

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

"LUCIAN BLAGA" UNIVERSITY OF SIBIU

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND ARTS

EXPRESSIVE VALUES IN ELENA FARAGO'S LYRICS
- PHD DISSERTATION SUMMARY

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SIBIU

2015

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Elena Farago's lyrical work has been approached from several perspectives, but most of them were limited to general assertions that failed to undertake a substantial introspection, a deep analysis of its multiple valences.

The opportunity and significance of the topic of the hereby work is given by the fact that we want to outline the poetic work of one of the most representative artists of words in the first half of the 20th century, which has been regrettably and unjustly forgotten.

The utility of our approach results from the perspective provided to literature enthusiasts, i.e. a deep and multilateral reception of the intrinsic value of Elena Farago's lyrical work.

The objective motivation of our approach is also supported by somewhat subjective considerations, resulting from our actual appreciation for Elena Farago's work. They include: the poetry prize of the newspaper *Incanta*, in the "Elena Farago" inter-county competition of literary creation for children and youth, 15th ed., Craiova, 1989, with a jury chaired by Professor Ovidiu Ghidirmic, PhD; poetry awards in the National Competition of Literature for Children, 2nd (1992) and 3rd ed. (1993), organised by the "Minerva Alexandrescu" Cultural League, with a jury chaired by the writer Mircea Ionescu-Quintus; published volumes of lyrics *Cand lebedele canta* (Craiova, Pasarea Maastra Publishing House, 1999), *Umbra Sarpelui* (Craiova, Mihai Dutescu Publishing House, 2002), *Ghicitori pentru cei mici, pentru parinti si bunici* (Craiova, Mihai Dutescu Publishing House, 2005), etc.

The hereby investigation examines Elena Farago's lyrical work, a *creation* that has not been subject to a deep, pertinent analysis so far, though it belongs to one of the most representative artists of the words in the first half of the 20th century.

Elena Farago has been the subject of many writings, but, with few exceptions, these were superficial and incomplete. The opportunity and meaningfulness of the work stems from the fact that we want to genuinely outline the lyrics of this writer, her poetry that has been regrettably and unjustly forgotten.



The utility of our approach results from the perspective provided to literature enthusiasts, i.e. a deep and multilateral reception of the intrinsic value of Elena Farago's poetic work.

The objective motivation of our approach is also supported by somewhat subjective considerations, resulting from our actual appreciation for Elena Farago's work. They include: the poetry prize of the newspaper *Inainte*, in the "Elena Farago" inter-county competition of literary creation for children and youth, 15th ed., Craiova, 1989, with a jury chaired by Professor Ovidiu Ghidirmic, PhD; poetry awards in the National Competition of Literature for Children, 2nd (1992) and 3rd ed. (1993), organised by the "Minerva Alexandrescu" Cultural League, with a jury chaired by the writer Mircea Ionescu-Quintus; the volume *Ghicitori pentru cei mici, pentru parinti si bunici* published in Craiova, at the Mihai Dutescu Publishing House, in 2005, etc.

The hereby analysis aims at depicting the essential aspects defining Elena Farago's lyrical work, who has been considered the most outstanding representative of our female poetry in the first half of the previous century.

Characterized by a particular sensitivity, Elena Farago stands out due to the complexity of her creation, which was vigorous and marked by emotive and affective vibrations, by tender sounds and highly suggestive images.

Their horizon has been fraught with the stylistic expressive values defining Elena Farago's lyrical work, by involving various methods: analysis, comparison, statistics, etc.

This exploration has not aimed at exhaustively examining Elena Farago's poetical work, with the analysis being focused on the creations that stand out through highly expressive, emotive, affective and specific stylistic values, that define the configuration of her lyrics, of the poetic expressiveness of a poetry that is so original, rich and varied, in order to detect the "specific sound" (Ibraileanu, Caragiale).

It aims at revealing the poet's *specific* methods of creating her lyrics, the poetic expressiveness of a lyrical creation that is so rich and varied, providing the revelation of its multiple valences and expressive values.



The expressive values of Elena Farago's lyrics found at a phoneme level will be examined in order to configure a dense, suggestive, revealing image of her poetry's language.

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In the beginning of their review, we have thought of selecting the bibliographic approaches devoted to Elena Farago's lyrical work, summing up a remarkable number of references of a genuine historical and literary interest.

A random selection dwells upon Constantin Ciopraga's opinion, that Elena Farago "was able to find a language that was convenient for both late Romantics, and modern amateurs of intimate monologues"¹.

In 1906², in the journal *Samanatorul*, Nicolae Iorga analysed the clarity of Elena Farago's language and ample rhythm, saying that she was a contemplative poet, with inclinations towards reverie, skilfully mastering the art of creating a harmonious bridge between natural landscapes and deep spiritual turmoil. At the same time, her mentor outlined that, in the incipient phase of her lyrical creation, the poet was strongly influenced by Alexandru Vlahuta, and recommended her to come out of the attachment scope of her model, to search for a new way among the multiple poetic formulae available.

This advice was accompanied by others, and the scholar considered them to be essential for Elena Farago's classification among the renowned writers of our literature: to give up internal monologues for good; to leave "long complaining verses" to others; to establish a dialogue with the dead nature, that would bring the latter to life; to identify the secret wires that connect being to the non-being.

In 1929³, Felix Aderca confessed that all intellectuals (irrespective of their training) who came to Craiova tried to get away from the monotony of the province town, that lacked the animation and agitation of Bucharest, by entering Elena Farago's saloon, where they found the "aspect of a tender super-human of the poetess", which covered everybody in a diaphanous light,

¹ Constantin Ciopraga, *Literatura romana intre 1900 si 1918*, Iasi, Junimea, 1970, p. 438.

