MIRCEA CĂRTĂRESCU. INSTANCES OF THE LYRIC IMAGINARY

Poet, writer, theoretician, Mircea Cărtărescu travels through literary domains at full sail, with an inborn talent, a prodigious memory and an enviable dexterity in handling the language. What we deal with here is a case of clear paradox: his literary nature, abundant and original meets, somewhere in the abyss of the human being or even at its rational surface, a fully assumed culture, assimilated with certain livresque devotion. The personal touch of the texts signed by Cărtărescu derives, generically speaking, from the collision between the feeling and the idea, thoughts and affects, from the coincidence of the contraries.

The shine off taking verve of the poet, his capacity and desire to counteract the pre-established models becomes very evident in *Poeme de amor* (1983) (*Love poems*). Performing a short review, we might say that, in time, the eros was conceived in a poetic grid, in two opposite instances. First of all would be the erotic poetry introduced by the troubadours, as instances of feeling limits, of representing the man in ceremonial postures of adoring and humiliation, of declaiming the affect in tonalities of exalted effusion. Much later, a certain reaction to this tradition imposed image appears, reaction that would lead to modern and postmodern poets go through a process of demitisation or re-writing the erotic feeling in the parody grid; this feeling is no longer evaluated in superlative-inflationist terms, but it is integrated into a new axiological code, feelings discovering a counterpart in the intellectual that sets the limits and makes them be rational, thus perceived in a reticent and circumspect manner by the (more) critic eye of the poet. Therefore, love is not transcripted in the solemn register but in the imaginative-ironic grid, evidently, with parody marks and humorous poetic phrase and slightly sharp and bitter lucidity. “iubito, sunt leşinat după sprayurile cu care te dai/ şi mi se face sete de buzele tale…/ şi aş vrea să mănânc puţin ruj de pe buza paharului tău…/ şi să-ţi deşurubez câteva lacrimi de sub ochiul tău…/ doar ca să-ţi arăt cât pot fi de rău/ cât sunt de negru în cerul gurii”.

What we are dealing here with is, undoubtedly, a situation of de-mitisation of the feeling and the loved woman, in a language of clearly sought prosiness, where the word sounds brutally correct and the

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collocations derived from different semantic spheres make us think of Arghezi; this embodiment of the lively by means of a mechanic element leads to ironic and parody elements, as it appears in the following stanzas of an inexhaustible lexical power, amplified by the intertextual insertions, that aim to show that worldly life is nothing else than a comedy of the text: "arată-te. cumpără-mi. ştiu că ai bani./ că nu te-ai risipit *prin spini şi bolovani*./ că eşti lângă mine/ şi mângâi ghemotocul dureros de zgârciuri, vene şi intestine/ *tremur viaţa me*/ nu mai pot merge femeie braţ cafine/ ridică-mă, spală-mă. *Cuţitul os*./ am să fiu cuvios./ nu mai fac, nu mai pot să fiu aşa de întreg:/ *advocat, mare proprietar şi aleg. Coleg*./ nu mai ţine./ mi-e sete de tine, mi-e foame de tine/ îţi văd tricoul (KISS ME) reflectat în vitrine/ ia-mă în braţe şi striveşte-mă bine". Love, as expressed by the postmodern poet, is more like a comedy of the word than a pure feeling, a parody halo effect of the language than a psychologically traced affect. The same applies to the transplants of archaic terms or argot elements that help the language be charmy and visually plastic. ("să ne iubim, chera mu să ne iubim per tujur/ ca mâine vom fi pradă inundaţiilor, surpărilor de teren beţiilor crâncene/ ca mâine un ieri cu labe de păianjen de fân îţi va umbla în cârlionţii de florio ai coiffurii/ zăpăcindu-te, ambetându-te").

In such a livresque featured poetry, the quotidian seems to be made of bibliographical references and the poet is articulated by reflections of the books read. It is true that there are biographical echoes, but these are also exposed in a bookish manner: ("o să suport condescendenţa tinerilor, o să las nasul în jos când o să vină vorba de poezie, o să fac traduceri/ ca să nu mă uite lumea, ca să par că mai trăiesc,/ sau o să-mi public cândva un volum de versuri din tinereţe/ atât de proaste, că nu le băgasem în nici o carte/ şi o să am un succes «de prestigiu», mi se va spune «autorul *poemelor de amor*»,/ precursorul a Dumnezeu ştie ce poezie va mai fi pe atunci").

