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**THE UNIVERSE OF THE ROMANIAN FOLKTALES
COLLECTED BY I.G. SBIERA**

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Костин Клаудия. Коллекция «румынских народных сказок», собранных И.Г.Сбиерою. «Румынские народные сказки», которые были собраны И. Г. Сбиерою в Южной Буковине (Сучавский уезд) в XIX веке, отличаются от других румынских народных сказок пластикой речи, искусно обработанным стилем, а также оригинальностью и автохтонностью.

Даже через полтора века с тех пор, как они были опубликованы, сказки являются отражением духовности традиционного общества, особенностей души народа и его идентичности. Доказательством этой глубоко аутентичной особенности и сущности дискурса, особенно вступительные части и конечности некоторых сказок, как: Fata Rumpe-haine și Fătul-babei, Fata Ciudei, Vântul, Bruma și Gerul. Также нужно отметить и тонкую и индивидуальную любовь румын к юмору, их живой, критический дух, сопровождаемый острой иронией в отношении некоторых недостатков человеческого существа. Несомненно, что с точки зрения современности, именно такие литературные произведения могли бы составить основу исследований духовного и художественного сокровища для нынешних специалистов в области этнологии и фольклора. И, наверное, такая потребность возникает еще и потому, что до сих пор эти произведения не были предметом научного интереса среди специалистов, ведь в таком потребительском обществе, которое находится в эре технологического развития «мифологический горизонт» кажется сказочным.

Ключевые слова: Подлинность, дискурс, рассказчик, традиционный.

The current issues and their connection with the most important topics of research.

As it has been proved in the last century in remarkable studies of ethnology and folklore (we ought to mention: Ovid Densusianu – *Folklore. How it must be understood*, Pavel Ruxăndoiu – *The literary folklore within the context of popular Romanian culture*, Giuseppe Cocchiara – *The history of European folkloristics. Europe in pursuit of itself*, Constantin Eretescu – *The literary folklore of the Romanians. A contemporary view*), everything that pertains to traditional culture (oral literature implicitly) represents a live phenomenon in a continuous transformation and shaping, concomitantly with the evolution of society.

Some of the aspects, as the one of interpreting fairytales and popular stories (the fairytale/story being one of the most important species of folkloric epics) from the perspective of modern thinking, were widely overlooked by the specialists and that is why we consider that this could be a challenge. New hypotheses and new decoding and deciphering systems of the folkloric texts in a modern spirit as well as the universe of symbols contained in them can create interesting perspectives of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research. As Giuseppe Cocchiara opines, in his notorious study *The history of European folkloristics. Europe in pursuit of itself*, “in folklore, the substantive intervention of various disciplines is required by the very nature of folklore (...)”.

The analysis of the latest research and publications where the exhibition of the issue can be found. Except for the study of the fairytale *Youthfulness devoid of caducity and life devoid of death* that opens Petre Ispirescu’s anthol-

ogy of fairytales, a study elaborated by Adrian alui Gheorghie (*Youthfulness devoid of caducity and the tragic feeling of time*) and Val Cordan’s (*Time against the grain. An attempt on anamnesis in fairytale*) to which add up the forewords that have been written in the collections published in the last decades, we cannot speak about analyzes applied to the said literary species.

Despite the fact that the habit of storytelling is an ancient one and it has been practiced almost by all the peoples of the world throughout centuries and even after the 2nd World War, the preoccupation of the specialists in interpreting fairytales from a mythological, historical, philological, compared or comparative perspective has been situated and it still is situated in a cone of shadow. Naturally, even the popular stories collected in the 19th century by the literary historian and folklorist I.G. Sbiiera, who had been a reputable professor at the “Yurii Fedkovich” University from Chernivtsi, got the attention they deserved only in the Preface to the anthology I.G. Sbiiera – *Tales and Poems*, Minerva Publishing House, Bucharest, 1971, signed by Pavel Țugui¹.

The objective of the article. Mentioned less and less in the specialty bibliographies and read by a limited number of readers, the stories that have been collected and processed by I.G. Sbiiera lure the attention of the aficionados and those passionate about folklore through their esthetic valences, their mythic-symbolical valences and the accuracy of the “telling”, through originality and authenticity.

The aim of our paper is to highlight these qualities and undoubtable values of the fairytales from I.G. Sbiiera’s collection² in order to attract the attention of the specialists

¹ Sbiiera, Ion G., *Povești și poezii*, Prefață de Pavel Țugui, Editura Minerva, București, 1971.

