TRAIAN CHELARIU AND THE REWRITING OF THE MIORITIC MYTH

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Abstract: "The myth abnegation is the action of effeminacy" says Traian Chelariu, an author from Bukovina living in the ages of 1906 – 1966. According to him, the myth represents "the hypothesis where the logical and psychological functions from our human being are going to mingle in a present stem". Thus, the author manages to revitalize the myth of Miorița through the dramatic opera The Carpathian Ballad. A fairy tale in six tableaus, which presents the same story of the murdered shepherd, but in a complex manner, with intrigue of miraculous creatures.

Keywords: Traian Chelariu, Miorița, myth, dramatic opera, ballad.

The myth as an assumption

*"*The abnegation of the myth is a devirilisation. The myth is not a mendacity but an assumption, if we can speak about assumptions whither the logical and psychological functions of ourselves/our being are identified within a base which is present in paleoncephalon, in neoncephalon and in all the nerve substance layers. But the assumption is the first great victory of a human being, more precisely, of a man, towards the unknown adjacencies of the world.

The myth as an assumption, as the incipit of constructing your own world, as a winning stratagem in the first fight of figuring out the mysteries represents the first step of finding out the truth, of cultural incorporation of the mystery*."* (Traian Chelariu, 1989, p. 210)

Traian Chelariu, the Bucovina XX century writer vehemently argues this point of view both theoretical, in his volume of philosophical reflections *În căutarea Atlantidei,* and practical, through his play *Balada carpatină.* Raised in the spirit of the Cernauti prestigious schools, educated in the academic environment of Paris and Berlin but stopped from his ascension by the dictatorship imposed after the Second War, Chelariu is an author who succeeded to write poetry, prose, plays and memoirs. His literary work contains 8 volumes published during his life and five volumes published after his death; each of these volumes has the power to convert the personality of the author in a symbol of Bucovina culture and of the avatars of a Romanian inter-war writer. (Angela Furtună, discourse, July 2011) In an intrigant manner, the volumes of reflections and memoirs establish the main theoretical basis both for his writing as for the daily life of the author, containing surviving formulas in foster social environments and the journals of his literary works. In this way, it can be seen that the author is building the definition of the myth in a few pages of his volume *În căutarea Atlantidei and* then he applies the theories for valorising the myth, using them as sources of inspiration in his literary work.

The *mioritic* myth

"But myths have neither time nor space. They are crystallizations as mathematicians' theorems. Or just like the Platonic ideas. If you do not meet them anywhere it is not their fault. How can you meet them if your ways are permanent practical deviations from the ideal form?"(Traian Chelariu, 1989, p.8)

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The Romanian modern culture is also in a permanent deviation from the perfect form, which offers texts and symbolic manifestations where we can find fragments, segments or they send us to structures, representations with mythic valence. Therefore, the modern Romanian texts show mythological information which can disclose mythical sequences (characters, places, action outlines, objects, animals and plants) through resemnification, decontextualization, releasing from the actual functions, being projected to a possible past in which it could have had functions, meanings and mythical application. (Mihai Coman, 2008, p. 309-310)

As a result, the myths return to modernity masked, desacralised. Contemporary thinking approaches to the same aim: to know and to explain myths. Modern societies assume from the structure of the myth only aspects which are in concordance with the expectations and the imaginary of the contemporary man; therefore, the myth obtains new forms, which are appropriate with the context in which it is found.

For example, we can speak in the same way about the *mioritic* image that represents the Romanian myth of death, which becomes source of inspiration for many literary works. Thereby, the Romanian *mioritic* myth which presents a wonder-working sheep which reveals to her master, the shepherd, the conspiracy planned against him by two other shepherds, assumes different cultural forms, the majority of them being literary works. The dissimulation of the myth into the model of a folkloric poem is the most spreaded version, followed by epic and dramatic rewritings.

Traian Chelariu subscribed to this process of creation under folkloric inspiration-pastoral, giving life to the dramatic work entitled *Balada Carpatină,* which presents the same story of the murdered shepherd but in a more complex manner, with the intrigues of some miraculous beings. John Vreme is a young old man who has among his sheep a new kind of sheep, Mioriţa, this race is also wanted by Cornea, an old man who owns 3000 sheep on many fields and valleys. The ballad is completed by the presence of certain characters such as: Vidra, sort of an earth sister of the *iele* which represents the reason of arguing between the two old men; The White Hermit, a wise old man; The Old Mother, John's mother and The old witch, Vişana. Yet, the action of this ballad does not resemble with the first version because it revolves around the theme of love which takes shape through the story of a consecutive and unconsummated relation. The old man Cornea loves Vidra in a telluric and proud way and Vidra loves the innocent young boy John, who is not convinced of the feelings he has for the woman because his dream is to find the beautiful *iele*. Traian Chelariu rewrites the *mioritic* myth by adding the *iele* myth, ending with the death of the young old man and with the death of Mioriţa: if John Vreme dies because of the game invented by the *iele*, the sheep dies because of the old witch Vişana who wants to destroy the dream of the young shepherd.

The Carpathian Ballad

*"*Search in the myth the mystery and in the mystery the truth. This is the way to the arise of the truth, the way, the life and the truth." (Traian Chelariu, 1989, p. 112)

The rewriting of the *mioritic* myth in the manner of Bucovina writer is conceived in a Romanian fairytale manner, with elements specific to the Geto-dacian people, due to the wish of revitalizing an archaic type of thinking and living.

From placing the action in a traditional time and space ("The place and the time in which the action from Mioriţa takes place – Area bordered by woods and beautiful cliffs", Traian Chelariu, 1976, p.155), to the characters which are specific to the Romanian frame (*Iele*, the shepherds, The old mother), the author reconstructs the context specific to the myth. Traian Chelariu also succeeds to revive the pastoral environment by using an archaic language („drăgănele", „traistă", „devale", „prăsire", „nouri", „vădită") which leads the reader to the atmosphere of the mentioned time. Human's connections with nature and animals are shaped

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by the writer through the appearance of some invisible characters, intrinsic echoes of the main character, which contribute to the reconstruction of the Romanian mythic environment.

In this way, The Voices of the sky and of the earth, The voice of the *iele*, the voice of the bird which doesn't sleep, replenish the dialogue between Ion Vreme and the nature, forming a complete image of the well known unity between man and nature. In the matrix of forming the Romanian old pure border we can also find the main character, the old young man, who is characterised as "a kind of Prince Charming, finder of the Good and of the Beauty"(Traian Chelariu, 1976, p.152). Ion Vreme is the carrier of the delicate romanian soul, who hears the voice of the nature, he is reconcilead with the life of the mountains, he feels the joy of simple things

(looking at some mountains, singing a doina) and he looks detached the idea of the end of life ("death comes when it has to come', ……'How would I cherish the doine if they didn't have an end", Traian Chelariu, 1976, p.183). This is the uninitiated finder of beauty, of unknown, who tries to give a sense to his life through finding the *iele*. The *iele* represent a romanian specific mark of myth, which are represented in the play through a choir which appears only in the moments of loneliness of the old young man, murmuring a dizzy song : "Here we are! The *iele*! The good ones, the bad ones… the murmuring of the fountains, the shadow of the sink holes, the fog of the mountains, the murmur of the woods…the noise of the fallings, of the water and of the evenings – The voice of the quietness, and of the qiuietness! Of the good things and of the bad things, After the falling, we banish the madness, We bring them madness! Here we are! The good ones and the bad ones". (Traian Chelariu, 1976, p.156) Their image depicted from Chelariu's play remains as undefined as the image from the Romanian mythology, becoming an appearance which predicts death.

The elements which bring change and escape from the schema of the ballad Miorița, are represented by the construction of some antithetic figures which expand the number of characters and knot a complex action. For example, the image of the *iele* in the mirror is represented by Vidra, the terrestrial sister of these, who succeeds to become a reason of building the plot. Then, the antithetic image of Ion Vreme is old Cornea, an old shepherd, with telluric ideals and controlled by powerful instincts, therefore totally different, compared with his younger opponent. Other two pair of characters are old Vișana and the Old mother, two embodiments of mothers. If the first one is a greedy and cunning old woman, unprincipled who wishes to marry her daughter with the old shepherd in order to become the mistress of the surroundings, the second is a fatless gentle small woman who is looking for her son, anticipating the misfortune which will come.

The infidelity of the *mioritic* model is achieved especially by using the theme of love, which represents the engine of displaying the action, the old Cornea wishes more the love of Vidra, the girl who loves Ion Vreme, than the new kind of shep. Therefore, a love triangle is produced, a triangle which remains opened because the young shepherd has his own utopian ideals which concerns the *iele*. The *mioritic* rewriting of Traian Chelariu emphasizes two types of experiences: the telluric one, dominated by instincts and felt by Cornea and Vidra and the ideal one, intrinsical, felt in a simple way by the old young man.

In the end of the rewriting, the author gives back the balance of the universe through Ion Vreme's death because of the *iele*, the Miorița sheep and because of old Vișana and of old Cornea from Vidra's revenge. The third scene of the last act, shows in a symphonic manner all the voices of the nature, including that of the *iele* and the voice of the balancer character of the White Hermit, which reproduce lyrics form the popular ballad Miorița, suggesting the mythical character of this text.

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