STUDIA UBB DRAMATICA, LXIV, 2, 2019, p. 11 - 32
(Recommended Citation)
DOI:10.24193/subbdrama.2019.2.01

100 de ani (100 Years*) by I.L. Caragiale: Recycling the Image of the Nation*

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Abstract: On February 1, 1899, the National Theatre of Bucharest hosted the premiere of the play *100 de ani. Revistă istorică națională a secolului XIX, în 10 ilustrațiuni [100 Years. National Historical Revue of the 19th Century, in 10 Illustrations]*, arranged by I.L. Caragiale. Caragiale's controversial work is a montage of verses, prose and short plays written by several Romanian authors from the past (in other words, the play consists of old literary or dramatic works, appropriated, copied and pasted to fit into a new scenario). As a matter of fact, Caragiale wrote only the stage directions and a few lines and connecting scenes. But the overall, dramaturgical-directorial vision of the script belongs to him. Considering the way Caragiale treats the works of his literary colleagues in *100 Years*, one could say that, in this particular case, he does not behave as a writer, but as a true author-director (or "*auteur*"). The ten "illustrations" arranged by him consist of a series of more or less allegorical or symbolic representations of the century about to end, with its emblematic moments, culminating in an "apotheosis" celebrating King Carol I. In my paper, I will try to argue that Caragiale's "revue" is more than a minor piece of homage art: it is an exercise of historical re-evaluation underpinned by a philosophy of history. I will also analyse the way the author recycles the image of Romania, departing from the traditional theatrical (allegorical) representations of the nation.

Keywords: Caragiale, recycling, Romania, history, nation, allegory

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On February 1, 1899, the National Theatre of Bucharest hosted the premiere of the play *100 de ani. Revistă istorică națională a secolului XIX, în 10 ilustrațiuni [100 Years. National Historical Revue of the 19th Century, in 10 illustrations]*, arranged by I.L. Caragiale. The work had been made to order and it would reward the writer with a 1000 lei prize, granted by Petru Grădișteanu, then manager of the capital's National Theatre, but also the managing director of theatres. The revue poster promoted a "Great show. – *Tableau*x vivants, movement, dancing and singing. – Prose and verses of literature." [„Mare spectacol. – Tablouri vii, evoluțiuni, dansuri și cântece. – Proză și versuri din literatura diverselor epoce"]. It had a numerous cast, including some of the best actors of Romanian theatre, like Aristizza Romanescu, Constantin Nottara, Ion Brezeanu, Maria Ciucurescu, Iancu Petrescu, Nicolae Soreanu or Vasile Toneanu. The music aspect was the responsibility of Constantin Dimitrescu, who composed some of the songs played by the orchestra. The text of the "historical revue" was printed in the same year, in *Gazeta săteanului*[2].[3] Its author, Ion Luca Caragiale (1852-1912), was a great prose writer and playwright, one of the greatest classics of Romanian literature and viewed as a tutelary figure of Romanian theatre. When *100 Years…* premiered, he was already seen by some as one of the greatest playwrights alive, while also being envied and contested by others. However, the "historical revue" was generaly received with reserves (and ironies) from both sides. Nevertheless, it was a box-office hit and it achieved even greater succes, later that year, with the general public in Iasi, where it was staged at the initiative of actor Gheorghe Cârjă.

Caragiale's controversial work is a considerable montage of verses, parts of prose writing and play scenes selected from creations by Iancu Văcărescu, Ion Heliade Rădulescu, Costache Facca, Nicolae Bălcescu and

2. See *Gazeta săteanului*, XVI, no. 1, February 5, (1899): 22-32, and no. 2, February 20 (1899): 56-58.

3. The quotes in this paper are from: Ion Luca Caragiale, "100 de ani. Revistă istorică națională a secolului XIX, în 10 ilustrațiuni [100 Years. National Historical Revue of the XIX-th Century, in 10 illustrations]," in *Opere. Teatru. Scrieri despre teatru. Versuri . Vol. III [Works. Theatre. Writings on Theatre. Verses. Vol. III]*, ed. Stancu Ilin, Nicolae Bârna, and Constantin Hârlav, III (București: Editura Fundației Naționale pentru Știință și Artă, 2015), 673–716.