² Sbiiera, Ion G., *Basmelor românilor*, vol.7, Editura Curtea Veche, București, 2010.

over them, as well as that of younger researchers, doctoral students, so that they condone analyzes from interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives.

The exposition of the main material of the research.

I.G. Sbiera, the historian of Bucovina, the historian of the old Romanian literature and the folklorist born in the legendary space of Suceava belongs to that category of scholars to whom history and literary critique are still indebted, because, apart from the monograph that was made by Alis Niculică (*Ion G. Sbiera. The life and work*, Suceava, 2005³), the pages dedicated by Grigore and Lora Bostan in the anthology *Pages of Romanian literature. Bucovina, the Chernivtsi region, 1775-2000* (Chernivtsi, 2000) or by Emil Satco in *The Encyclopedia of Bucovina* (Iași, 2004⁴) and the articles signed by Pavel Țugui, his work was largely overlooked by the specialists in the field.

The literary historian, memoirist and professor at the University from Chernivtsi is not rooted in today's public conscience not even as a collector of the folkloric fact from the area of Suceava.

Unjustly, the cloak of oblivion descended over the name of I.G. Sbiera, although his contribution in the domain of old literature and folklore basked in appreciation since the era he lived in, the critical considerations he formulated on the topics of the texts from the Romanian Middle Age and the folkloric creations he collected from his native area representing „the most important and durable component of his work” (Pavel Țugui).

His obvious esthetic conception which permeates his entire work and the vision on existence and the world are undoubtedly fed by the folkloric creation he knew so well and treasured so much, because it represents “the most solid foundation on which a clean national sense and the written literature of the educated classes could develop”.

It is known that at the advice of his professor, Aron Pumnul, I.G. Sbiera collected folkloric works between 1855-1857 and he even put together a collection of stories, poems, folk songs and riddles from which, after a careful and methodical textual revision, he will publish, three decades later, in 1886, *Romanian Folktales*, “as they are spoken, both language-wise and structure-wise”. The texts that were included in the volume were collected by I.G. Sbiera from the villages within Suceava: Horodnicul de Jos, Voitinel, Vicovul de Sus, Ciudei, Opăițeni, Cireș, even if his initial intention was to insert “certain treasures not from just one region or country, but from all of them, from wherever Romanians still tread”, these treasures being the mirror that reflects the spiritual valences that are specific to the nation, the indwelling thesaurus and its identity and continuity in a cultural space⁵.

Irrespective of whether the anthologies of folkloric texts published previously (E.B. Stănescu-Arădanul – *Popular Prose*: 1860, I.C. Fundescu – *Popular literature. Fairytales, orations and riddles*: 1872-1874, 1876-1882, I.H. Hîntescu – *Păcală's bygones*: 1876, D. Stănescu – *Fairytales*: 1885) served as models for I.G. Sbiera or not, he respected the parameters of popular speech and he manifested a remarkable consideration in keeping and valorizing local authenticity, because all of these augmented the oral character of the stories and conferred originality to his initiative, which must be seen as a constructive one, because, beyond the act of recording folkloric facts – with the inchoate means that existed amidst the 19th century –, the

“collaboration” with the anonymous narrator generates a coefficient of creativity in transcribing and spreading the folk work “at large, in the world”.

Any lover of traditional culture that reads the folktales from I.G. Sbiera's anthology carefully cannot help but observe the rustic speech, of an extraordinary plasticity, that endows the discourse with authenticity and a plus of expressivity: “They said they were, for it they wouldn't have been, no story would be told. They said that once upon a time there was a rich boyar that didn't even know the extent of his richness. Even though he was so rich, he only had one girl. This girl was very beautiful and comely. Anyone who saw her immediately held her dear. Her parents still loved her a great deal and cared for her more than they cared for their own eyes. They never said “no” to her and they fulfilled any desire she had, that's how dear she was to them. After she grew up and started to go out in the world, she was seen by some and by some other ones, and anyone who laid eyes on her was astonished by her beauty. The news of her beauty were widespread. Bachelors especially were staying in line to see her and talk to her. But as fast as they met her and she was face to face with them, the girl stole their minds and their hearts, so that the poor bachelors had no peace and no respite! Poor them! They walked as if drunk and nothing enticed them! The only thoughts they had were what to do and how to woo her, maybe they would get her as wife!” (*The tear-clothes Girl and the crone's boy*). This introduction into the fabulous, miraculous universe of the fairytale reveals the vision of the anonymous author from the surrounding areas of Bucovina and, at the same time, the vision of the folklore collector, whose implication is obvious in a narration that situates the event on the coordinate of the reality that belongs to contemporary Romanian village in which, however, the existential dimension of the archaic Romanian village is to be found.

