ASPECTS CONCERNING THE IMAGINARY IN THE WORK OF FANUS NEAGU[1]

Abstract : *Aspects concerning the imaginary in the work of Fănuş Neagu is meant to observe the different forms of this medium of literary expression, as it shows oneself within the European literature of the 20th C, approaching the concept from both a practical and a theoretical angle. During all the paper, we have tried to demonstrate that the means of expressing the imaginary in Fănuş Neagu's prose are oriented, passing through a special form, from a deadly destiny to an ontological triumph. Consequently, the imaginary has become manifest as a creative imagination, and moreover, as an euphemistic transformation of the world, as a human being order.*

Key words: *Fănuş Neagu**;** imaginary; Brăila*

Aspects concerning the imaginary in the work of Fănuş Neagu is meant to observe the different forms of this medium of literary expression, approaching the concept from both a practical and a theoretical angle.

In modernity, the imaginary was given a permanent and close attention in the field of literary and aesthetical research, gaining various theoretical tones and foundations. During the past decades, the number of exegeses has increased remarkably. Some of them have in view the consolidation of a theory on the manifestation of the imaginary in literature and art; others are mere notes made more or less at random, which, most of the time, cannot resist the temptation of a definition. This theoretical and critical interest gave birth to a huge number of actions, each bringing crucial elements for both understanding and interpreting the imaginary art and literature, as well as their particularity in relation to other literary or artistic phenomena.

As a whole, the critical exegesis reveals a variety of opinions, suppositions, modes of approach and use, and the tendencies balancing – as in many other sectors of literary theory and aesthetics - between restrictive formulations and comprehensive considerations. The common and invariable idea to be found in the approaches of a number of theoreticians and literary historians dealing with the imaginary, in spite of some specific nuances and differences, such as Gilbert Durand, Gaston Bachelar, Roger Caillois, Tzvetan Todorov, Jean Burgos, Jean Jacques Wunenburger, Faulkner, Corin Braga, Lucian Boia, etc is that of a rupture; the imaginary is at bottom the conflict between a rational and explainable order of the world and a surprising, unacceptable and unexplainable order, opposing the first one.

"The imaginary is the freedom we take upon ourselves to relate to the world so as it appears to us as intuitively absent. The imaginary is not intended to express essential truths in short or combined forms; it is the poetry of pure sensitivity, the poetry of the imagination whose sole aim is to express itself"(Antohi, 1991:78).

Relating the above to Fănuş Neagu's writings, we easily identify the literary imaginary since the first reading of his work and we can also talk about the symbolism of the imaginary, which is one of the elements of originality of the work.

In this paper , we have tried to demonstrate that the means of expressing the imaginary in Fănuş Neagu's prose are oriented, passing through a special form, from a

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deadly destiny to an ontological triumph. Consequently, the imaginary has become manifest as a creative imagination, and moreover, as an euphemistic transformation of the world, as a human being order.

Fănuş Neagu rediscovers and turns to account the ancient implications of the epic. The prose writer looks for the popular melos simplicity, adorned with the picturesqueness and the sensational of archaic forms of life, that he is going to reveal. His epic is a way of reflecting the human reality which is projected on a vast screen of the eternal and of the absolute. As Nicolae Balotă also noticed, the writer configures his own imaginary space of the plain of Brăila. His characters are influenced by the place they live in, a place that they love passionately or hate obstinately without being able to flee from their destiny. In Fănuş Neagu's work, the ascent, the rituals of verticality, and of purification are correlated with the light and with the visual perception. "The sceptre", a Durand's metaphor, recovers itself like a representative symbol of the notion of the artist's beneficial omnipotence, who associates the destiny's virility to himself. During the day time imaginary journey, Fănuş Neagu's "sceptre" separates light from darkness and sets up the transcendental thoughts in opposition to the irreversible time's passing. The strong humanity, the vegetal brightness, the characters' heroism and liveliness are reverberations of Brăila's imaginary region with ascensional significations.

