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***DIMITRIE STELARU – dimensions of the poetic universe***

**ABSTRACT**

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## I. Introduction

Poet, prose writer and playwright, especially known and appreciated as a member of or closed to the group of poets from the *Albatros* magazine (Geo Dumitrescu, Victor Törnyöpol, Constant Tonegaru, Ben Corlaci, Mihnea Gheorghiu, Ion Caraion and others), Dimitrie Stelaru not only had a rambling life difficult to retrace, but also a quixotic one by nature that entered the legend of the literary life, an aspect that did not always represent an advantage because this rambler and bohemian image partially blurred out the structural acknowledgement of his poetry.

In our endeavour, we started from the observation that, although a great number of articles, literary criticism and reviews have been written in prestigious publications such as „Revista Fundațiilor Regale“, „Universul literar“, „Viața românească“, „Steaua“, „Transilvania“, „România literară“, „Luceafărul“, „Contemporanul“, „Familia“, „Convorbiri Literare“, „Tribuna“, „Tomis“, „Ateneu“, „Timpul“ etc., or chapters or subchapters, some of them conventional, imposed by the diachronic and typological classifications, others serious and substantial, in volumes of criticism and literary histories (E. Lovinescu, Pompiliu Constantinescu, G. Călinescu, Al. Piru, Eugen Simion, Ovid. S. Crohmălniceanu, Nicolae Balotă, Nicolae Manolescu, Dumitru Micu, Romul Munteanu, Ion Pop, Nicolae Rotund etc.), his general image was still pinned around the acknowledgement as a shuffler, a fantasy poet and predominantly as “the last bohemian” of our literary post-war life. In the last few years, however, we notice a few serious and more practical exegeses like that of Emil Manul (Dimitrie Stelaru. Monografie, 2003), even though the author did not offer an integrated and persuasively argued perspective, that of George Achim (Revolte și consimțiri. Scriitori români din secolul XX, 2004), and of Marius Nenciulescu (Dimitrie Stelaru și paradigma poetică a anilor '40, 2011), all of them primarily giving the appropriate attention to Dimitrie Stelaru's poetry.

We have had some natural reserves, even quantitative ones, towards the way the importance of his poetic work is treated and valued. For instance, we are pointing out that the attentive study written by Marius Nenciulescu (a PhD thesis) refers to the author's entire work ( the lyrics, the tales in verse, the stories, the prose and the dramaturgy),

devoting over 60 pages to poetry, while in George Achim's book, according to the aim of his book, poetry is given one chapter (23 pp.). The title of the chapter, which contains an adequate and thoroughly argued analysis, does not escape the inevitable chimerical epithet: Stelaru – the chimerical. On the same line, a historian, Ionuț Țene - a poet, and through adoption a literary critic – commenting on the book of Marius Nenciulescu, circulates as definitive the known clichés (Ionuț Țene, *Noi Dimitrie Stelaru, n-am conosciut niciodată Fericirea*, [www.napocanews.ro/2011/11/noi-dimitrie...n-am.../comment-page-1](http://www.napocanews.ro/2011/11/noi-dimitrie...n-am.../comment-page-1)). The writer himself contributed to the fictionalized behavioural poetry-fronde ambivalence through the unfaithful diary-novel *Zeii prind șoareci* (*The gods catch mice*) (*De doi lei planeta* (*A dime the planet*) – the original title).

Bearing these factors in mind, with the exception of the introductory chapter - *Dimitrie Stelaru's personality. Brief paratopic considerations*, in our paper, we focused exclusively on the lyrical universe as a whole, on the structure, the themes, the configuration of the motifs, on the distinctive images and notes of the poetic imaginary. We were equally interested in the thematic classification of his poetic and meta-poetic reflection to which we devoted a separate chapter.

In a thematic research and analysis, with elements of archetype, psycho-criticism, semiotic, and stylistic criticism, we tackled the main significant fields and the structural aspects of the geography of the stelarian poetic imaginary, by inter-textually paraphrasing a phrase belonging to Jean Pierre Richard – “magical geography”, stated in reference to the prose of Gerard de Nerval.

**Key words:** verbal instances, lyrical subject, poetic self, expressionism, vision, poetic imaginary, intertextuality, modernism, poetics, metapoetics, paratopics.