Alecu Russo, Vasile Alecsandri, Dimitrie Bolintineanu, Scipione I. Bădescu, as well as from the folk poetry selections by Alecsandri and G. Dem. Teodorescu. Văcărescu, Heliade Rădulescu and Costache Facca established themselves as writers in the first half of the 19th century. Bălcescu (known especially for his historical works), Russo, Alecsandri and Bolintineanu were part of the 1848 revolutionary generation. As for Scipione Bădescu, he was one of I.L. Caragiale's generation peers and member of the influential cultural association "Junimea" ["Youth"] led by the Romanian critic Titu Maiorescu, a group which, at some point in time, had also been attended by Caragiale. In other words, the play consists of old literary or dramatic works, appropriated, "copy-pasted" to fit into a new scenario. The "revue" also integrated the speech held by Prince Carol of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, the future King Carol I of Romania, in 1866, when he arrived in the country that he would lead until the beginning of the First World War, in 1914. Caragiale himself had written only the stage directions and several lines or connecting sequences. He, however, was the creator of the overall directing vision of the scenario, because, by the way in which he relates to the texts of his literary peers, Caragiale behaves, this time, not like a writer, but like a true auteur-director. The ten *tableau*x "arranged" by him include a series of "illustrations", more or less markedly allegorical or symbolic, of the 19th century that was ending, in the moments deemed emblematic for Romania's history; and culminating with the "apotheosis" that celebrates King Carol I. They depict history as if it were an evolving process of slow, but implacable progress, from the awakening from the "sleep of captivity" (*tableau* I) to the 1821 Revolution of Tudor Vladimirescu, against the Phanariote regime protected by the High Porte (*tableau* II), the appearance of education and of theatre in Romanian (*tableau*x III and IV), the failed Revolution of 1848 and the Romanian revolutionaries' forced exile, redeemed by the Union of the Principalities (Moldavia and Wallachia), which took place in 1859 (*tableau* V), the arrival of Prince Carol in the country, on 10 May 1866 (*tableau* VI), the Russian-Romanian-Turkish War of 1877-˝78 (War of Independence), in which the Romanians fought together with the Russians, ending the Ottoman suzerainty (*tableau* VII), the proclamation of the Kingdom of Romania in 1881 (*tableau* VIII), the inauguration, in 1895, of the railway bridge of Cernavodă,

on the Danube (part of the largest complex of bridges in Europe at that time and the third longest in the world), an event representative of the country's technological progress and of its connection with the western civilisation (*tableau* IX), and, in the end, the aforementioned apotheosis.

Șerban Cioculescu, Caragiale's informed biographer and editor, was also very reserved in the introduction to volume VI of Caragiale's *Opere [Works]*, in 1939, with regard to *100 de ani...*: "We could say, in plain terms, that it is Caragiale's weakest creation, if it were not, in fact, a puzzle of parts that do not match."[4] In plain terms: Cioculescu is wrong. In reality, despite the puzzle-like/mosaic aspect, the work holds remarkable coherence. I will prove this by paying a closer look to the way in which the author creates the feminine allegorical characters who represent the nation and are present in the revue, as well as the manner in which he directs their appearance on the stage. Thus, în *tableau* I, open with a doina (a traditional Romanian song), in a wild landscape typical of the Romantic stage-setting, Moldavia and Wallachia are each chained to a rock, under a demon's spell ("the spirit of darkness"). "The women wear grey clothes and their national stoles; their respective flags and emblems laid at their feet. They are covered in black crape", the stage indications also show. They attempt several times, in vain, to stand up, while voicing their despair and hopes regarding the fate of the Romanian (the lines are from the poem *Ah! de-am putea!... [Ah! If we only could!...]* by Iancu Văcărescu). Three alphorn sounds precede the appearance on the "rock in the middle", "in white light", of a "bright angel" ("the Spirit of light"), which makes the demon "fold his wings terrified" and disappear in the ground. The angel recites Alecsandri's *Către români [To the Romanians]*, better known under its second title given by its creator, i.e. *Deșteptarea României [The Awakening of Romania]*. For the role of the Angel, Caragiale cast Aristizza Romanescu (1854-1918), the most appreciated Romanian actress at that time and Alecsandri's favourite actor. Obviously, this choice gave a special quality to the moment in the economy of the performance. (In her later memoirs, Aristizza would make a short note with regard to the

4. Șerban Cioculescu, "Introducere [Introduction]," in *I. L. Caragiale, Opere. Teatru. Vol. VI [I. L. Caragiale, Works. Theatre. Vol. VI]*, ed. Șerban Cioculescu (Bucharest: Fundația pentru Literatură și Artă, 1939), XXIX.