² Nicolae Iorga, *O noua poeta: doamna Farago*, in *Samanatorul*, V, 1906, issue 23, p. 441444.

³ Felix Aderca, *De vorba cu Elena Farago*, in *Marturia unei generatii*, Bucharest, Editura pentru Literatura, 1967 (1st ed.-1929), p. 79-80.



achieving spiritual enlightenment with her experience, with the brilliant intelligence of her conversation.

As Aderca tells us, the saloon was attended, from morning to late at night, by the entire intellectual elite of the town: physicians, professors, students, actors, lawyers, musicians, officers. University classes took place within the museum.

In 1937⁴, Constantin Papacostea-Pajura, in the evocation *Elena Farago*, said that Elena Farago's lyrics were fully worthy of unanimous admiration, considering that this poetry combined in a highly attractive form, by means of an irresistible musicality, deep and ineffably delicate feelings, pious and timid loves, the greatest values hidden in the corners of our soul.

He also said that it was almost impossible to apply the relative and highly subjective scales of criticism to "what is imponderable, what is sublime and immortal".

Ending his evocation, Constantin Papacostea-Pajura said that Elena Farago's work was "a guiding book and a spiritual manual".

In 1938, Perpersicius observed that Elena Farago's poetry was, from the very first volume published in 1906, a continuous hope, a permanent call of the blue bird, of the longing that was relentlessly tormenting her, and a perpetual "heart break". This heart, that can desire with the highest intensity, also has the force to suffer to the same extent. He emphasizes that no one managed to relive "longings for discrete loves" as Elena Farago did; this was not only valid in Romanian poetry, where she was unequalled. In the content of one of her most representative poetic creations, the poetess found correspondences with a new Magdalene⁵.

In the article *O sarbatorire ciudata: Elena Farago*, published with the occasion of her 60th anniversary and more than 30 years devoted to poetry (April 1938), Ovidiu Papadima pertinently commented that, in her lyrical creation, Elena Farago was "a great and pathetic friend of humble things and destinies"⁶. The lyrics of the poetess are generated by the natural, instinct-generated sincerities of female literature. This is a literature where feeling bursts, as a volcano, in all its splendour. This release of creative energies mostly claimed for

⁴ Constantin Papacostea-Pajura, *Elena Farago*, in *Scoala Mehedintului*, March-April 1937.

⁵ Perpersicius, *Elena Farago*, in *Civdntul*, March 25, 1938.

Ovidiu Papadima, *Scriitorii si intelesurile vietii*, Bucharest, Minerva, 1971, p. 61.



free verse, not only because it was famous at the time when the talent of the poetess arose, but also because it was highly necessary. In the same way, a much lower number of stylistic restrictions were needed by modern female literature as a whole.

Elena Farago gives voice to the poetry of those defeated by life, she gives voice to the poetry of the *illuminated* people of this life, and of the wretched ones as well, concludes Ovidiu Papadima at the end of his article.

Eugen Lovinescu was not insensitive to the undoubted value of Elena Farago's lyrics, and he said that her poetry was limited to a single emotion: the ineffable emotion generated by the sublime feeling of love. That feeling that releases the incommensurable energies that can put the entire universe on fire.

The critic of *Sburatorul* underlines that Elena Farago's poems do not describe the borderless happiness of life, but the furious verse of a despotic feeling, lacking joy, where the pleasure offered by love rarely turns into tenderness, into sweetness, without ever reaching exaltation.

Elena Farago's work obviously caught George Calinescu's attention. If in 1906 Nicolae Iorga found that the lyrics of Elena Farago became more luminous due to the overwhelming influence of Alexandra Vlahuta, George Calinescu, in his *Istorie a literaturii*

romane de la origini pana in prezent, published at the end of July 1941, called for attention upon the highly visible influence of Cosbuc and, by means of the latter, of Eminescu. From Cosbuc, the poetess borrowed the oratoric form, that will be found in her entire literary creation, thinks the great critic, and, as for Eminescu's influence, he finds a similarity between *Ce te legeni, codrule* and *Salcie ingemanata* and the descendance of Elena Farago's *Scrisori* from those of Eminescu.

The word "dor" [longing] is a "heavy substance" for Elena Farago, and her "old lyricism" is characterized by an outstanding lexical richness.

When her verse flows freely, unrestricted from all kinds of artifices, Elena Farago appears like a renowned poet of candid love.

⁷ Eugen Lovinescu, *Istoria literaturii române contemporane*, Bucharest, Minerva, 1973, p. 585.

⁸ George Calinescu, *Istoria literaturii române de la origini pana in prezent*, 2nd ed., reviewed and supplemented, edited and prefaced by Al. Piru, Bucharest, Minerva, 1982, p. 702-705.



The poems devoted to maternity are highly original, in Calinescu's opinion.

Liviu Calin⁹ says that Elena Farago is deeply understanding with the many and the wretched, with the millions of anonymous, and their sufferings are intensely shared by the poet, as she identified herself with them.

The deep suffering generated by unrequited love are described with genuine timidity, and the reveal of erotic feelings proves the full extent of the outstanding sensitivity of the lyrics of this poetess. Elena Farago's sentimental feelings unveil a seldom found femininity, as they become a permanent and marvellous messenger of love. *Scrisorile*, which provide a secret, intimate environment for the creation and development of the dreams of the poetess, testify to this purpose.

