quality, intrinsic to the notion which is expressed by the noun; the poetic text sends to a referent, out of it, easily representable. The poem is built as mimesis, in the rationalist sense of a "talking picture", a "copy of the real".

The real to which this traditional type of poetical text sends is of representative nature, and not a creator of an imaginary world, of visionary nature; it reflects, simultaneously, and with high fidelity, the way of esthetic revaluation of the world, proper to the epoch, hence a certain ideological and rhetorical code of institutionalized cultural values which often replaces a true processing of the verbal matter.

Thus, it can be said that traditional lyricism evokes the real, but without vexing it, evoking, at the same time, a certain type of poeticism (i.e. of writing). The founding of the traditional poetic text on a similarity with the world, as well as the need of its "intellectual" recognizing by its confrontation to a reality, easily reconstitutable, non-problematic, exterior to the

BDD-A12888 © 2008 Editura Mirton; Editura Amphora
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.75 (2026-11-06 13:28:15 UTC)

process of poetic signifying, represents the necessary condition for the esthetic emotion.

The aim of the poetic image is to reproduce the real, to be verisimilar. To be verisimilar is a fundamental condition, which presupposes that the image, as mimesis, as imitation, be controlled by reason, which means that fantasy be subjected to the idea of reproduction of reality, which must not vex reality, but discover its universal characteristics, embellish it, ennoble it.

The classical poetics is rationalistic, i.e. reason leads the process of reproduction and representation of reality and it must tend to the essential, to grasp what is general, universal and typical. The high frequency of some epithets, like *sweet, bitter, holy, soft, sad, mournful, fatal, tender, black*, highlights, in addition to stereotypical expression, the fact that the poetry is also considered as a figurative language, conceived as a stylistic "plus", a "dress" for a preexisting content, and not immanent to it, where we find again the classical conception about "ornatus" (see the adorning epithets) of an old rhetorical tradition, a language which exists beyond the common language, embellished and ennobled by addition of stylistic ornament.

It is clear that these epithets, which are stereotypical, generalizing, of adorning character, real stylistic clichés, can be considered as marks of poeticity. Their use is felt as generating elegance and expressive nobility, in the sense of classical rhetoric, which proves that it can still believe in the intrinsic poetical virtues of the word.

The epithets still work, in spite of Eminescu's poetic experience, as some poetic "labels", assigned to things, as a proof of the deep consistent rationalism, on which this poetical praxis is founded.

BDD-A12888 © 2008 Editura Mirton; Editura Amphora
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.75 (2026-11-06 13:28:15 UTC)

The stock of images, with "ornamental" value on which the lyrics of Vlahuţă or Şt. O. Iosif are based, for example, marks a homogenous stylistic level, semantically supersaturated, which will be surpassed by modern lyric poetry, the internal law of evolution of poetry being, with us too, the one of opening out of the image to the semantic impertinence.

By repetition and prevision, the epithets lose the quality of creators of true stylistic effects. The stereotypical character appears not only in the case of the figurative poetic language, but, also, in the case of the non-figurative poetic language, out of which the lyrical speech is constituted.

In the case of the epithet, the stereotype reaches the whole structure (determiner and determined). A privileged place is occupied by the epithet *sweet*, alone or in combination with other appreciative epithets, also frequent, for example, with Vlahuţă.

Classical esthetics cultivates the clarity of expression, the transparency of the text, which must not present obstacles to its decoding. It is founded on the realization of some senses which can be easily discovered and, in general, avoids multiple meanings, which, later, are characteristic of modern poetry. It can be said that the classical esthetics is based on the programmatic principle of univocality (a clear sense), refusing ambiguity. Boileau, who is the most typical theorist of classical poetics, in the most classical epoch of European literature, which is French classicism, and who is the best known representative of the classical values, founded in the antiquity, in *Poetic Art* (*L'Art Poétique*), strongly affirms: "Ce qui conçoit bien, s'exprime clairement", where there are to be found the everlasting principles of the first epoch in European

BDD-A12888 © 2008 Editura Mirton; Editura Amphora
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.75 (2026-11-06 13:28:15 UTC)

literature, the classical epoch: to conceive, to express clarity (as fundamental relation).

