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DOCTORAL THESIS

METAPHORICAL SEMANTICS IN ION CREANGĂ’S FAIRYTALES AND SHORT STORIES

- summary -

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KEYWORDS

Integral linguistics, cognitive semantics, metaphor, conceptual metaphor, image schema, discursive poesis theory, core metaphor, sense articulation, sense creation and world creation, generative nucleus, semantic strategies, reference field, referential quanta, character functions.

The aim of our paper is a semantic investigation on a textual level, within the theoretical framework of the integralist paradigm, while focusing on the role of the metaphor in the articulation of textual sense. We chose to analyse Ion Creangă's *Stories* and *Short stories*, due to the richness of the factual field provided by the former's works to any reader willing to interpret his work on an alternative plane of hermeneutical immersion, one which distances itself from its classical counterpart. The main objective of our research was *to examine the semantic functions of the metaphors within Ion Creangă's work, as well as their role in the construction of textual sense*. Within the confines of our thesis we have endeavoured to offer an overall analysis of the metaphorical structures which are integral to literary textuality, from the perspective of creation techniques and their specific roles in sense creation and in the construction of the scope of fairytales and short stories. Our investigational endeavour also focused on examining a series of articulatory metaphors, originating from the “generative nuclei” of the texts we chose to tackle.

The object of our research was the body of texts belonging to the “*Stories*” (a generic term for the fairytales and fantasy stories): *Soacra cu trei nurori* [*The Mother with Three Daughters-in-Law*], *Capra cu trei iezi* [*The Goat and Her Three Kids*], *Punguța cu doi bani* [*The Purse a’Tuppence*], *Dănilă Prepeleac*, *Povestea Porcului* [*The Story of the Pig*], *Povestea lui Stan Pășitul* [*The Story of Stan the Hapless*], *Povestea lui Harap-Alb* [*The Story of Harap-Alb*], *Fata babei și fata moșneagului* [*The Old Woman’s Daughter and the Old Man’s Daughter*], *Ivan Turbincă*; and to the “*Short stories*”: *Poveste (Prostia omenească)* [*Human Stupidity*], *Moș Nichifor Coțcariul* [*Old Man Nichifor Slyboots*], *Povestea unui om leneș* [*The Story of a Lazy Man*], *Moș Ion Roată* [*Old Man Ion Roată*], *Popa Duhu* [*Priest Duhu*], *Ioan Roată și Vodă Cuza* [*Ioan Roată and Prince Cuza*].

1. *Introduction*

The section that represents the introduction to our paper proper is divided into a few parts which serve to clarify the premises of our endeavour as much as possible, as well as the instruments which we intended to employ and our established objectives. Thus, in *Short history of the research on the issue*, we have a succinct presentation of the main viewpoints concerning the study of the metaphor within Ion Creangă's works. We laid out the four research directions which include the metaphorical plane of the Romanian prose writer's literary art. The first mention of metaphorical occurrences concerns the *idiomatic metaphor* – i.e. the one originating from idiomatic expressions – and belongs to Iorgu Jordan. The second research direction, the one pertaining to the existence of a “*common folk*” *language metaphor*, is extensively illustrated in G. I. Tohăneanu's monographic volume, *Ion Creangă's artistic style*. The author notes the metaphorical richness of the synonym chains he identifies in the texts, while making a comparative study between the narrative “*tier*” and the dialogic one. The third type of metaphor which should lend itself to a systematic investigation is the *core metaphor*. The first exegete to identify a “*core metaphor*” in our terminology is G. Munteanu. In *Păcală*, the critic underlines the “*dialogically hyperbolised*” metaphor, *seeing the world as a spectacle*. This metaphor is supposedly *the outcome of a journey*, but at the same time *the means by which such an outcome is achieved*. In G. Munteanu's opinion, the *journey metaphor* represents the structural basis of all of Creangă's works. In the paper *Creangă before Creangă*, M. Berteau assumes the mantle of the investigation into the two fundamental metaphors and dubs them “*core metaphors*”. *Human stupidity* is the first of Creangă's works where we can notice the presence of the *journey metaphor* and the *world as a spectacle metaphor*. The *journey metaphor* is, concurrently, an “*epic metaphor*” for an “*adventure of human knowledge*”.