play: "*100 de ani*, some sort of compilation by Caragiale, which, at that time, disappointed many"[5].) At the end of the scene, Moldavia and Wallachia finally manage to stand up and free themselves. Starting from this first sequence, the critic Ștefan Cazimir identified, in the essay *I.L. Caragiale față cu Kitschul [I.L. Caragiale and the Kitsch]*, the manner in which the playwright had written *100 de ani*...: "by turning into a 'serious' text a parody published three years earlier!"[6]. (This was a gazette article, in which Caragiale announced the publication of Al. Macedonski's volume of poetry *Excelsior*, an excuse for the relentless ironist to criticise the pompous title and the highbrow author, while also ironizing the idea of human progress.[7]) In a backdrop populated by "alphorn sounds and riot thumps", the stage welcomes a young peasant woman ("brave Lelea"), who sings a song of rebellion against the Phanariote oppressors (the ruling elite of Greek origin, recruited from the Fenar quarter of Istanbul during the Ottoman suzerainty over the Romanian Principalities). She regrets that she does not have weapons and she promises that, however, she will fight bare handed. The peasant girl's verses are borrowed from the same Alecsandri's selection of *Folk Poetry*. Next, *tableau* II, the one with Tudor Vladimirescu's anti-Phanariote Revolution (or "riot"). Moldavia and Wallachia will appear two more times during the performance, but without lines. Thus, at the end of part two in *tableau* V, i.e. the part dedicated to the events of 1859, they recompose the group found in the upper part of "Union of the Principalities", a painting by Gheorghe M. Tattarescu (1820-1894) dating back to 1857 (made two years before the so-called "Small Union"). Tattarescu's painting – which bears an academic, neo-classic nature with influences from religious Renaissance painting – shows (in the lower part of the composition) two shepherds and their sheep. The older one, seen to the fore, seems to be sleeping and dreaming of two

5. Aristizza Romanescu, *30 de ani. Amintiri [30 Years. Memories]* (București: Editura Librăriei Socec & Co, 1904), 354.

6. Ștefan Cazimir, *I.L. Caragiale față cu Kitschul [I.L. Caragiale and the Kitsch]* (Bucharest: Editura Cartea Românească, 1988), 109.

7. See Ion Luca Caragiale, "Notițe literare [Primim la redacție…] [Literary Notes [We received at the editorial office…]]," in *Opere. Publicistică [Works. Journalism]*, ed. Ilin Stancu and Constantin Hârlav, II (București: Editura Fundației Naționale pentru Știință și Artă, 2011), 500–501.

women, Moldavia and Wallachia, who sit on a cloud and are shrouded in a flag marked with "UNION" and with the emblems of the countries (while emblems of the great friendly powers are standing guard around). An angel holds a crown above their heads. The women wear laurel wreaths and long, grey, belted clothes which resemble the world of Roman antiquity rather than the Romanian one. This was often reproached to the author (not only with regard to this painting) and this makes Caragiale's choice even more interesting and more significant, since he could have drawn his inspiration from two other paintings on the same topic, but much better localized, created in a Romantic manner, from the painters Theodor Amman (1831-1891) and Nicolae Grigorescu (1838-1907). In Caragiale's play, the two female character do not sit floating on a cloud, but they are placed on the "mound" in the middle of a village spreading on the "two banks of a brook" (*i.e.* the river Milcov that separates Moldavia from Wallachia). In the penultimate *tableau*, we will find them integrated in a scene that regroups the whole cast of the play. *Tableau* VI starts with the conversation of the folk in a village at the foot of the Carpathians. They discuss the arrival of Prince Carol in the country, from the Danube: "This was the fate of this imperial child; he was meant to follow the path and walk of the Danube. A streamlet starts quickly downward; then, gradually it crosses plain after plain; it grows forever; it becomes stronger; it breaks rocks; it opens in two a huge mountain chain and reaches, grand and undefeated, the Black Sea. This is the Danube's path and so will be his fate! Our special young man will grow step by step, patiently, will become stronger, he will break obstacles of circumstances and bad habits that are harder than rocks and, undefeated and grand, he will have to rule at the Black Sea", believes the village Chief. (The analogy is indicative of Caragiale's view regarding the organic development that should characterise the shaping of a man's personality and, at a wider scale, the evolution of society.) He – the village Chief - is also the one to repeat Carol's words at his arrival (otherwise, the dialogue is fully the creation of the playwright). Following the cheers for the young ruler, the stage is left empty and then, in the "strong moon light", the Romanian Sentry appears on the rampart and he recites the namesake poem by Alecsandri. At the end, the Sentry begins to patrol, saying: "The dawns will

be serene… the wind blows from the west!" – of course, an allusion to Carol's arrival. (This line and the others until the end of the *tableau* are all written by Caragiale.) And then:

> (*Ajungând în mijloc și uitându-se spre dreapta, [Sentinela] se oprește parcă ar vedea pe cineva că se apropie. – Orchestra în surdină. - România apare în dreapta și se oprește un moment gânditoare. Sentinela o vede; ia arma la mână și strigă puternic.)*
> Cine-i?
> ROMÂNIA (*pe gânduri, către sineși, fără a lua seama la sentinelă*)
> «Nihil sine Deo!»
> SENTINELA (*urmându-și jocul, mai puternic*)
> Cine-i?
> ROMÂNIA (*urmându-și jocul*)
> Inimile sus!
> Voi, copiii mei cu toții din hotare la hotare! (*face un pas*).
> SENTINELA (*culminându-și jocul*)
> Cine-i?
> ROMÂNIA (*ridicându-și fruntea*)
> Mama ta, voinice.
> SENTINELA
> Stăi... Lozinca!
> ROMÂNIA
> Neatârnare!
> (*Sentinela prezentă arma. România înaintează pe înălțime; apoi, ca inspirată.*)
> Dup-atâta chin, în fine soart-a vrut să fie dreaptă!
> De-astăzi m-a legat cu fiul unui neam împărătesc.
> Pentru numele lui mândru, pentru fruntea-i înțeleaptă,
> Trebui´altfel de coroană... Sentinelă, fii deșteaptă:
> Fapte mari se pregătesc...
> Sentinelă, fii cuminte!
> Sentinelă, nu uita!
> SENTINELA (*discret*)
> Neatârnare!
> ROMÂNIA (*tare*)
> Neatârnare!

SENTINELA (*cu avânt*)
Neatârnare!
ROMÂNIA
De-azi nainte,
Asta e lozinca ta!.

[(Reaching the middle and looking to the right, [the Sentry] stops as if he saw someone coming closer. – Soft music from the orchestra. - Romania appears to the right and, for a moment, she stops pensively. The Sentry sees her; he grabs his arm and shouts.)
Who's there?
ROMANIA (broodingly, to herself, without paying attention to)
«Nihil sine Deo!»
SENTRY (following his play, with more strength)
Who's there?
ROMANIA (following her play)
Be brave!
You, all of my children across the country! (she takes a step).
SENTRY (culminating his play)
Who's there?
ROMANIA (lifting her head)
Your mother, brave man.
SENTRY
Wait... The password!
ROMANIA
Independence!
(The Sentry presents his arm. Romania goes ahead; then, as if inspired.)
After the struggle, the fate finally wants to do right!
From now on it has tied me with the son of an imperial family.
His proud name, his wise forehead, for them,
A different crown is needed... Sentry, be smart:
Great deeds are on their way...
Sentry, be good!
Sentry, don't forget!
SENTRY (subtly)
Independence!
ROMANIA (loud)
Independence!

SENTRY (impetuously)
Independence!
ROMANIA
From now on,
This is your password!.]

The scene is interspersed with clear Shakespearean, Hamletian reminiscences (see the Danish prince's night walks on the rampart). In her first appearance on the stage, Romania astounds with her contemplative stance ("for a moment, she stops pensively", "broodingly, to herself, without paying attention to…"). The thing that haunts and puzzles her is the slogan of the house of Hohenzollern, *i.e.* of the family of the new ruler, "Nihil sine Deo" (which has remained the slogan of Romania's Royal House), which, in the end, is a high ethical principle. Will the country be able to answer to this moral command? Is she cut out for the "imperial" son, for his "stately" name? In other words, is she ready to enter the Western society (which also involves the espousing of the aforementioned ethics)? "A different crown is needed" for all these, says Romania "inspired"; in other words, a transfigured people is needed. Although focused on such dilemas, she continues to be confident ("Be brave!"; "After the struggle, the fate finally wants to do right!"; "Great deeds are on their way..."). The new password, "Independence!", also expresses the state of self-confidence and it foreshadows the *tableau* on the War of Independence. At the absolute premiere of the play, the character Romania was played by a very young and promising actress, who was at the beginning of her career, namely Eugenia Ciucurescu (1880-1942), sister of Maria Ciucurescu, one of Caragiale's favourite actresses, also in the cast. The next *tableau* (VII) reproduces a play in an act of the repertory generated by the War of Independence. This was "*La Turnu-Măgurele* – Scenă patriotică din vremea războiului de V. Alecsandri" ["*La Turnu-Măgurele* – patriotic scene from the war of independence by V. Alecsandri"], an idyll in which the action occurs in the back land; the play was put on stage, in 1877, for the support of wounded soldiers. The first part of the eighth *tableau* continues it, describing the victorious soldiers' return from war, while also discussing the women's involvement in the conflict, by invoking and celebrating the figure of the wife of Carol I, called by a soldier "the best mother" and

