

## The sonorous world of Mircea Eliade's „theatrical” prose works

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**Abstract:** *In some of Mircea Eliade's fantastic prose works, centered around theater and performance - prose that can be considered, themselves, as true dramatic scripts - the sound clues take up a very important place, alongside the visual suggestions. The main elements of creating the sound dimension in these proses are the voice, the choral effects, the evoked instruments, the noises, as well as the references to music and certain musical pieces. The vocal way of treating the characters (whisper, murmur, speech, shout, cheers, song, etc.) is consistent with both the character and the dramatic situation in which they evolve. Also, the noises are varied and suggestive, each short story having a certain sound specificity. Noises spatialize the discourse and give a note of reality / presentification of the action in these proses. Selected from the context, they could give rise to a real "score" of concrete music.*

**Key-words:** *Eliade; Orpheus; theater; prose; sonority; voice; noises; music*

### 1. Introduction

India's influence on the thinking and work of Mircea Eliade is a well-known fact, but it is highlighted especially when talking about his scientific work. Indian thinking, which fascinated and marked Eliade from a very early age, is also reflected in his literary creation, especially in the series of short stories that Ioan Petru Culianu sees as part of the "cycle of performance and cryptography"<sup>2</sup>. These are complemented by the novel *The Forbidden Forest* which, although pre-dating the “theatrical”<sup>3</sup> short stories, already contains, in a cohesive form, Mircea Eliade's theory on dramaturgy and performance<sup>4</sup>.

The performance is, in Mircea Eliade's vision, a ritual of reconstituting the world, a creative gesture that imitates that of the divinity. The performance is a way of dramatizing and thus revealing the meanings of a myth. An initiation consists of a secret ritual through which man can pass into a new dimension and can access a new existence, and the performance, in Eliade's view, gives rise to such an experience.

If, for the Western theater, from Aristotle onwards, the main element of the play has been the intrigue, and what the actors imitate is “the chosen and whole action (...) events meant to arouse fear and pity”<sup>5</sup>, for the Indian theater, the object of imitation is, mainly, the emotional states (bhāva), the intrigue serving only as a structure that allows to reach the goal of art - the rasa - that is, the aesthetic experience. An element of coincidence, however, between Greek

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<sup>2</sup> Ioan Petru Culianu. 2009. *Studii româneşti*, vol. II. Iaşi: Polirom Publishing House, p. 138.

<sup>3</sup> I have called „theatrical” the fantasy prose pieces by Eliade, whose subject is represented by theater, i.e the performance.

<sup>4</sup> The novel *The Forbidden Forest* is written between 1949 and 1954. The first theatrical short story is *Goodbye!...*, published in *Revista scriitorilor români* (The Romanian Writers' Magazine), Munich, 1965. This will be followed by *Two Generals' Uniforms* (1971), *Incognito at Buchenwald* (1974) and *Nineteen Roses* (1978-1979).

<sup>5</sup> Aristotel. 1965. *Poetica*, introductory study, notes and comments by D.M. Pippidi. Bucharest: Editura pentru Artă şi Literatură Publishing House, pp. 59, 69.

theater - the matrix of European theater - and the Indian one is the importance given to sensory stimulation, especially hearing. Aristotle says that, along with the scenic element, necessary for the imitation of some people in action, singing and speaking are also necessary, especially, the "adorned speech", made up of "rhythm, harmony and song". And at the end of the sixth chapter, he emphasizes the fact that, of all the elements through which the tragedy is realized, "music is the most important adornment."<sup>6</sup> Probably, Aristotle refers here to the musicality of the lyrics, but also to the vocal-instrumental music that accompanied the tragedy. The lyrics, made up of a variety of metrical feet, are never chosen at random, their pulsation corresponding to the emotion or atmosphere of a certain moment in the dramatic unfolding. These metric feet are judiciously distributed, providing the text with exceptional strength. On the other hand, Aristotle, of course, also refers to the musical component of tragedies, consisting of songs sung by the choir, but also by actors, as well as instruments such as the aulos.

Like the tragedy, which is a theatrical performance almost entirely sung, the Indian show has an important musical component. A vocal-instrumental ensemble accompanies the play of the actors, who do not speak or sing, but perform an extremely codified pantomime, which illustrates the content of the story sung.

Therefore, music has been, since ancient times, an essential ingredient of the performance, contributing to the realization of the atmosphere and to the stimulation of a certain psycho-emotional disposition of the audience, whose delight occurs both through sight and especially through hearing.

And if the two components - auditory and visual - are defining for the ancient Greek and Indian spectacle, we will see that they also play a very important role in Eliade's prose, which can be considered as "mysterious scripts".