In the subchapter *A few current theoretical reference points in the study of metaphors*, we have a brief history of the two current prevalent doctrines of research in the field of the metaphorical: the first is represented by the philosophical hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur, which incorporate the “*metaphorical imagination*” within the plane of language function, while the second, represented by the direction of G. Lakoff's cognitive semantics, places the metaphorical phenomenon (homogeneous) within a primeval plane of knowledge.

Ricoeur's study (*The Living Metaphor*) is an attempt at legitimising the theory of the phrase-metaphor as irreducibly opposed to the theory of the word-metaphor. The metaphor is presented as a "discourse strategy", which "protects and enhances the *heuristic* value of *fiction*". The position adopted by Ricoeur places him at the other end of the spectrum to Aristotle, who defines the metaphor on the basis of semantics which employ the word as their core unit (a viewpoint shared by all western thinkers previously). The metaphorical is defined by way of a logical process, which is meant to overshadow the analogical one. Ricoeur speaks of a logic of resemblance, shrouded in predication. The hermeneutist does not take into consideration the two types of metaphor distinguished by Blaga (*linguistic* and *poetic*), which he makes note of. The copulative predication does not represent the identity between terms, but instead predicates the subsumption of denotational categories.

The cognitive theory of the metaphor was considered worthy of attention as well – it claims that metaphors are not metaphorical *phrases*, but metaphorical mappings of the content, in other words conceptual metaphors which illustrate abstract terms by way of concrete concepts substantially influenced by a schematic-imagistic viewpoint. It is the belief of these theoreticians that conceptual metaphors trace their origins deep within the primeval, prelinguistic experience. The Lakovian theory shatters the concept that the metaphor is merely an act of expression which can easily be mirrored within a language. This theory has major shortcomings as well. The flaw, with regards to both linguistic meaning, as well as the metaphorical manner of speaking, lies in conceptualising language as a given fact, a product (*ergon*). A clear distinction between the two types of metaphor – the metaphor used in language and the one used in poetry – is not made in this case either; it is therefore viewed as being inconsequential. Another aspect of this approach is represented by the conviction that poetical works must take into account a background pertaining to our intuitive knowledge about the world, one which Lakoff and Johnson dub "The Great Chain of Being" and which would be responsible for governing human metaphorical thought, including when it comes to creating fantastical worlds. In what concerns the constitutive role of image schemas, cognitivists are not mistaken, but instead make generalisations, narrowing everything down to the "physical" manifestation of the latter.

In the context of these endeavours, the most significant aspect that has not been taken into account within the aforementioned theories is that metaphors used in a literary text function differently than the ones used in spoken language. The common language metaphor depicts (re-depicts) the world, while textual metaphors say something about this world, even going on to create entirely new worlds.

The *Introduction* was concluded with the *Theoretical framework of the research* section. It is here that we went into detail and justified the choices made in what concerns the integral semantics of the text. This doctrine provides the most adequate theoretical framework for capitalising on the contributions provided by metaphorology, with the aim of establishing a clear distinction between the linguistic and poetic metaphors. The theoretical premises which were taken into consideration consisted of the Coserian contribution to the systematisation of the field of common language metaphors, represented primarily by the paper *The metaphorical creation in language*. In this paper, Coşeriu notes the creative and cognitive trait of the language metaphor, also underlining the consequences of its adoption by the linguistic tradition of the community, before finally providing a structure for the “field” of spoken language metaphors by way of establishing a “series” of universal metaphors, classified in four fundamental categories. The “language” metaphor is a manifestation of *linguistic creativity*. The role of this metaphor is *to organize the experience within the given world, in the form and by way of linguistic means*. Considering the fact that the aim of our investigation is also the way in which the functions of the metaphor within a text indicate and consolidate the foundations of sense construction, we focused our attention on the textual metaphor, whose finality is radically different, since it moves beyond the designated plane pertaining to sensible experience, advancing towards an interpretation of the world and a reconceptualisation of the “designatum”.