"mother of the wounded – our great captain's illustrious wife". And then he draws out Elizabeth's portrait, of which, he says, every soldier carries with him (together with the portrait of "our great captain"); the soldier shows it to the crowd from the village that welcomed the troops with water and wine. He then recites an ode to the Queen (signed by Scipione I. Bădescu). Bell tolls and band songs mark "the country's celebration", because "she took her crown from the mouth of a cannon" – as illustrated by another verse by Bădescu, delivered by an old man; this verse prepares the audience for the following scene. (It is not a figure of speech: the royal crown of Carol I was actually made from the steel of a canon captured by the Romanian soldiers from the Turks in the battle of Grivița, during the War of Independence, on 30 August 1877. The steel crown can now be seen at the National Museum of History, in Bucharest.)

In the second part of *tableau* VIII a second apparition occurs, even more surprising than the first one, of Romania:

> (S-a întunecat aproape de tot... Se aud lovituri de ciocane pe nicovală ca la o făurărie în plină activitate. – Muzica în surdină. Toată lumea ascultă. Apare sub lumină albă România înarmată. Toată lumea stă cuprinsă de emoție. România se apropie de stânca din mijloc. Scoate spada și cu mânerul bate rar de trei ori. – Stânca se deschide, se vede făurăria gnomilor, luminată roșu. Tunuri, arme, lanțuri rupte. Gnomii suflă în foale, alții taie dintr-un tun, alții lucrează la nicovală. – Gnomii primesc cu politețe pe musafira înarmată. Ea asistă mândră în picioare la activitatea faurilor. – Danț și evoluții de gnomi lucrând.)
>
> *["(It's almost dark... Hammers can be heard on anvils like in a forging shop during working hours. – Soft music. Everybody listens to it. Armed Romania appears under a white light. Everybody awaits, their hearts full. Romania nears the cliff in the middle. She draws her sword and, by using its grip, she knocks three times. – The rock opens up and you can see the dwarves' forging shop, in red light. Cannons, arms, broken chains. The dwarves blow the bellows, some other cut from a cannon and other work on the anvil. – The dwarves put on a courteous welcome for the armed guest. Proud, she stands and witnesses the activity conducted by the forgers. – Dance and movement of the dwarves working.)"]*

This is followed by an exchange between the dwarves (or the gnomes) and Romania, with regard to the steel crown that the former are building and which will be ready by the end of the tableau. In these scene, Caragiale's dramatized verses are again borrowed from Scipione Bădescu.

The woman's armed appearance, under a "white light", requires a retrospective look at the scenario, because it refers to two previous sequences, which – now an obvious aspect – had prefigured it by design (yet another proof that the parts of the puzzle "match" perfectly, contrary to what Cioculescu may think): it's the apparition of the Angel (also "in a white light"!) and the scene with the "brave Lelea", the warrior peasant who would urge people to revolt since the first *tableau.* We remember that she was chanting that she could only fight with her bare hands and teeth. Caragiale gave to the peasant woman the weapon that she needed and, thus, he civilised her…