The powerfully authentic note and the radiant gist of the discourse are much more evident in the ending of some fairytales. For example, the ending of the fairytale “*Envy's girl, the Wind, the Hoar and the Frost*” – “And I got in the saddle and told you thus the story! – Now pay it! – May God repay it *with good, with peace and with health!*” – reveals in its subsidiary the apotropaic function of the story, the effort and the importance of the act of recounting (narrating) which, according to the collective traditional mentality, deserves to be rewarded, but not in a common fashion and not by anyone, but by the divinity with whom he, the Storyteller, is in an intimate coalescence. Another ending, somewhat atypical, masterful, like the one from “*Curly-Mint, Basil and Chestnut-Skirt*”, presents the world of the fairytale as “upside-down”, the word “against the grain”, “the placing of the event in a very special way” (Val Cordon): “I chanced to be at Chestnut-Skirt's weddingmyself. Alas! What exquisite meals were at that table, all just stakes and roasted meat, like those you would have swallowed with your eyes, too! But those wines! You would have drunk them all without fearing dizziness! My favorite was a kind of roasted duck; I ate from it until I couldn't eat anymore and because I liked it so much, I slipped a drumstick in my pocket, to have it as food on the road when I would go back home. When I was returning home, halfway there, I was starving and I started to chew on that drumstick. And just when the meat was at its sweetest, I met a wise man who told me he had learned from all the

³ Niculică, Alis, Ion G. Sbiera: viața și opera, Suceava, Editura Biblioteca Bucovinei „I.G. Sbiera”, 2005.

⁴ Satco, Emil, Enciclopedia Bucovinei, vol.I-II, Iași, Editura Princeps Edit, 2004.

⁵ Sbiera, Ion G., Familia Sbiera după tradițiune și istorie și amintiri din viața autorului, Cernăuți, Tipografia universitară a lui R. Eckhardt, 1899.

scholars of the world, and he kept on begging me to give him something to eat, for he was starved. And as he kept on asking, I got angry and I threw him that drumstick. He, the poor guy, instead of catching it with his hands, he kept them in his pockets. The drumstick didn't enter his pocket, but hit him so hard on the leg that he limps to his day. If you don't believe me, look at that certain scholar and you can see him limp to this day because of that!" This return in the profane time and space, a return to his own identity is a deliverance from the captivity of the miraculous and of the "masterful" discourse of the fairytale.

The themes and the motifs that exist, in general, in the fairytales and the stories from the Romanian space receive different nuances in I.G. Sbiera's anthology, and the characters often have symbolical names that reveal the creator/ collector's rich imaginary and inventive spirit (Swinging-Linden, Curly-Mint, Chestnut-Skirt, World's envy, Whirligig); they behave in concordance to the norms and structure characteristic of the collectivity to which the one that communicates the narration belongs to. Beyond what is narrated by the informer, the collector undoubtedly affords to color, to emphasize the attitude of the heroes there where he considers that is necessary to underline moral senses, emotions, human valences, following faithfully the coordinates that are specific to the popular narrative art. An eloquent story in this sense is "*The priest's daughter and the captain without nose*". After the heroine, a "clever", "robust" and "sapient" girl, cuts off the nose of the captain of thieves that befell her parents' house one night and after he asks for her hand in order to kill her, the two halt in a forest together with the 24 thieves. In this moment of the event the mood of the two central characters and the girl's feelings are captured, but these remarks are not characteristic of the act of popular storytelling: "As they walked, they talked about various things, until the captain got so sleepy that he had to lay on the grass and sleep. As he prepared to sleep, he asked her to look in his head. She complied and started looking in his head. He fell asleep immediately; and she was stricken with a horrendous grief and started to cry bitterly. "Alas!" - she said to herself: - "how could my parents give me on the hands of such a tyrant like him! He is about to kill me exactly when I would live more dearly". As she cried, one of her tears fell on the captain's face and it burned so bad that he jumped on his feet and asked her, quite sternly, why was she crying so hard? She answered that it was because of her bitterness, because she had been parted with the house of her parents, away from her sisters and parents! He mused: "Don't worry, you won't be bitter much longer!" and they started to walk again". The inner monologue of the characters requires some attention because, usually, the folk narrator is preoccupied with the dialectics of the action and the characters' deeds, but not as much with their interior tribulations.