2. Aspects of the metaphorical semantics in the texts of Ion Creangă's “stories”

In this section of our paper, we started our investigation with an illustrative overview of the entire field of metaphorical occurrences identified in Creangă's fairytales and stories, as well as an initial observation of the main aspects which define the functionality of these occurrences within the works of the great raconteur. As such, we

started with a short acknowledgement (a temporary one) of the criteria, approved by an entire tradition of studies within this field, pertaining to the *formal* (lexico-grammatical) internal structures specific to the metaphorical phenomenon in general. Starting from these formal guidelines, we then sought to illustrate in as rich a manner as possible the way in which these structures make their presence felt within the textual setup of Creangă's "stories". In a field as rich as that of metaphorical illustrations, we noted the differences between the metaphors of common folk speak and their original employment within the text, the latter of which we defined as being dependant upon a process of resemantisation. It is in this context that we later attempted an initial approximation of the great functional coordinates (i.e. of the potential specific semantic purposes) that the delimited and resemantisised formal structures needed to conform to in the process of revealing the textual sense. Naturally, we firstly encountered the finality that Blaga had defined as "plasticizing", but which now manifests itself not as a mere metaphorical *designation*, but instead in the process of expressing *sense*.

In the analysis we endeavoured to provide in the subchapter *Exploiting the idiomatic metaphor*, the richness of the material required us to present as extensive a sample as possible of metaphorical occurrences with the main aim of illustrating the abundance of metaphors present in the text, contrasting it with the frequency they appear in spoken Romanian. As previously noted, the main source of metaphors was the language of the "common folk", from which the author plucked a copious amount of representative metaphors. They were integrated within the text and thus gained new semantic meanings. We ascertained that chains of metaphors contribute to either the designation of new textual facts, poignantly highlighted in the world of fairytales, either towards expressing some clearly sarcastic intentions or the irreducible mindsets of characters. Textual metaphors have thus proven the assertion that their finality is precisely sense-creation and "world" creation, going beyond their minor contribution to local expressivity. And thus, the use of metaphorical successions for love, for "violence", imprecations, ironies, sayings and proverbs at the dialogic level (not the narrative one, by any means) of texts such as fairytales and short stories brings with it explicit and implicit links, which facilitate and contribute, in a particular manner, to the blending of the syntactic and semantic planes, with the aim of articulating the textual sense.

A particular sequence was reserved for the detailed analysis of a few characteristic expressions of Creangă's writing style ("foc de harnică" ["extremely diligent woman"], metaphorical expressions of irony and of the pantheon of evil).

Finally, the most extensive section of this first chapter, *Cognitive semantic structures*, attempted to place the entire issue up do debate once more, starting from a different overview than the traditional formal (lexico-grammatical) approach. To be precise, we adopted the viewpoint that is prevalent, as a matter of fact, in current international research and proposed a rethinking of the enhancement of meaning metaphors have brought, content-wise, in the context of the image schemata theory and the metaphorical concepts belonging to cognitive semantics. Without burdening ourselves with these epistemological and linguistic implications at a principle level, we attempted to underline two image schemas which we considered relevant in the context of I. Creangă's fairytales, namely: *Source – Itinerary – Target* and *Container*. The use of these new operational concepts was only justified in our paper through adherence to the wider and more complex overview provided by linguistic and poetic integralism.

3. *Aspects of the metaphorical semantics in proverbs*

This chapter of our paper deals with the paremiological forms present in Ion Creangă's fairytales and short stories from a different perspective than the traditional one. We identified the text-specific functions of the proverbs and paremiological expressions found in the texts that we examined. These Romanian language pretextual forms, discovered and recovered within the sphere of literary textuality, were the subject of an investigation whose aim was to put into practice the theoretical implications of cognitive semantics within the field of metaphors, owing to the fact that this course of action gave us adequate descriptive possibilities, while its major contributions to metaphor research were recovered and integrated within the theoretical framework of integralism.

According to the principles of cognitive semantics, proverbs are minimal forms of "poetry", whose "starting point" is a certain world image. From a metaphorical standpoint, we perceive proverbs by way of a process of projection from a source towards a target and by adherence to *the principle of cognitive invariance*, in the sense that there exists a metaphorical mapping that does not overrule the structure of the generic schema of the

target. The target is implicit, or, in some cases, explicitly described. The process is facilitated by a metaphorical projection which goes from the level of the specific to the generic level, the latter of which is then projected as a replacement for the generic level of the target. “The cognitive model”, dubbed *The Great Chain of Being*, plays an essential role in the understanding of proverbs. *The Great Chain of Being* is a scale or a hierarchy of the forms of being, of their characteristics, as well as their respective and specific manifestations within the world, organised in a series of tiers. The cultural archetype of *The Great Chain* firstly pertains to traits and behaviour, while the link between tiers is established only with the aid of the tiers corresponding to the traits and behaviour. This archetype is intuitively built and presents us with an intuitive global overview which is supposedly deeply ingrained in our psyches since the time of our first experiences.