The unusual backdrop against which "armed Romania" shows up is borrowed by the author from Nordic, Germanic mythology, i.e. from the space of origin of King Carol I. The feminine presence seems to be "contaminated" by the imaginary of this space, which, as known, is populated by warrior women ("the Valkyries"), although she is never unleashed like the first ones. Instead, Caragiale's "armed Romania" looks like "Germania" (the name is in Latin), the personification of the German nation (starting from around 1813, during the Napoleonic wars), portrayed as a young vigorous, dignified, serene women, carrying a sword and often a crown in her other hand (the crown of the Holy Roman Empire). The character's Hamletian stance in scene VI also is reminiscent of the Nordic area. At any rate, Caragiale's Romania is much closer to the feminine allegorical representations of the modern occidental nations (Germania, Britannia, Marianne, etc.) than the namesake characters of Romanian dramaturgy written before him, owed to his uncle, Costache Caragiali (1815-1877), and to Frédéric Damé (1849-1907), a French-born journalist and writer (translator, amateur historian, etc.), settled in Romania in 1872. Another dramatic text with Romania as a protagonist (*24 Ianuarie sau Unirea țărilor și a tuturor partitelor [24 January or the Union of the Countries and of All the Parties]*, from 1860), by the actor Mihail Pascaly, has been lost.

Thus, the first allegorical-dramatic representation of Romania, dating back to 1852, comes from actor and playwright Costache Caragiali. The character appears in a too little known *Prolog pentru inaugurarea noului teatru din București [Prologue for the Inauguration of the New Bucharest Theatre]*, written by Caragiali at

the inauguration of Teatrul cel Mare [The Grand Theatre] of the Wallachian capital (which will be later called the National Theatre). Unfortunately, it could not be put on stage, apparently because of its too markedly patriotic nature which did not sit well with the authorities of the age. Costache Caragiali's prologue remained in manuscript until after the author's death and was only published in 1881, in the *Familia* magazine[8]. Actually, Caragiali's allegory was not quite without precedent in the Romanian theatre: before him, the writer and cultural promoter Gheorghe Asachi (1788-1869) had turned Moldavia into a dramatic feminine character – "Zâna Moldovii [the Moldavian Fairy]" – , in a *Prolog [Prologue]*[9] made for the debut performance of the students at the Iasi Philharmonic-Dramatic Conservatory (the first school of theatre in Moldavia), which occurred on 23 February 1837, on the stage of Teatrul de Varietăți [Variety Theatre]. Asachi's prologue "dramatised", in fact, an even older representation painted according to his own sketches on the curtain used on 27 February 1816, during the show with *Mirtil și Hloe [Myrtil et Chloé]*, after Gessner and Florian, which went down in history as the first representation in Moldavia given by Romanians in their language. The aforementioned curtain, which was an imitation of a model he had brought from Rome, showed god Apollo extending his hand to Moldavia in an invitation to join him in the kingdom of the arts. Also, around 1850, the first iconographic representations of Romania appeared, from painters Constantin Daniel Rosenthal (1820-1851) and Gheorghe Tattarescu (already mentioned earlier), both of them participants, one directly, the other indirectly, to the Revolution of 1848. We are talking about the allegorical paintings "România rupându-şi cătuşele pe Câmpia Libertăţii" ["Romania Unshackled on the Field of Liberty"] (1848) and "România revoluţionară" ["Revolutionary Romania"] (1850), respectively "Renașterea României" ["The Rebirth of Romania"] (also known as

8. Costachi Caragiali, "Prolog pentru inaugurarea noului teatru din București [Prologue for the Inauguration of the New Bucharest Theatre]," *Familia* XVII, no. 14 (1881): 81–84.

9. See Gheorghe Asachi, Prolog rostit în Teatru Național din Iași la ocazia deschiderei și inaugurării sale în 23 Fevr. 1837, apud Theodor T. Burada, *Istoria teatrului în Moldova [History of Theatre in Moldavia]*, Institutul (Iași, 1915), 170–72; Gheorghe Asachi, "Prolog compus de A. G. Asaki, și rostit pe Teatrul Varietăților din Ieși în 23 februarie 1837. La acea întâi dramatică Reprezentație Moldovenească a Conservatorului Filarmonic," *Albina Românească (supliment)*, no. 18 (1834).

"Deșteptarea României" ["The Awakening of Romania"], 1850), painted by their authors abroad. (After the defeat of the Revolution in the Principalities, Rosenthal was in refuge in Paris, and, in the same period, Tattarescu was pursuing his studies in Rome.) "The Principalities' Union" by Tattarescu is, in fact, a replica of this much better-known earlier painting of his, "The Rebirth of Romania". Tattarescu would also paint Romania in 1866, in celebration of the abdication of Ruler-Cuza (Carol's predecessor).