In 1966, Lidia Bote¹⁰ outlines the reality that "Elena Farago's poetry, full of *longings*", is the place where traditional sadness and symbolism meet. With a "deep melancholy of folkloric topics and settings", this poetry "conciliates symbolism with folkloric motifs".

The uninterrupted spiritual ascension, the soothing elopement that also represents her reason of being, becomes a usual topic of the lyrics of Elena Farago and of all symbolist poets, but, if used excessively, this topic falls down to mannerism. For our poet, "ideal is engraved *Pe piatra unei fantani*" [On the rock of a fountain].

Elena Farago's poetic creation is highly populated "by *wanderers* and *girls* who sing at sunset, overcome by sadness", says Lidia Bote. Even tough Romanian symbolists are said to be characterized by an irremediable state of depression, they frequently raise a vibrant hymn to life, which is also done by Elena Farago in the poem *Canta ustazi viata*, for instance.

The theme of mystery, found in all symbolist poets, is also found in Elena Farago, in whose lyrical creation it aims at outlining the suffocating, hardsome, dark atmosphere, causing emotions of disturbing drama. The apparitions with opaque enigmas, intoning prophetic songs, are a symbol for such situations (*Trecea un om pe drum, Un pribeag canta, Un apostol nebun canta*).

⁹ Elena Farago. *Poezii*, edited by Liviu Calin. Bucharest, Editura de Stat pentru Literatura si Arta, 1957, p. 264-265.

¹⁰ Lidia Bote, *Simbolismul romanesc*, Bucharest, Editura pentru Literatura, 1966, p. 340,353,354,372,398,414.



In 1970¹¹, Constantin Ciopraga outlines a different facet of Elena Farago's artistic personality, showing that she was a poetess of deep spiritual experience and could only express herself in low voice, "as verse practically replaced letter writing". As long as they are maintained within the scope of the "feminine complex", her lyrics fulfil the requirement of communication, but they also express timidity, decency, "features supplemented by patheticism". When asked to choose "between speaking and not saying anything", the poetess goes for the middle way, since her pain cannot be revealed, for fear that she may face the indifference of those around. This is where the origin of the area of shadows and lights must be searched for. In this filtered light, in the barely perceptible sounds of the flute, in the predilection for mystery, lies the connection between Elena Farago and symbolism, says Constantin Ciopraga.

Of the repertoire of symbolist procedures, the only mechanism that was borrowed was musical repetition, as the verse left the impression of a barely intonated song. In order to induce the idea that life was a relentless well of unpredictable situations - a fountain "with brackish, and warm, and bat water" - the idea is restated in new structures. In the poem *Trecea un om pe drum*, the technique of repetition generates a certain "disposition for communication" among people, where "longing and the unknown interweave", finds Ciopraga at the end of his analysis.

In 1928, the professor C. D. Fortunescu, director of the journal *Arhivele Olteniei*, published in Craiova, made a pertinent analysis of Elena Farago's entire literary work, with the declared purpose of establishing her legitimate place within the entire Romanian literature.

Fortunescu shows that "the idea of homogeneity" resulting from Elena Farago's creation is the proof of the utmost sincerity of her poems. Lyricism is the defining features of our author's poems, and such lyricism is not declarative, superficial, but deep. Two elements can be found therein: the sentimental, passionate element, and the intellectual element.

The category of passionate elements mostly includes creations "where love is the generating feeling of poetry". It should be said that, in all Elena Farago's work, "there is no hymn that cherishes passion". In the very rare poems where she voices this feeling, the poet is discrete and delicate, unequalled in Romanian literature.

¹¹ Constantin Ciopraga, *Literatura romana intre 1900 si 1918*. Iasi, Junimea, 1970, p. 438-439.

¹² C.D. Fortunescu, *Opera poetei Elena Farago*, in *Arhivele Olteniei*, VII, 1928, issue 37-38, p. 327-335.



"Released from particular and personal elements", only limited to generally human elements, Elena Farago's erotic poetry is "spiritualized, intellectualized, which underlines its value", reminds C.D. Fortunescu.

The category of intellectual elements "is represented by a significant part of the poems in *Soaptele amargului* and *Nu mi-am plecat genunchii*, of a deep philosophical nature. They are spiritualist poems, expressing the certainty that human being is something eternal, as we have a divine soul.

At the end of his appreciations, C. D. Fortunescu disagrees with Eugen Lovinescu, who said that "Elena Farago's poetry completely lacked all intellectual elements".

In 1914, Ion Trivale showed that the defining feature of Elena Farago's lyrics, that impressive feeling of the soul being put forward, combined with the fear of succumbing to passion, is fully maintained in the intimate poems of the volume *Din taina vechilor raspantii*.

As for the expressive means, with the passage of time, the poetess accumulated a surprising mastery, reaching the performance of unequally delicately depicting the entire fight between the deep desire of releasing her soul assaulted by longings and the fiery obstacles represented "either by decency, or by cruel obligations".

When Elena Farago begins to write lyrics for children, she alienates herself from intimate poetry, which is regretted by Ion Trivale, who thinks this change is the result of the assiduous search for a spiritual balance that may bring her the calm she so much needed, that her troubled existence so badly wanted. That spiritual balance is found by the poet in her *Schite* - poems where the spirit that animates her, fully released from the past's issues, finds its rest in the ecstasy provided by the direct perception of natural landscape. Most of these *Schite* are inhabited by the luminous, innocent face of a child, showing a situation of the infantile soul, as the child is no longer seen as some lyrical motif, but the generating source of motherly love. It comes out of the subjectivity scope of the poetess, acquiring

¹⁵ Ion Trivale, *Cronici literare*, Bucharest, Minerva, 1971, p. 124.



the status of independent, autonomous entity, which also proves Elena Farago's irreversible orientation towards the external world.