## II. Dimitrie Stelaru's personality. Brief paratopic considerations

In this chapter, besides the brief biographic information, we noticed that the phrase *out of place*, which according to Dominic Maingueneau shows the writer's place on the enouncement stage in the relation with the text and the referee, defines in the case of our poet his ontological condition in itself. The poet suffers more painfully than anyone else does from all the confinements of the mundane world. Its consequence is reflected in the extreme reduction of the social communication and relations. He is on the one side, and on the other, there are the "tyrants", "the wardens", and he goes against their moral code no matter what he does and, therefore, the poet's existence becomes that of an eternal outcast, in his case paradoxically identified through non-affiliation and atopy.

As Poe, the Stellar feels exiled on earth. The poet's world is elsewhere, among the angelic creatures of which his "cherubic" "double" is a part, as Eugen Simion wrote. Fascinating here are the reactions a person cut out in a completely different way than his peers has in front of his tragic destiny. His lyric is the expression of this painful and endless swing between polar existential attitudes and situations. A relevant image of Dimitrie Stelaru can be outlined from the mosaic of some pertinent fragments of physical and moral characterisations: "... grey bundle ..... vegetal, livid eyes ..... a defensive attitude ..... of a cornered animal....." (Eugen Lovinescu); ".....a creature with the walk and the eyes of a sleep walker ....the forehead was beautiful .... the code of grief had cuddled in the corners of his mouth ..."(Eugen Jebeleanu); "He came from an old despair and was wearing the coat of unhappiness since his youth" (Eugen Barbu); "...eagle eyes and the instinct of an old fox .... a fragile, defenceless being ... He played with his own life daily" (Petre Stoica); "... but I ... have never got to eat to my heart's content ... I for one have never had enough money ... the green, the only liquid that satisfies my thirst ...." (D. Stelaru).

When the volume *Noaptea geniului* (*The night of the genius*) appeared, Geo Dumitrescu drew out a plausible and graphic portrait of Dimitrie Stelaru, as a Ianus Bifrons, the creative personality and the person who intrigued his contemporaries with

his attitude and behaviour: “Dimitrie Stelaru is not the genius referred to in the title of his book [...] Dimitrie Stelaru is a man [...] Dimitrie Stelaru is a major histrionic. As big as Hamlet. Stelaru knows how “to play the fool” in an artistic, bohemian and villain way – if we may say so. He always poses as original, whether this is suggested by the waving of his proverbial trench coat, with its pockets always irrationally full of diaries, or by his elusive incoherent gestures, or by his admirable head of a medieval singer [...]. Stelaru «is playing». Besides poetry, it is maybe the only lucidity of his existence -”. (Geo Dumitrescu, *Dimitrie Stelaru*, „Timpul“ VI, no. 1772, April, 16, 1942).

He somewhere defines himself as a “degenerate, grizzled, rambler, patriarch, bandit” poet or as “a banished god”, but in any of these hypostasis or in all of them he feels lonely, disintegrated by the wind that whistles like a “solitary emperor” (*Sunt singur*) (*I am alone*). A terrible attraction towards self-destruction, like that of Nerval, draws him into the world of artificial paradises. On the verge of complete destruction, however, a frantic longing for the heights awakens and, making the sordid scenery vanish, he replaces it with heavenly landscapes (*Cetățile albe*) (*The white fortresses*) so as to fall again into his own inferno.

It is impossible to find in another Romanian poet such a vortex of the telluric magma simultaneous with the magnetic stellar force that elevated his soul and spirit in the heavenly realms.

### **III. The modern anxiety and civilisation**

In the third chapter, as suggested by the peritext, we mainly analysed the poetic vision and the expressionist imaginary revealed by the network of themes, motifs and figures that we stated and interpreted in a more complex acceptance than the rhetorical one, in the line of the studies and essays written by Charles Mauron and Jean Pierre Richard. The aspects identified, such as *the oppressive urban environment, the modern apocalypse, the ontic confusion, the demonic, the contradiction between the destructive industrial civilisation and the primordial nature, the attempt to escape from the stifling*

*city, the hostile setting, the snake, the beast, the lead branches, the killing song, the worms of civilisation etc.*, were generated – and at the same time brought him forward – by the radiant semantic nucleus, the anxiety and the alienation of the profound self, of the poetic self in his earthly world and existence. And we do not put forward a romantic vision, but one true to the inherent structures of the poetic imaginary and of the paratopic correlations distinguished in the previous chapter.