The protagonists of Costache Caragiali's *Prologue…* are Apollo and the Muses (also present in Asachi's prologue), Saturn, God of Time, Romania and Fama (Pheme), Goddess of Rumors. The background characters include the spirits of "a number of dramatic authors of the classic school". The site of action is no longer the road to Mount Parnassus (like at Asachi), but Mount Parnassus itself: stepping on its peak, Caragiali's Romania will accomplish the journey started by the other, older writer's Moldavian Fairy… Apollo then encourages the Muses to share their gifts to the new proselyte, which they hurry to do, elatedly. In fact, in the guise of old Hellas, the Muses perform a rite with local origins, the whole scene being a reminder of the well-known motif of the Ursitoare (Fates) in the tales of the Romanians. Noteworthy, Romania, depicted as a young and beautiful woman, appears in front of Apollo dressed in "splendid national costume". Another occurrence of the character with Romania's name, prior to Caragiale's *100 Years…*, was in the dramatic poem (translated from French) *Visul Dochiei [Dochia's Dream]*[10] by Frédéric Damé, which premiered on the 8th[11] or 9th[12] of October, in the

10. Frédéric Damé, *Le rêve de Dochia. Poëme dramatique* (București: Szöllösy, Libr.-Edit. (Impr. de la Cour (Ouvriers Associés), F. Gobl), 1877). See also Frédéric Damé, Visul Dochiei. Poemă dramatică [Dochia's Dream. Dramatic Poem], translated in Romanian, in verses, by D. O. and T. S. [=Dem. C. Ollănescu and Th. Şerbănescu] (Bucharest: Tip. Românul Carol Göbl, 1879); and Frédéric Damé, "Visul Dochiei. Poemă dramatică" ["Dochia's Dream. Dramatic Poem"], translation by D. Ollănescu and T. Șerbănescu, in Familia, III, no. 10, February 28 (1879): 150-152; no. 11, March 15 (1879): 161-162; and no. 12, March 31 (1879): 183-184.

11. According to a note at the beginning of the 4th edition of the play. See Frédéric Damé, *Le rêve de Dochia. Poëme dramatique*, 4th edition, translated in verses by C. D. Ollănescu and Th. Şerbănescu (Bucharest: Stabilimentul Grafic I. V. Socec, 1894), 2.

12. According to theatre historian Ioan Massoff. Ioan Massoff, *Teatrul românesc. Privire istorică. Vol. III [Romanian Theatre. Historical Perspective. Vol. III]* (București: Editura pentru literatură, 1969), 29.

opening of the 1877-'78 season, during the Independence War. Dochia is a local mythological figure, linked with the Dacians, the ancestors of the Romanians, as well as with the moment when a significant part of the territories they occupied was conquered by the Romans, in the 2nd century AD. Literary critic Florin Faifer noted that "Damé's play has a blatant similarity, at times up to identification, with the lyrical poem *Dacia și România*[13] by Basiliu P. Rădulescu, which brings together the same allegorical embodiments and develops an almost identical argumentation"[14]. Despite the fact that they are mother and daughter, in the two texts, Dochia and Romania stand, in fact, metaphorically speaking, for the same character who has two faces – one turned toward the past, the other one toward the future. Romania tries to awake her mother from the slumber by which the latter seeks to ease her centuries-old pain; she tries to instil hope in the country's fate. In the end, she will manage to obtain from her the blessing for the soldiers who are getting ready to battle with the Turks. In Frédéric Damé's play, the two characters are also joined by other allegorical feminine characters who embody the Romanian historical provinces that had remained outside the borders of the United Principalities: Banat, Transylvania, Bukovina and Bessarabia. Each of them wears the traditional costume of the related region. From this point on, the Romantic vision of the nation (with its emphasis on local colour) became prevalent, as proved by the first Romanian postcards, from 1894, picturing none other than Caragiale's own wife as Romania, dressed like a peasant, in traditional clothes.

In I.L. Caragiale's "historical revue", unlike her predecessors, Romania looks foreign, remote. She lacks local colour. The traditional, rural apparel, where not abandoned entirely (the author does not give any indication on the character's clothes), is, at any rate, eclipsed by Romania's confrontational stance and the related features (the sword and the crown). The character's Hamletian position is even more foreign from the national specific traits. In 1910, two years before his demise, during a visit to the Romanian students of Budapest (and recorded, according to Șerban Cioculescu, in an issue of

13. See Basiliu P. Rădulescu, *Dacia şi România. Versuri [Dacia and Romania. