Figures of sound at Şerban Foarţă

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Résumé : En analysant le travail de Şerban Foarţă, j'ai remarqué que les figures sonores occupent une place importante. Le poète passionné de la forme figée, de la musicalité et de l'équilibre entre sens et forme, est un amateur des vers holorimes, des calembours, des palindromes. J'analyserai quelques-unes des figures sonores qui apparaissent dans ces vers étranges composés des mêmes sons, qui se prononcent à l'identique bien que formés de mots différents. Je propose de mettre en évidence les valences de la langue roumaine, à l'aide d'exemples tirés des créations d'un poète qui insiste surtout sur l'euphorie des mots.

Mots-clés : *holorimes, musicalité, aphérèse, synérèse, allitération, assonance, palindrome.*

Introduction

Making use of the creative side of the language is specific to human beings, and especially, to literature. The concern for innovation and the musicality of the verse is vital in Şerban Foarţă's work; it is manifest in the special attention to the shape of the poetry, the rhyme, the rhythm inside euphony of words that make poetry to be innovative, easily recognizable and difficult to imitate or translate. The innovation relies on the author's craft to weave words, giving them a particular musicality that is based on a particular way of emphasizing the syllables, of distributing of the breaks, thus creating a specific echo. Because of that, they need to be spoken aloud, as if being chanted. The Holorhyme volume constitutes misconduct and also a confirmation of the language's possibilities, the corset does not embarrass the author, it's stimulates him.

The considerations on the sound structure of the verse proves a predilection for certain sounds, certain combinations.

In order to increase musicality there are figures considered phonetical accidents like sound suppression at the beginning, within or at the end of the word and figures which consist in the repetition of the sounds. The musicality is a consequence of the

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rhythmic cadences of the poet who was entirely mesmerized by the formal performance, by the cleverly-built speech in which the euphonic virtues of words are exploited.

Apheresis (gr. *Aphairesis*, lat. *Remotio* – "removal") is suppression/fall of a sound or syllable at the beginning of the word. The process occurs frequently in holorhymes as the author is limited in these playful structures by the presence of certain sounds:

„cărări umblând?...Parfum de crin,
în pajişti; cântece şi *´arpe.*
În paji, işti cântece şi, iar, pe
cărări, un blând parfum de crin..." (2010, p. 180).

Apocope (gr. *Apokope*, lat. *Apocope* – "drive out") is the shortening of a word by suppressing a sound or syllable at the end of it. Although the apocope is considered in the Romanian language as a regional phenomenon or one of the spoken language, demonstrating some negligence in the pronunciation, in the literary texts it is a diversion that generates expressivity. With the poet from Timişoara, the appearance of the apocope is justified by resuming and reordering the sounds, the pauses or the word with accents. Şerban Foarță is not the founder of the icons, but he remains the only one from the Romanian language that delights us with this kind of poetry, in this case by the use of holorhymes. The apocope (*turbanu '*) appears so that the used sounds may have the wanted echo:

„În plin balcon, turbanu', mitenele
(ale cui?): rasate, doamnele,
şi domnişoarele, în voal
tenace, lejer; beatitudini
de mire galeş,
ilustru. O, nu-
ferii!… ci
rea, cre-
dinţa
lor.
Î n
p l i n
bal, con-
turb anumite
neleale cuirasa-
te: doamnele, şi
domnişoarele: învoalte
nacele, jerbe, atitudini
demiregale şi lustru. O,
nu fericirea, credinţa lor." (2000, p. 216)

The hourglass consists in changing the metric units, the words seem to be welling in reverse order for deposit seeping through the limited space. In the second part of the hourglass, words acquire new meanings, which is not surprising for the readers accustomed to the juggling of the poet. Thus, „O, nuferii, ci rea, credinţa lor" becomes „O, nu fericirea, credinţa lor", from the word „balcon" fragmented are made other ones and examples keep continuing.