### **III.1 The tentacular town and the demonic presence**

As any modern poet, Dimitrie Stelaru felt in his own way the impact with the pre- and post-war structures and with the industrial, social, economic, political, cultural and eventful environment contemporary to him, elements that, mediated and transformed by the writing through fracture, left marks on the poetic universe and imaginary.

In an expressionist poem with typical rhetoric, *Din Turnu-Măgurele (From Turnu-Măgurele)*, the poetic self as declarative instance states the intention of leaving the anxious city with Eumene. According to the same expressionist paradigm with traditional touches, typical of Blaga as well, he wants to go back towards the primordial pristine nature - another modern pattern - towards the primitive man – “The primary man” as a guide and a “magician” of nature, in fact an isotopy of an imagined primordial space.

Although the discourse includes elements that give the impression of the concrete in the landscape, the poet continues to work with abstract and generalising elements in expressionist style, and also with the antagonism between nature and the destructive industrial civilisation, symbolised by the lead branches and by the trains with sulphuric acid, a civilisation in which the modern man remains prisoner:

Let us not stop, Eumene: the gate towards the river  
is open and we must pass through it  
at the same time with the man. He will stay until morning  
among lead branches  
and sulphuric acid trains.



The poetic self is looking for an exit, an escape together with the chimerical Eumene from this setting with the aspect of an urban industrial apocalypse: “Let us not stop, Eumene/for fear of the groaning and thunder stroke clouds/let us not stop”.

A spoiled world with sick morals is presented, in which everything can be sold and bought: “There is a bargainer in each of us/And you are buying life with compliments”. On the edge, once again proving that the acceptance of the resemblance with the other people was purely rhetorical, the poetic self as declarative instance, but also as its subject, cries out its despair through interrogatives in front of a deus absconditus, betraying a state of suspicion, of fear: “Where is the mount of love?/Where?/Wreathed by the sound of the angels/The lifted latens the sky?”

The physical and metaphysical tension reaches the limit and in the tentacular city the poet is under the impression that the loved one is permanently accompanied by an enigmatic shadow or by a daemonic presence. We do not deal with the aesthetic Satanism of Baudelaire. In Stelaru’s poetry, the daemonic, as in Bacovia’s lyrics, is not named, but just metaphorically implied through malefic effects and contrasts: “Your hands give me life/But his hands return winding/Death’s knives.” (*Scrisoarea*) (*The Letter*). And in the vision patent by the expressionist poetics, besides this metaphysical tension, the lyric self also lives the spiritual and psychological wounds of the decadent city, touched by the morbus of the mercantile civilisation where even the “legends” are bought, the people are anonymous and amorphous, “yawning among themselves”, and art is reduced to the bright signs of the pubs. In this expressionist paradigm, we also mention the tendency towards generalisation and abstractions such as The Man, The One, the Lifted, the Poet, the Bird of Evil, Freedom etc.

### **III. 2. The anxieties of the poetic self**

In a series of poems, *Singur (Alone)*, *Străin (Stranger)*, *Ascunde-mă sus (Hide Me Up Above)*, *Cântec de dragoste (Love Song)*, *Linu* etc., the solitude and the estrangement of the poetic self acquire desperate Bacovian accents. Moreover, even the painful nerve-racking intensity of the soul’s state is Bacovian. Of course that by Bacovianism, as well as bovarism, we understand a psychological and stylistic category and not a relation of influence. The lyrical subject does not feel that he belongs to a place and the alienation in

love seems unbearable to him: “I’m an alien here:/Your eyes do not tell me about the flowers of the star,/nor your soul envelops me with love.” Sometimes what is believed to be a love poem proves to be just a strange and painfully sad lament whose finality is the exorcism of the lover’s phantom and a cry for the end. As an actor of the statement, the poetic self resumes his condition of an outcast, of a prophet preaching in vain and listened by no one: “He was walking straight ahead/With light in hands/Maybe he’s a poet/A song among dogs.”