The dynamics of the scenes and the elements of rough humor that increase the charm and beauty of the text are also relevant. We have something conclusive in this sense: the dialogue between a rustic character, "A poor Whirligig, poor, but with a houseful on children" and one of the brothers of the dragon, with whom he becomes "brothers", because, after a lengthy and inexplicable – for them – wait, he goes into the garden to see why the man isn't bringing the cabbage he had to bring back from the garden, as he was given the task: "The dragons are waiting for him to return with the cabbage and he doesn't; they wait for him to come

and he doesn't. At one time, it already seemed like too long and they sent one of them to see what Whirligig was doing in the garden. When the dragon got there, he found Whirligig digging around the garden and asked him:

- Whirligig, what are you digging around here, why won't you bring the cabbage home already?

Whirligig, quite affected by the dragon's words, answered:

- What? What am I digging? I'm not a hen!

- Then what are you doing? – the dragon continues.

- I know you don't have wax-cherries on your eyes!

You can see that I'm digging the garden to bring it home in one piece; where I'm from, people make their gardens for vegetables around the house – so close that you can get what you need through the window – not like you, so far away from home!"

The "Short fables" (Pavel Țugui) from I.G. Sbiera's collection emphasize a certain "voluptuousness of humor" and a vivid critical spirit, joined by a scouring irony directed towards some defects of the human being. Feminine characters like the adulterous wife of the priest from *The Droll Servant*, the widowed crone who wants to marry with a "young bachelor" from *The Crone Bride*, the barmaid – young woman – who schemes the assassination of her husband and puts the blame on a boyar from *The Man with Three Coins*, the clever, hardworking and beautiful maid that "no one could ever beat at talking" (*The Girl No one could beat at talking*) or masculine characters like the naïve priest (*The Droll Servant*), the greedy priest (*Pepelea*), the thieves that after becoming proper householders in Chernivtsi and Suceava go back to their old hobby (*The Three Thieves*), the peasant that borrows the devil's flour and then is saved from slavery by precisely the devil (*The Red Hill*) are all "flesh and blood" people from the village in Bucovina, but they become symbolical images of the traditional Romanian world, the performers of the folkloric text (anonymous author and collector), inviting us to penetrate beyond the contingences, towards the essences, the general or/ and particular elements of identity, towards a behavioral/ characteristic code of the world both as it is and as it should be.

The conclusions and the teachings that detach are in conformity with the "elder views of the folk" (I.G. Sbiera), whose *mores* sanctions drastically – via discourse – the deviation from customs, from well-defined, established ethical principles. For example, the ending of the story *The Droll Servant*: "But the poor priestess remembered how many pies she ate from the priest's hand, she remembered forever how love outside of marriage was and how delicious the roasted cockerel and wolfish love were! She was the most faithful woman after that".

The Romanian Folktales anthologized by I.G. Sbiera are engaging readings, with a unique discursive charm that is completed by the spectacular, whose message illustrates the intrinsic spiritual dimension of the Romanian, his warm and generous humanity, a specific *forma mentis*. The incontestable merit of the collector is that of respecting the spirit, the system of thinking conversant of the folkloric creation from the area of Bucovina, which confers a veritable originality to the texts in his collection among so many other collections of fairytales that have been compiled in our cultural space throughout the years.

Conclusion: The popular tales collected by I.G. Sbiera from the villages around Southern Bucovina, original and authentic, are, like all popular fairytales, quintessential

mythic and archaic texts in which the idea of sacredness is sometimes presented as they reflect the spiritual and emotional structure of a people, of a human community.

The prognosis of future research. This paper is meant to be just the beginning of the research on I.G. Sbierea's folkloric texts. In the future, we shall pursue their interpretation from the perspective of the mythical elements and the symbolical valences, with applications on a wider corpus of texts and to subsequently finish the research with a comparative analysis of fairytales from I.G. Sbierea's anthology with the fairytales of the nations from the proximate area: Eastern Europe and South-Eastern Europe, in order to prove that, undoubtedly, the anonymous storytellers, completed by versed fairytale-collectors have created a genuine "mythology as esthetic support".

Synopsis. The *Romanian Folktales* collected by the philologist I.G. Sbierea in the 19th century from the area of Southern Bucovina (Suceava County) distinguish themselves within the pale of similar folkloric species from the anthologies of other folklore aficionados in the Romanian landscape through the plasticity of the language, through the discourse processed with "craftsmanship" and through authenticity and originality.

After a century and a half since their publication, the tales are the mirror that reflects the spiritual valences specific to the traditional society, as well as the characteristic spirituality and identity.