In *Levantul*, a ludic-parodic epic poem, the mannerism of Cărtărescu follows the line of abundance of heterogeneous objects. The most shocking image is that of a carnival marketplace, a textualised fair, dominated by bookish connotations. Cornel Regman observed the manner in which, starting with this volume, the poet shows more interest in ebullient phantasy, in extroversion: "In *Levantul,* Mircea Cărtărescu beats every record in conceiving an extravert poetry, that -just like the bee does with the honeycomb- also considers the honey to fill it. The epic poem with

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adventures and contingencies that appear as if pulled right out of the sleeve will constitute the frame for the unleashed phantasy of the poet. A phantasy that works on two levels, one of which strictly parody, a level that somehow activates the ingenuity of the hidden faber of the poet, with results not very high –we have to admit- (numerous imitations, attempts on given themes, even an ambitious gloss); the other level would be intrinsic to the condition of the poet, favouring the blooming of all the artistic gifts of the creator."

The temptation of the game is very strong in the poem *Levantul*, an attempt towards the baroque exercise pushed to the absurd, by eliminating the extremely dispersed elements of the real, that, thus, make the passing to the world of imagery quite burlesque, fantastic, yet with echoes from Urmuz's mecanomorph embodiment, as it appears in the following stanzas:

"Mestecări de roţi dinţate unse cu lichid dă frână/ Arce rupte, cruci de Malta prinse tare în şurupe/ De cremaliere ştirbe, de rulmenturi şi de cupe…/ Una mare cât hambarul lua poame din cais/ Cu trei deşte de aramă şi le pune iute-n coşuri;/ Alta mică jumuleşte peanele de pe cocoşuri,/ Le ascute şi le moaie-n călimări ce cresc din stâncă/ Şi înscrie-n pergaminturi vro istorie adâncă;/ Alt mehanic cu lăboaie de paing înşfacă iute/ Un pirat ce să holbase prea aproape de volute/ Şi îl bagă-ntr-o chilie cu o poartă dă oţel:/ Într-o clipă-l scuipă proaspăt, pomădat, spălat şi chel/ Ras obrazul, ras şi capul, cum să poartă la tătari…".

The XIIth song from *Levantul* opens with a fastuous (in colour and tones) presentation of the Balkan area, where the magic of the past and temptation of the far-away is present, together with the feeling of indolence, obviously completed with a mix of suavity and horrible fear. This part of the poem imagines an entire world, a polychromatic, unarticulated and fascinating one, by its oniric projection and by the frame of perpetual oscillations between façade and essence, between reality and delusive illusion of the poetic game.

The archaic sounds and lexical forms abound, in the poet's attempt to introduce the reader to the fabulous world of the Orient, a world with fluid contours and a trepidant mechanic of its own metabolism, with an inhomogeneous structure, with a polychromatic diversity extravagant in rhythm and form: „Floare-a lumilor, otravă ce distili între petale,/ Semilună care aur pui pă turle dă cristale,/ Vis al leneşei cadâne ce pe perini de atlaz/ Fundul greu strevede dulce pîn şalvarii de Şiraz,/ O, Levant, ostroave-n

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marea limpezită ca paharul,/ Sertăraş unde miroasă cimbrul şi enibaharul/ Ce Dimov într-o poemă n-apucă a mai descri,/ Zeci de tronuri hîde-n cari şade cîte-un Hangerlí,/ O, Levant, Levant feroce ca şi pruncul care bate/ Cuie într-o pisicuţă adormită – cine poate/ Neagra ta tristeţe-a trage-n al său pept şi a sta viu?/".

Moreover, the XIIth song establishes an eloquent opposition between the present and the future, between the concrete world and the phantasy world, a phantasy that makes the profiles of the objects seem relative, alter them by transforming them into magic weightlessness. The author is being presented here while writing his epic poem, being visited by his own characters. The station in the present is performed in a cold and freezing atmosphere, a state improper to inspiration: „Lucrez în bucătărie. Suflu-n degetele reci./ Gaze sînt mai mici ca unghia, ca petale de-albăstrea./ Zaţ de nechezol mînjeşte fundul ceştii de cafea./ Sunt pe masă doar borcane nespălate, şi-un cuţit:/ Se reflectă-n lama-i oablă chipul meu nebărbierit".