In 1972¹⁴, Ion Rotaru reached the conclusion that many of Elena Farago's creations in the incipient phase of her literary career were visibly influenced by *samanatorism*, with the preferred models of St. O. Iosif and George Cosbuc, as well as Mihai Eminescu, whose style is found in her many *Scrisori* [Letters]. Let us not forget that George Calinescu also saw that Elena Farago created many of her poems under the veil of Cosbuc's and especially Eminescu's lyrics, with Eminescu's influence being intermediated by Cosbuc's work.

Ion Rotaru considers that Elena Farago became a name in the Romanian literature of those times by means of a range of poems created after she translated Maeterlink's *Blue Bird*, which ensured her inclusion in the category of symbolists.

The poem bearing the strongest symbolist accents and, at the same time, the highest artistic value, is *Era o fantana*, where the symbolist setting is built on basis of repetitions, symmetry of imperfective verbs and rhymes, which are only boring, lacking variety in appearance, concludes Ion Rotaru at the end of his analysis.

In turn, Vasile Netea shows, as Ion Rotaru, that, in the beginning, Elena Farago's lyrics were marked by *samanatorism*, with Cosbuc and Iosif as models, and Panait Cerna as well, in Netea's opinion¹⁵. Thereafter, our poet focused on the surprising allegories, symbols and euphony in Minulescu's poetry, giving life to emotional literary jewels praising love and maternity. In the following, coming into contact with French symbolists, by means of their works, which she translated, Elena Farago reached an outstanding mastery, says Vasile Netea.

A more pertinent research of Elena Farago's work, which was much deeper compared to the appreciations of the other scholars who studied her creations, was drawn up by C.

¹⁴ Ion Rotaru, *O istorie a literaturii romane, voi II (De la 1900 pana la cei de-al doilea razboi mondial)*, Bucharest, Minerva, 1972, p. 189-190.

¹⁵ Vasile Netea, *Interviuri literare*, Bucharest, Editura Minerva, 1972, p. 205-217 (the interview with Elena Farago was taken in August 1943).



D. Papastate who, in the monograph¹⁶ devoted to her, discovers new and surprising valences of her talent.

He is convinced that it is the delicate and tender feeling what gives Elena Farago's poetry that note of originality stemming from the depths of a sensitive soul.

Analysing the erotic lyrics of the poetess, Papastate says that the poems with this topic are not desolating, they are so tender that it is impossible to believe that, for Elena Farago, love is a devastating fire, that turns her soul over, but this should not make us think that, beneath the calm form of the poems, there is not a beating heart where the turmoil of life would not find deep spiritual experiences.

When dealing with the reflection of nature in Elena Farago's lyrics, Papastate shows that the description of landscapes is humanized, with a high diversity of nuances. The lyrics to nature are characterized by naturalness and spontaneity and sometimes maintain the simplicity of oral creation. Proving outstanding originality in the concept and a remarkable artistic achievement, pastel poetry is an absolute novelty in Romanian literature.

When attention is caught by social lyrics, Papastate observes that the poetess approaches this topic with the genuine desire to describe the miserable and hard life of her fellow beings, since she sometimes thinks of herself as responsible for not actually being able to soothe their pains.

As for Elena Farago's child literature, Papastate thinks that it maintains the two motifs it was born from: love for one's own children and love for other children.

The poems with this topic suggest altruism, the idea of humanity, tenderness, parental love, disapproval of chauvinistic nationalism, the conviction that observation may result in learning many things from objects, not from people only, etc.

Florea Firan¹⁷ discovered an outstanding musical harmony in Elena Farago's poems, as the poet praised love with remarkable feminine sensitivity.

About children's literature, he says that such poems are characterized by an outstanding purity of the soul and an overwhelming delicacy, revealing

¹⁶ C. D. Papastate, *Elena Farago*, Craiova, Scrisul Romanesc, 1975.

¹⁷ Florea Firan, *Profiluri si structuri literare*, Craiova, Scrisul Romanesc, 1986, p. 323.



the high capacity of art to model consciences, being created in a deep melancholic note.

Doina Curticapeanu's attention is also caught by Elena Farago's *Schite*, among others, who are classified as a separate genre in Romanian literature. They are based on the organisation of separate aspects into simple landscapes, where fine, deep observation uses the effect generated by contrasts.

Of the above mentioned, one can clearly conclude that Elena Farago's literary work caught the attention of contemporaries and the posterity, with an outstanding praise from both critics and peers.

Moreover, we want to show that our paper is structured in six chapters and will analyse the expressive values of Elena Farago's lyrics.

The first three chapters of the work aim at drawing up a synthesis of theoretical aspects, as well as outlining our personal contribution to the detailed analysis of the corresponding issues.

Chapter I, THE INCANDESCENCE OF CREATIVITY, provides information on Elena Farago's life and work, describing the unbelievable odyssey of the poetess on the turmoiled ocean of life.

The first component of the chapter, *A Biographical Description*, provides an incursion to the artist's agitated life, full of hardships, of frustrations and overwhelming internal longings.

The second component, *Configuration of the Work*, includes general considerations of the volumes of original lyrics written by the poetess.