Referring to these forms of poetry, Eugen Simion asks:

"What value can this complicated game with sounds and this mystifying science have in poetry? The value that any game of this nature has: 1) it causes pleasure, it creates

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> surprises by technical finesse of the verse and 2) shows the prosodic possibilities of a language, its proclivity to the most difficult formal assemblies... If all the poets, in a period, made use of such formal subtleties, the poetry would become sterile, of course, and would probably die from the lack of sense and truth. It would not be either literature would lack such fine calligraphers, aesthetic, spirits that are briefly cultivating the refinements of the language and live their hour of glory when they manage to compose a good palindrome." (Simion, 1989: 411)

Of course that Șerban Foarță's poetry has exceeded the critics expectations, because the game of verbal forms is not meaningless and joints often communicate more than malleability.

Syneresis (gr. *Synairesis*, lat. *Synaeresis* – "nearby contract") consists in the merging of two vowels in a rising diphthong, the transformation of the gap into a diphthong. Thus, from the earliest pronunciation of the word "theater"/„teatru", into three syllables „te-a-tru", now we utter this word into two syllables „tea-tru". Also, the syneresis may be graphically marked by of a hyphen, if we pronounce into syllables two monosyllabic words: *pe-o, și-a*.

The holorymes of Șerban Foarță are full of synerese:

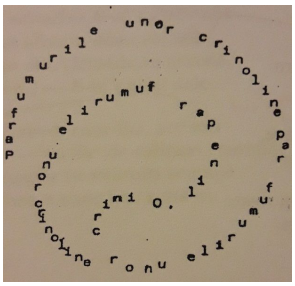
„prelung *adio,-n* mângâieri
de auroră fără glorie
de aur. – Oră fără glorie,
prelung *adie-o*,-n mângâieri" (2010, p. 176)

„Imbold imens *e-a* treia,
în ea să pier; deliberat,
în ea, să pierd, eliberat,
ca un simbol, *dimensia-a* treia" (2000, p. 259)

Alliteration (lat. *Ad* + *literally*, fr. *Allitération* – "repetition of the same letter") is characterized by repeating a consonant with an euphonic, onomatopoeic, descriptive or symbolic effect. This figure relies on the linkage between sound emission and its reflection in the human mind.

> "The euphonic effect is more difficult to analyze it consists of a linguistic idiomatical feeling – it is a consonant and vowel's harmony thus, essentially an acoustic symmetry in words and sentence, perceived, largely, by the speakers of a language." (Dragomirescu, 1975: 34)

The text under a playful sign, in which parallelism is the repetition of sounds, in holorhyme is suggestively named *Placă (puțin) defectă/Plate (slightly) damaged*, in which alliteration and assonance, among other figures, create musicality:



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The icon is constructed under the shape of of Möbius' Strip, so that the look which follows the letters, across this whole chain, should return to the same place. The poet calls this trick to make sense of "everlasting pheminin" hiding behind his words a slight melancholy with a slight scent of romance. Putting the idea anticipated by the title into words, since the words are following the movement of a "slightly" damaged plate, scratches that fragment of the message, song, repeating certain portions: "The perfumes of some crinolines seem fumes of lilies! O line seems fumes of crinoline..."/„Parfumurile unor crinoline par fumurile unor crini! O, line par fumurile unor crinoline..."

In Foarță's holorhymes the text is ambiguous, revealing the playful intention of the author, who exploits homophone. The words that keep repeating in the poem are "fragrance"/„parfum" and "crinoline"/„crinoline" and as a result of this fragmentation the synonymy between the words' "fumes"/„fumuri" and "fragrance"/„parfumuri" created. Reading "the plate" can be obsessively restarted generating a high artistic effect.

Assonance (fr. *Assonance*, lat. *Ad sonar* – "to call, to resound, to play at") is a form of homophony that consists of repetition of a stressed vowel in two or more successive words. Alliteration and assonance give relief to the lyrical text by rhythmically organizing it.