We find here something from the typical postmodernist taste for the past, both historical and literary past, some sort of "retro" fashion that recovers, in a unique ludic and parodic manner, elements and more or less obsolete parts of the literary mechanism. Mircea Cărtărescu dismantles old literary resorts in a very virtuous and frenetic manner. The real world and its fictional paraphrasing are mingled here, under a multitude of carnival or ludic instances and accents. According to N. Manolescu, the "comedy" of the literature is assumed by means of certain language game approaches that confer archaic charm or scent, or, on the contrary, imprint a neologistic hue to the invented language. An extremely lively linguistic performance is being achieved by the mingling and mutual contamination of words belonging to different lexical areas: „Cînd pornii poema asta cît eram de cilibiu!/ Joacă îmi părea a face să trăiască-n epopee/ Şpangă de bărbat alături de pept fraged de femee,/ Stiluri mult sofisticate să aduc dîntr-un condei/ Cum călugărul înfloare pergamintul dă minei/ Ticluiam, cu muzichie dă clavir şi dă spinetă,/ Vreo istorie pe apă, vreun soi de operetă,/ Plictisit fiind de joasa poesie-a vremii noastre.../ Cum sucește cofetarul acadele roz, albastre/ Împleteam şi eu la frase, umilitul condeier/ Rîdicînd nu turnul Babel, ci doar tortul lui Flaubert./ Cine-ar fi crezut vreodată că o lume-avea să iasă/ Vînturînd aripe ude, dîn gogoaşa de mătasă/ A Visării, Poesiei... Doamne, Doamne,-ţi mulţumesc!/ Folosişi iar carnea-mi slabă la

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ceva nepământesc,/ Străvăzuşi iar lumi frenetici pîn mocirla mea dă sînge,/ Din nou bila cea vrăjită-n palma mîinii mele stîngi e!".

The epic poem *Levantul* stands a very complicated plot and a very juicy language and can also be perceived as a text with multiple metatextual valences since the poet rewrites the lines of force of the Romanian poetry from a ludic-ironic and parodic perspective. The stylistically dexterity of the author is amazing, just as the fully management of certain diverse language registers. The image of the author facing the fictional world imagined by himself, the livresque, the permanent game among text, intertext and metatext make the poem *Levantul* be a poem in which comic and parody, imitation and irony meet in order to configure a comedy of literature rewritten in the postmodern template.

The poem *Georgica a IV-a*, from the volume *Faruri, vitrine, fotografii (Lights, shopwindows, photos)* belongs to the typical postmodern creations, that attempts to parodically recreate myths and cultural or literary forms. The parody aims at the purism of the literary genres and species, whose structure is undermined by bookish quotations, by analysis of intertextual allusion or by appeal to brutally actual images. This cycle of poems authored by Mircea Cărtărescu is, according to Radu G. Ţeposu "a replica to the bucolic and arcadian poetry, moreover, to the homogeneity of the imaginary classic, to the poetics of harmony."

In other words, the parodic instinct of the poet is oriented towards the certain tectonic of the imaginary classic, towards the monolithic stability of the images, towards the conventionalism of certain procedures and the subversive approach of a poetic manner intensely particular. Heterogeneity and reflexive irony is preferred to clarity and harmony, thus, the image of the reality becomes relative, of inedite dimensions, closer to the complex phenomenology of the real. Again, we find in *Georgica a IV-a*, the same mannerist distortion of reality, treating the world in a parodic tone, with traditional hues and real imposed pieces, but also irony. „ţăranul de când cu electrificarea/ înţelege cum stau lucrurile pe planetă/ se indignează în mijlocul pogoanelor sale/ de situaţia din cipru şi liban/ pândeşte sateliţii şi le smulge/ aparatura elecronică bă/ plozilor nu uitaţi bateriile solare/ să ne-ncălzim la chindie conserva de fasole/ cu cârnăciori produşi la feteşti/ bă daţi în câini lumea e mică/ bă cu gerovital se duc ridurile ca-n palmă (...)".

The poet aims to un-sanctify the poetic language and the world it evokes. If in the poetry from the past the rural world and the peasant, as

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signifying traditional figures, were presented in a cvasiritualic, mythical frame, the poetry written by Mircea Cărtărescu dissolves that festive air by means of irony, parody and imitation. The attempt to turn against the solemn valence of ones poetic universe is achieved by the insertion of a denotative, strictly actual language, using terms taken from daily life and common lyrical "objects". The orality of this poem is quite obvious: the appellations (hai, bă, dragii mei etc.) suggest an imagined dialogue that imprints dynamism and fluency to the poetic expression.

