DRAMATIC ACCENTS OF THE METAPHOR WITH HERTA MÜLLER

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Abstract: *For many years, Herta Müller's social existence has been thousand kilometres away but her agony is perpetual and completely Romanian. Her soul and her body breathe the Romanian spirit and the tragism of the Communist period breaks out in particular dramatic metaphors.*

Key-words: *Terror, communism, metaphor.*

The present excursion into the literary and biographical world of the writer Herta Müller starts with a brief moment of departure to the backstage of the last autumn Romanian press so as to have the opportunity to quote an article published as a reaction to the reactions stirred by the Herta Muller`s winning of the Nobel Prize for literature. The title belongs to Iulia Popovici and it sounds like this: "«Our Germans» and their Nobel". The article was published in the „Observator cultural" magazine, in October 2009. It obviously makes reference to some hysterical-patriotic reactions that invaded the Romanian media on hearing the magnificent news. Many fellow countrymen hurried to tick into the honour card of our nation the merit of the Romanian origin of the writer and the resounding success of the autochthonous topics. In fact, Iulia Popovici noted: "Herta Muller′s work and her Nobel are not the merit of the past and present Romanian nation, for what Herta Muller writes is the struggling with a trauma that no one has historically taken upon." (POPOVICI, 2009: http://www.observatorcultural.ro)

As it is obviously relevant for the topic, we continue with an overview of the general line of Herta Muller. The writer was born in Romania in 1953 in Nitchidorf village of Banat, in a family of Swabs (German colonists settled in Banat and Transylvania in the VIII th century). According to her own confession, she only learnt the Romanian language at the age of 15.

She debuted in 1982 with the volume of stories *Niederungen*, an opportunity fully used by the Board of Censors to set their "cleansing" mechanism working. The manuscript saw the light of print in original form two years later in Germany. The echo of the event propagated to the hardworking censors′ ears in the country and the consequence has materialized into Herta Muller′s interdiction of publication in Romania.

In exchange she is offered another "profession" as an informer of the Securitate. Her refusal, in conjunction with charges of being a sympathizer of the dissident Aktionsgruppe from the German House of Culture come to be a source of fierce political contention. As a consequence of the more and more twisted relationship with "the green plums eaters", as she metaphorically calls them, Herta Müller leaves the country in 1987 bearing the burden of an incurable "contamination" of her whole being with the monomania of a violent and acutely felt "uprooting": "That is not our home, other people live there now. Home is where you are ... And my mother answered: You cannot know what is at home now. In that place where Ceasornicarutoni

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[watchmaker Toni] provides himself with the graves, there, there is definitely home." (MÜLLER, 2006: 222)

She establishes herself in Berlin and continues to write and publish novels, essays and poetry volumes, all rewarded with notable awards, the most resounding and the latest in chronological order being the Nobel Prize for Literature awarded in 2009, October subsequently to ten years of having been nominated for this prestigious distinction by the German state. By awarding Herta Müller, the Swedish Academy meant not only to recompense an outstanding literary merit, but also to homage the past 20 years since the collapse of the communist regime in both Eastern and Western Europe (Berlin Wall Fall).

Herztier is the novel who occasioned the writer to chop off at least one head of the dragon that constantly threatens her neuralgic being; it is just the head of the widespread public ignorance. The denunciation of the horrors of the pre-revolutionary communist repression and the suicide-like perpetuation of the key elements of the mechanism inside represent a "shock therapy" both for the writer and for the universality.

Confession takes, not accidentally, a cyclical form; the author has often testified even this feeling of terror produced by the Romanian inability of breaking the vicious circle of leftist dictatorship and, simultaneously, of escaping of the clutches of a mimed liberty.

The element that orders the text and disturbs the general sensitivity is Terror; it is present everywhere, like a second nature for people and things; it cripples, reduces or abolishes the being who is irreparably infected with its monomania. Terror is the object and the subject of the narrative in itself in Herta Müller′s writing, it is the pretext and the context of the inner skidding. Everything minimizes or maximizes itself under the effect of a definite mood that is being organically lived and felt at all the levels of the existence. Universe starts, passes through and returns to the same common denominator: terror; man is afraid, his thoughts lose vitality, words come contorted, turn round and hide themselves behind the mirror.

The text is a form of escape, a sublimation of the linguistic shape into a "dumb race" (as the writer calls it), a transmigration of the "herztier" from her into the potential reader′s heart; the words' weakness finds inside the revolt the resources of a thing syntax promoted to the rank of the human: the nail scissors, the shoes, a strategically placed comma or a cold in the head are all linguistic elements that carry sharp pieces of the daily torments′ mirror.

The key of a transgressive reading is to a high degree political and the supporting images belong to an imaginative record that abounds in freshness and it sublimates itself into an amazing suggestive force. "What associations of words, what outbursts of the core essences into the heart of those words joined by chance!" (IUGA, 2009: http://www.observatorcultural.ro) exclaimed Nora Iuga, Herta Müller novel′s translator.

