

About the Possibility of New In Poetry

By Alexandru Ioan Popa

Poetry would have appeared together with human, 100,000 years ago, in the hot dust of African savanna and died on the tables of Cabaret Voltaire, in Zurich – Switzerland, by the hand of DaDa-ists. It throb a while, some tried to resuscitate it, but I, with all the winters cold in my blood, I've killed it. It has been said before, but I truly did it. Here`s why, here`s how:

I don`t believe in poetry anymore. Since DaDa, poetry is just a corps, artificially animated. Nothing alive, nothing new can be said anymore; everything was said. Still, many say this, no one believes it. Every contemporary poet can be nothing but mediocre. And yes, mediocrity has its mediocrities, its geniuses, its stupidities. But it is still mediocrity. Whoever likes this, it`s his business. Personally, I prefer to be the worsted poet then a mediocre one. It`s a risk that I take it without a thought. But who knows...

If DaDa-ists were using automatism in order to generate poetry, I use automatism to deform what I've created in a classic manner. The poet is a poet when defines itself as such. Poetry does not exist, only the good or bad will of interpretation. So, contemporary poet writes a text, however worked, however profound, however sensible, but condemned to be mediocre. I propose that when he acknowledge this, with a painful pleasure, to altered its poem through automatisms, letting the algorithms, strange of himself, to reconfigure his text, in the hope of new forms, of strange meanings.

My proposal regarding poetry could seem, at a superficial view, one that resembles DaDaism, or Absurd or Conceptualism, but has nothing to do with none of those movements. It goes from the creation of a real text, written by all skills of the poet and grammatically and semantically coherent, deformed afterwards through automatisms, however brutal, until it ends up into a non-text. The poem would appear broken to the reader, altered, unreadable, but... suggested (isn't this the dream?), as the shape of a woman`s body through an opaque window glass. His mind would re-construct the reality, but without ever being able to confront

it. This is the secret of un-disappointment, the triumph of ideal upon reality.

From Eliot we know that the new has to be judge in the context of tradition, so in what sense should we now interpreting the traditional quote of Robert Frost, “The poetry is what gets lost in translation”? Isn’t our proposal reveling it as being even more true than it was supposed to be? Isn’t the poetry lost in successive translations the one that the readers mind strive to reconstruct from the bizarre pieces of the abused poem? And how he would never make it, and even if he does, even less he could know it – isn’t this the proof that poetry is beyond poetry?

What brings new this procedure? In the first place, the discovery that however broken a text would be, semantically and grammatically, the readers mind will try to fix it. The original poem, mentally reconstructed, has its own ontology; it does not belong to the poet (who has written a hall other text), neither to the reader (who has built it upon poet’s suggestions, but without the possibility of knowing the original).

Of a great pedagogical use is “The lesson about cube” of the Romanian poet Nichita Stanescu, where he talks about constructing a perfect cube, and after that, smashing with a hammer one of its corner, that everyone to look at it, wandering what a perfect cube have been if not having a broken corner . We accept it, but with a twist: the cub can be perfect only in the reader’s mind, who reconstruct the broken corner. Previously, was just an ordinary cube, polished, that’s right, razed, etc. (useless, of course) with bla,bla,bla.

But however ordinary a cube could be, however corrupt or bad designed, it exists and no one can denied it. Is the same with altered text, beyond any interpretations, he also exists in itself, like a broken cube, like a twisted circle, like a triangle with distorted angels. We may not like it, but how happy is the one who knows that to like because you don’t like (meaning the pleasure of unpleasant) is an inexhaustible resource of pleasure.

Killing poetry I’ve discovered that beyond poetry is poetry. In conclusion, all that remains is to play. A poetic game that anticipates a poetic reality that will be to come true. Pound said to us, about poetry, that we should make it new. I say we make it crazy. As crazy as

possible. This is the motto of the age I prophesying about.

* While I was writing on my volume, I've checked on internet if someone have done this. I've searched "Poetry made with Google Translate" and I've discovered that there is a mister called Ari Eckols, who published online 10 poems distorted with this procedure. He split the page in four: in upper left is the original text, in lower left the poem was translated in one language and re-translated in English, in upper right in two languages and in lower right in three languages. Through the fact that he choose to publish the original text and its more and more altered versions, Eckols dose nothing more than to acknowledge that yes, the text is deformed through multiple translations, but fails to see the implications of this fact, as we presented those above. It happens that great discoverers sometimes miss what incredible applications their discoveries can have. Because the idea has come to me before knowing him, I consider that is appropriate to share together the discovery.

Poems:

Singur în furtuna (original, in Romanian)

Șapte rinoceri
burtă voluminoase
și pantofi agil
înveliți în gelozie și alcool.
Viermele aceste dorințe
un oraș mic.
Pot miere
vânat,
singur în furtuna,
formele de pictura pe pâine.

Alone in the storm (English translation)

Seven rhinos

bulky belly
and agile shoes
wrap in jealousy and alcohol.
The worm those desires
a small town.
I can honey
hunted,
alone in the storm,
painting forms on bread.

Seul dans la tempête (French translation)

Sept rhinocéros
ventre volumineux
et chaussures agiles
envelopper dans la jalousie et l'alcool.
Le ver ces désirs
une petite ville.
Je peux miel
chassé,
seul dans la tempête,
formes de peinture sur le pain.

Allein in dem Sturm (German translation)

Sieben Nashörner
sperrige Bauch
und agile Schuhe
wickeln in Eifersucht und Alkohol.
Der Wurm diese Wünsche
eine kleine Stadt.
Ich kann Honig
gejagt,
allein in dem Sturm,
Malerei bildet sich auf Brot.

O gaură uriașă (original, in Romanian)

O foarte mare bucurie
lume prin lentila
un caine
loc,
printre tonul lui de pisici
ca o bucată de beton.
La prima coaja
și în spatele ei
arsuri severe,
un sunet unic,
O gaură uriașă,
fluxurile de suprafață,
O fantana.

A huge hole (English translation)

A very great joy
world through the lens
a dog
place,
among his tone of cats
like a piece of concrete.
At first bark
and behind it
severe burning,
a unique sound,
A huge hole,
flows on the surface,
A fountain.

Un énorme trou (French translation)

Une très grande joie
monde à travers la lentille
un chien
place,
parmi son ton de chats

comme un morceau de béton.
Au premier aboiement
et derrière
de graves brûlures,
un son unique,
Un énorme trou,
flux à la surface,
Une fontaine.

Ein riesiges Loch (German translation)

Eine sehr große Freude
Welt durch die Linse
ein Hund
Ort,
zu seinen Ton der Katzen
wie ein Stück Beton.
auf den ersten Rinde
und dahinter
starkes Brennen,
einen einzigartigen Sound,
Ein riesiges Loch,
fließt auf der Oberfläche,
Ein Brunnen.

The End

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