## 2. Purpose

An analysis of the elements with auditory effect from the "theatrical prose", but also from *Mântuleasa Street* and *In Dionysus' Court*, will highlight the role they play in creating the atmosphere and a sound drama. It is interesting to note that there is, in fact, a double reference to the sound and music world in these proses. On the one hand, Eliade always refers to Orpheus - the guardian figure of poetry and music, a symbol of the force of sounds produced by word or song, a civilizing hero. On the other hand, in prose we detect a whole arsenal of sound elements, among which the most important are the voice, choral effects, evoked instruments, noises, as well as references to music and certain musical pieces.

## 3. Methodology, objectives

I re-read the prose, following the implications that the references to the Orphic myth have in these proses. In a second step, I turned my attention, in particular, to the sound aspects and I drew up a series of tables, divided into four sections each, meant to assist me in compiling a "database" to use, in order to draw the necessary conclusions.<sup>7</sup> These fields contain the following:

NOISES/ONOMATOPOEIA/ SUGGESTING OF SONORITIES	VOICE (timbre quality, intonation, vocal dynamics) / BREATH	INSTRUMENTS	REFERENCES TO MUSIC/SONGS
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<sup>6</sup> Aristotel. *op. cit.*. pp. 60, 62.

<sup>7</sup> As this statistical study is made up of 54 pages, I will limit myself to a synthesized presentation of its contents.

Only for the short story *Goodbye! ...* I drew up a table with five sections, the additional section referring to “silences / pauses”, because I noticed that, throughout the prose, there are significant references to these parameters.

Also, for the short stories *Goodbye! ...*, *Two Generals' Uniforms*, *Incognito at Buchenwald* and *Nineteen Roses*, in the “voice” section, I added the “choral effects” aspect, because they appear frequently in the writing. The obvious presence, in four of the “theatrical” proses, of the choral effect, strengthens my conviction that they are elaborated not only as literary fictions, in which Eliade exposes his ideas about dramatic art, but that they were conceived and that they can be read as “mysterious scripts”. Another argument, which argues in favor of this idea, is the fact that Sorin Alexandrescu, talking about *With the Gypsy Girls*, says that in that short story there is “a general strategy of the epic, which entails a careful staging of events, in the sense of creating a real “show”. (...) The narrated event acquires ambiguity by the endless variation of the setting and of the actors, with their divergent perspectives, thus exactly as on a stage, in which the elements presented can no longer be commented by the author, hence maintaining an enigmatic autonomy”. If the staging strategy comes to light, when read carefully, in other short stories, it appears even more prominently in the “theatrical” prose.

#### 4. The fascination of Orpheus

The return to *illud tempus*, the nostalgia of a lost paradise, often called “Arcadia”, the retreat in mythical times, long before Sophocles, in whose work the dramatic form crystallizes, exerted a strong fascination on the generation of artists at the end of the 16th and early 17th century. They wanted, like the “directors of the future”, to create a total, thaumaturgical performance, capable of producing a spiritual opening and a liberating leap of consciousness. It is symptomatic that Orpheus - the poet / singer-thaumaturg - becomes emblematic, both for the generation of playwrights and composers of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries<sup>8</sup>, and for that of many artists in the first half of the 20th century<sup>9</sup>. His figure marks the moments of searching, of questioning the means and procedures of creation and the condition of the artist in the world. In Eliade's prose, especially in the “theatrical” ones, but also in the play *A Spiritual Adventure*,

<sup>8</sup> *L'Euridice* (1600), „favola drammatica” by Giulio Caccini and Jacopo Peri, *Euridice* (1602), opera by Giulio Caccini, *L'Orfeo* (1607), opera by Claudio Monteverdi, *La morte d'Orfeo* (1619), opera by Stefano Landi, *Orfeo dolente* (1627), opera by Domenico Belli, *Ballett von dem Orpheus und der Euridike* (1638), ballet by Heinrich Schütz, *Orfeo* (1647), opera by Luigi Rossi, *Orpheus von Thracien* (1659), opera by Johann Jakob Löwe, *Orpheus und Eurydice, der Hölle-stürmenden Liebes-Eifer*, (1683), Singspiel by Johann-Philip Krieger, *La descente d'Orphée aux enfers* (1686), opera by Marc-Antoine Charpentier, *Orphée* (1690), opera by Jean-Baptiste Lully and Louis Lully, *Orpheus and Uridice* (1697), mask by George Weldon, *Orpheus* (1698), Singspiel by Reinhard Keiser, *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1715), opera by Johann-Josef Fux, *Orpheus oder die wunderliche Beständigkeit der Liebe* (1726), opera by Georg Philipp Telemann, *I lamenti d'Orfeo* (1749), opera by Giovanni Ristori, *Euridice* (1750), pasticcio by Georg Wagenseil, *L'Orfeo* (1752), opera by Carl-Heinrich Graun, *Orfeo* (1672), opera by Antonio Sartorio, of course, *Orfeo ed Euridice* with the Viennaise (1762) and French version (*Orphée et Eurydice*, 1774), a „laboratory-opera”, in which Christoph Willibald Gluck experiments the fusion of the elements of *opera seria* with those of lyrical tragedy *à la française*. Of course, many other titles could be quoted here.