The deep rummaging despair of the poetic self is caused by his great solitude as well as by the apprehension induced by the phantom of death, “the wide mists”, and the devastating passage of time. In an expressionist way and with the same expressionist rhetoric – the worms of civilisation, decayed night, spiky goddess – he blames contemporary history and at the same time includes himself in this sick and decadent world through the use of the first person plural of the verbs: “Listen you walls how we bite ourselves away/Slowly, like brothers! Brothers? We are the worms of civilisation/Entered at once with life in flash.” ”A society avid for material values that distorts and dehumanizes reducing the man to his primordial instincts:“Behold how they cry for money, for land.” Because he does not exclude himself from this world, he doubts himself and he makes his own moral indictment looking for comfort in death.

We also insisted in this chapter on a rhetorical-pragmatic aspect of the poetic discourse, having an efficient aesthetic impact on the reader of the text, emphasised in other chapters too, and on the play upon the poetic instances because of which the subject sees himself as the object of his own statement, a device used somewhat frequently in not just a few of his poems.

#### **IV. The identity crisis and the outcast**

In this part that is related to the previous chapter and that contains the sub-chapters **IV. 1. The damned poet and existential despair**, **IV.2. The traumatic isotopy**, and **IV. 3. Poetic biographism**, we analysed the way in which the lyrical subject

creates the mask of *poète maudit* and of the social outcast. Ion Pop also writes about a rhetoric of alienation in the few pages, a little bit dismissed, (Ion Pop, *Jocul poeziei*, Bucharest, Cartea Românească Publishing House, 1985), about Dimitrie Stelaru's poetics.

The lyric self cries out and exacerbates his frustration of not having been loved by anyone, of being just a social outcast fellow and, also, the confusion, the lack of references and of ethical, spiritual or metaphysical certainties implying the unsatisfying fragmented self-knowledge and the inaccurate, oscillating and even distorted perception of the world.

As the uttering instance, the poetic self creates himself a self-portrait and a behavioural attitude of a socially famelic outcast ("To eat bread") and of a damned poet ("the traces of the devil on the face"), having engraved in himself the signs of an adverse destiny, of a derisory histrionic or of a Shakespearean buffoon.

However, the tragic touch is more significant, the poet concentrating, on the one hand, upon a real and lasting physical pain ("the bloody earth of the shoulders"), and on the other hand, upon the painful aspiration towards spirituality and poetry ("the sun's gates – the eyes sick for her"); inflicted condition, ontological and creative, concrete and evanescent, rotten and uplifting, but whose common denominator is the existential despair.

From this state of existential confusion and of the now public ostracism, the poet will identify himself with a prototype of sufferance and of messianism – Jesus Christ, prophesying, contrary to the biblical figure, a "late" time and not a moment of redemption, of human rehabilitation in the soteriologic sense. We preferred the term of poet instead of that of the lyrical self, of verbal presence etc. because the referee is directly mentioned in the text and quite in a dramatic way. At the same time we mention that the reference to Christ is personalised and individualised as his own condition and not that of the humanity in general.

Without having a place of his own, the lyrical subject is looking for an ontic status and identity in history and in an archetypal imaginary filled with cultural symbols. On the other hand, the creative self experiences the failure of this way of situating himself in a world and he will resort to a contact, although dramatic and painful, with the hostile

reality by textualising, in a series of poems that remind us of the American poetry of experience and of social protest of the 50's and 60's (Philip Lamantia, Michael McClure, Philip Whalen, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac și Gary Snyder), biographic-referential moments or historically-eventful in a modernist and neo-modernist discourse with postmodern anticipation. We use the postmodernist term with the meaning of textual construct and not with axiological implications.

## **V. The thanatic isothopy and the gothic imaginary**

Another major significant field is generated by the quasi-permanent obsession of death. One of the causes was undeniably the premature death of his young father who died in the battles of World War I shortly before his birth (1917), as well as the death of his first teenage lover because of tuberculosis. Although he never met him, it is clear that the painful event made an impression on his subconscious, fact revealed in the poem *Cantecul lui Stelaru (Stelaru's Song)*, an elaborated poem, by no means accidental, as a hypertext in relation with Eminescu's poem *Ce te legeni (Why do you wail)* and the ballad *Miorița*. The thanatic isotopy informs in different ways – lament inflections, serious tone, mystical transfiguration, oniric projection, ironic bravado – the discourse of a series of poems such as *Maria-Maria, Cătălina, Mai aud lupii (I can still hear the wolves)*, *Apele morții (Death Waters)*, *Lumina întunericului (The light of darkness)* etc.