The last component of the first chapter, *Critical Reception*, shows how Elena Farago's work was welcome by literary critics

The second chapter, THEMATIC BENCHMARKS, provides an insight on the main themes and motifs found in this writer's lyrics.

Elena Farago's poetic creation took several directions within its evolution, one of them being the one of lyrics with a deep social character.

From her literary beginnings, the poetess showed outstanding interest for

¹⁸ Doina Curticapeanu, *Elena Farago*, in *Dictionarul Scriitorilor Romani D-L* (coordination and scientific review by Mircea Zăciu, Marian Papahagi, Aurel Sasu), Bucharest, Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 1988, p. 254-256.



the wretched, who had a hopeless existence, where they no longer saw any opportunity of being able to support themselves. A suggestive aspect is that she debuted with the poem *Gandul truditilor*, in 1902, in the newspaper *Romania muncitoare*; the poem was included in 1906, titled *Munca*, in the volume *Versuri*, which was her editorial debut. For its mobilising message, as well as wishing to popularize the first published poem of this poetess, an integral reproduction follows:

"Se sfarama pamantul sub sapile-ascutite,
Si mainile vanjoase de sapi parca-s lipite
Asa-s de incelestate in ritmica-ncordare...
Pe frunti si pepturi goale curg rauri de sudoare.

Se sfarama pamantul...o, cata zbuciumare
Sub fruntile-necate in rauri de sudoare, Si
cata muta ruga-n privirile-atintite De parca
cer povete taranei rascolite. -

Pamantul, el ii-i cartea de-ndemnuri si povata:
Nadejdea si rabdarea din el, prin el, le-nvata De au
ramas prin veacuri mereu neobositi.

O brazda-i data gata.. Ei uita ca-s truditi
Si sapa inainte de-un gand calauziti -
Ca truzile-ngropate sunt samburi sfinti de viata"¹⁹.

The contents of the poem shows that, even though it implies an outstanding effort, working the land provides peasants with outstanding satisfactions, giving the conviction that it represents

¹⁹ Elena Farago, *Versuri*, Luceafarul, Budapest, 1906, pp. 70-71.



"samburi sfinti de viata" [holy seeds of life], that will generate the much expected fruit.

Social poems are especially found in the cycle *Martie-Decembrie 1907*, including six poems later published in magazines, then in the volume *Soapte din umbra* (1908). The first poem of the cycle, *Doina*, was first published in *Neamul romanesc*, the newspaper directed by Nicolae Iorga.

With words of an impressive dramatism, with an impressive affective load, Elena Farago's *Doina*, published in March 1907, before Vlahuta would write *1907*, depicts the moving drama of those who had the courage to ask for their right to a better life. Elena Farago asks the *doina* not to speak of the murmurs of those who die in silence. She begs it never to sing the tragicality of the blooded spring of 1907, since this would have a negative impact on children, innocent souls, who would learn to curse those who committed the atrocities during the great rural rebellions. We reproduce a part of this poem:

"Graiul tau ce stie prinde
Orice jale, orice dor,
Nu-l lasa sa-nvete, doina,
Ce soptesc cei care mor ...

Plang si canta si-si suspina Vietile in
viersul tau, Tu, ce-ai fost de-a pururi
scara Intre ei si Dumnezeu,

Tu, ce le inveti copiii Sa
priceapa de ce plang
Frunzele in codrii
toamna, Stelele de ce se
stang,



Jalea primaverii astia Nu-ncerca s-o
canti vreodat' Ca s-or invata copiii
Sa blesteme, si-i pacat!... ".

Seceta, the fourth poem of the cycle, was first published in *Ramuri* (issue 7-8, June-July 1907). The poem describes the sad landscape of fields avid for water, where, due to the scorching sun, one can only find "rare wheat, with poor harvest". Fields are instead fraught with poppy flowers, symbolising the blood of the peasants killed during the repression of rebellions:

"Nici un nor, nici semn de boare,
Parca n-a plouat de-un veac,
Stau asa, de parca zac
Insetatele ogoare.

Si-n grau rar, cu spic sarac,
Prapadit de prea mult soare, Se
desfac napasatoare Asa multe flori
de mac!...

Doamne, Doamne, de ce-s oare
Asa multe flori de mac Vara asta
pe ogoare...? "

The rhetoric interrogation that the poetess addresses the Divinity at the end of the poem is full of meaning, and the symbol generates remarkable expressive valences.

The cycle *Martie-Decembrie 1907* ends with *Florile dalbe*, written in December 1907. From the very first verse, the poetess asks everybody to



welcome Christmas carollers in their homes, especially in that December of 1907, when the spiritual wounds caused by the repression of the rebellion were still warm and open. No Christian should close their gates to the carollers, whose crystalline voices come to lighten up their souls, to keep the flame of their hope for a better future burning:

"Si mai ales in iarna asta lasati copiii sa colinde!...

Sa nu se-nchida nici o poarta in preajma lor si nici un semn

Sa nu-i opreasca din curatul si sfantul datinei indemn.

O, mai ales in iarna asta lasati copiii sa colinde!...

Social lyrics also described the life of poor people - especially children - who humbly carry the burden of their poverty, the humiliating stigma of their human condition.

In tender words, fraught with borderless sadness, Elena Farago presents the childhood-less childhood (that she lived herself), the situation of poor people, who are lacking the small joys specific to their age, compared to the one of rich children, who rejoice the best conditions, without having to care for tomorrow.

Another trajectory of Elena Farago's creation is the lyrics describing nature.