In the prose of Fănuş Neagu we identify symbology of Gilbert Durand's day time regime, which includes the scheme of raising, of light and that of verticality. Bachelard considered that the upward verticality is the only direction with an active and spiritual significance according to the human being's position. As regards this axis of human representation one can notice the straight connection between the moral and metaphysical attitudes and the imagination suggestions.

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In this literature, *the horse* is the characters' companion in their destiny, in their way towards the hope land, in their revengeful adventures, on their love or turmoil paths. "The horse thieves" world is a kingdom, an imense horizontal space, where man and "animal" both elude the civilized world going back to their native condition. Instead of the cosmic felling brought by "the depth" and by "the high" to the man, the plain gives to him imagination, ardent passions and thirst for dreams.

In this imaginary space, we can perceive some symbols aspiring to pure verticality, wishing to escape from time's passing and from death and to go to an eternal superreality: *the clownhero;the hypervital and outsized hero; the burning desire* to live; *father*as a symbol of ambitious raising; *water* – a symbol of creation and mobility; *the beneficial horse* – as a symbol of adventure; *the plain* – as an imaginary geography.

" Neagu's world lives at the outskirts of the Danube *plain*, seen as a Faulkner's territory, imaginary and real at the same time, giving us the feeling of mirage. The plain is a "spacial infinity" where the place or the locality are lost "points" on a map and the man is a mobile "point". As most of the characters are wandering, their space is limited to their horizon. The prose writer is profoundly attached to the Bărăgan plain, to Brăila

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and to the Danube. Vacillating between "plain" and "water", Neagu's hero is, otherwise marked by two infinite spaces: one of mobility and the other of inertia" (Grigor,2002:63). The moon is a dominant element in terms of the nighttime imaginary in Fănuş Neagu's work , looks for steadiness and it will concentrate its aspirations to a transcendental world. It gathers the archetypes and the returning symbol together with the dramatic adventures of time. Mircea Eliade considered the cyclic time playing the role of an identity principle applied to the reduction of human life diversity. As a consequence, time regeneration as a reiteration of the cosmological act of creation determines the abolition of destiny as a blind fatality. In order to overcome time which determines death, in Fănuş Neagu's prose there are cyclic images related to moon phases, standing for the fact that man repeats the act of creation. The moon symbology influences birth, becoming, death, waters, woman, fertility, destiny and time. In this prose, "moon" is both a metaphor and a sign for life stages and a fantastic element. It is a grotesque moon which makes people become mad or infested and their life is determined by the moon light.

Because of the archaic way of perceiving reality, the image of the moon with Neagu's prose is unique in our literature. Moon influences characters through its magic, predicting their tragedies and accompanying their way in life. Man's communion with nature can't be destroyed being a condition of an ever return. Time is seen as becoming and it succeeds in conquering fatality of history.

Fănuş Neagu's characters are genuine projections of the "moon's flame", because moon is the star of life's rhythms and which practises its mirage on their trajectory. The whole Neagu's prose is placed under the sign of a "synaesthaesic" ritual that integrates themselves in an atmosphere with lively olfactory accents, mixing states of dizziness, frenziness, madness, nocturnal soaring. We can meet situations of the halucinated who, slipping through turbid waters of a decomposing world, seem to find themselves again in it, and to discover troubling meanings. Because of the archaic manner of perceiving the world, the moon image with Fănuş Neagu is special.

This type of the nocturnal imaginary with Fănuş Neagu gathers, under the symbol of "moon", other elements of natural cyclic movements and returning in time: *moon* – a symbol of life rhythms; *initiation and revelation*; *the orphan heroes*; *the removal and the straying*; *the circle* and *the cross*; *music* as a symbol of time domination; the sensual and unstatic *love*.

Fănuş Neagu's writings have an ingenious architecture, an outstanding vocabulary proving the writer's exceptional native talent. He is a story teller by excellence, like Balzac was, each element of these writers' prose being destined to tell something, in a captivating way, animating the epical structure and making it speak. Neagu's literature configures his own artistic universe, first lived and then written, without deteriorating other "universes", but introducing them in a panorama vision of the human existence.

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