<sup>9</sup> *Eurydice* (1942) by Jean Anouilh, *La Descente d'Orphée* (1957), play by Tennessee Williams, *Orfeu da Conceição* (1956), play by Vinícius de Moraes; *Orphée* (1913), mimodrama by Roger Ducasse, *Les Malheurs d'Orphée* (1924), opera by Darius Milhaud, *Orpheus und Eurydike* (1926), opera by Ernst Krenek, *La favola d'Orfeo* (1934), one-act opera by Alfredo Casella da Conceicao (1947), *Orpheus* (1947), ballet by Igor Stravinski, *Orphée 53* (1953) opera by Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry; the famous *Orphée* (1950) and *Le Testament d'Orphée* (1959), films by Jean Cocteau and Orfeu Negro (1959), film by Marcel Camus, based on the play by Vinícius de Moraes.

originally entitled, *Eurydice*<sup>10</sup>, Orpheus and Euridice are always evoked, even if by a single and short sentence, like that from *Incognito at Buchenwald*: "Do you know his story, that is, their story, with Orpheus and Eurydice?"<sup>11</sup>. As if in a mirror, A.D. Pandele, the playwright in the short story *Nineteen Roses*, writes, in his youth, a tragedy in two acts, *Orpheus and Eurydice*.

At first, I was tempted to say that Orpheus and Eurydice appear as a leitmotif in these proses, but it seems fairer to say that this reference works as a metatext, to use a term proposed by musicologist Gilles Cantagrel, when talking about a feature of the Bach polyphonic structure. Marta Petreu shows that, in *Nineteen Roses*, there are three levels of the narrative: the first is that of Eusebiu Damian's narrative, the second consists of "the adventures of the master's identity-memory, while the third level is, through the mise en abyme technique, Pandele's premonitory novel, *Roata Morii* (The Wheel of the Mill), and, in general, all his creation"<sup>12</sup>. I believe that to this narrative polyphonic structure, another voice, a plane, is added, which is that of the myth of Orpheus. And to clarify this I will use a comparison with a musical structure, more precisely with the Bachian polyphony to which I referred. Chorales are Protestant religious songs composed of biblical verses. They are so well known to believers (at least, that was the case in Bach's time!), that even when they only hear the song, the words are also "heard," implied. Usually, the chorales sung at a certain service take up verses that appear in the sermon of the day, so we can say that, together with the pastor, the organist becomes a preacher who speaks about God, without words, through music. In this way, in vocal-instrumental or only instrumental pieces, the "speaking themes" of the chorales become elements of a speech without words, a process that JS Bach will generalize in his instrumental music and, especially, in cantatas, as Gilles Cantagrel explains<sup>13</sup>. He goes on to show how "in an aria or in a choral piece, in which certain clearly stated words are sung, a choral motif is suddenly slipped into the instrumental fabric, very well identifiable but bearing another text. Only implied, these words play the role of a metatext explaining the meaning of what is stated

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<sup>10</sup> References to this play can be found in Mircea Eliade's Diary, on October 3 and 30, 1946. We find out that the beginnings of its writing date back to December 1944, when Eliade simply "saw" the play, while walking alone on the deserted terraces of Estoril. The thought of the play follows him for two years and he will write it in 1946, in a period of terrible emotional trials and material deprivations. In the play, we find some of the recurring themes of Eliade's creation: the camouflage of the sacred in the profane, the theme of the double, that of coming out of time, the theme of the labyrinth. The action of this play begins in August 1936, in the Danube Delta, with a discussion between Teodor Manciu, a talented poet aged 28 and Alexiu, a friend, who is 40 years old. The other characters are: Mihai Barbură, a genius composer, Ștefania, alias Eurydice, Petru Baranda and Christina, Mihai Barbură's dead wife.

<sup>11</sup> Mircea Eliade. *Incognito at Buchenwald*, p. 477.

<sup>12</sup> Marta Petreu. 1988. *Salvatorul salvat și enigma celor nouăsprezece trandafiri*, in *Caiete critice*, no. 1-2. p. 178.

<sup>13</sup> Gilles Cantagrel. 2008. *De Schütz à Bach. La musique du baroque en Allemagne*. Paris: Fayard, p. 110.

"clearly"<sup>14</sup>. It is the very principle of exegesis"<sup>15</sup>. Doubles of the sermon delivered in the pulpit, the cantatas thus become catechesis and exegesis”.

