

THE EXPRESSIVENESS OF REGIONALISMS AND POPULAR TERMS IN THE POETIC LANGUAGE

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Abstract: The use of regionalisms and popular terms is undoubtedly a source that generates expressiveness, both in the literary text and in the familiar language. Regarding the artistic language, the presented examples are extracted from the creation of the Transylvanian writer Ștefan Augustin Doinaș, whom the generations who studied at school remember only as the author of the well-known ballad *The Wild Boar with Silver Fangs*. However, Ștefan Augustin Doinaș, on his real name Ștefan Popa, is a much deeper creator, proving through his poetry a vast general culture and a good knowledge of the Romanian language. The present text illustrates some categories of popular terms and their connection with the poetic text.

Keywords: *artistic language; poetry; popular terms; regionalisms; expressiveness;*

Premises

In general, in the consciousness of the moment of the Sibiu Literary Circle, Doinaș established himself as an author of ballads. Therefore, literary criticism focused especially on this aspect, appreciating the new aesthetics created after the German model. The analysis of the aspects of his style takes the research further, because the values of Ștefan Augustin Doinaș's creation cannot be reduced only to the ballad universe, nor can they be defined by a clear-cut formula. The stylistic research in the over 20 volumes of poems by the writer Ștefan Aug. Doinaș proposes an approach to the secrets of poetic grace, trying to penetrate the intimacies of his creative workshop.

One of the resources that the poet calls upon to generate expressiveness is the use of the popular and regional layer of the Romanian language. Moreover, the poet demonstrates a unique knowledge of the Romanian language, engaging in the creation of poetic language all the ramifications of the language: territorial ramifications through words used in certain regions, temporal ramifications through the use of neologisms, but also older terms, etymological ramifications through the integration of borrowings from various languages into the poetic text, as well as social ramifications using both familiar and slang words, but also specialized terms from professional language.

Rituals and customs signaled by regionalisms

In the case of Ștefan Aug. Doinaș's lyrics, regionalisms have either prosodic value, being used to obtain rhyme, or expressive value to reveal the meaning of the text. For example, the rhyme pair *ochiul* (eye) / *deochiul* (the evil eye) from the poems *Logosul* ('The speech'), published in 1983, and *Zorile* ('Dawn'), published in 1992. The noun used, *deochiul* ('the evil eye'), belongs to the popular belief, according to which the superstitious believed that some people would have a magical power to make those on whom they fix their gaze sick. Artur Gorovei shows that it is considered the result of an evil power, even the devil appearing under the name „diochiatul”, „diochiul” (Gorovei 1985, 94). In popular belief, the sky, the wind, the field, the forest, the forest, the water, the spring, the fence, the birds can also be „deochiați”. In Doinaș, the association *ochiul-deochiul* in the rhyme acquires a special meaning in that the *deochiul* represents the effect of looking, that is, of the eye that has this power, the symbol of the eye appearing several times in the poem. This rhyme is also used in the poem *Tradafirul negru* ('The black rose') from the volume *Alter ego*, in which the atmosphere is charged with mystery, superstition and symbol.

Other regionalisms that stand out in the lexical-semantic physiognomy of the rhyme are: *stâlpare* (the poem *Stanțe* – 'Lyrics'), respectively *cășlegi* (the poem *Cel din urmă păstor* – 'The last shepherd', vol. *Anotimpul discret* – 'The descreet season'). *Stâlpar* is the name for a green branch, a leafy twig. By extension, it came to designate a leafy willow branch that is distributed to Orthodox believers at church on Palm Sunday. Of course, the choice of the term in the composition of the rhyme is closely related to the title of the poem and is related to the idea of antiquity and continuity of form, even etymologically, the term coming from the Latin *stirparia*. With symbolic implications in the text is the use of the word *cășlegi*. This represents a popular custom, denoting a period of time in which Christians eat animal products and do not fast. It is about the Christmas Holidays, the period of time between Christmas and Easter Sunday, a period „free for entertainment and parties, when people eat ,sweet', meaning the period of fasting is over, in Romanian “Christmas Sweet Time” – *Dulcele Crăciunului* (Ghinoiu 1997, 42). In the same poem, there is another regionalism in the rhyme *țapii / napii* (goat/kale), the latter being a regionalism in Transylvania and referring to beets.