There is a mutation in tone and perception in the second part of the poem. The frivolous tone, marked by parodic and ironic hues, turns to a grave one, touched by an acute perception of the world, life and death. The intertextual stress is also present here since the echoes of the poetry written by Arghezi (from *De-a v-aţi ascuns*) are clearly sensed. The poetic language is austere, adornment-free, the line cut is severe and neat, the text tone is mainly grave even liturgical in phrase. The paraphrase inspired from the poetry authored by Arghezi, together with the solemn touch in which the game of life and death is played, do not lack the irony, or the parodic hue. „hai daţi-i zor cu porumbul că eu mă duc/ puţin pe lumea cealaltă adică a treia/ şi ultima feţii mei/ dragii mei copchiii mei ce să-i faci/ aşa e jocul/ arză-l-ar focul". This poetry stands the mix of old and new, of simple and complex universe, of solemn and parodic spirit.

Having a heterogeneous composition and an extremely diverse vocabulary, oscillating between grave and jolly aspects of life, *Georgica a IV-a* is a poem that contains an un-sanctifying meaning, a polemic predisposition regarding the idyllic and mythic perception of the rural world, of the peasant and his environment. The poetic discourse is of an extreme semantic clarity, the image conformation is precise, the tectonic of the text is founded on an extremely eloquent game between gravity and impulse, between solemn and ludic applied upon verb exploitation.

Referring to the type of articulating the imagery in the poetry of Cărtărescu, Radu G. Ţeposu observes: "the eye of the author is avid, febrile, sees a lot and gathers the infinity of the perceived fragments that move enigmatically, hyperbolically or microscopically as if in a plasma. The impression of ontological mess, of fastuous congestion suggests a type of imagination: the poet is fancies in representation out of a desire to be realist in observation. The precision, the hyperrealist accuracy apparently positivist in description push the details to uncertainty, to convulsive

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explosion. The final image is of a raving perception, of a *misterium tremens.* The observation and description intentionally unselected are forms that aim to recover homogeneity by plurality, by fabulous agglutination. The vision is the style."

Ciocnirea (The Collision) is a love poem, in which Mircea Cărtărescu finds himself again against the wool of the romantic mentality and tonality. Love loses the solemn feature and gravity, the hieratic grace of the feeling becomes lucid, extrovertit emotion, but also phantasy display of informal gestures, suggestions of the ineffable and details of the most prosaic reality. The initial sequence of the poem describes a communication crisis, if not a communion one, of two human beings that live in a technical universe, with crumbled articulations and with a predisposition to materialise. „într-un tîrziu am încercat să-ţi dau telefon, dar telefonul murise/ receptorul duhnea a formol, am deşurubat capacul microfonului/ şi am găsit fierul ruginit, plin de viermi;/ am căutat şurubelniţa/ şi-am desfăcut carcasa: de liţa bobinelor/ îşi prinseseră păianjenii pînza./ pe şnurul împletit, acum putred, cu cauciucul mîncat şi sîrma zdrelită/ îşi lăsau mirosul furnicile".

The second sequence of the poem brings along a modification in tone, in lyrical disposition and in image register. The poet shifts from a space of the concrete, of the appearances, of the intolerable details to the surreal regime, in which lines of the objects are spoiled, forms and surfaces are mingled until annulled, distances and differences abolished. In fact, the poet is building in a surrealist-ironic manner and using disparate elements of the real, unified and activated by the eros, an oneiric fairy, in which objects lose their weight and consistency and the intolerable constraint of the space and time seize to function. A universe created in the surrealist dreams is being affected by the grading and degrading eros. „l-am apucat, l-am smucit pîn-a ieşit din pioneze/ cu tencuială cu tot,/ am tras de el pînă am început să apropii/ metru cu metru cartierul tău de al meu/ turtind farmaciile, cofetăriile, pleznind ţevile de canalizare/ încălecînd asfalturile, presînd atît de mult stelele pe cerul violaceu,/ de amurg, dintre case/ încît deasupra a rămas doar o muchie de lumină scînteietoare/ pulsînd în aerul ars, ca de fulger./ trăgeam de fir, şi ca un sfînt indian făcînd trapezul pe ape/ statuia lui c. a. rosetti aluneca spre miliţie/ consiliul popular al sectorului doi/ se ciocni de foişorul de foc şi se duse la fund cu tot cu o nuntă/ iar strada latină zîmbi; trăgeam de fir, încolăcindu-l pe braţ, şi deodată/ casa ta cu brîuri albe şi roz ca o prăjitură de var/ apăru cu fereastra

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ta în dreptul ferestrei mele/ geamurile plezniră cu zgomot/ iar noi ne-am trezit faţă-n faţă/ şi ne-am apropiat din ce în ce mai mult/ pînă ne-am îmbrăţişat strivindu-ne buzele/ pulverizîndu-ne hainele, pieile, amestecîndu-ne inima/ mîncîndu-ne genele, smalţul ochilor, coastele, sîngele,/ ciobindu-ne şira spinării, arzînd".