A similar phenomenon occurs in Eliade's prose. The myth of Orpheus, implied and recalled directly or indirectly (by evoking katabases - in caves, on the seabed, in cellars, through the presence of characters who sing, recite or write poetry, who heal through their art, etc.) works as a meta-plane, which explains the other levels of the narrative. Orpheus - the poet, the singer, the healer, the savior - is, therefore, present or implied, the reference figure of "dramatic art and technique suitable for our time". He is the generator, actor and even director of the performance. (In that strange spectacle he performs in front of the Lady General and a perplexed audience and which is equivalent to an initiation, Ieronim Thanase descends into the cave in the depths of the sea, which is seen in the waters of the mirror.) A.D. Pandele, evoking the heated discussion about theater, which he once had with Mihail Sebastian and Camil Petrescu, whose subject had been the reinterpretation of classical myths, says: "... I also told them about the myth of Orpheus". So, the myth that preoccupies him constantly, the myth that traverses Pandele's work, and respectively, Mircea Eliade's prose about theater is that of Orpheus, emblem of the new type of performance.

The quasi-obsessive presence of Orpheus' figure, in Eliade's thought, can also be seen in the note he makes on August 27, 1951, in his Diary<sup>16</sup>, while he was in Ascona, at one of the Eranos meetings, organized by Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn. On the afternoon of August 27, after a conference and lunch with Jung, Eliade had intended to rest, but had been disturbed by a waking dream that was going against his will. In his dream, he was engaged in a discussion with the audience and spoke Sanskrit (better than he actually did), being unable to speak any other language. Then, about two days after that discussion, he pretended to be settling on the shore of the lake, like an Indian hermit, almost naked and eating only a handful of rice. In this *rêve éveillé*, Eliade was called Nārada, and the dream ended with his "falling asleep" and "awakening" (en abyme) after fifteen days, looking for Christinel and being embarrassed because he was late for Jung's conference. The dream had disturbed Eliade, not so much by its content, but by the fact that, after a night of insomnia and a day full of demanding events, he did not feel the slightest fatigue, he was perfectly lucid ("as if I had taken a few pervitin pills ") and wondered if, thinking about the yogic processes of abolishing time, he had not "enlivened" any "image" that would have caused him both euphoria and that way of coming out of time that he had not experienced before.

I think it is more than obvious that this dream contains all those desires and ideals nurtured by the "Indianist" Eliade, who had pushed them into the depths of his consciousness, but never for a moment managed to suppress them permanently or eliminate them: the fluent

<sup>14</sup> I will use here one of the examples offered by G. Cantagrell, to provide better clarification. The cantata *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* (*Crying, lamentations, disturbances and discouragement*) BWV 12, the text of aria no. 5, sung on bass, says: "Ich folge Christo nach" ("I follow Christ"). Well, an instrumental refrain introduces the first notes of the chorus "Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan" ("What God Does Is Well Done"), and thus the audience is told that by keeping Christ as their guide, the Christian can move forward on the path of life and that the trials he will have to endure will be for the good of his soul. The following aria, which is sung by the tenor: "Sei getreu, alle Pein ..." ("Be faithful, for any pain will mean little"), is accompanied by a trumpet, which sings the theme of the choir *Jesu meine Freude* (*Jesus is my joy*), announcing the bliss that the Christian will find beyond death. Everything becomes even clearer if you know the musical codes in force at that time. For example, the bass voice is "Vox Christi" or that of the Prophets announcing Christ. In the musically transposed parables, the bass voice is attributed to the owner of the vineyard or the good shepherd, while the high voice (soprano or tenor) is the expression of the faithful soul, the Christian community, the Church, and the trumpet timbre signifies royal majesty and triumph in battle.

<sup>15</sup> Gilles Cantagrel. *op. cit.*, pp. 111-112.

<sup>16</sup> Mircea Eliade. *Jurnal*, vol. I, *ed. cit.*, p. 145.

command of the Sanskrit language, the life of a yogin hermit, the intense preoccupation with getting out of time, but especially the name of Nārada. However, the name "Nārada", which Eliade bore here, is not accidental. Son of Brahmā, the third avatar of Vishnu, archetype of the sage, messenger of the gods and celestial musician, Nārada is, in a way, an analogue of Orpheus, who reveals, through his songs, the laws governing the created Universe and the bliss caused by the vision of the Absolute. If we were to only look at the theme of his songs, we would see that it very clearly reflects the two major concerns of Eliade: understanding the mysteries of the Universe and the state of bliss that can be attained by one who has been liberated and reintegrated into the Absolute. Then, Orpheus is a figure who brings together two essential attributes - love and creation - considered by Eliade as transfiguring forces.