After a brief analysis, one can easily find that natural landscape organically merges with the turmoils agitating the soul of the poetess, intensely participating in her feelings. Invested with human features, nature completes Elena Farago's love poetry, potentiating its artistic message.

In her lyrics to nature, Elena Farago uses folkloric style pastel poetry, setting-based pastel poetry and pure pastel poetry. Folkloric style pastel poetry adopts a folkloric means of expression and impregnates an innovative aspect to descriptive lyrics. Setting-based pastel poetry includes both the depiction of a natural landscape, and the description of strong love feelings, which amplify the quality



of the depicted landscape. Pure pastel poetry can be joined by a different type of pastel poetry, which does not have the features of pure pastel, but describes both a natural landscape, and people and other beings.

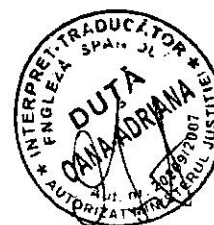
In the lyrics where the poetess depicts nature, we find several poetic motifs, such as: sun, moon, sky, sunset, night, sea, forest, mountain, spring, summer, autumn, winter. Dawn, light, morning, sun appear in several hypostases. In the poem Un pribeag canta, of the volume Soapte din umbra, the sun generates sadness, melancholy. In the poem S-a dus si noaptea asta, of the volume Din taina vechilor raspantii, the dawn awakens the garden from the sweet sleep of morning, bathing its rays in the flower dew. In other lyrics, we are met by a cold and misty morning.

Another trajectory of Elena Farago's poetic creation is erotic lyrics. This proves not only a deep philosophical introspection, but also a relentless living, a perfect understanding of spiritual turmoil. Her poems ravage the soul like musical creations, with their melancholy being able to inspire suffering, compassion or love. This melancholy resonates the deep chord of our hearts. Elena Farago's erotic lyrics reveal regret for a failed existence, burning between expectation and remembrance.

Musical repetition, the feeling of vague, of imprecise, of clear-obscure, of withdrawal from a complete expression of feelings, the alusive, veiled presentation of her erotic feelings, are poetic procedures ensuring Elena Farago's first-line place in Romanian symbolist poetry. Referring to the inclusion of this poetess in the symbolist category, Eugen Lovinescu asserted the following: "Elena Farago's inclusion among symbolist poets, even among the most representative ones, will, of course, cause amazement. As far as we know, no one has placed her within this current so far"²⁰.

In Elena Farago's lyrics, love is a murmured longing, a virginal timidity, the beat of a soul that has gone deep into the night of memories, like the moon in the night

²⁰ Eugen Lovinescu, *Critice, II*, Minerva, Bucharest, 1979, p. 202.



of depth. Her love expresses the suffering caused by unrequited feelings, the pain that could not rejoice the caresses of the one they loved in the very harsh moments assigned by an implacable fate:

In dorul celor doua vorbe
Atatia ani am mers plangand...
Dar vezi pribeagul carui nimeni nu
i-a intins in drum o mana,
Pricepe azi din soapta-n care durerea
lumii se ingana,

Ca nimeni nu mangaie bine ca
cel nemangaiat nicicand".

De vorba cu trecutul²¹.

Existentialist, intellectualist poetry marks a new direction in Elena Farago's poetic creation.

In all the five volumes of original lyrics, the poetess approaches crucial aspects regarding human existence. Her bright mind was always concerned with decrypting the mysterious secrets of life, as well as the laws governing the universe. She is always looking for explanations for the situations life puts her in, solutions to solve the difficult challenges she has to face.

An existential poem, conceived in an obvious philosophical disposition, where the poetess raises the issue of life and death, is *Sufletul vorbeste*²²:

"...Si iar,
Zalog taranei,
Mi-or ingropa vestmantul

²¹ *Idem, Soapte din umbra*. Ramuri, Craiova, 1908, p. 15.

²² *Idem, Soaptele amurgului*. Ramuri, Craiova, 1920, pp. 5-6.



Ramas sa-i dea naturii
Rasplatorul bir
Al trupului - ce-asteapta
Pe milostivul zbir
Ce-i va orbi privirea
Si-i va muti cuvantull...

Si voi zbura-n vazduhuri,
Senin,
Si gol,
Ca-n zorii
Card m-am desprins din scrumul
Unei albastre flori,
Si pentru-nalta oara am pribegit,
Prin nori,
Stiind ca sunt
Surasul nepieritor al flori..."

A deep philosophical implication is also found in *Trecea un om pe drum...*, a poem expressing the spirit's aspiration to release itself from the material cover of the body, in order to go towards new, unknown worlds, providing answers to the tormenting questions about existence.

The last trajectory identified in the evolution of Elena Farago's lyrics is that of poetry dedicated to the children's universe.

Lyrics bringing children to the front, with their hopes, joys, failures and concerns, stem from an impressive love to them.

Starting from the description of day-to-day life, Elena Farago creates





highly attractive poems, created at the level of understanding of the small ones. Literature for children in both verse and prose are highly appreciated by those it is dedicated to. The enthusiastic reception of Elena Farago's poems is also described by Eugen Lovinescu, who sent her a letter on December 28, 1912: "[...] Last time, I left your volume at home. As I went back, my three grandchildren had learned all the poems. There is an agitation everywhere. One can only hear: «Cot, cot, cot/fac Si eu ce pot/Cotcodac, cotcodac/Puii sa-i impac/». I had to use Pestalozzi to get rid of the story of your *cuciu schiop*. There is nothing to say: you are popular in my entire home. It is a noisy popularity"²³.