Iorgu Iordan believes that:

> "the need for expressivity from which spring (rhyme, assonance and alliteration) appears to be purely aesthetic, but we cannot deny that the proper sense of those syntactic formulas gain force, color and freshness due to the fact that the constitutive elements show matches of the sounds that lead our mind to the lyrics of the poets." (Dragomirescu, 1975: 43)

The two figures of phonetic repetition frequently appear in the maze developed by Șerban Foarță in holorhymes especially, but also in other variants: paronomasia, repetition, parallelism, homophones etc., since many of the puns are relying on sound similarity. The phonetic and the linguistic games are disclosed to us by holorhymes, in which the author explores continually the language by giving way to the sound figures because phonemes from a line came back into the body of the following verse:

„În port, o cale se repetă.
Unsoare,-n irizări la țărm
Un soare,-n irizări, la țărm,
în portocale se repetă.

În fiecare chiparos
adastă. în alburne, moartea.
Adastă, în alb, urne. Moartea
în fiecare chip, a ros." (2000, p. 267).

Urmare și adio (2010, p. 191) / *What Follows and Farewell* (2010, p. 191) reunites, by the lyrics cut into holorhymes by the Mathematical precision, six metric structures that do more than replaying the lyrics transmitting different ideas through the same phonemes from which words are formed, deformed or reformed.

„În cer, egrete,-n cer, crep roșu
în, toarse, caiere de nori.

Balconul cerului, în mare

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bal,
conul cerului.
În mare,
întoarse caiere de nori.

În cer, egrete,-n cer, crep roșu;
în moar, terasele de nori.

În norii: flame,
gladii,
yole,
în oriflame, gladiole,
în, moarte, rasele de nori, –

în ce regrete
'ncerc
reproșu´
orfan, dosindu-l, să i-l fac
or', fandosindu-l, să i-l fac!

În cer, egrete,-n cer, crep roșu..."

Palindrome (gr. *Palin* – "back" and *dromos* – "way, way to travel") refers to words or groups of words, lyrics or statements that read from left to right or vice versa, do not change their meaning: *aba, aerisirea, anina, apa, ara, apocopa, cuc, cojoc, capac, unu, radar, rotitor, supus, rever, rar, potop, dud*; *Sole medere, pede ede, perede melos*. (Take care of you under the sun, eat standing up, write songs!).

Like in most language games punctuation does not count, either. Sentences or palindrome phrases are called retrograde, recurrent or sotadics (after Sotades, who is believed to have used them for the first time).

Palindrome is not universal and its frequency depends on the shape of the words in a particular language; for example, in most Australian languages, all words begin with a vowel and end with a consonant therefore the palindrome cannot occur. On the other hand, the Chinese and Japanese write syllables and it is easier to create palindromes. The concept of palindrome, especially in poetry, has become widespread in Eastern Europe and the relationship between the reversibility of the form and of the meaning has been explored, yet it remains a challenge. Mirror writing, magical writing, rigid, mystical, playful, Mathematical writings, we all perceive it differently. In fact, the invention of the texts which, when read from left to right and from right to left bear the same sense, before being a literary or language game, allowed creation of speech.

The French language likens the palindrome with the Roman god Janus that is depicted with two faces: one looking face to the past and the other one in the future.

There are times when the word is not identical, but simply makes sense, as in *Roma – amor, Vasile – Elisav*, a character of Șerban Foarță's palindrome *Roșul ușor e rozul iluzor*, in which the author chose not to write a sequence of nonsense, but leaves the reader free to find among other words, those with trimmings. The theme of the novel is the palindrome, the recurrence. The French teacher, whose name obviously belongs to the palindromes, Vasile Elisav tries to initiate the two students from the apartment 22, the palindromes Nora Aron and the paronymic called Carmen Carpen, into the art of palindrome, which is also called in the novel

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„eigologie". The book is a mixture of psychological dialogues and wordplay, symbolically ending with the question: "Should we begin a cigar from left or right?"