In Nāṭyaśāstra, the Indian treatise on dramatic art, Nārada is remembered as one of the ten Prajāpati (демиурги) born of Brahmā's mind; character often encountered in mythology, being the divine ascetic who communicates to people the message of Heaven. He is credited with the oldest Indian musical treatise, the Nārādī-śikṣā.

This dreamlike delirium, together with Eliade's repressed desires that it could have contained, is very significant, because it is also linked to his literary and dramaturgical ideals. If Nārada was the "sage" who helped Brahma to create the science and art of theater, in turn, Eliade-Nārada became a founder of the art of theater or, specifically, of a new art of theater. Like Nārada, Eliade is a sage, but at the same time, taking on the avatar of the poet-musician, he assumes the role of bard, who knows that he has a duty to convey to humanity an important message through his "songs" (his literature), but also through a "dramatic art and technique suitable for our time". One of the bearers of the eliadesque message is the poet Adrian<sup>17</sup> (whose name read backwards gives us the imperfect anagram of the name Nārada), who says that: "the change of man, his mutation, cannot begin from above, through the elites, but from below, from the common people, those who spend the night in gardens and restaurants". That strange violin, which did not resemble any known instrument, and with which Adrian's girlfriend, Leana (aka Euridyce), accompanied her ancient songs through the summer gardens, may also be a reference to that vînhâ, the first stringed instrument invented by Nārada, an instrument that has, to this day, played an important role in the musical ensemble of the Indian theatrical representation.

## 5. The main elements used for creating the sound dimension in the „theatrical” prose

### *The Voice*

As I have shown, as one of the main elements of creating the sound dimension in prose, I considered: the voice (with many and various registers and suggested nuances, which could be considered, most of the time, true captions), choral effects, the instruments mentioned, noises, as well as references to music and certain musical pieces. All these elements, followed from one prose to another, make us feel / imply a sonic world - I would even say a specific "sonority" - of eliadesque prose. If in the writing of an author one can imply, through the graphology, data of his temperament and character, and through syntax aspects related to his breathing and his way of speaking and reading, through the sound elements we can discover the way he relates acoustically to the world around him, his auditory or musical preferences or idiosyncrasies, respectively.

What I could already notice, at the time of reciting and compiling these tables, was the preponderance of the indications regarding the voice, its intonational quality, ("in a neutral voice", "lowering the voice", "in a humble voice", "an unusual fervor in the voice", "to raise the voice", "lowering the voice even more" etc.), to the timbre one ("a man's voice, mature", "a

<sup>17</sup> In the short story *In Dionisus' Court*.

that clear, serene voice, without any pathos”, “loud, strange, deep voice”, “wild voice”, “metallic tone”, “not like any other woman's voice”, “woman's cry”) or dynamic (“she shouts suddenly raising her voice”, “she exclaims”, “she whispered”, “she spoke in a low voice”, “she shouted as loud as she could”, “they spoke loudly”, “she finally said, very slowly, as if she were whispering”). “Shouting”, “exclaiming”, “whispering” and “starting to laugh” are the most common. For example, in the short story *Mântuleasa Street*, these four appear predominantly, to which are added only a few others such as: “burst out”, “with a harsh coarse voice”, “lower your voice”, “began to murmur words, misunderstood, in his language, in Tatar”, “with a neutral voice”. *Two Generals' Uniforms* and *In Dionysus' Court* are rich in indications regarding the attributes of the voice. And I say “indications” because, on the one hand, many of them could be included in some captions, and on the other hand, because they make me think of the *Sprechgesang* singing style, where the composer notes in detail in the score the vocal effects that the performer wants to achieve.

Of the four vocal actions mentioned, ‘shout’ is by far the most commonly used, being followed in terms of frequency by ‘whispers’, both serving as poles of intensity between which the other manifestations of the voice are included. It could be said that all the characters of Eliade either shout (exclaim or burst) or whisper, their dialogues following this “melodic line” with extremely steep zigzags. This could have several possible interpretations. On the one hand, in this sound fabric of “cries and whispers”, in the permanent alternation of these contrasting vocal effects, we could see a manifestation of the principle of coincidence of opposites, a common theme in Eliade's work. On the other hand, the frequency of shouts may suggest a symptom of sound regression in non-articulated language. We know that the phenomenon of linguistic regression preoccupied Eliade, and in the short story *Youth without Youth*, it constitutes one of the means of returning in *illo tempore*, to the archaic being. Maria Vodă Căpușan states that “Eliade is closer to Artaud and Michaud, to the poetry of the “cry” as the latter understands it, when the language regresses in an inarticulate sound, to account for the existential anguish. Without realizing a theater of shouting, affirming it only as necessary in this moment of crisis”<sup>18</sup>. The theatrical crisis is one of the facets of the crisis of Western culture. Another facet of it is the language crisis, which consists in the rejection of the preeminence of the written text and the “need to find the lost substance of the verb” by restoring “the original path of investing with images, forces, reality of words”, as Monique Borie points out<sup>19</sup>. Opting for a return to the origins and not for *avant-garde*, the detour through the different societies of orality, in which hearing has a fundamental role, is the answer that Artaud gives to the crisis of the theater and of an entire culture. And this is because “this role of hearing is linked to the belief in the magical impact of words, i.e. in their *effectiveness*”, explains Monique Borie. Here we find, once again, the ideational resonance of Artaud and Eliade, the latter's literary and scientific work being impregnated by the idea of the need for the effectiveness of words and gestures and the need for meaning that man has, in order to justify and accept individual and collective dramas.