Other poems, - *Elra, Frenezie (Frenzy)*, *Trenul morții (Death train)*, *Regele fără timp (The out of time king)* or *Corabia de plumb (The Lead Boat)* – contain strange visions of medieval bestiary, terrifying, gothic-expressionist, associating the misty phantoms of the subconscious with thanatic archetypes of the collective subconscious.

## VI. The Attitude towards divinity: acceptance and denial

We entitled this chapter *The attitude towards divinity: acceptance and denial* because, except for some metaphysical fulgurations, in Dimitrie Stelaru's lyric we did not distinguish an authentic religious experience, such as that found at Daniel Turcea, and in no way Christian. That is why we think that a more adequate term is attitude, involving the cultural significance from which we do not exclude the social or political semic element and creating ambiguity at the reception level as in the poem *Omul nou* (*The New Man*).

We mentioned Christian-orthodox even though Jesus is conjured at utterance level because, on the other hand, from a range of attitudes pendulating between extreme boundaries, we also noticed in some poems moments of spiritual enlightenment, of sensibility and emotional religious experience.

In the inward and social crises that he goes through and in order to "fill" the existential void that surrounds him in the absence of communication and of the communion with the other, the subject of the utterance will search and address Divinity waiting for an answer.

Similar to Arghezi and Blaga, poets who from this point of view had an undeclared but certain influence, he will resort to a language with intrusions of religious symbolism such as the holy light, the messianic revelation, the Golgotha etc. Despite of the intensity of the existential cry, the Divinity will close in its mutism, just like in Arghezi's poetry, or Deus otiosus will abandon his creation just like in Blaga's lyrics. As in other cases, the poet also introduces terms and elements of theological symbolism; symbolised by the sun, the holy light cannot be endured by an unprepared and vain person and manifests itself as a cratofania.

Disappointed but also under the pressure of the ideological context, in poems such as *Ora de religie* (*The religion class*) and *Nu* (*No*) the lyric self will embrace a sarcastic-accusing perspective and tone towards the transcendence, the iconic representations and the evangelic message.

## VII. Resentment and sarcasm

The chapter *Resentment and sarcasm*, in which we insisted on the so-called “anti-war” poems, contains affinities with the previous chapter through the analysis and the interpretation of the vision of the creative self. The fury and the resentment of the poetic voice is directed towards an oppressive force which can be political, socially-historic, psychic or even metaphysic. But, in most of the poems from this category (*Pasărea libertății* (*Freedom Bird*), *Pace* (*Peace*), *Luptăm* (*We fight*), *A fost un război* (*There was a war*)), the target of the message is clear: the war and the alienated out of gear world that generated it.

From this group, a remarkable and representative poem is *Luptăm* (*We fight*), with an anti-war theme in accordance with the manifesto of the magazine „Albatros“ and with the intention of the group of the contributors to publish an anthology with a title so significant and **shocking** - *Sârmă ghimpată* (*Barbed Wire*), banned by censorship **right from the manuscript stage**. In reality, the manifesto of the Albatros was anticipated by the manifesto of Geo Bogza and Paul Păun - *Poezia pe care vrem să o scriem* (*The poetry we want to write*), published in „Viața imediată“, no. 1, dec. 1933, of which we chose a representative excerpt: “We want to write a poetry of our times, which is no longer that of the collective neurosis and of the ardent thirst for life. The dream poetry, the pure poetry and the hermetic one are long gone. The strength of a huge collective tragedy has crushed under a foot of clay the trivial things that represented the object of the modern writers at the end of the war. (...)”

From this process of vast dramatization of life, people gained their contact with the violent and still unwritten beauty of that current epos. But this grand block of marble, licked by flames and bathed in blood that imposes itself as a stringent poetic material of the era, the drained poetry of the last groups of hermetics, did not brought between its barren and academic banks only one awe.” Taking into account this perspective, *Luptăm* (*We fight*) presents an anti-war message similar to *Libertatea de a trage cu pușca* (*The Freedom to shoot*) by Geo Dumitrescu.

In comparison with Geo Dumitrescu’s poem that has a narrative development and simulates a rhetoric of the natural, Stelaru’s poem is much more concentrated and with more significant figurative language.