The pain caused by the image of poor children, who had a harsh life, with no perspective, with no prospect for a better future, and the conviction that she will never be able to have children, generated outstandingly beautiful poems, that the poetess completed with the utmost brightness of her soul.

After she adopted Mihnea-Dorin in 1907 (born on December 4, 1907) and especially after giving birth to Ana-Virginia (Cocuta for the family) on August 1, 1913, the literary creation devoted by the writer to children acquired an aureole that had not been found in Romanian literature before. The previous melancholy disappeared and was replaced by the joy of having met her destiny as a mother. The author's soul beat with a happiness that fills her entire being. Now her life truly has meaning. The creations achieved after the two crucial events in Elena Farago's life are full of colour, light, optimism:

"Din senin de zari scaldate-n
Razele-i de vesnic har,
Rostul zilelor de-acum
Lumina-va iar si iar,

²³ E. Lovinescu, *Correspondența cu Mihail Dragomirescu și Elena Farago*, edited and with an introductory study and notes by C. D. Papastate, Scrisul Românesc, Craiova, 1976, p. 151.



Al nadejdii drum statornic, Iar
in verdele-i vesmant, Presara-
vor flori albastre, Si-ngana-vor
cantec sfant,

Ingerii ce-or sta de paza
Dorului inmugurit
Din caldura si din viersul
Unui dulce gangurit".

Din pustiu de zari mocnite

Special attention should be paid to legends among literature dedicated to children. Elena Farago wrote three legends: *Blastamul aurului* (in the volume *Soapte din umbra*), *Siminoc, floare de pai* and *Poveste pentru Mihnea* (in the volume *Soaptele amurgului*). Even though they are written in a popular style, they do not deal with folkloric topics. They are original works, created by Elena Farago's fantasy.

Reading Elena Farago's entire literary creation, one can easily reach the conclusion that a great part of it deals with the children's universe. Through its spiritual purity, through the depth and sincerity of the conveyed message, children literature is a genuine ethical code for the small ones, a precious guide that helps them develop skills and abilities related to honesty, hard work, friendship, spirit of sacrifice, altruism, compassion, rejection and condemnation of the bad and attachment to good deeds.

Both from a stylistic point of view and in terms of the approached topics, Elena Farago's poetic creation is integrated within the lyrics of the beginning of the previous century.

²⁴ *Idem, Din taina vechilor raspantii*, Ramuri, Craiova, 1913, pp. 39-40.



As one can see from the content of this chapter, Elena Farago dealt with several literary themes and motifs in her work, and the ones described here are only some of them.

Chapter III, STYLE AND EXPRESSIVENESS IN ELENA FARAGO'S LYRICS, provides the opportunity of researching her lyrics in terms of linguistic expression. We will provide suggestive examples to prove that the poetic language of Elena Farago does not stem exclusively from tropes, i.e. from the improper use of terms, but also from the proper use of terms, from their selection and their rigorous combination. Even though they are not tropes, they are still sources of poetic language, one cannot say that they have no poetic value at all.

Considering the complexity of the expressive values in Elena Farago's lyrics, the hereby work will only analyse the phoneme level.

"Any change caused, with an artistic intent, in the substance of expression generates a phonological trope. Sounds themselves only have a communicative value provided that they are somehow integrated and organised in the form of expression. Phonological tropes, in general, confirm the suggestive and imitative capacity of artistic symbols more than other stylistic categories. The aesthetics of sound is generated by the acoustic musical symmetry aiming at *calming down* thinking, and by the ambiguity that increases its dynamics and disturbs it at the same time.

Sound changes in the substance of words may act with the repetition, amplification or contraction of sounds or groups of sounds. The most frequent phonological tropes, alliteration, assonance and rhyme, are based on the repetition technique"²⁵.

Paying utmost attention to every interpretation of terms, Paul Magheru says that some analyses distinguish between alliteration and assonance: "Some stylistics treatises distinguish between alliteration (the repetition of some consonants) and assonance (the repetition of especially tonic vocals). By alliteration, we will understand the repetition of any sounds, vocals (vocalic alliteration) or consonants (consonant alliteration)"²⁶.

²⁵ *Idem, Notiuni de stil si compozitie - cu modele de compuneri scolare*, Bucharest, Coresi, 1991, p. 41.

²⁶ Paul Magheru, *Notiuni de stil si compozitie - cu modele de compuneri scolare*, Bucharest, Coresi, 1991, p. 41.



In Elena Farago's work, we frequently find expressive alliterations, with a suggestive syntactic argumentation.

A brief analysis of Elena Farago's lyrics clearly shows that the alliterations help amplify the euphony of verses, the expressive potential of poetic discourse.

The repetition of some consonants, especially those holding an initial position, emphasizes the relationship between certain lexical phrases.

"According to professor Paul Magheru, assonance is the repetition of sounds with a close tone. It is mostly used to create imperfect rhymes"²⁷.

As for imitative harmony, Paul Magheru states as follows: "The adaptation of the meaning of words to their sonority is done, when possibly, by means of *imitative harmony*. Imitative harmony is a selection of word sounds, so that their resonance suggests

natural manifestations of the phenomena"²⁸.

Of the onomatopoeia, Paul Magheru thinks the following: "Onomatopoeia represents a given, natural, semantic, phonetic and musical sound organisation, while the effects of imitative harmony are sought and combined so that they have maximum suggestion power"²⁹.

The researches of specialists have clearly shown that, especially for stylistics, onomatopoeia should be included among tropes. Together with alliteration and assonance, it helps achieve the musicality of a poetic text.