The author, through the main character, gives some definitions of the palindrome:

> A palindrome is like a fan: it is initially a simple sheath from which are coming out, then, dozens of swords that are arched like *cauda pavonis* that it is in manifestation a symbol of initiation of the world. A palindrome is also like a harmonic, which, first, is a pouch, in one dimension, from whose edges we can pull then in both directions.

Through this novel, the author tried to stop – at least in literature – time. Since the palindrome is reversible, "it loses this becoming: it is something that is motionless, it is like a mirror, an hourglass through which actually the sand not the time is flowing, and the sand makes us full of sand, it is true like the time, and on the other hand there is this 8-number eight - lying down, the infinity, that is an equivalent of eternity and therefore it implies to something static, like the eternity." (Popescu, 2012: 210)

The Romanian puzzles – term *polindrome* is also known, a special anagram, with which it should not be confused, because the above mentioned one has become established to designate words or phrases that have different meanings when read in the opposite direction.

This is the case of the poem *Cvasi-palindrom* playfully processes blend:

„*uşo*r i-am pus pe buze *roșu*
uşor i-am pus pe buze *roșu*
pe faţă *rozul iluzor*
pe faţă *rozul iluzor*

glicinele: o *vomă mov*
glicinele: o *vomă mov*
pe giulgiul ei ca un *blam alb*
pe giulgiul ei ca un *blam alb*

dat nouă
care
urgent
negru." (2000, p. 290)

The dual nature of the poet- the rigorous and sentimental sides- is revealed through *Scrisori (mai mult decât) deschise*,/Letters (more than) opened in which those two sides start a "step-in-two palindromes".

„Un *rar*
un *rotitor*,
la bal,
vals slav!

(un *vals slavrotitor* întru *slava ta vals*
uşor roșu 'n obraji de atâta efort
dansezi fals mon amour şi cânţi fals acest vals
și eşti greu mon amour ca un lemn ca un mort

rotitor somnolent raz-dva-tri *valsu' slav*

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obrazul pe umărul tău să mi-l culc
şi să-ţi spun te iubesc şi să-ţi spun că-ţi sunt sclav
şi sunt *roșu* 'n obraji şi *ușor* ca un fulg" (2000, p. 235- 236)

What is interesting in Şerban Foarţă's writings is what reversibility stands for, and how it can be analyzed. Unfortunately, the texts written in this manner are somewhat ignored by linguistic studies, as they are considered not relevant. We believe that this text- in which the phonetic and linguistic games are highlighted – make an important contribution to knowledge and language interpretation or even by putting a limit to it. It can analyze the way in which the palindrome highlights the symmetry of certain words and phrases, which Foarţă has also highlighted.

Conclusions

Our study aims at highlighting the particularities of Şerban Foarţă's language, of the innovative role of the language. The poet has a special audience for his nonconformity which is tasted more than the conventional sides of the language. Our attention was attracted by the euphoric elements that give to the texts musicality. We could say that there is an alternation between sound, construction, semantic and thinking figures.

The author makes use of all possibilities given by the language in order to confirm its euphonic virtues, without neglecting those from a semantic field. Although the choice of words generally abides by linguistic rule, Foarţă's literature is full of lexical, grammatical, phonetic and semantic deviations.

Therefore, his work is based on sound figures, the author often calls them, as we can see in his texts a technique and a language that consist in a real formal ceremony. Behind them, an universe full of meanings keeps extending.

The author prefers the linguistic material drawn from the "non poetry" giving these words new meanings. Thus, if the word is univocal or denotative, in his poetry it is loaded with the sense of becoming multifaceted. Foarţă' s words do not express nothing through their conceptual content, but through their shape, the structure of the material is carefully chosen by the virtues that the author knows how to highlight. The poetical language is born at the junction between language and technology.

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