Besides the physical destructions, the poisonous effect of the war brings with it the terror, the constraint, the moral regimentation, the disappearance of freedom and the enchainment of the word signified through the metaphor of the poets in iron harnesses, while the awaited interrogative about freedom remains purely rhetorical (*Oraşul s-a rupt* (*The town was torn*)).

The dark and terrifying imaginary, the atmosphere of horror and dehumanisation caused by the carnage of the war, as well as the sarcastic and accusing attitude of the enunciation instance, characterise the poetic discourse of the anti-war series, of unequal value, of which we also mention *Rob* (*Slave*), *Sub bombardament* (*Under bombing*), *Oamenii* (*The people*), *Opriţi-vă* (*Stop*), *Alt vânt* (*A different wind*) and *Lor To them*).

Of these, *Sub bombardament* (*Under Bombing*) stands out through the authenticity of the experience infiltrated by the biographic dramatic one and through the perlocutionary force of the utterance voice. The endemic hunger of the poet and of the other outcasts, as well as the terror of the war, is presented in a black imagery. Life moved underground, in a larval subhuman existence as if taken out of Goya's *Caprices*.

The indignation of the poetic self is vaticinally and sarcastically directed towards a history that over time has always been violent and unjust, bloody, and ungrateful, of which the 20<sup>th</sup> century is no exception. Anonymous tyrants forgotten by History, "without a face", that meant nothing for civilisation, governed off the fat of the land through abuses and crimes.

A history of tyranny in which humanism, the spirit, and the culture were permanently drowned in blood and overwhelmed by the carnages and the mercantilism in which everything is sold and bought. The poet will change the biblical words *mane tekel fares* (Daniel, 5, 25) that mean counted, divided, weighed, by replacing the last term with money.

The discourse of the locutor ironically ends with an anti-phrase that "praises" the daemonic happiness of the oppressors: "All were good judging by the holes in which they threw their prisoners/today bones, but then a hell of happiness/and a few libraries of broken bricks." The stark absence of the spirituality and of the ideal is accusingly marked by rhetoric interrogations: "where is the marrow of the infinite column?/where are your wingless legs?"

## VIII Poeisis and poetikon

Contrary to his recognised and spread position of a bohemian from the line of Villon and Nerval, lost in the contemporary world, to a lack of interest in any form of adjustment to reality (social, political or cultural) except for the last period of his life, and in his own creation, the author of *Noaptea geniului* (*Genius night*) had a rational **active** poetic consciousness. He reflected on the creative process (poietikon) and on the condition and the status of the poetry (poeisis) and of the poet in general, or related to the architect of that period – modernism, proletarianism and neo-modernism. His poetic and poetikon outlook was textualised directly in metapoems or in a wider semiotic network including other adjacent poetic motifs. We approached these aspects in detail and systematically in the sections “Poeisis and Eros”, „Poetikon and metapoetry“ and „The Poet as Chosen and Genius“.

### VIII. 1. Poeisis and Eros

In a poem like *Mâinile* (*The Hands*), the poet, a figure of the text designated by grammatical markers, is the subject of the spiritual and moral dilemma between the enslaving erotic temptation, symbolised by the hands of a young woman that sends forth a daemonic lure (“But youth, youth has something daemonic”), and the ineffable space of the poem symbolised by dream. More certainly, it is about a search and an exploration of the grace state hidden by the erotic desire: “The hands, white as a lie,/I longed for them on other nights - /The chain, their touch crushed me -/I don’t want it anymore now, no, I don’t./What was I dreaming?”.

The dualism or the analogy poetry-eros is also present in *Ar trebui* (*You should*), the lover being presented in a romantic, idealised perspective with the attributes of the Muse. The verb however appears as conditional to underline the possibility and the projection as suppressed desire, associated with the thanatic obsession: “You should be song or star -/Legend and high wind;/The wells dug in the sky/Towards the passion of the rare tomb.”

The chimerical lover, probably the phantom of that lover, Maria, dead so young, - episode told in the biographic fiction *De doi lei planeta* (*A dime the planet*) (*Zei prind*



*șoareci*) (*Gods catching mice*) – concedes room to an earthly reality and to an intense desire, on the symbolic level the eros being in coalescence with the earth and the disturbance of perceptions, a desire also enhanced by the action of the artificial impulse: “Clear you are not – nor lost,/Fetch me the earrings and the words -/Close the gate, I’m drunk -/Dirt you are. Tear up my attire.” Having as hold the phrase “tear up my attire” and the hypothesis of Maria’s phantom in the poet’s subconscious, the meaning of interpretation can be modified. Under the influence of the desire and of the alcohol, the woman is an agonizing and painful semi-presence, neither “clear” nor “lost”, a Eurydice that cannot materialize as a reality or as logos despite the calling of the orphic poet: “Fetch me the earrings and the words.” And then the implacable certainty follows – “Dirt you are”, and the tragic gesture of tearing up the clothes.

In an orphic vision, the connection of the poetic self with the speech returns in one of the poems with the same peritext, *Eumene*: “Near rivers and lunar steppe/Words bring up cherubs.” And, although the eros and the creation condition themselves, paradoxically, they both confess an absence and not the fulfilment of the being: “Love, clear solitude,/Any song is a desert.”

## **VIII. 2. Poetikon and metapoetry**

In an oniric speech, *Mări în sus* (*Seas above*), *Pădurea serilor* (*Evening Forest*), *Stăm alături* (*We stand by each other*), *Mâinile au un demon* (*The Hands Have a Deamon*) and others, speak about the making of the poem, the poetikos, about the dynamic of the poetic process, the creative energy, the turning of vision into text as experienced act, and about the merger between the self and the word.

## **VIII. 3. The Poet as chosen and genius**

The theme of the art and of the genius is the concern of Dimitrie Stelaru in a representative poem - *Romola*. The title of the text is given by the wife of the great ballet dancer of Polish origin from Serghei Diaghilev’s company - Vaslav Nijinski (Wacław Niżyński), who, after he achieved perfection, was, like so many geniuses, stricken by dementia. Romola also represents the name of the main female character from the short

story with eponym title by George Eliot, of whose cronotope is the Italian Renaissance Florence. Accidentally, from this point of view as well the name is adequate because the historic short story of the English writer recreates a social, religious, intellectual, cultural, and artistic atmosphere of the town in those times.

In a long series, the theme of the poet as exception and of the poetry is also to be found in the ample poem *Poeții mâncau?* (*Were the poets eating?*) – exponential for the uttered category – which we do not hesitate to associate to the concept of metapoetry although it involves many social references. As a corollary of this mode of interpreting poetry and the image of the poet, we have the poem *Stelarii* (*The stellars*), a text that, starting from its pseudonym, represents the category of poets chosen in a vision, which we should not be afraid to call it as mystical, but not necessarily orthodox, rather with Gnostic-platonian influences when you see divinity under the sign of Beauty, but this privilege of the enlightened vision belongs only to the stellar. It is a god of spirituality and implicitly of the art: “God is our sun, the stellar’s sun - /The elevated beauty, the eagle of art.” Access to it is given to the stellar, the visionary poets that, on the one hand are conscious of the original sin - their “fruits” here “are full of worms”, and on the other hand, with a purged soul, they go beyond conventions and iconic representations in order to reach the grace state – “the saints thrown into the adornments of the churches”. In a hermetic language like that in *Roman de la rose*, the poetic self describes the state of grace reached: “We are the gold gone through fire -/The bud escaped from the snow’s claws.” Some critics noticed the mystical echoes in a number of poems but treated them with suspicion, and others lingered excessively on his bohemian side as existential and stylistic pattern.

### **IX. Hypostasis of the eros**

In this chapter, I tackled the theme of the eros, a magnetic semantic nucleus in the Stelarian imaginary that penetrated many of the most significant poems of his lyrics such as *Herta*, *Preludiu* (*Prelude*), *Trec prin grădini* (*I pass through gardens*), *Noaptea geniului* (*Night of the genius*) or *Veste îndepărtată* (*Distant news*). According to the system of isotopies in which the garden is an essential semanteme, and the significant vector, in the subchapters (“The sensual and ardent eros”, “Eros and poesis”, “Eros and Thanatos”) we analysed the position of the self, the vision and feeling towards a

fundamental experience of the human condition and, also, the connections with other significant fields and their materialisation in the lyrical discourse. We distinguished and examined the solitary attitudes of the poetic self (the lover embodied by the feminine spirit of nature, the mystical lover) that are complementary (the woman as lover and magna mater, the lover and the poetic dream), or completely antithetic (the aspiration towards the primordial innocence and the physical attraction, the goddess Flora and the improper Venera, the pure lover and the prostitute, flattery and anathema, the ungrateful woman and the poetic ideal, communion and alienation, fulfilment and sufferance).