There is no doubt that I.G. Sbierea modulated the texts because, beyond the act of recording the folkloric facts, the modern, initiated reader feels that "collaboration" of the collector with the folk story-teller. The influence of the philologist, who has been a great lover of traditional culture and literature can only be beneficial, given that it increases and reinforces the coefficient of literacy and the undeniable esthetic valences of the tales that have been collected from the villages around Suceava.

We are convinced of it by the strongly authentic note and the radiant essence of the discourse, particularly that in the introduction and the ending of fairytales like *The tear-clothes girl and the crone's boy* and *Envy's girl, the Wind, the Hoar and the Frost*. We also notice the fine and unmistakable "voluptuousness of Romanian humor", the vivid critical spirit, accompanied by the scourging irony towards the defects of the human being.

The characters are live, "flesh and blood" people of the traditional Romanian world, symbol-images of a continuous present.

The folktales collected and processed by I.G. Sbierea invite us to go beyond contingencies, towards the essences, towards a behavioral and characterological code of the world. A world as it were and as it should be.

Without a doubt, for the specialists in ethnology and folklore of this age, these literary creations are a support for the research - from a modern perspective - of a spiritual and artistic thesaurus. And it might happen that this perspective enforces itself, all-the-more that the tales were not given much attention by specialists until now, because in a consumerist society, in a full-fledged technological era, the "mythic horizon" pertains to the universe of the fairytale.

Костін Клаудія. Всесвіт «Румунських народних казок», зібраних І.Г. Сбієрою. «Румунські народні казки», які були зібрані І. Г. Сбієрою у Південній Буковині (Сучавський повіт) у ХІХ столітті, відрізняються з-поміж інших румунських народних казок пластикою мовлення, майстерно опрацьованим дискурсом, а також оригінальністю й

автохтонністю.

Навіть через півтора століття з того часу, як їх було опубліковано, казки є віддзеркаленням духовності традиційного суспільства, особливостей душі народу та його ідентичності.

Без сумніву, І. Г. Сбієра працював над текстами казок, і тому сучасний підготовлений читач, який не має стосунку до запису фольклорних явищ, відчуває „співпрацю” між збирачем казок та народним оповідачем. Втручання філолога, який відчував велику любов до традиційної культури та літератури, могло мати лише позитивний характер, підвищуючи коефіцієнт літературності, безсумнівну естетичну сутність казок, записаних в селах Сучавщини.

Доказом цієї глибоко автентичної особливості та сутності дискурсу, є особливо вступні частини та кінцівки деяких казок, як: *Fata Rumpe-haine și Fătul-babei, Fata Ciudei, Vântul, Bruma și Gerul*. Також потрібно відзначити й тонку та індивідуальну любов румунів до гумору, їх живий, критичний дух, супроводжений гострою іронією щодо деяких недоліків людської істоти.

Персонажі – це живі люди традиційного румунського світу, образи-символи безперервного сьогодення.

Зібрані та опрацьовані І. Г. Сбієрою народні казки запрошують нас поринути за межami випадковості, в сутність, у характерологічний та поведінковий код світу, того бувалоного світу, але в той же час саме такого світу, яким він повинен бути.

Без сумніву, що з погляду сучасності, саме такі літературні твори могли б скласти основу досліджень духовного та художнього скарбу для теперішніх фахівців у галузі етнології та фольклору. І, напевно, така потреба виникає ще й тому, що дотепер ці твори не були предметом наукового інтересу серед фахівців, адже в такому споживчому суспільстві, яке перебуває в ері технологічного розвитку, „міфологічний горизонт” здається казковим.

Ключові слова: справжність, дискурс, оповідач, традиційний.

Клаудія Костін – доктор філософії, доцент, декан факультету мови і румунської мови і літератури та наукових комунікацій Сучавського університету імені «Штефана чел Маре», (з 2008 р.). Автор книг «Міфічні структури і домінуючі символи в спектаклях Лучіана Блага» (Ясси, 2003 р.), «Основні моменти в історії середньовічної румунської літератури. Частина І» (Suceava 2005 р.), «Румунський літературний фольклор» (Ясси, 2007р.). Читала лекції в університеті Аліканте, Іспанія (2009), університеті ім. Юрія Федьковича, Україна (2012, 2013, 2015) та університеті Гранади, Іспанія (2011, 2013, 2014 рр.). Брала участь у міжнародних семінарах і конференціях Іспанії, Італії, Бельгії, України, Угорщини, Марокко. Координатор Міжнародного колоквиуму «Людина і міф», (Сучава). Коло наукових інтересів: етнологія і фольклор, міфологія румунська, румунська література (середньовічна епоха і міжвоєнний період).

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