Lakoff and Turner, the proponents of this theory, hold the belief that in order to understand proverbs, it is essential that we combine the theory of common sense, of “*the natural order of things*”, with *The Great Chain*, thereby resulting in a complex theory which can shed light on the way things work in the world. Add to this the metaphor THE GENERIC IS SPECIFIC and **The Maxim of Quantity**. Despite the existence of all these four “ingredients” on different planes, as a whole they function in harmony to provide us with a means of interpreting proverbs. Together, these four components represent “*THE GREAT CHAIN METAPHOR*”. Proverbs can be interpreted in many different ways, depending on the backdrop they are set in. But this does not mean that every decipherment is valid. All interpretations are conditioned by a single generic level metaphor – “*THE GREAT CHAIN METAPHOR*”. The interpretation possibilities are those that provide an understanding of the traits and behaviour from the upper tiers of *The Great Chain* in the terms of the traits and behaviour from the lower tiers.

During the course of our endeavour, we have exemplified the way in which the creative processes behind proverbs work and have demonstrated that these processes do indeed take place as “instances” of *the global cognitive model*. We conducted a selection of the proverbs from fairytales and short stories before organising them in accordance with their target domain. This type of research provided us with ample opportunity to observe the rendering of a single target domain by way of different source domains. We attempted to conduct a few textual analyses as well, in accordance with the generic level metaphor,

GENERIC IS SPECIFIC, while also attempting to demonstrate how this type of structure functions within the selected texts. This particular metaphor facilitates our understanding of an entire range of situations in the terms of a specific situation.

In this sense, our research corroborated two fundamental aspects of the employment of proverbs within the texts we analysed: firstly, the fact that proverbs are semantic units which are already ingrained within the traditions of a linguistic community; next, the fact that their actualisation as semantic units, accomplished by placing them in a specific context, which is different from that of current speech, oftentimes leads either to their reinvention and resemanticisation through the appropriation of new semantic values, either to the reinforcement of their conventional semantic values.

4. *Sense articulation in “Povestea lui Harap-Alb” [“The Story of Harap Alb”]. Morphology of the fairytale and the textual metaphorical function of the journey*

Chapter III of our paper deals with sense articulation in *Povestea lui Harap-Alb [The Story of Harap Alb]*, capitalising on the theoretical contribution brought to “fairytale morphology” by Russian formalist V. I. Propp, as well as on the fundamental tenets of *discursive poesis*, which are conceptualised in the larger framework of the cultural poetics project devised by professor M. Borcilă. In this sense, the *functions* that govern the prototype organisational schema of the fairytale have been corroborated with the *core metaphor* concept proposed by the discursive poesis theory.

In his paper, *Fairytale morphology*, Propp investigates *the way in which* the fantastic fairytale *works* as a device. He substitutes the term *motif* (in the acception provided by *Subject poetics*) with *function*, described as a *significant act* of a character, one which has consequences on the plot. The *functions* are pinpointed within a corpus of 100 fantastical Russian fairytales. Consequently, 31 *functions* and an *initial situation* are identified. When defining the *functions*, the character that carries them out is not taken into account; what *is* taken into account is the significance of the respective function within the unfolding of the story. In Propp’s view, *functions* represent the cornerstone of the narrative structure. Characters who fulfil certain functions can easily be replaced by others and oftentimes there will be a very complex reasoning behind these substitutions. It is in the context of a sequence such as this that a series of multifaceted changes can be observed.

Speaking of the types of challenges the hero has to face up to, which are essential for the protagonist's rite of passage, we can ascertain that they are used with a clear goal in mind, one which had been established at the beginning of the story during the character Holy Sunday's prophecy. Propp's schema underlines, from his own perspective, the fact that within the framework of the narrative text, the organisation of sequences can be rendered through the use of synthetic forms at a more abstract level.

It is in this context that we presented, in a concise manner, a few aspects and general coordinates of the current view on *discursive poesis* (which we then brought up again and expanded during the final chapter). According to this approach, sense articulation within the confines of a lyrical text can be observed with the aid of three metaphorical semantic strategies: the *diaphoric* strategy, the *endophoric* strategy and the *epiphoric* strategy. The metaphorical semantic strategies are used for textual units which are constructed on three *levels of sense-creation*: that of the *referential quanta*, that of the *reference fields* and that of the *generative nucleus*. In discursive poesis, the *core metaphor*, i.e. the *generative nucleus*, represents the main level of the narrative, the basis for the entire plot, brought about through the use of the *dia-*, *endo-*, *epiphoric* strategies.

In Propp's view, the *guiding storyline* from the fairytale's plane of logic was regarded as being at least tangential with the one which we can entail from the unfolding of the story's metaphorical nucleus by way of textual sense. Generally speaking, fairytales, which present a semantic structure, are established on the basis of *functional* relationships, with the mention that we are not dealing with *norms* specific to standard dynamics, which are expanded upon creatively in every text. These *functional* relationships form semantic fields and are present at every level of the story, leading to repercussions ranging from the lexematic level to the global semantic one, even if the formalist approach leaves them untouched. We cannot separate the fairytale's functional structure from the content creating process, which leads us from the lexical meanings to the global textual meaning by way of the multifaceted *dia-*, *endo-* and *epiphoric* articulation.

When observed in the context of the text's semantic dynamics, the *journey* metaphor, which is actually present in all of Ion Creangă's fairytales and short stories, reveals its symbolic-mythic specificity. It is a trans-significant metaphor and has an articulatory textual function within the text's in-depth dynamics. The *journey* on which the

young lad goes on has double meaning. On the one hand, it is a *journey* in the geographic sense, full of perils and compulsory challenges, which leads to a realm, an irreversible *journey*. At the same time, it is a *journey* brimming with obstacles and mazes which goes *upwards*, also signifying a spiritual purification, a step up from the impious state to that of the initiate / sacred.

5. *Metaphorical semantic strategies in a short story by Ion Creangă: „Povestea lui Stan Pățitul” [“The Story of Stan the Hapless”]*

This last chapter of our dissertation focuses on the core metaphor in the fantastical short story *Povestea lui Stan Pățitul* [The Story of Stan the Hapless], by adhering to the exegetic model of semantic dynamics dia-, endo-, epiphoric, which is apt at identifying sense articulation in literary texts.

Firstly, we proceeded to detail the theoretical framework that served as a guideline in this section of our paper. Starting with the generative nucleus, the rules that govern textual sense are constructed in accordance with the specificity of the artistic literary texts. The proposed solution relies on a fundamental dissociation of the metaphorical processes, something which was suggested in the philosophy of L. Blaga. This dissociation between two types of metaphor, the “plasticising” one and the “revelatory” one, aids in classifying lyrical texts in accordance with certain internal-semantic standards. The two basic functions of the metaphor (“plasticising” and “revelatory”) are (re)interpreted as “fundamental types of cultural functions in lyrical works”. M. Borcilă suggests two functional-typological categories for lyrical works: type **A** – this category is characterised “by a plasticising overview, the syntactic existential-axiological principle and a diagrammatic constructive model”; type **B** – characterised “by a revelatory overview, the existential-axiological principle and a symbolic constructive model”. Each of the two reference-driven models of construction are divided up into two functional (sub)categories. We placed the chosen text in the symbolic category **BI**, since we consider it a *symbolic-mythical text*, owing to its “revelatory” finality, the latter of which is accomplished in accordance with the cultural and mythological framework to which the author’s creative overview adheres to.

The *diaphoric* strategy initiates the creative process and consists of the delimitation and confluence of two incompatible semantic fields, with the clash that occurs between them leading to the creation of a strain with the world knowledge plane. The *endophoric* strategy attempts to bypass the aforementioned strain. The semantic leap of faith brought about by the *epiphoric* leads to the projection of a brand new imaginary plane, whereby the two elements can coexist. These semantic-poetic strategies lead to a displacement of the intelligible and to the establishment of a world beyond the language-driven structure of the phenomenal world.