The frequency of the shouts in the “theatrical” prose and the expression “shout theater” make me think of the ancient Greek theater towards which Eliade's preoccupations were constantly directed. Specifically, one difficult and still little explored aspect of the Greek theater, namely: the interjections, the cries that the characters emit in the plays of the Greek

<sup>18</sup> Maria Vodă Căpușan. 1991. *Mircea Eliade - Spectacolul magic*. Bucharest: Litera Publishing House, pp. 129-130.

<sup>19</sup> Monique Borie. 2004. *Antonin Artaud. Teatrul și reînțoarcerea la origini*. Bucharest: Unitext Publishing House, p. 62.

playwrights. Whereas, knowing the meaning of interjections, in Greek theater, is essential to understand the nature and nuances of the characters' emotions, the meaning of their intervention and the precise intention for which a certain interjection was uttered, as explained by linguist Michèle Biraud<sup>20</sup>. In Eliade's prose, the "shouts" are also individual, but they appear, especially, in the moments that I could call "chorales", which makes me think, once again, about the different choral hypostases of ancient Greek theater.

**The choral effects** argue that, as we have shown before, Eliade's theatrical prose can be understood as "mysterious scripts." Eliade's interest in Greek tragedy was constant. He perceives this genre as being closer to his origins and conception of the performance, and this is because any tragedy - more than any other dramatic species - presents and comments on the effects of time on human beings. Not coincidentally, Eliade writes a tragedy, *Iphigenia*, in which the heroine is a symbol, not only of sacrifice, but also of overcoming limitations and acquiring a superior condition, as well as / implicitly of an indestructible glory.

The choir always appears in these prose in order to

- confirm / reinforce what a character said ("This is very true" or "And yet it is important, it is really very important.")
- to urge action ("Curtain! Curtain! Raise it at least halfway"; "Light! Let there be light!")
- to make a prediction ("She will live! She will live! She will live!")
- to emphasize the importance of the collective dimension of the performance ("We create the meaning .... We reveal the meaning, through the performance.").

A significant aspect of choral interventions is the use of verbs in the present tense, with the exception of the quasi-oracular statement of the group of actors from *Incognito at Buchenwald*: "She will live! She will live! She will live! ", referring to Marina Darvari's niece. The verbs in the present tense illustrate the continuous present that the performance creates, suggesting, in this way as well, the abolition of time.

### Noises

According to the voice, the next richly illustrated sound category is that of noises. In general, in "theatrical" short stories, the most frequent noises are those produced by the opening or slamming of a door, the ringing of the telephone, footsteps or clapping.

Extremely "sonorous" is the short story *Two Generals' Uniforms*. In some passages of it, we can speak of a true polyphony. The noises made in the attic of the Calomfirești house, by Ieronim Thanase and Vladimir Iconaru - who had come to look for the generals' uniforms - overlap with their whispers and the sounds of the cello played, in turns, by Antim Manolache and Maria da Maria on the ground floor of the house.

Each short story is characterized by certain noises and, in each of them, there is a certain predominant or frequently repeated noise. Also, in the range of noises of each short story one can distinguish a noise of maximum intensity and, as its counterweight, one of very low intensity.

	Specific noises	Frequent/pr edominant noise	Maximum intensity noise	Lowest intensity noise
<i>Mântuleasa street</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• childrens' voices</li> <li>• door bell</li> <li>• elevator</li> <li>• door (opened, shut, slammed)</li> </ul>	the door's noise	(in the story of Fărâmă: the snap which is heard in the illusionism act performed by the Doctor; the moan of the bull, which could be heard over seven valleys.)	whistling the words between his teeth

<sup>20</sup> Michèle Biraud. 2010. *Les interjections du théâtre grec antique. Étude sémantique et pragmatique*. Louvain: Peeters Louvain-la-Neuve.



