MIHAI EMINESCU AND TÉOPHIL GAUTIER - FROM THE "AVATAR" TO "POOR DIONIS"- BETWEEN UNSLEEPING AND DREAM

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Abstract: The study "Eminescu and Théophile Gautier-from the "Avatar" to "Sărmanul Dionis"- between unsleeping and dream" constitutes an application on the literature field. The thesis in which direction is argued is the following: The fantastic prose finds a new beginning, both in Romanian literature and in the French one through Mihai Eminescu and Théophie Gautier. In his cultural assimilation, Mihai Eminescu reads the works of Gautier and even imitates a fragment from "Avatar", at the end of the novel "Sărmanul Dionis". Both of them have in common the passion for the Indian philosophy and for the fantastic, evidence which can be noticed from the two works observed in the title. Conclusion: The influence of Théophile Gautier upon Mihai Eminescu cannot be proved actually, but can't be excluded either. A comparative look upon the novel "Sărmanul Dionis" and "Avatar", indicates similes, but also a difference of construction of the narrative plan, a better knowledge of the Indian philosophy by Mihai Eminescu and a bigger elegance in swinging among the real and the imaginary plan, between reality and dream.

Keywords: fantastic, fantastic literature, real-imaginary, reality-dream, dream.

1. Introduction: The concept of fantastic in a romantic vision

The romantic writers are those who orientate upon the liberty of the spirit which implies releasing the creative imagination in different forms, such as: the fabulous, the miraculous, the unusual, the supernatural, the fairy, the metempsychosis, duality, life as a dream, the androgen. These are just a few steps to enter into the other dimension formed by another time and another imaginary space, tangential with the real space.

The concept of "fantastic" claims its origins in the Latin word "phantasticus" and in the Greek word "fantastikos", both meaning "imaginary, unreal". Gilbert Durand in "Structurile antropologice ale imaginarului" considers the fantastic as a unique dimension of the human, creative emanation, from the incipient phase of a theoretical and practical creation, considering that this has an important role in the transcendental structure of the imaginary. In this sense, we can notice the remark of Roger Caillois, who considers the fantastic as being "a threatening, an innovative break in the world of the real", a situation generated by "the hesitation of the reader between understanding a rational solution and a supernatural solution", considers Tzvetan Todorov (R. Caillois, 1971, T. Todorov, 1973). In the essence, the fantastic affirms as an aesthetical category, present in different literary species, swinging between real-unreal. Finite- indefinite, logic, illogic, object-sign, promoting the strange, enigmatic, the miraculous, producing fear, restlessness, terror and communicating through a dialogue literary-artistic between the creator and the reader.

Because the fantastic is a literary "genre" with many "sub" genres, many times ambiguous in delimitation, its defining overcomes a certain difficulty which implies overtaking the concept fantastic. Its beginning starts with presenting the notions real and fantastic. In the preview of the book "Elixirul de viață lungă", Irina Mavrodin offers a new perspective in what concerns the fantastic, taking into account intertextuality, through an implied category- the verisimilar, which breaks the coherence of the universe, through the supernatural element, as a defining constant. While Ioan Vultur approaches the problem of the

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fantastic from the perspective of communication, processes of communication and textual aspects, Irina Gregory establishes, like Sigmund Freud, an identification of the concept with the strange element, generating restlessness, considering it "a break in the order of the real world, a "disequilibrium characteristic to the modern conscience", but also " a miraculous history narrated in a realist manner" (I. Gregori, 1996). Gheorghe Goldeanu in "Mircea Eliade - poetica fantasticului și morfologia romanului existențial", identifies another dimension of the concept, by "breaking up the sacred from the profane" (G. Goldeanu,1997, p. 39). Also George Bădărău in his volume "Fantasticul în literatură", identifies the roots of the Romanian fantastic in folklore, the mythical-magical thinking, folklore-books, German romanticism and the prose of E. A. Poe (George Bădărău, 2003). Based on a hidden dimension of the soul, the fantastic allows an approach by the greatest mysteries of the existence, love and death. If death integrates us in nature, love, in the opinion of Ion Biberi takes us "on the authentic line of the biologic and vital", because through this we confess to each other, the loved one and the world gets a new dimension (Ion Biberi, 1971, p.188). This new dimension is generated by the feminine apostasy, because "the human type we prefer into the other one, presents the profile of our own heart", considers Jose Ortega y Gasset in 1995, in "Notă despre iubirea curtenească" (Jose Ortega y Gasset, 1995, p. 62). Coming back to Ion Biberi, we can say that the fantastic manifest the highest form of existence by presenting the spiritual attitude of the man towards himself and the world, but also by adding the real near myth and symbol. In this sense, the fantastic, through metaphoric speeches, mythical values and symbolics, offers us an overview upon the world, realizing an important aesthetical and anthropological perspective.

In what concerns the fantastic prose and its reality, Ioan Dersidan, recognizes its value through the capacity of "assuming the imaginary" and his "referring to knowledge" (I. Dersidan, 2000, p. 18). That's why, by denying and overcoming the real , the fantastic manifest itself through imaginary and mood, which are organized in images-"symbolic constellations" focused on the " gliding towards the real and rational, into arbitrary signs, proposing metamorphosis, recombination and getting over languages and moods" (I. Dersidan, 2000, p. 82).

In the Romanian literature, the folkloric fabulous, the magic and mythical miraculous, forms the most important vein of the Romanian, fantastic prose, imprinting a uniqueness which differentiates it from the other literatures. Mihai Eminescu offers to the Romanian fantastic the most authentic romantic dimension. In the opinion of George Călinescu, in „Eminescu's works" we can identify forms of the romantic fantastic: the migration of the man into a cosmic space, changing and combining worlds, representing sidereal spaces by contemplating the plurality of the worlds, the music of the spheres, strange spirits belonging to the underground world intervening in the human existence, demolishing the human being, swinging the ego between real and imaginary, disgusting contrasts, the alive corpses; and not lastly the imaginary reconstruction of primordial chaos in the poetic cosmogony.

In the French literature, T. Gautier "is the representative of the romanticism, but having ideas of an artist", as Albert Thibaudet says in "Histoire de la literature francaise" (A. Thibaudet, 1936). In what concerns approaching the fantastic, he proves to be original through his modality of revealing the phenomenology of this genre, in which the hesitation is valorized in a certain manner by the oddity of the happenings the characters of Gautier get through, always at the limit of natural. In what concerns the originality of its writings, L. Ulici affirms in the preface of the book "Avatar": "The equation of the hesitation is developed in different variants from a story to another, and the 5 imaginary stories create a unitary picture of the fantastical characters and a particular case as well. Maybe their special charm comes from the fact that presenting a theoretical principle, generalizing, of the fantastic, they manage to dissolve the general characters into an epic multitude, having a strange particularity" (L. Ulici, 1973, p. 11). Both of them "see" in the dream a modality of existence of the fantastic.

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2. M. Eminescu and T. Gautier - between unsleeping and dream

For the romantics, the dream is the most important existential axis, defining for their way of thinking and feeling, as a second life, an escape from an ordinary present, in an universe of the endless freedom. In this sense, Zoe Dumitrescu-Buşulenga says that "the dream was for the romantic writer the cure of the suffering, the condition of the knowledge, the generator of the myths, the poetical mood by excellence […]. Through the dream, the time and space were abolished; through dream the hero could have adventures of the humanity or spirit, touching the condition of the universality and reintegrating in the cosmic macro-rhythms" (Z. Dumitrescu-Buşulenga, 1976, p. 129). In "Dicţionarul de simboluri" Alex Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrand considers the dream "the best agent of information in what concerns the mental mood of the one who dreams [...] it is for the one who dreams a image upon himself, often unsuspected, it is a revelator of the ego and self" (Alex Chevalier & Alain Gheerbrand, 1995, p. 457).

For Eminescu, the dream represents the revealing pulsation of his genius in transfiguring the reality through which he projects his ideals: "So much have I dreamt, So much have I dreamt, that I am not from here now", says Leon-Paul Fargue, motto-words of the chapter "Romantic sky", from "Sufletul romatic şi visul" of Albert Béguin, which fit the poet as a glove (A. Béguin, 1998, p. 206). In this context, the rality as we think about it, configured by the creative-self from the demiurgical apostasy, derived idea from the philosophy of Fiche, as H. Sanielevici says in "Cercetări critice şi filozofice": "If the world is a creation of the ego, if the phenomena are within us, then the space and time are in us too, then individual means almighty and must sing the achievement of his desires in his deepest soul" (Sanielevici, 1986, p. 52). I think that the most beautiful definition of the dream at Eminescu, can be encountered in "Geniul pustiu": "a sunny world for me, a world full of the clear beams as a diamante, clean stars as gold, dark and perfumed green of the bay groves- the dream opens his golden bars and let me in his poetical and forever young gardens" (M. Eminescu, 1972, p. 152). T. Gautier considers that the dream is not synthesized into a definition, even if he wrote a poem called "Dream" (Rêve).

The bond which connects Mihai Eminescu and Théophil Gautier is the final of the novel "Sărmanul Dionis", which contains a quote from Gautier: "Not always are we from the country who saw us growing up, and that's why we are looking for our true country. Those that are made in this way feel exiled in their city, strangers in their home and exhausted by an inverse nostalgia….It would be easy to be only about the country, but it is also about the century where there truly existence must have happened…..I like that I once lived in the East and when the during the carnival I disguise with some gabardine, I imagine to wear again my true clothes. I was always surprised that I don't understand the Arabic language. I must have forgotten it. "It is interesting to be noticed that what I have already said is anticipated in a few questions of the author: "if it was a dream or not, that is the question. Isn't it that the off-stages of life is actually a producer whose existence we cannot explain? Aren't we like some figurants who [...] come on stage, go around and appear again? [...]. Isn't it possible that someone, living, can have moments of a retrospective lucidity which may seem to us like the artifacts of a man form a long time ago, who no longer exists?" (M. Eminescu, 2009, pp. 84-85). These questions decode the philosophy of Eminescu about life and about the existence of a long line of people, gathered in the existential matrices of an only God, expressed also in the poem: "But if all people died/Others would be born again […]/ "From the bosom eternal yesterday, lives today everything that dies''/ "Because everyone is born to die/ And die to be born again", where we can find the Indian influence (M. Eminescu, Luceafărul). I consider that no one can certainly know the source of inspiration of Eminescu, even if the simile with

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the Indian philosophy is very obvious sometimes and the French literature can be a source of inspiration, although some critics are against this idea. Between the novel "Sărmanul Dionis" of Mihai Eminescu and some paragraphs from "Avatar", by Gautier, in the study "Eminescu și cultura franceză", I. M. Rașcu establishes a few correspondences. Among these, I will note the quotation where words of Visnu appear, and is above the gate through which we enter in the serenity world in "Sărmanul Dionis" (Rașcu, I. M, 1976, p. 216). In what concerns these analogies realized by I. M. Rașcu, Amita Bhose, in the study "The literary prose of Eminescu and the Indian thinking" points out:

- "Eminescu says clearly that the quotation was written with Arabic letters, while Gautier speaks
  about "Indian hieroglyphs", an inexistent thing";
- "Eminescu is preoccupied by the successive transmigration of the same soul, and the curer of
  Gautier makes the "transplantation" of one's soul into another one's;
- "In "Avatar", Gautier describes an "Indian "world, giving many insignificant details ("the
  marble ladder from Benares"), confused (Brahmin instead of priest or dwarf), and wrong (Buddha was a great admirer of the great god Mahadevi etc.) and conjures an occult India, full of fakir";
- the doctor Balthazar from "Avatar" describes Indian scenes, often pronounces the terms
  "eternal" and "infinite" even if they don't have any connection with the subject, and in the process of reciprocal transfer of the two souls, he uses "alchemic" solutions, unknown to the Indian legends.He pretends to know the creative word of Visnu, which means only another confusion; in the Hindus trinity, Brahma is the creative god and Visnu is the one who keeps the balance of creation"(…) the theories exposed by the characters of Eminescu in "Sarmanul Dionis" adapt to the one in "Upanisade";
- "The moral frame in "Sarmanul Dionis" is superior to the one in "Avatar" and closer to the one
  from the "Legile lui Manu", because Dionis wants to defeat the time to reveal the supreme truth of the world; he "doesn't crave for someone else's faithful wife", as Octav de Saville, "because in every reincarnation he is bound to Maria's soul, his unique love"
  (after Amita Bhose, "Proza literară a lui Eminescu și gândirea indiană").

With all these differences, the Indian critic doesn't exclude the possibility that the French literature may be one of the sources of inspiration which, stirring his curiosity, determined Eminescu to fathom the Indian philosophy. In this sense, Amita Bhose points out: "Both authors, Gautier and Eminescu, reveal an Indian world, the first one in an explicit way, and the second one in a more subtle and suggestive way. At Gautier, there is a bizarre India, like some naïve movies from our century; In Eminescu's work it is recreated an India of the wise men, a spiritual India, to which many great thinkers like Goethe and Schopenhauer aligned. Going towards India, Gautiers reaches the profane and Eminescu starts from the sacred. The work of Gautier is written according to those times, and the work of Eminescu addresses both to the readers after centuries and overseas" (Amita Bhose, "Proza literară a lui Eminescu și gândirea indiană").

3. **Conclusion:** Both Eminescu and Téophil Gautier are guiding marks. In what concerns the role
   of Gautier in the literary dynamics of his époque, he is the promoter of the impersonal literature. In this sense, Gustave Lanson said: "The importance of Gautier is great in our literature: on one side, through his hatred towards everything that was bourgeois, he released the eccentric romanticism, unhealthy, presented as ferocious and immoral; he generated

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Baudelaire. On the other side, the exactness of painter made him come out of romanticism; he renounced to the subjective lyrics for the objective, the model. It is the beginning of the impersonal literature."(G. Lanson, 1893, p. 954).

In what concerns Eminescu, presenting a fascinating universe, through originality and the diversity of the approached problematic, he inaugurates a new direction in the Romanian prose: the direction of the philosophical, metaphysic fantastic. He surprises in a romantic manner the predisposition to the mysteries of the universe, of love- the only capable of imposing a favorable solution to a diabolic pact, and of the death. Assimilating the autochthon, archaic layer, of the faiths and pre-Christian thinking which imprinted his thinking, on one side, but also the context of its manifestation in the universal literature, which Eminescu knew in a certain manner and which imprints his thinking, he imposes as a genial Romanian, authentic in the constellation of the great thinkers of the world.

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