It is during the *diaphoric* stage that the *generative nucleus* of the text – *the journey is a rite of passage* - is set up through the articulation of two referential fields: a) **CR I** – Stan’s world, b) **CR II** – Beelzebub’s realm. This metaphorical core is exemplified through a special template of the referential plane: the internal reference fields are “disanalogical” in comparison to the phenomenal ones - they are structures which indicate the presence of a fundamental world. During the story’s initial stages, two instances of the *journey* are outlined:

- 1) **Stan’s departure in search of wood through the forest:** without being metaphorical, this representation’s importance lies at the global level of sense-macroarticulation, adhering to the **CR I** pattern, representing day to day life and daily routine. Later on, Stan’s journey will become a route to “the other side”, one which he does not even anticipate and which will change his destiny / “journey” in a certain way.
- 2) **An entirely different representation of the *journey*** emerges to contrast the aforementioned route, adhering to a **CR II** pattern, made possible by the dual and enigmatic existence of the devil.

During the second stage of metaphorical articulation, there is a transition from the tensional referential context, brought about by the emergence of the apparitions, to another referential context where the tension is avoided. An important role during this part of the story is played by Stan’s servant. The setup of this specific character’s significance is rooted within two contexts and can be traced on two levels: firstly, the mythical level where he traces his origins, which encompasses the entire hellish plane (**CR II**); and secondly, the level of beliefs and community traditions to which he has descended to

(**CR I**); during the instances in which he appears within the community, he conducts transformations, thereby bringing about the birth of a plane of existence (**CR III**) which is alien to the village and which belongs to a single individual, this time in the shape of a human archetype. The household represents a different plane of existence, a different “life”. It opens up the possibility of a fancied world, beyond the one we perceive through our experiences, a world which is put into perspective by experiences in the field of “mystery”. As a passage to a more complex plane of sense, the metaphorical transfiguration will only take place after Chirică recreates Stan’s household and decides that it is high time for the master to get married as well. The pursuit of perfection gradually takes place within an entire system of sense values which becomes important in the context of Chirică’s metaphorical transfiguration, the sign of an enigma - a fundamental and decisive function for what we have come to refer to as Stan's/Ipate's *journey*. All of these aspects allowed us to view this character as the key-metaphorical element which links the three referential fields of the text and which functions as a catalyst, a guiding light towards field transcendence.

During the epiphoric stage, the elements of the textual world, having gone through changes throughout the story, no longer possess their initial “contents”, but instead disclose hidden and enigmatic planes: Ipate has become Stan the Hapless, the woman is representative of the paradisiacal period, while the devil regains his status as the lord of evil, “all rights reserved”.

In conclusion, it is our belief that the textual analysis template brought into question illustrates, quite conclusively, the manner in which the metaphor performs its role within the text – a role which goes beyond decorative and rhetorical purposes – through its fundamental contribution to the construction of textual sense.

6. *Conclusions*

At the end of our investigational endeavour, we hope that our main objective, the one we established at the beginning, has been accomplished. We believe that the outcome of our research could have rather general theoretical implications, as well as a practical impact pertaining to the characterisation of the selected texts. In each of the chapters we managed to, at the very least, pinpoint a number of possible approaches to the issues

linguistic and poetics theory, in their current state, have to deal with when it comes to the great classic's body of works.

The analyses we conducted in our paper lead to the following overall conclusions:

1. These texts certify *two distinct metaphorical functions*:

I – *the linguistic function*, which exploits the specifics of common folk speak and brings its contribution to the author's stylistic stamp;

II – *the sense construction input function*:

a) the coherent articulation of microtexts through the metaphorical procedure (see proverbs);

b) contributing to the constitution of the generative nucleus of certain fantastical stories (where we could actually refer to *a specifically poetic function*);

c) contributing to the global sense-articulation of an entire text and to the establishment of the latter's metaphorical dynamics.

2. The metaphors are resemantised at sense-level: they are not merely replicated, but exploited in an original manner, so as to create meaning. By way of corroboration with the generic formal parameters, the crucial role that the metaphorical dimension performs when it comes to the semantic strategies of a text at a global level is confirmed.

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