In *Porumb de sămânță* ('Corn for seed'), the word *soroace* appears, which refers to the deadline set for completing an action or fulfilling an obligation. For Christians, it is also the date when the dead are commemorated, respectively the religious service that is held on this occasion, being a synonym for the funeral. Regionally, it has the meaning of misfortune, fate, omen. Compared to the *Dictionary of the Contemporary Romanian Language* (DLRC), the Academy's adds five more meanings, two popular (for “menstruation”, respectively “reason”) and three regional: in certain places it represents that time of year when the harvest is ripened and gathered, in Banat it is the name of a popular game played by men, and in the Romanian Southwest region Șopotul Nou-Moldova Nouă, the form *suroc*

means witchcraft. Knowing the valences of this term, the exhortation in the poem addressed to the grains: “do not fear of *soroace*” is plurivocal.

Expressiveness of the use of regionalisms

The poet does not hesitate to highlight the prosodic value of unusual regionalisms either through their apparent lack of expression or through the restricted register occupied in the language, of the territory in which their meaning is known. Doinaş uses a word that, for example, is not registered in the *Dictionary of the Contemporary Romanian Language*. It is the verb *a se îmburica* from the rhyme *se-mburică/frică* (*frică* – ‘fear’) from *Birul dregătorilor* – ‘The Tribute of the Officials’ (vol. *Anotimpul discret*). It is possible that the regionalism circulates in a very restricted area. Around the city of Sibiu, it has the meaning of “standing / to rise on tiptoe”.

From the poem *Măria-sa puiul de cuc* – ‘His Majesty, the young cuckoo’ (vol. *Papirus*) the use of *zăcaş*, formed from the verb *a zăcea* to rhyme with *caş* (‘cottage cheese’), is noteworthy. *Zăcaş* is used regionally for someone who is lying sick in bed, but it has come to have by extension the meaning of lazy, slothful, but also the figurative meaning of evil, spiteful, envious and vengeful. The word circulates with these meanings in the regions Muntenia and Transylvania from Romania.

In the poem *Sub mesteceni* (‘Under the Beech Trees’), the vocabulary is popular. In the creation of the rhyme, a noun appears that is known only in the region of Moldova, namely *lăicerul* from the pair *lăicere/tăcere* (*tăcere* – ‘silence’). The regionalism is registered in DEX, and Artur Gorovei specifies that it is a “peasant woolen carpet that is spread on the floor or with which benches and walls are decorated in the countryside” (Gorovei 1985, 443). The term is synonymous with *velinţa* which appears in the rhyme *putinţa* (‘power’) / *velinţa* from *Sonete către Euridice* – ‘Sonnets to Euridice’ (vol. *Anotimpul discret*). In DLRLC, the additional observation is made that *lăicer* is used in Moldova, being “a narrow bark of colored wool, woven with stripes or patterns” (DLRLC 1956, 729).

Another interesting regional term is the synonym of malt *sladuri*, which appears as a rhyme with *jaduri* and is defined as „barley prepared for fermentation in the manufacture of beer” (DLR 1992, 1043). Ion Gheţie and Lazăr Şăineanu note that it is an outdated and regional term for malt, *slad* being made from rice and sprouted oats and then dried. The *Romanian Language Dictionary* (DLR), volume X of the new series, edited by the Romanian Academy, notes that *slad* refers to „cereals or potatoes (mixed with cereal grains), which are fermented to make brandy” (DLR 1992, 1043). It is also specified here that the term is used in the Romanian region Bârsana-Sighetul Marmaţiei, in the North of Romania, with the plural form *sladuri* to refer to the dregs left over from the distillation of plum brandy or other fruits. Another regional term used by the poet is *povarnă*, which rhymes with *goarnă* (‘trompet’), respectively *cearnă* (‘sifts’) in the poem *Satul* (‘The Village’) (vol. *Hesperia*). *Povarna* is the rudimentary installation for

making brandy or spirits, denoting either the boiler by narrowing the scope of the notion or the entire building. The term falls within a lexical field of the village that also includes the nouns: *țărâna* (soil), *movile* (mounds), *iarba* (grass), *salcâmul* (acacia), *păianjenul* (spider), *văcarul* (cowherd), *biserica* (church), *copilăria* (childhood), *vacile* (cows), *junincile* (heifers), *taurul* (bull), *păraiele* (streams), *vrăbiile* (sparrows), *rândunicile* (swallows), *pițigoi* (tits), *gălbiori* (yellowtails).

In the second volume published by Doinaș, *Omul cu compasul* ("The man with the compass"), even if the number of regionalisms and popular terms decreases, the originality of the constructions is maintained. For example, in the poem *Desprindeți-vă strofe* ("Break out your stanzas") the poet chooses a loan-word from Turkish, *bagdadie*, which is known in Moldova with the meaning of "ceiling, sky". With this regionalism Doinaș constructs a beautiful metaphor of the cosmos, alongside the starry corolla of the world, being also the blue finger of the rain in *bagdadie*.

Unusual regionalisms are also encountered in the volume *Papirus* ('Papyrus'). In the poem *Febră* ('Fever') the plural noun *gâtlane* appears, in Transylvania and Moldova an obsolete and regional synonym for *throat*, but in Doinaș it is about *gâtlane*, "a variety of plums with a long neck" (DLRLC 1956, 391). With this meaning the word appears in the enumeration: "melons, peaches, figs and *gâtlane*, bit with pain by caterpillars" (*pepeni, piersici, smochine și gâtlane, mușcate cu durere de omizi*).

Another lesser-known regionalism is *vipie* with the meaning of „great heat, scorching heat, even fever” found in several poems (*N-ai să mă crezi* – 'You won't believe me', vol. *Poetic alphabet, Prima declarație despre rouă* – 'First declaration about dew', vol. *Arie și ecou* ('Aria and Echo'), *Solstițiu* ('Solstice'), vol. *Anotimpul discret*).

The plural noun *oluri* is given initiatory value by the poet in the poem *Intra-rea în lucruri* ('Entering Things'). According to the DLRLC, it refers to a long vessel in which milk is put to ferment. According to the DLR, the meanings of the word differ depending on the geographical area. In the first meaning, three regional meanings are grouped: in some areas the word refers to a demijohn, in the Ineu-Arad area to a jug, and in Voievozi-Carei, in the northwest of Romania, to a cauldron, respectively to the boiler in which laundry is boiled. The second meaning has five meanings, of which 4 are regional: it can be understood as a tile, but also a bush. In other geographical areas it is a circular hollow made in an object that has such a hollow: in the stone of a mill or in a game with stones or balls, naming the hole into which the stones, respectively the balls thrown to the player, must enter. Finally, a last regional meaning is that of 'waterspout' (rum. *bulboană, vâltoare de ape*).

Popular words between everyday language and poetic language

The expressiveness of the verses is given by the use of many popular words, which sometimes deliberately bring the text closer to the everyday speech, such

as *chica* (for ‘hair’) from *Balada șoferului de troleibuz* (‘The Ballad of the Trolleybus Driver’), *țoale* (‘clothes’) from *Piesă cu crin* (vol. *Aventurile lui Proteu*, ‘The Adventures of Proteus’), *borât* (‘disgusting’, vol. *Vânătoare cu șoim*, ‘The Falcon Hunter’), *sobolul* ‘the mole’ (*Cârțița de gradul al doilea*, ‘Second degree mole’, vol. *Papyrus*), *zgrăbunțe* – ‘bumbs’ (*Interiorul unui poem* – ‘The Interior of a Poem’), *zimț/presimț* – ‘jag/premonition’ (*Strajă zadarnică* – ‘The Vain Guard’, vol. *Cartea mareelor* – ‘The Book of Tides’), *tehui* – ‘dizzy’ (*Crai de ghindă* – ‘The Acorn King’), *blid* – ‘dish’ (*Jurnal de aprilie*, ‘The April Journal’, vol. *Poeme* (‘Poems’) and *Atena, sfârșit de secol*, ‘Athens, End of the Century’, vol. *Anotimpul discret* – ‘The Discreet Season’), *rât* – ‘snout, muzzle’ (*Libertatea* – ‘Liberty’, vol. *Locuiesc într-o inimă* – ‘I Live in a Heart’), *văzui* – ‘I saw’ (*Un zeu al hotarelor* – ‘A God of the Borders’, vol. *Alter ego*), *balegă* – ‘(cow)dung’ (*Satul* – ‘The Village’), *slovele* – ‘the letters’ (*Vecinii au adormit* – ‘The Neighbors Fell Asleep’, vol. *Cartea mareelor* – ‘The Book of Tides’), *humă* – ‘clay’ (*Odă la floarea-soarelui* – ‘Ode to sunflower’), *a se năzări* – ‘to see’ (*Agronomii* – ‘Agronomics’), *a se piti* – ‘to hide’ (*Baladă spaniolă* – ‘Spanish Ballad’), *a ogoi* – ‘to calm down’ (*Eu și toamna* – ‘Me and autumn’), *a fojgăi* – ‘to fidget’ (*În pustă* – ‘In the wasteland’), *a hălădui* – ‘to wander’ (*Salcie plângătoare* – ‘Weeping willow’), *liberează* – ‘eliberates’ (*Din marmură* – ‘From marble’), *irumpe* – ‘breaks out’ (*Limite* – ‘Limits’), *slîn* – ‘dirt’ (*Symposium* – ‘Symposium’), *plează* – ‘whip’ (*În pragul furtunii* – ‘In the threshold of the storm’), *zgaibe* – ‘bumbs’ (*Izvoarele* – ‘The Springs’), *colb* – ‘dust’ (*Coșmarul* – ‘The Nightmare’), *borțos* – ‘swollen’ (*Crai de ghindă* – ‘The Acorn King’), *a boi* – ‘to paint’ (*A face pești* – ‘To make fishes’, vol. *Anotimpul discret*), *a colcăi* – ‘to be full of’ (*Nașterea augurilor* – ‘The Birth of the Augurs’), *a se buluci* – ‘to pile up’ (*Rit câmpenesc* – ‘Countryside rite’, vol. *Aventurile lui Proteu* – ‘Adventures of Proteus’), *a năpârli* – ‘to moult’ (*Intrarea în lucruri* – ‘Entering into things’), *gâlci* – ‘swelling’ (*Confruntare* – ‘Confrontation’), *gâlcevindu-se* – ‘arguing’ (*Primăvara care întârzie* – ‘The spring that is late’), *sulemenidu-se* – ‘making up’ (*El umblă prin scrum alb de Rusalii* – ‘He walks through the white ashes of Pentecost’, vol. *Arie și ecou* – ‘Aria and echo’), *țâfne* – ‘arrogance’ (*Melodia timpului circular* – ‘The Melody of Circular Time’, vol. *Aventurile lui Proteu*), etc. This list of popular, even familiar words shows that for Doinaș it seems that any word can be used in poetry, even those that seem „antipoetic”.

The expressiveness of metaphorical constructions becomes, through the use of these popular words, unexpected and all the more poetically valuable. Lightning has a „unknotted whip” (*plează deznodată*), the flakes „walk for a day” (*fulgii hălăduiesc o zi*) and „in the discolored grass the glassy bugs are buzzing” (*în iarba decolorată fojgăie sticloase găngăniile*). In a philosophical sense, time „with its mouth full of raspberries...it still did not know how to be sarcastic” (*timpul cu gura boită de zmeură...încă nu știa să fie sarcastic*), we „still shed old meanings” (*noi tot năpârlim de vechile-nțelesuri*), and at the birth of augurs „the sky of the mouth will be full of suns” (*la nașterea augurilor cerul gurii va colcăi de sori*).

But perhaps one of the most beautiful artistic images is created by the poet by using the popular term for typhoid fever – *lingoarea*, a term used to personify the European river, the Rhine. In *Castel pe Rin* ('Castle on the Rhine') he speaks about the „lingoarea Rinului” ('the typhoid fever of the Rhine').

Another less well-known popular term becomes an unusual epithet in the author's poetry. In the poem *Fereastra insuportabilă* ('The Unbearable Window') in the expression *zigzaguri spelbe* ('pale zigzags'), the adjective *spelbe* popularly refers to what is yellow or pale, people's faces, washed-out eyes or even a stale drink, even having the meaning of „barren”. Another popular adjective is *porumbac* ('with different spots, often white with grey or dark grey') in the construction “stallions with spots” – *armăsarii porumbaci* (*Pădurea din Dunsinane* 'Dunsinane Forest', vol. *Vântoare cu șoim* – 'Hunting with hawk'). The dictionary meaning limits its use to birds and their variegated plumage.

Also interesting is the interweaving of the proper meaning of a word with the symbolic sense, situated at another level of understanding of the text. Choosing the symbol of Jonah in the poem entitled *Chitul sau experiența profeției* ('The Whale or the Experience of Prophecy'), the swallowing of the prophet and the experience in the belly of the whale are rendered by using a popular term used in a proper and yet philosophical sense, through which it seems that the biblical symbol is parodied by the expression „giorăie în pântec” (with the meaning of 'making sounds in the stomach').

Conclusions

From 12 volumes of lyrics, Ștefan Augustin Doinaș confers expressive valences to a number of 72 regionalisms and popular terms, to which are added over 30 with prosodic value, in total in the poet's creation more than 100 popular and regional terms are used. Although these words represent a primarily lexical category, regionalisms and popular words constitute a way of creating stylistic values throughout the author's poetic career, marking the poet's style. This category is not marked quantitatively, as with traditionalist poets. The ease with which Doinaș uses rare terms, sometimes known in extremely narrow areas, but which generate unique expressive values, is amazing. Thus, these words become components of figures of speech and generate the poetic function of the text.

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