To conceive means to have a clear representation of the way of reference, well structured, founded on rationality, and to conceive well, means to have this control over the poetic embrace of the world, based on reason, on rational knowing, i.e. a clear knowing, without shadows.

The expression must represent the word in its essential universal characteristics.

If, from all these principles, the basic characteristics are extracted, classicism can be characterized, in a diachronic way, in relation to romanticism, in relation to the epoch that is in opposition to it, romanticism representing the denial of classical principles, as follows: reason is no more the only way of knowing (including the artistic knowing), the human being is also a subjective being, not only a rational one, and intuition, the subjectivity, represents a way of access to a knowing of the real, maybe more important than the rational one.

Rational knowing is external, analytical and progressive.

Internal (intuitive) knowing is sympathetic, i.e. it is made on the basis of adhering to reality; this sympathetic vibration is named empathy.

In classicism, there is rationality, while in romanticism, there is subjectivity.

Classical art has its roots in the antiquity, and the "technical" part of classicism is represented by Rhetoric, which is a collection of rules to built literature with the help of the indirect language (figures of style), i.e. how the reality can be brought into the text, a reality which must not be invented because it exists, is stable, steadfast, with clear contours, and how it can be given back, the aim being to embellish it, to ennoble it.

BDD-A12888 © 2008 Editura Mirton; Editura Amphora
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.75 (2026-11-06 13:28:15 UTC)

Hence, the classical poetics cultivates the figures of use, which are somewhat stereotypical, this representing a literary convention.

From the point of view of the dichotomy, romanticism can be characterized, in relation to classicism, in relation to the epoch which is opposed to it, as representing the denial of the classical principles. While the rational knowing is analytical, external and progressive, the subjective knowing is synthetic, totalizing, flashing, internal; it grants this act a certain individuality, a certain freshness – it is about subjectivity, which differs from one individual to another. Hence, this means: rationality in classicism, subjectivity in romanticism.

Subjectivity means to privilege the individual (not the general). The laws of reason are the same: reality reveals a complexity in relation to the act of assuming subjectivity in relation to the unknown and, as such, the concept of individuality becomes fundamental. Hence, not the common typical things, but the original different things will represent the object of artistic searches. This turn to subjectivism of the artistic approach, this concentration of the real, this multi-stratification of the real, which reveals not only the common, general, accessible aspects, will provoke the effort of creators to highlight the polyvalence, of reality and intercepting; art begins not to tend to univocality (to senses which do not generate a multiple intercepting), but it tends to develop, more and more, programmatically and consciously, the ambiguity, the plurivoicality (hence not closed, but open meanings).

Umberto Eco was designating the works of modernity as open works, in a famous book – *Opera aperta*. By advancing along this way, opened by the romanticists and continued by the symbolists and other currents of modernity, one can understand the statement of Mallarmé who was saying that

BDD-A12888 © 2008 Editura Mirton; Editura Amphora
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.75 (2026-11-06 13:28:15 UTC)

"always there is a need for some obscurity in the verse", i.e. to do that in the sense of to adhere to an action of signifying, much more complex, where there is no more a stable reality, with clear firm contours, to which the literature is leading; reality becomes protean and it results from the way in which it is reproduced in the text; it is built at the same time as the text (it is no more external, but immanent to the literary utterance).

It is possible to examine again and set in parallel the two statements which are considered as synthesizing the two poetical arts (the classical one and the modern one): "Ce qui conçoit bien, s'exprime clairement" and "always there is a need for some obscurity in the verse" – *clairement – obscurity*. The two programmatic texts measure an antinomy which was established beginning with the so-called literary modernity (which was launched by the romanticism).

Modern poetics prefers the figure of invention and not the figures of use, cultivated by classical poetics; modern poetics is not repetitive like classical poetics, but it represents the creative effort of unchaining from the conventions, in order to find, as Eminescu says, "the word which expresses the truth", unique, unrepeatable of subjectivity.