The third lyrical sequence brings into the foreground, after the impetuous leap in the imaginary and miraculous oneiric domain, the throwback in the common reality, just like the place of the dynamic, ardent images is taken by the static, dull, still images. The erotic ecstasy is followed by a feeling of unbeing, by a symbolic leap out of time. „arzînd cu troznete, ca daţi cu benzină/ arzînd cu gheţuri albastre, cu stalactite de fum/ cu ceară sfîrîitoare, cu seu orbitor/ pînă cenuşa a umplut lada de studio şi chiuveta din baie/ şi păianjenii şi-au făcut plase în coşul pieptului nostru". A poem of the opposites (real/unreal, mundane/sublime, suave/atrocious, dynamic/static), *Ciocnirea (The Collision)* is a poem of erotic crisis, a special state built out of ups and downs, of burns and ashes, contingency and transcendence, surrealis-oniric vision and brutal observation of the mundane reality.

Gheorghe Grigurcu made an efficient synthesis of the most important data of the poetry signed by Cărtărescu, underlining the elements of rebelliousness and nihilism, that are to be found in the poetic structure: "being anti-discursive by means of interminable discourse, being anti-sentimental by means of exhibition, being anti-calophile by means of amazing writing subtleties, he constructs his performance upon a rigorous freedom. His nihilism is a sparkling display, directed with accuracy, his rebelliousness stands an intellectual alibi, and the expressive subversion he seems to promote is the result of a language cult. It is precisely that surprisingly mature ability to master the levers of poetry the one that allows him the synthetic effects, especially that immense, water-fally text, figure of a frenetic saying."

The poem *O motocicletă parcată sub stele (A motorcycle parked under the stars)* is structured like a long monologue, written in an ironic and parodic style. The décor of the poem is ambivalent, having elements of the mundane space, with shops, gangs and streets and also with a very live suggestion of the cosmic elements (stars, galaxies etc.) In fact, one can say that the mirror of the motorcycle plays, among other things, a mediating role, a passing function from one space to the other, from the terrestrial

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dimension to the cosmic one: „sunt o motocicletă parcată sub stele, lângă vitrina magazinului/ de reparat televizoare,/ din gang vine curent, sunt palidă, slăbită,/ în magazin au lăsat un bec aprins, aşa că vreo două tuburi catodice/ ghivece cu asparagus şi cactuşi, rafturi de cornier înţesate de carcase/ de televizor, casete AGFA şi cabluri/ lucesc tulbure, îmi populează singurătatea./ căci mă simt singură./ în oglinda mea retrovizoare foiesc galaxiile,/ aburesc stelele în roiuri globulare, îşi trimit gâfâitul radiosursele/ toate îndepărtându-se-n fugă, ca nişte criminali de la locul faptei/ lăsând o dâră de sânge în urmă".

Besides the theatrical-allegoric air of the poem, we can also feel an antinomy between animated/unanimated, between real/unreal, with the irrepressible presence of a feeling of nostalgia of the steel and rubber being towards the soul states of the human („ce linişte câteodată mă-ntreb/ ce-o însemna să faci dragoste, căci ei vorbesc doar de asta. în fiecare/ sâmbătă ei mă încalecă/ şi mă târăsc pe şosele. văd dealurile, norii, soarele/ picăturile de ploaie, copacii încurcându-se-n curcubeu.../ ah, cilindrii mei îmi ticăie nebuneşte, atunci chiar simt că trăiesc./ ei intră în motel şi fac dragoste./ ei sunt Stăpânii şi se simt liberi./dar cum poate fi cineva liber când e făcut din celule?"). The entire poem preserves the irreconcilable opposition between the object transfixed in its space and the human being, a being able to express and achieve its own options. The interrogation at the end of the first lyrical sequence of the poem is exciting as it expresses the idea of human perishness, of fragility of the human flesh as opposed to the unanimated inert more durable mater.