<i>Goodbye!...</i>	<u>The hall:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• applause</li> <li>• rhythmical taps of the feet against the floor</li> </ul> <u>The stage:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• talking</li> <li>• whispering</li> <li>• cheering</li> </ul> (Counterpoint between the sound planes of the hall and of the stage)	<b>the rustling of the hall</b>	<b>the cheers</b> on the stage	<b>the whispers</b> around
<i>In Dyonisus Court</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• door</li> <li>• footsteps</li> <li>• rhythmical claps of the hands</li> </ul>	<b>murmurs, mixed noises</b>	Massive group of guests, exiting <b>noisily</b>	precipitated <b>whispers</b>
<i>Two Generals' Uniforms</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wind</li> <li>• moaning/whining</li> <li>• creaking</li> </ul>	<b>wind</b>	(in the scene imagined by Ieronim: the powerful <b>scream</b> of Maria da Maria when her hands where crushed.)	(in Ieronim's, imagination, Veronica <b>whispering</b> : "I don't want to die".)
<i>Incognito at Buchenwald</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• steps</li> <li>• applause</li> </ul>	<b>steps</b>	<b>unending thunder</b> , coming from all sides at once	
<i>Nineteen Roses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knocking on the door</li> <li>• the phone bell</li> </ul>	<b>The phone bell</b>	The mass of shadows muttering and advancing with a <b>muffled sound of heels, striking the ground more and more menacingly</b>	<b>the crickets' song</b>

Noises spatialize the discourse and provide a note of reality / presentification of the action in these proses. Selected from the context, they can give rise to a "score", which could resemble a "score" of concrete music<sup>21</sup> or the sound illustration of a radio theater play.

### ***Instruments***

Surprisingly, the range of instruments that Eliade uses in his "theatrical" prose is smaller than we would expect.

Among the classical instruments, the violin and cello, piano, brass, trombones are mentioned, on several occasions, while the drum is only mentioned once - in *Mantuleasa Street*, when the Doctor makes the garrison marching band disappear into a box - which is somewhat unexpected, coming from a historian of religions so preoccupied with shamanism, where the drum plays a central role<sup>22</sup>.

As instrumental ensembles, the orchestra and the fiddler band are evoked, and as other sound sources, the radio and the turntable. Only in *Nineteen Roses* and in *Mantuleasa Street* does he refer to the "obsolete musical instruments" and to the various whistles that Laurian Serdaru uses and, respectively, to the "lute" that accompanied Leana. References to such instruments, even if isolated, prove that Eliade was, however, aware of their importance in a ritual-type performance. In fact, in the short story *In Dyonisus' Court*, it is mentioned that the same Leana, who will also reappear in *Incognito at Buchenwald*, "sang accompanying herself by a violin (...) which she supported in a strange way, like I've never seen anyone else do. (...)

<sup>21</sup> Concrete music uses "sound objects" taken from the external world of natural sounds. I use here the term "sound object" in the sense given by the musicologist and composer Pierre Schaeffer, ie even sound "considered in its sound nature and not a material object (instrument or any device) from which it comes" (*Traité des objets musicaux. Étude interdisciplines*, p. 23).

<sup>22</sup> Just four years before writing this short story (1955), Eliade had published *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (1951).

it was not a violin like all the others (...) it did not look like the violins that could be bought in Bucharest thirty or forty years ago..."<sup>23</sup>.

### *References to music / songs*

In his prose about theater, Eliade says of some of his characters that they are "musicians"<sup>24</sup>, such as Antim Manolache and Maria da Maria. Some of the characters in the short stories graduated from "The Conservatory", as is the case of Laurian Serdaru, his fiancée, Niculina Nicolae, or Petru Lorinț. Many of the characters sing, with their voices or on an instrument. The repertoire of songs that have the same archaic nuance, varies from enchantments (Oana, who enchants the mandrake<sup>25</sup>) to slum songs or very old romances, "from the time of Duchess Ralu and Anton Pann" and "old" romances. From the classical repertoire he mentions: *Adagio* by Albinoni and the *Triple Concerto for violin, cello and piano, op. 56, in C* by L. van Beethoven and makes a cyphered reference to the opera *Un ballo in maschera* by Verdi.

What is somewhat surprising is that Eliade does not give more concrete musical references, despite a deep understanding<sup>26</sup> and vast musical cultures, being himself a good pianist and probably aware of the existence of many instruments, through his research on ritual practices.

In his short stories, Eliade associates music with theater and sometimes uses it as a metatext, intuiting that it can organically complete a directorial script. At other times, he uses it as a musical backdrop or as a stimulus that could give rise to associations in the mind of the listener<sup>27</sup> or which could create for him an aesthetic emotion (*rasa*) - as in Indian theater.