An example of continuity and discontinuity in the evolution of the Romanian poetical language is the epithet.

The poetical "work", even by its nature, leads to the modification of language. This thing is the required condition for poetry because language, as an instrument of communication, is conceptual, has an impersonalized and general content and is without sensibility and emotive effect.

In order to accomplish an esthetic function, language must be adapted to the expressive needs of the creative individuality, to be the carrier of its subjective "truth". This deep conversion produced by poetry is manifested with high poignancy in the

BDD-A12888 © 2008 Editura Mirton; Editura Amphora
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.75 (2026-11-06 13:28:15 UTC)

case of that poetical "modifier" of language (creator of individualized significations), which is the epithet. It determines, even by its stylistic role – the "esthetic" qualification, hence individual, of an object or action – the passage from the instrumental language of current communication, to the one of invention and esthetic creativity.

The imaginary universe of poetry proposes to contemplation a world having a particularly concrete character; thus, it represents a series of "qualities", with the aim to express it as an individualizing one, in its specific "materiality", revealing and also covering an emotional meaning, which is the very message of the poetic "communication".

On the stylistic level, this word is installed by using the rhetoric figures, true "universals" of this type of communication, where the epithet occupies a privileged place, due to its characterizing virtues.

On the Romanian cultural level, two poetical arts can be put in antonymic position: the one of Conachi – representative of mimetic poetics and the one of Macedonski - representative of visionary poetics.

The Romanian poetical language, before and after 1880, is constituted in a relatively unitary direction which, from the point of view of the figurative level, puts together poets, actually different enough, where one can find "frequent and characteristic" images, for a whole century of Romanian poetry. In other words, the post-Eminescu lyric poetry takes over and continues the poetic principles existing before Eminescu's poetry, some of them being saved by the great poet, from the stereotypical character to which the precursors had condemned them. Thus, it can be said that we are talking about a poetry which presents itself as a semantic-stylistic

BDD-A12888 © 2008 Editura Mirton; Editura Amphora
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.75 (2026-11-06 13:28:15 UTC)

continuum dominated, with authority, by the traditional figures, based, in general, on predicable combinations.

The new imaginative system, based on the idea that poetry has its own logic, of combinatory nature, the moderns, for which the text is an autarchic world, comprising its own code, will clearly say that it radically opposes the one of classical type. The latter began to be fissured, in Europe, even in the time of romanticism; in Romania, the phenomenon was practically not produced within the framework of this current, with the exception of Eminescu. The evolution of the European lyrical language, considered from the point of view of the poetic figuration, will be achieved by the defeat of rhetoric restrictions, staying under the sign of a progressive stress on the linguistic "abnormality". So, the code, subversive in relation to the "ancient canon" is not only a particularity of a school, but it constitutes the filling, now conscious, of the *internal necessity* of poetry. This law, dominating, which seems to be tyrannical, even today, exerting, in its way, from the modern visionary aspect, to a more and more random creation, a new kind of terror, this time an anti rhetoric one, is illustrated, also by the history of Romanian poetic language.

The figures of rhetoric represent, consequently, revealing indexes of the affective-imaginative capacity of the creator of poetry, their study permitting not only the access from the interior – the only one which is dedicated to the textual nature of the poeticity – to the knowledge of the imaginary universe of the great poetical personalities, but, also, to the one of the "over-individual" "personalities", hence, of the schools, currents and literary styles. Their way of realizing the poetical text can mark a tradition or, also, can signal a revolution.