If we were to consider the human being from the point of view of the way it is built, the human being is in a disadvantage, but if we were to approach the feeling of love, the human is privileged, love is an affective state that confers him a special statute, an ideal physiognomy, that generates harmony and affective equilibrium. The aspiration to love felt by the motorcycle is actually equated to a tension towards the higher levels of the feeling, the human sphere with its proteic universe of feelings, restlessness, repressions „Şi înapoi în gang, lângă vreo dacie prăfuită./ mi-e sete de dragoste, dacă aş putea iubi măcar vreun stecker cu/ prelungitor din vitrina asta./ mi-aş luneca degetele pe pielea lui de plastic alb, dac-ar vrea/ şi dac-aş avea degete, dac-aş putea să trăiesc/ măcar şi în câmpul bioelectric al cactusului..."

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The last part of the poem gets a deceptive tone, it is marked by a state of unfulfilness, by a revelation of pain and death „curând, curând o să mor şi n-am făcut nimic în lumea asta,/ or să mă arunce la fiare vechi/ or să îmi crape farul şi becul ars o să-mi atârne de două firişoare/ de liţă/ toată viaţa i-am ajutat pe alţii să facă dragoste/ iar eu o să mor printre bobine, magneţi şi ciulini./ sunt o motocicleta parcată sub stele./ dimineaţa or să mă-ncalece iar, or să-mi sucească ghidonul,/ or să mă ambreieze/ şi iar pe asfaltul multicolor, printre dealurile roşcovane,/ printre munţii albaştri/ prin depresiuni străbătute de râuri/ printre pasajele de cale ferată, prin oraşe de provincie cristaline/ rulând contra vântului prin stropii de ploaie şi gazul de eşapament/ mâncând kilometrii./ asta o însemna să faci dragoste?/ oricum, asta e consolarea mea, e meseria mea, e dragostea mea./ pentru asta merită să fii singur.“ Being an allegory of the irreconcilable tension between animated and unanimated, between human and the object, the poem *O motocicletă parcată sub stele (A motorcycle parked under the stars)* stands as a clear proof of the postmodern lyrical means that Mircea Cărtărescu is able to master: phantasy, irony, parody, rapid alternation of poetic spaces and scriptic predispositions, ludic spirit and oniric register.

Poema chiuvetei (The poem of the sink) appeared in the poet's maturity volume *Totul* (1985), (*Everything)*. The *Idile (Romance)* consists of love poems, in which the poet performs an ironic-ludic marked eulogy of the loved one. The romantic magniloquence is relative here due to the parodic hue, the ardour of the feeling is tempered due to the restrictive impulse of the daily logic of the imaginary. Nicolae Manolescu observes: "Just like in the *Poemele de amor (Love poems),* the poems of the *Idile (Romance*) volume is based on a superior game not only because of the feelings, but also because of the literary forms in which they were expressed. By mixing the erotic styles, Mircea Cărtărescu renews the extravagant poetry written by Minulescu: emotional glibness, exotic toner, references to the immediate reality of a certain environment, deliberate incongruence, intended exhibitions, onomastic delirium. The poet uses the most various registers to sing his love into: serious, comic, hit, Bucharest slang, professional style etc."

The symbolic and allegoric drama from the poem *Luceafărul, (The Evening Star)* written by Eminescu is also debated here in verses and images that are un-sanctifying, in ludic and phantastic tones, in a vivid and polychromatic language that denotes common objects, with a completely

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erased existential accent. The lyrical heroes are treated as objects with the un-sanctifying impulse, parodic and linguistic hoax approached by the poet – all these are elements of the postmodern discourse valued by Mircea Cărtărescu out of his desire to actualise a myth, to revive it by un-sanctifying the vision by immediate connection to the harmless mundane element.