The songs sung by Leana or the fiddlers (such as those evoked in the short story *In Dyonisus' Court*) contribute to creating the nostalgic ambiance of the summer gardens of the old Bucharest, to the reconstruction of a "literary geography", as Andreea Răsuceanu<sup>28</sup> calls it.

On the other hand, the vocal register is very expressively suggested in Eliade's prose, ranging from whispering, murmuring and speaking to shouting, cheering and singing. This fact makes me think even of Enescu's *Oedipus*, where the word is transposed into music with extreme refinement, rendering very subtle nuances of intonation, and the vocal way of treating the character is consistent with his character and dramatic situation.

<sup>23</sup> Mircea Eliade. 1981. *In Dyonisus' Court*, in the volume *In Dyonisus' Court*, with a foreword by the author, edition and afterword by Eugen Simion. Bucharest: Cartea Românească Publishing House, p. 494.

<sup>24</sup> Older term, used for „musicians”.

<sup>25</sup> In the short story *Mântuleasa street*.

<sup>26</sup> For example, in the *Portuguese Diary*, on November 16, 1942, Eliade notes his impressions of the concert conducted by Hans von Benda (1888-1972) in São Carlos, which had Händel, Mozart, Bruch and Haydn on the program. On this occasion, he makes an interesting confession, which mirrors the way in which music gives rise in his mind to connections with literature and dramaturgy: "The *Andante Cantabile* from Mozart's *Concerto in E flat major* made me infer the final scene of *Faust* - the angels scattering flowers above him". It is interesting how his thoughts fly, then, to Petru Anicet, the seductive piano teacher from *Hooligans*, but also the way he talks about his characters, as about real and autonomous beings. Thus, he goes on to say: "in general, the *Concerto* brought Petru Anicet even closer to me; I was with him and sometimes I suspected him of snobbery, of artifice. But the angelic grace of *Andante cantabile* revealed to me not only *Faust*, but also my dear Anicet". Then, his ability to feel and see the fundamental elements, of unity in culture, makes him notice an interesting thing about a *Concerto grosso* by Händel, whose structure makes him think. "Isn't the exacerbated repetition of the motif a zeal to infer the infinite?", ponders Eliade, who, without realizing it, inferred one of the principles of baroque music - cyclicity - which, in the 17th century, was a metaphor of infinity, of eternity.

<sup>27</sup> As it happens, in *Nineteen Roses*, in the scene with the two astrologists in one of A.D. Pandele's plays, which his quite puzzled secretary, Eusebiu Damian, types.

<sup>28</sup> Andreea Răsuceanu. 2013. *Bucureștiul lui Mircea Eliade*. Bucharest: Humanitas Publishing House, pp. 11-12.

Also, the noises are varied and suggestive, each short story having a certain sound specificity. The continuous noise passages of certain scenes (street noise, voices, applause, etc.) alternate with moments of complete, almost unnatural silence, only possibly abruptly interrupted by footsteps on the pavement, a closing door or a bell, moments that make me think of the atmosphere in Edward Hopper's paintings or the very strange one in M. C. Escher's drawings.

## 6. Conclusions

It is obvious that in these theatrical prose, which can be considered true "mysterious scripts", we can speak of a sonorous dramatization. The diversity of the range of noises, voices, timbres, musical references does not constitute a simple "sound decoration", but contributes organically to the creation of the atmosphere of the short stories. The philosopher and aesthetician Gernot Böhme believes that the aim of stage art is to "provide the action with the atmospheric background, to tune the spectators into the theatrical performance and to provide the actors with a sounding board for what they have to represent"<sup>29</sup>. Accordingly, in these short stories, history itself is spatialized and shrouded in an atmosphere that creates a whole range of sound suggestions. As Sorin Alexandrescu points out, even if there is no explicit dramatic intentionality, the narrative events in these short stories are arranged in *a mise en scene*<sup>30</sup> to the materialization of which the sound dimension of the text contributes substantially. Thus, images and sound suggestions engage into a dialogue, and the reader's intellectual understanding is doubled by a bodily resonance.

In recent decades, we can notice a growing interest of theater people for word and sound as starting points of theatrical creation, for sound as an element of dramatic construction. For this reason, I consider that Mircea Eliade's theatrical short stories, due to the diversity of vocal hypostases through which the characters express themselves, the multitude of means of in which the text is endowed with sound, as well as an implicit staging, constitute a very fertile ground for theatrical exploration and creation.

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<sup>29</sup> Gernot Böhme. „The art of the stage set as a paradigm for an aesthetics of Atmospheres” in *Ambiances* 2013. <http://ambiances.revues.org/315>.

<sup>30</sup> Sorin Alexandrescu. 1969. *Dialectica fantasticului*, introductive study for the volume *La țigănci și alte povestiri*. Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură Publishing House, p. XXXIX - XLII, XLVIII.

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