The deciphering of the invariants of structure, hence, of the configurations of the poetic language, in a real "grammar"

BDD-A12888 © 2008 Editura Mirton; Editura Amphora
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.75 (2026-11-06 13:28:15 UTC)

of poetry, by disposing the analysis on the level of the general rhetoric categories, i.e. by studying the figurative skeleton the poeticity - the thing that was named the figurate poetic language, not forgetting that there exists, together with it and as important, also a non-figurate poetic language – is absolutely necessary in the case of an "internal" history of the poetry. Considered from this angle, it is nothing else but the display, in diachrony of the way of poetical processing of the verbal material in some literary epochs, in relation with the esthetic idea (and implicitly, of poeticity) to which an epoch adheres, not forgetting the subversive pillars of evolution, being motivated, in this way, by an intrinsic research, the only one valid in the case of poetry, the hermeneutic categories, elaborated by history, critics and literary theory, as the ones of the classical, romantic and modern approaches.

The Macedonski "moment", hence, makes the year 1880, decisive for European poetry, represent, in Romania too, a real limit, because after this date, on the background offered by Eminescu's poetic experience, the elements of a new epoch began to appear, promoting a new attitude, more active, more free in relation to language. The problem is that this limit is still "*marginal*"; it has not the force of a shock and, for the moment, it has few representatives, really endowed with the Macedonski "sacred fire".

REFERENCES

Bousoño, C., *Teoria expresiei poetice*, Bucureşti, Ed. Univers, 1975

Cornea, P., *Originile romantismului românesc*, Bucureşti, Ed. Minerva, 1975

Cornea, P., Zamfir, M., *Structurile tematice şi retorico-stilistice în romantismul românesc, (1830-1870)*, Bucureşti, Ed. Academiei, 1976

BDD-A12888 © 2008 Editura Mirton; Editura Amphora
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.75 (2026-11-06 13:28:15 UTC)

Marino, A., *Opera lui Alexandru Macedonski*, Bucureşti, Editura pentru Literatură, 1967

Munteanu, R., Cultura europeană în epoca luminilor, Bucureşti, Ed. Univers, 1974

Munteanu, Şt., *Stil şi expresivitate poetică*, Bucureşti, Ed. Ştiinţifică, 1971

Oancea, I., *Istoria stilisticii româneşti*, Bucureşti, Ed. Ştiintifică şi Enciclopedică, 1988

Oancea, I., *Poezie şi semioză*, Timişoara, Ed. Marineasa, 1999

Oancea, I., *Romanitate şi istorie*, Timişoara, Ed. Facla, 1993

Oancea, I., *Semiostilistica. Unele repere*, Timişoara, Ed. Excelsior, 1998

Petrescu, I., Em., *Eminescu şi mutaţiile poeziei româneşti*, Cluj, Ed. Dacia, 1989

Scarlat, M., *Istoria poeziei româneşti*, Vol. I-IV, Bucureşti, Ed. Minerva, 1982-1984

Zamfir, M., *Introducere în opera lui Al. Macedonski*, Bucureşti, Ed. Minerva, 1972

POETICĂ MIMETICĂ ŞI POETICĂ VIZIONARĂ – TRĂSĂTURI CARACTERISTICE

Rezumat

Lirismul tradiţional evocă realul, dar fără să-l contrarieze, evocând în acelaşi timp şi un anumit tip de poeticitate (şi deci de scriitură). Întemeierea textului poetic tradiţional pe o asemănare cu lumea, ca şi nevoia unei recunoaşteri ”intelectuale” a acesteia prin confruntarea lui cu o realitate uşor de reconstituit, neproblematică, exterioară procesului de semnificare poetică reprezintă condiţia necesară a emoţiei estetice.

Putem caracteriza dicotomic clasicismul în raport cu romantismul, în raport cu epoca ce i se opune, romantismul reprezentând negarea principiilor clasice. În timp ce cunoaşterea raţională este analitică, exterioară şi progresivă, cunoaşterea subiectivă este sintetică, totalizatoare, este o cunoaştere fulgurantă, din interior; ea conferă acestui act o anumită idividualitate, o anumită prospeţime, fiind vorba de subiectivitatea care diferă de la un individ la altul. Deci, aceasta însemnă raţionalitate în clasicism, subiectivitate în romantism.

BDD-A12888 © 2008 Editura Mirton; Editura Amphora
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.75 (2026-11-06 13:28:15 UTC)