The lyrical "objects" do not belong anymore to the circle of the romantic absolute. On the contrary, they are extracted from the domestic universe. The distance between the protagonists of the lyrical script (*the yellow star* and *the sink*) is immeasurable since the two entities belong to irreconcilable ontic spheres. "într-o zi chiuveta căzu în dragoste/ iubi o mică stea galbenă din colţul geamului de la bucătărie/ se confesă muşamalei şi borcanului de muştar/ se plînse tacîmurilor ude./ în altă zi chiuveta îşi mărturisi dragostea:/ – stea mică, nu scînteia peste fabrica de pîine şi moara dîmboviţa/ dă-te jos, căci ele nu au nevoie de tine/ ele au la subsol centrale electrice şi sînt pline de becuri/ te risipeşti punîndu-ţi auriul pe acoperişuri/ şi paratrăznete". The poem continues to insert parodic invocations by means of which the star is invited to master "the linoleum kingdom" and become "queen of the cockroaches". The inflexions of faked fairy and the oniric reflexes confer the poem a vague surrealist colour, with indefinite form of the elements, with a broken, lent syntax of the images: „stea mică, nichelul meu te doreşte, sifonul a bolborosit/ tot felul de cîntece pentru tine, cum se pricepe şi el/ vasele cu resturi de conservă de peşte/ te-au şi îndrăgit./ vino, şi ai să scînteiezi toată noaptea deasupra regatului de linoleum/ crăiasă a gîndacilor de bucătărie". The tragicomic drama is a drama of incompatibilities and of communication.

The erotic language is thus un-sanctified, deprived of the hues of the sublime and rethory invested with by the romantic poets and the elements used are, as already presented, sent to the common space of the kitchen. „dar, vai! steaua galbenă nu a răspuns acestei chemări/ căci ea iubea o strecurătoare de supă/ din casa unui contabil din pomerania/ şi noapte de noapte se chinuia sorbind-o din ochi./ aşa că într-un tîrziu chiuveta începu să-şi pună întrebări cu privire/ la sensul existenţei şi la obiectivitatea ei/ şi într-un foarte tîrziu îi făcu o propunere muşamalei".

The ending of the poem brings into the foreground the minstrel of this fabulous postmodern fable, in which the heroes signal to the space of the kitchen and the predisposition towards fake and comedy of the language is

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dominant: ".. cîndva în jocul dragostei m-am implicat şi eu/ eu, gaura din perdea, care v-am spus această poveste./ am iubit o superbă dacie crem pe care nu am văzut-o decît odată.../ dar, ce să mai vorbim, acum am copii preşcolari/ şi tot ce a fost mi se pare un vis". The love story between the little star and the kitchen sink has as presumed, an ironic and parodic ending, in which the flee in the unreal, in the phantasy world is refused and fulfilment in the terrestrial, common space is the only one possible. Formally speaking, the poet explores here the resources of invocation and exclamation, appeals to the monologue and dialogue, abrupt images and surrealist suggestions of the nitric, but also performs a rough cutting, a firm and concise observation of the common reality. This "reversed Evening star" oscillates between the fairy love dream and earthly attraction under the ironic and parodic touch of the postmodernists.

O seară la operă (A night at the opera) is, probably the most read poem written by Cărtărescu, besides the *Levantul.* The *Argument*, quotes a probabilistic speculation according to which "a monkey trained to type and having the infinity of time at its disposal, will eventually succeed, in some billion years, to reproduce a sonnet written by Shakespeare. The poem refers to the moment in which our monkey gathers all its efforts and manages to, more or less well, perform this sonnet."

The poem is, as noticed, an intertextual journey among the phases of the Romanian love poems. The poet uses several types of attitudes and of stylistic registers of the imaginary in order to achieve the performance of the enloved gestures: intertextual quotes, parody and imitation, irony touch, image collage,

On the other hand, the poem *O seară la operă (A night at the opera)* is also a comedy of the erotic language, a text built from other texts, at the junction of other texts, fed by other texts, fuelling the visionary energies with the rhetoric of the erotic language. N. Manolescu justly underlined such a pose of the text signed by Mircea Cărtărescu: "One prime idea to be depicted from here is that the poem is built by words and they somehow lay at the poet's disposal, since he does not invent but use them. Any love poem is, in the same time, new, original, resulted from the recombination of all the existent love poems. *O seară la operă (A night at the opera)* is a splendid programmatic poem serving this theme. There is no such thing as a ground zero of the poetic language. Moreover, poems reflect a literary tradition than they express feelings. On the edge, a love poem could be the

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synthesis of a certain erotic line, as a text born out of other texts, in peaceful coexistence. A synthesis animated by parody, no less authentic than the versing of the poet's love feelings."