Studies have shown that the suffixes most frequently used to form verbs by adding them to onomatopoeia are: *-âi*, *-ăi* and *-(ă)ni*. In Elena Farago's lyrical work, these suffixes have a low frequency.

²⁷ Paul Magheru, *Notiuni de stil si compozitie - cu modele de compuneri scolare*, Bucharest, Coresi, 1991, p. 42.

²⁸ Paul Magheru, *Notiuni de stil si compozitie - cu modele de compuneri scolare*, Bucharest, Coresi, 1991, p. 45.

²⁹ Paul Magheru, *Notiuni de stil si compozitie - cu modele de compuneri scolare*, Bucharest, Coresi, 1991, p. 47.



As for noun derivation, we find several situations in Elena Farago's poetry:

1. feminine nouns deriving from onomatopoeic verbs, using various suffixes:
-eala, -tură;
2. male nouns derived with the suffix *-uleț*;
3. male nouns derived with the suffix *-el*;
4. male nouns derived with the suffix *-ișor*;
5. male nouns derived with the suffix *-ător*;
6. neutrale nouns derived with the suffixes: *-et/-it*

As for *-et*, it is also found in Elena Farago's work as *-ăt*: *dangăt, freamăt, geamăt*.

The volume *Catelusul schiop* also includes some of her own onomatopoeia, created by Elena Farago with the intent of helping enrich vocabulary: *bi-vist!* (p. 69); *bi-vist-bivist!* (p. 68); *bvidevit!* (p. 68); *cirip-ci...* (p. 68); *cirip...ci...cilb...ci...* (p. 54); *tel-telert-telertel* (p. 55); *ticc.tecc.tec* (p. 68); *tzrr...bvi...devit...* (p. 67).

Of rhyme, which is the most important phonological trope, Paul Magheru says that it represents: "the musical, euphonic match of the sounds at the end of two or several verses, starting with the last tonic vocal"³⁰.

Pursuant to his research, Al. Tosa³¹ concluded that the types of rhymes can be established considering the following four criteria: the level of sound harmony, the position of the accent, the association of verses in stanzas and the morphological structure. Of these, we will only analyse the first three. The level of sound harmony is given by rhyme depth and rhyme precision, by the precision of harmony. In terms of rhyme precision, one finds four types of rhymes: *poor rhymes*, *sufficient rhymes*, *rich rhymes*, *very rich rhymes* and *leonine rhymes*. Pursuant to analysis in terms of rhyme depth in the first and the last

³⁰ Paul Magheru, *Notiuni de stil și compoziție - cu modele de compuneri școlare*, Bucharest, Coresi, 1991, p. 42.

³¹ Al. Tosa, *Frecvența tipurilor de rima în poezia lui Cosbuc*, in *Limba și literatura*, 1966, vol. 11, p. 57-58.



volume, we have the following situation: the volume *Versuri* includes only 3 poor rhymes, 184 sufficient rhymes, 214 rich rhymes, 78 very rich rhymes and 23 leonine rhymes. The volume *Nu mi-am plecat genunchii* includes 8 poor rhymes, 107 sufficient rhymes, 146 rich rhymes, 54 very rich rhymes and 28 leonine rhymes.

In terms of *harmony precision*, which is the second sub-criterion of harmony, rhymes can be classified as *perfect* and *imperfect* (assonances). Perfect rhymes are very numerous in Elena Farago's lyrics, while the number of imperfect rhymes is very low. The situation of assonant rhymes is as follows: 10 in the volume *Versuri*, 2 in *Soapte din umbra*, 3 in *Din taina vechilor raspantii* and one in each of *Soaptele amurgului* and *Nu mi-am plecat genunchii*.

We state that, in order to underline the evolution (or involution) of assonances from a quantitative point of view, the volumes have been included in order of publication. The non-significant number of approximative rhymes fully proves the outstanding artistic mastery of the poetess.

Depending on *the second classification criterion*, rhymes are of four types: *masculine* (*iambic* or *abrupt*), *feminine* (*trochaic* or *smooth*), *dactylic* and *hyper-dactylic*.

According to the position of accent, the situation of masculine and feminine rhymes in the five volumes is the following: in the volume *Versuri* - 541 masculine rhymes and 362 feminine rhymes. In the volume *Soapte din umbra*, 557 masculine rhymes and 441 feminine rhymes were identified. In the volume *Din taina vechilor raspantii*, we find 367 masculine rhymes and 255 feminine rhymes. In the volume *Soaptele amurgului*, 523 masculine rhymes and 430 feminine rhymes were used. In the volume *Nu mi-am plecat genunchii*, the poet used 355 masculine rhymes and 336 feminine rhymes.

The third classification criterion includes five types of rhyme: couplet rhyme, cross rhyme, chiasmic rhyme, monorhyme and slant (half-) rhyme.

The dissertation also analyses rhymes from this point of view.

Special attention was paid to stanza rhymes in each volumes, and a centralized



situation was designed thereafter.

The fourth chapter of the dissertation, CONCLUSIONS, creates a consistent and unitary image of Elena Farago's lyrical universe, surprising the specificity of her style, revealing her contribution to increasing the expressive potential of Romanian literary language, to the enrichment of poetic language.

ANNEXES, the fifth chapter of the work, includes facsimiles of objects in the "Elena Farago" Memorial House: furniture, paintings, photographs, manuscripts, volumes, letters, official documents, etc.

The last and sixth chapter, BIBLIOGRAPHY, illustrates the sources lying at the basis of our documentation for the hereby work.