## **X. The messianic isotopy and the compensating space**

We end our research and analysis of the poetic work with this chapter in which we point out one of the defining lyrical masks of the Stelarian creative self, the Messianic hypostasis and the imaginary places meant to shelter, even temporarily, his endlessly restless self. When we refer to Chosen in Stelaru's poetic mythological system, we do not necessarily suppose a divine or christic connotation, although it is not excluded. Undoubtedly, the semantic field of the term also includes the romantic meaning, sometimes with schopenhauerean nuances, of an exceptional person in contrast with the regular man. And the phrase messianic isotopy does not necessarily suggest a christic meaning, but, even more than that, a prophetic one gone through the romantic grid. In the case of the authentic poets with Dimitrie Stelaru's formation, the archetypes and the mythical symbols are usually heightened, changed, and semantically transformed in an original configuration that is due to some genuine or voluntary intertextual processes.

However, the poem *Cetățile albe* (*White fortresses*) corresponds to one of the most prestigious mitologema of the sacred space in sacred-mystical sense, a bower of the divinity and of the pure souls, regardless of whether it refers to the Tibetan Shambala, Walhalla from Asgard of the north mythologies, the biblical Heaven, the sky of the Platonian ideas, the Dacian Kogaion, God's Fortress of Saint Augustin etc. Even though in Stelaru's poetic imaginary it could be a symbol of romantic or symbolist origin – we

think of Meka from the Macedonskian poem – and it is also such a thing, we do not exclude the mythical connotations and the Gnostic influences: “The white fortresses, the distant fortresses, only imagined,/Wherefrom no one descended, no one ever...” They are glimpsed and dreamt ideal places where, in a mystical way, the spirit of the poet dwells as an ethereal romantic double: “My heart is in their space,/My night roams in their country,/I stay among you, the ones around me, but I am gone”. Besides this ground duality of the poetic self, the difference from the others - an alteration through which he identifies his proud ipseity as Chosen, is also stated in the swirl of romanticism.

In an atmosphere and a landscape of a biblical apocrypha, the world awaits a herald, a mysterious and legendary messenger. As in the imaginary of the traditionalist and modernist poets with vernacular influences, in a syncretised expressionism, Blaga’s paradigm in a poem like *Satul Minunilor* (*The village of wonders*) chosen from the many more possible, the motif acquires the local cover. If in a poem of Ion Pillat – *Mreața* (*The mirage*), from the volume *Biserica de alta data* (*The church long ago*), the Virgin Mary “waits on the porch”, and God, the Son and the Holy Ghost talk in the house about the works of the field on the Earth as some hard-working peasants, the herald from Stelaru’s poem, *Ceramica*, holds a hip flask bag on his belt:

He brings a message to the cross of the world  
And the hoof beat of the horse brings warning  
In this way, with a hip flask on his belt,  
He brings a message.

We made a connection with the poems of Ion Pillat and Lucian Blaga in order to show that, especially in this type of poetics, the religious isotopy is not only the result of the Adventist studies as it was often stated, but it also responds to a poetic and a cultural inter and post-war code. The poetic self is in a constant search of the primordial, of “the blue forest” – blue is a lustral colour – as an ideal, transcendental or virtual space, ab origine, in which to find his real establishment as being: “I am looking for my life in the blue forests,-/My life that has not been born/The blue leaves and the moon.” Or that self in spirit, and not the psychological-archetypalone in the line of Jung: “And my brothers from chaos,/My brothers, the gods.” (*Pânzele bucuriei*) (*The webs of joy*)

## **XI. Conclusions**

In conclusion, we focused on an endeavour with hermeneutical goal closing the circle of the argument on the lyric universe as a whole: structure, themes, motifs' configuration, distinctive figures and characteristics of the poetic imaginary. We have been equally interested in the thematic classification of his poetic and metapoetic reflection to which we devoted a separate chapter, as seen above.

In a thematic research and analysis with elements of archetypal criticism, of psychocriticism, semiotics and stylistics, we approached the main significant fields and the structural aspects of the geography of the Stelarean poetic imaginary.

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