# *THE TYPOLOGY OF THE SYMBOL IN THE MINULESCIAN POETRY*

**Andreea DAMIAN**[*]

***Abstract:*** *Being one of the most important symbolist writers, this paper tries to emphasize the types of symbols that Ion Minulescu uses in his poetry, and how these give a distinctive note to his lyrical speech. The interdependence between the form and the message of his creations make him an unique symbolist writer, who goes beyond the limits of what symbolism imposed. The mixture of feelings is organized according to some inner rules that create a typology of a different symbolist writer.*

***Keywords***: typology, poetry, rhetorism.

The symbol exceeds its sense as notion, turning into fact. This, in the Kantian philosophy, it suggests a coexisting reality, whether people know it or not.

T. Todorov delimits the symbol from the sign, refusing to accept its inclusion in the general theory of signs or in the semiotics, because the symbol is not just a word (sign), but a fact.

The beginnings of the symbol theorization appear since Aristotle, he associates signs with words and characterize them through a relationship of interdependence: sound- feeling- existing fact. Feelings are the same regardless of the individual, facts are identified in their own image. Aristotle observed that sounds are distinct, they can not be motivated in association with inner feelings, in this way sounds name the felling without becoming its image.

The conventionalist theory of symbols is accepted by Aristotle, who will mention it several times throughout his work, suggesting the significance given to names. Names become symbols only after they receive the semantic investiture. In *Poetica*, Aristotle also mentions the inability of names to form wider units, to combine.

For Aristotle, the symbol has wider meanings than the word, but one can observe the superficiality regarding the multitude of linguistic and non-linguistic symbols.

Also, Stoics mention the interdependence between signifier, signified and object. The signifier is the Aristotelian sound, the significant represents its image and the object is the real fact.

The two physical entities: the signifier and the object determine Plato's idea, meaning its representation *the lekton*. *The lekton* appears at a first language level and is able to evoke the third term (object); it suggests the reference of sound to things.

There is no mention of a semiotic theory, but the linguistic sign stands out as a distinctive sign. Unlike semantics, logic directs to the non-linguistic symbolism..

At a linguistic level, signs are indirect statements, therefore the logical sign theory cannot be complementary to the theory of the linguistic symbol.

The terminology is exposed differently: the signs are made up of sound- lekton and fact; and the indirect symbols represent the evocation of a lekton by another.

[*] University of Pitești, damiandreea@yahoo.com



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According to the critic of Sextus, the perfect sign has one meaning, but the polysemia of certain signs requires an eclectic approach and not just a purely semiotic one.

The adjacent ideas suggested by a particular symbol are interpreted from a rhetoric point of view: "The rhetoric speaks, in connection with the figure operation about what is not named, naming it" (Todorov Tzvetan, 1983: 41)

The metaphor relates both to the linguistic and to the semiotic level. Aristotle observed this duality and associated the metaphor to the synonymity process. The evolution of rhetorics is synthesized by Quintilian: "We like to do things so that they are suggested, than to tell them open." (Quintilian, 2002*:* 24)

The rhetoric moves towards semiotics, speaking for the first time about the existence of a motivation in choosing symbol, motivation that appeared with the introduction of the onomatopoeia in the register of the rhetorical figures.

Hermeneutics increases the research area and offers multiple possibilities of interpretation, making clear the difference between direct and indirect.

It brings at the surface the transmitter's desire to influence the perception of the message by the receiver imposing certain positive or negative aspects. The symbolistic is divided into: painting (imitative symbol), writing (hieroglyphic symbol) and language (metaphorical symbol and enigmatic symbol).

The ancient writing is one of ciriological type, with a symbolistic motivated by visible similarities passing then to a symbolic writing characterized by unjustified indirect transposition.

However, in researching the symbol T. Todorov admits that rhetoric is the starting point in classifying the rhetorical figures and the symbol.

There are two traditions of rhetorics: the condillacian type rhetoric and the rhetoric modeled by Du Marsais.

Highlighting the rhetorical figures is different according to each rhetorical style. For Condillac the signified is the key to defining because the feeling or the emotion is a rhetorical expression, and not pure reason. However, this moderate form is not entirely opposed to Du Marsais's emotional rhetoric, both focusing on rhetorical figures, but the first one tends to a thorough description of them.

The premise that to each signifier can be assigned one ideal signified limits the ability of the tropes or expressions to be synonymous without reducing their significance. *The ornamental rhetoric* promoted by Condillac allows the relativism becoming a rhetorical figure that takes the form given by the individual, the more individuals, the more rhetorical figures and as many expressed truths

*The structural-functional rhetoric* of Du Marsais designates two sides of rhetorical figure: the structural one (the composition) and the functional one (the effects on other party).

Taking into consideration the two aspects imposed by these rhetoricians, it is created a more detailed classification than the previous: linguistic figures and figures of thought.

The linguistic figures are subclassified into tropes and nontropes, tropes can be: expression tropes (related to the signifier) and semnification tropes (related to the signified); nontropes are divided into: diction nontropes, elocution nontropes, style and structure nontropes.

It is noted that these classifications are very mobile, which gives a rich dynamism to the ordering of rhetorical figures according to certain criteria. For modern



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retorics, for the successors of the French school, the symbol becomes the central rhetorical figure, the base of symbolism.

Romanian symbolism succeeds in bringing a literary synchronisation with the other European literary currents of the era.

While in France symbolism appears as a manifestation against parnassianism, this poetic-aesthetic attitude of Parnassian resistance finds followers quite easily. In Romania the emergence of the denial of symbolism is not parnassianism since almost all Romanian symbolist poets are also parnassianist poets.

This experience of the differences between European and Romanian events had also been felt in the case of Romanticism, which appears as a social-political manifesto, but also an aesthetic one. Whereas in France Romanticism emerged as an escape from the rigors of classicism. So the Romanian Romanticism is not suppressed by a severe classicism as the classical doctrine does not appear, and both the classical and romantic doctrine manifesto make evidence of structural coexistence.

The symbolist poetry is considered to be a purified poetry, the path to true poetry. Unlike Classicism and Romanticism which promoted radical manifestos, Symbolism knows another kind of promotion through literary cafes and literary salons. Here, the rigor of the classical manifestos is changed by orality, the poetry is created here and the theorization will come much later.

Minulescu is not just the promoter of the theorization of symbolism, but he lives a literary life alongside all his contemporaries. His work is equated with the development of the vast literary trends.

The artistic and creative life of the poet combines with his personal life, these two are generating one another, because his inner feelings are symbolist, he does not write symbolist manifestos but he theorize his daily pure symbolist existence: “a Minulescu mythology is a mythology of the symbolism” (Manu Emil, 1981: 182)

The minulescian lyric abounds in relations with its environment, and the symbolist essence penetrates beyond creation, reaching the daily lives where his home is a true sanctuary of this new trend.

In a relaxed atmosphere rise the first curiosites of the minulescian liryc: the minulescian bohemia becomes a masterpiece of the style which is characterized by a playful-conscious temperament, his poetry belongs to the extremes: he develops an urban romantism in a modern troubadour manner.

The lyrical discursivity of his works suggests a constant communication between the author and the reader, which allowed same traditional readers to apreciate his modern writings and even to get to know more of this new trend.

The avant-garde poets and the literary currents which they were promoting succeeded in discovering new realms of poetry, offering the potentiality to retrieve a reinvented lyricism from the immobility of the previous one. The minulescian lyric uses these vanguard techniques, but his lyric outlines the urban troubadur concealed with a tender nostalgia, which creates a comic anecdotal character.

However, the minulescian poetry is not based on the intensity of amusement, this arising spontaneously from the discursivity which, by respecting the symbolist criteria (observing the chorus, exposing the ideology), creates a theatrical poetry that will be read in a dramatizing context, pointing out to the mixture between proper bantering and the preciousness of the imposed language, generating convivial poetry without comic aim defined from the begining.



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The rain methaphor from *Acuarelă* suggests the beginnings of life, the ancestral pair over which the passing of time has left its mark, this is a deep thought exposed to the reader very cherfuly with great prowess.

The urban landscape represents the changing of decor from a distant paradise into the raining city: „În orașu-n care plouă/ De trei ori pe săptămână/ Un bătrân și o bătrână/ Două jucării stricate/ Merg ținându-se de mână!" (*Acuarelă*).

The minulescian romances read over time provide multiple perspectives; the sensation of easy reading leads in fact to the lyrical meditation containing also hermetic elements.

Minulescu's poetry offers multiple cues of interpretation, it cannot be precisely framed, ranging from meditation to elegy and to tightly coded verse. His lyric goes beyond symbolism, as Emil Manu says: "only an aesthetic research of symbolism could define the minulescian area of this literature " (Manu Emil, 1981*:* 185)

The ease of the minulescian poetry seems to be the result of the symbolist support, its features create an easy rhetoric that abounds in symbols and correspondents, in various decors and chromatic reachness. However the critics appreaciate his poetry beyond these boundaries: "some litearary historians found even gratuitousness and intelectual game in his romances" (Tomuș Mircea, 1966: 105)

The minulescian lyric grows the blurring of emotions, the lyrical meditations with tragic shades, the instinctual detail in a reach chromaticism, with a scenic game resembeling to a ritual procession. However, Șerban Cioculescu, as well as G. Călinescu, observe his relaxed attitude regarding the deity: „*Eu nu mint/ Eu sunt ca Tine.../ Nu știu dacă-i rău sau bine/ Dar nu cer să fiu iertat/(...)/ Ce fac eu la fel ca Tine,/ Nu-i păcat...*"

The idea of a pure poetry appears with symbolism, the essence of purity starts from intuition and not like in Romanticism from truth. Bergsonien influences manifest in the symbolist poetry through the absence of the asimilation of the moral values as goals of the poetry.

The symbolist aesthetic area excludes these notions, considering them *non* or *extra*-aesthetic.

The attempts of theorizing the current existed but did not prove prolific. Even though the modern tendencies of the poets to comment or make notes regarding their creation provides a reach and valuable material for symbolist theory.

The symbolist reaction against Parnassianism is based primarily on the transformation of the poetry in a specific music. So, parnassians saw poetry as a painting, and for the symbolists the painting becomes audible, a sonority with grave accords that resonates with the interior states.

The new modernist concept does not allow expresing the poetic object but suggesting it to a level of a weightless intuitivity.

The creations become lyrical meditations that exceed the rational stepping toward the unutterable and revealing a new lyrical consciousness. So the symbolist figure of style are the encriptions of some intuitive notions.

The plasticization of poetry made by the parnassians revolts the symbolist, who was seeking its musicalisation.

The suggestion, the vague and the ambigous go beyond the concept of asimilating a semnification reaching the theatricality of the language of the modern poetry. So the language becomes creative, generating poetic experience. On a formal level, symbolist poetry combats the conventionalism of the traditionalists, adhering to the free verse.



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The minulescian typology of symbols does not subdue to the rules imposed by this trend, because the poet does not comply absolutely with the symbolism. Minulescu borrows the decor and the sensitivity from the symbolists, a motivation given by Tudor Vianu for this attitude lies in the fact that Minulescu experienced only some symbolist groups, not all of them.

The minulescian symbol is not taken, but adopted, improved and passed through the filter of his own feelings which sometimes creates a distance from the current itself.

Emil Manu supports Tudor Vianu′s assertion but also completes it extrapolating Parnassian influences and avant-garde poetics beyond minulescian lyric, reaching the broadening of the themes and enriching the rhetorical style in the first half of the twentieth century in the Romanian poetry.

The symbol manifests sensory-pensive, addressing from a semiotic approach. It depicts two aspects: the formal side that leads to the hidden essence and the obscure side that represents the coding of the concept.

Minulescu is the first symbolist who goes down in the street, the urban universe in which people carry out their daily lives impress the poet. The small lyrical stories make him a lyric character; this urban drama does not depress him, but gives spectacularity to his creation.

The street becomes a metaphorical symbol, and Minulescu was named *poet of the street*, but unlike G. Călinescu the decorative objects does not lead his creation, but at a psychological level they create the atmosphere.

The chromatic aspect of his landscapes bring civilization to the fore, they are animated by plastic intensification techniques preserved from Parnassianism in order to complete the melody specific for his creations.

From a thematic point of view the minulescian Parnassianism is one before the symbolism regarding the ambient, the marine landscapes, the watercolours and the pastels: ,,În port e liniște/Și-n zare-/Tot liniște (dar mult mai mare)/ În larg sirena nu mai țipă/ Și macarelele-au tăcut" (*Marină estivală*).

The modernity of the minulescian creations is felt especially in the social phenomenon, the avid reading public manifests from the symbolist period till now: "...for Minulescu the public is a theme of literary sociology, Minulescu′s work never ceased to exist" (Manu Emil, 1981: 192)

The minulescian lyric does not have a pattern; it is mainly symbolist, romantic in the inner feeling, parnassianist in the pictoriality of the decor and modernist by the means of expression used in a Romanian poetry that was almost capped at the begging of the twentieth century.

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