The first part of the poem ironically transcripts a juvenile erotic discourse, in an enflamed and sparkling Labis style: "Sînt iar îndrăgostit. e-un curcubeu/ deasupra chioşcului de ziare, staţiei de taxi, farmaciei şi WC-ului/ public din piaţa galaţi/ reprodus pe retină de copii fărîmaţi/ reflectat de şinele verzi de tramvai/ străbătute de sentimente electrice, emoţii cu aburi şi senzaţii cu cai/ e-un curcubeu/ pe fiecare patiserie-ntomnată şi chiar pe bombeul pantofului meu/ şi fiecare stradă pare neobrăzat de adevărată./ – dar iat-o că se arată:/ dinspre eminescu, întunecînd chioşcul de dulciuri şi vulcanizarea/ cu zgomotul pe care-l face marea/ cu ţipătul sfîşietor de jupoane, tacheţi, cucoane şi tîrgoveţi,/ furouri, nervuri, sinucigaşi, staţii peco/ stilouri kaveko".

In the second part of the poem we discover a different register of the lover, a prosaic one, of the mundane verb, with juicy, picturesque accents, in short dialogues and abrupt wording: "bestia dracului se învăţase să sugă la cuba libre/ din acelaşi pahar cu mine. îl mai pocneam cîteodată/ dar e drept că în general îi toleram multe./ – bătrîne, dă-mi voie măcar pînă la toaletă./ sau dă-mi o ţigară, ştii, munca, şi mai ales creaţia are nevoie,/ nu-i aşa, de un stimulent, de pildă Rafa.../ (i-am dat un omei)/ – păi vezi?/ şi iar dă-i cu ţăcănitul ăla dement/ – încă puţin, bătrîne, şi iese o odă cum n-a văzut kansasul, fii/ atent ce poantă:/ în fine, tipul şi tipa/ sînt în piaţa victoriei, lîngă muzeul antipa/ şi tocmai cînd totul merge ţais, merge brici/ vine existenţa şi le spune: hai, daţi-i cu sasu' de-aici!/ – hai, gata, fetiţa, gata. o să treacă, toate trec în lumea asta./ – dar mai există existenţa? mai răsar stelele? mai există oraşe?/ – nu ştiu, nu fac politică./ – păi atunci hai să ieşim dintre betoanele astea/ şi, la braţ cu mama Natură/ cu pletele-n vînt să ne avîntăm printre dealurile înverzite/ printre herghelii, sau pe malul mării/ să respirăm briza sărată a strîmtorilor/ şi să plîngem de-atîta extaz pe carapacea crabilor/ în spumă, în algele băloase, să ne tăiem în scoici/ şi pescăruşii să ne ciugulească de degete.../ închipuie-ţi, bătrîne, e primăvară!".

The key characters of the poem are The Poet and Monkeyboy, an alter-ego. The Poet unreels his real "biography", with sadness and failure, melancholy and memories, while the Monkeyboy is represented in the other instance, a fictional one; his feelings are created by other texts, his

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ontic statute is, in fact, artistically moulded in livresque and intertextual resonance. In the dialogue between the Monkeyboy and the Woman, we find an abstract version of the illustrated history of the Romanian love poetry, in an alternation of styles and tonalities that remind us of Văcărescu, Alecsandri, Eminescu, Blaga, Barbu, Arghezi. By this parodic and imitation procedure the poet recovers, in fact, explores expressiveness and tonalities characteristic to the Romanian lyrical language. The ending of the poem is programmatic. There is this eulogy to creation and to the creator of permanent artistic values. Pentru artist, femeia nu-i femeie/ ci mai curînd ea seamănă-a bărbat/ căci harul lui abia atunci scînteie/ cînd de-un surîs se lasă fecundat./ Abia atunci gîndirea sa adîncă/ rămîne grea, şi plină e de rod/ cînd luntrea i se sparge ca de-o stîncă/ în ţăndări, de al rochiei izvod./ Artistul e-a domniţei lui mireasă/ şi-n grele chinuri naşte mintea sa;/ deşi din carnea lui a fost să iasă,/ poemul e asemeni şi cu ea./ pătrunde, deci, din nou în al meu gînd,/ să-ţi nasc copii, ce n-or muri curînd". Intertextuality but the so-called un-poetic inflexions the infusions of the existential ugliness and hieratic grace of the love feeling, triviality and suavity mingle in the poem *O seară la operă (A night at the opera),* programmatic poem and, in the same time, significant for the artistic technique and the vision of Mircea Cărtărescu.

Extremely imaginative and ironic, mannerist and using a baroque style, Mircea Cărtărescu touches several and very different poetry ages, nevertheless remaining himself, in a speculative intercession. In the light of the text, the eye of the theoretician hungry for paradoxes is always present like in a suave-allegoric palimpsest.

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