About "the incidental" or "the fortuitous" in juxtaposition of images with Herta Müller, Cosmin Dragoste comes to a completely different conclusion as compared to that of Nora Iuga; he considers that, on the contrary, "Herta Müller's associations are never spontaneous." (DRAGOSTE, 2007: 272) We tend to side with Mr. Dragoste and to admit that the type of "poetic" speech deeply thought and finally embraced by Herta Müller best addresses the need for otherness of the authorial self and that the "expression transformation" is a way that "enables dumb head rush, bringing about a poetic shock that must be seen as an wordless thinking." (MÜLLER, 2005: 20)

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The cruelty of the narrative and the violent message lie behind into the writer's being; it's not about a deeply process of phrase distillation that precedes every "linguistic outburst" but a stream of painful repressed memories wandering for an impossible linguistic receptacle; still, the ensemble is not the result of the interpreting hazard but a thoroughly poetics of the particulars, fact that doesn't damage at all to the proportions of the whole ideation construction. The real is all about the writer's perception level so the encoding cannot be accidental or even usual: "When I want to write them, Lola's sentences die away in my hand" (MÜLLER, 2006: 40). A world where the abnormal and the inhuman are intentionally and constantly cultivated cannot be embodied by a common speech: "the vocabulary is rather related to the brain reality and to the poem order than to the surrounding reality. The common words lose their meaning when they get to certain soul intensities." (GHEORGHE, 2009: http://www.observatorcultural.ro)

Affective memory dictates the flow of sinister feelings and the prose universe comes to be a hallucinating nightmare haunted by the terrifying ghost of terror; their terror embodied by the *Herztier* is the one who chooses the words and organizes the syntax: "A chaotic and terrifying universe, built up by means of a perpetual mood symbolizing, deprived of the narrative cores that could have organized and kept it clear of an excessive ambiguity." (CONKAN, 2010: 4)

As a character, the *Herztier* is Herta Müller's injured sensitivity, her shuddering ego that fights against a whole ailing world. The novel is the narrative of the death horror; death is everywhere: "death…is largely present, directly or indirectly." (DRAGOSTE, *op. cit*.: 259); it is hanging over the bodies and the souls just as a predator that tears up the air to catch up his prey. Sooner or later the last hour arrives for everyone: "sfranciocul"- "the one who kills nine times"- claws the victims one by one: Lola, Georg, Kurt: "summer was the one that kept the trap ready. It knew how the flowers came out of the old" (MÜLLER, *ibidem*: 41). The perpetual terror makes people and things smaller and smaller as if they all want to get invisible for the poisonous watcher: "During dictatorship towns cannot exist, because everything is small as long as it is watched" (MÜLLER, *ibidem*: 47). That is why little things and apparently innocent gestures often covering dreadful details alternate at a brisk pace: "somebody said the loudspeakers can see and hear everything we do." (MÜLLER, *ibidem*: 10)

In Herta Muller`s narrative world her "unconscious personality" (MAURON, 2001: 34) is subordinated to a persistent trauma and consequently to a tormenting terror. Cosmin Dragoste, in his monography dedicated to Herta Müller, concluded that this feeling of terror represents the subject which repeatedly indicates a "coordinating disposition". The building material of her prose is parataxis and lyricism, both of them functioning like a rotative mechanism which repeatedly concentrates and squeezes unsuspected quantities of essence out of a commonplace matter.

The sense perception is the basis of the artistic act's coding and interpreting. In few cases the writer suggests, or even gives explicit instructions: "People felt the dictator and his watchmen surveying all the secret escaping plans, people sensed them watching and spreading the terror" (MÜLLER, *ibidem*: 51); most of the time she entrusts meaning to the receiver's sensitivity. The small *herztier* safely migrates to the reader's inner "housing". Writing becomes a pantomime show of a life belonging to a dramatic paradigm; this life reveals itself as part of the synonymously chain of "trauma".

Following this dramatic "path", the psycho-critic method of Charles Mauron could be satisfactorily applied to Herta Müller`s prose in order to identify the " of

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involuntary ideas behind the consciously willed structures of the text." (MAURON, *op. cit.*: 24) "The obsessive metaphors" can easily be relevant for what he calls "pre-logical thinking" which connects the images according to their "emotional load". (MAURON, *ibidem*: 32)

The images that are frequently repeated refer to:

1. gloomy image of childhood detailed revelatory nature aspects
2. true and self-seeking friendship
3. urban people and their emancipation dreams struggling with the rural origin's evidence
4. sensual, bestial love with its sad procession of victims
5. terror under all its possible forms

For the reader of the *Herztier,* the whole prose edifice seems to be made of metaphor substance. Metaphor veils and unveils, obscures and reveals the human nature's tormenting becoming and end. This mysterious and hazardous atmosphere brings forward Blaga' s assertion according to which "The man is a metaphor - producer animal" (BLAGA, 1994: 357). It may be just the *hertzier* the one who makes the writer's totally distinct speech come into being? The "revelatory metaphors" (BLAGA, *ibidem.*: 354) spring from an impressionable ego brutally faced with an atrocious real contiguity.

Herta Müller's prose shines not by colour or style embroidery as one would expect in some cases at a woman-writer but it is remarkable by sincerity. Speaking about her work, Mrs. Bianca Burta Cernat said that: "Herta Müller is a free person who happened to be a woman and who consistently writes about life from an un-free world, haunted by the nebulous presence of Evil. Moreover, the merit of the writer consists in the fact that she "critically deconstructs an entire trauma culture." (BURTA CERNAT, 2009: http://www.observatorcultural.ro)

The jury that has interceded Herta Müller's prestigious award's getting unanimously agreed that the recommendations in Alfred Nobel*'s testament found in this case a successful layout and a proper bringing forward. With H*erta Müller the prose is not about pure aesthetics but, above all, her work reflects a "humanist-ethical commitment consubstantial to the aesthetic value".

By means of a particular artistic language that is not tributary either to the German or to the Romanian descent but to an attempt to experience freedom intensely undermined by the past shortcomings, Herta Müller impresses her prose with an evoking potential that is dense enough to depict the "universe of the uprooted" in touches of a sublime poetics. Poetic spirit goes over the entire confessions touching with the metaphor wing all the "Swabian" palpitations of the "herztier".

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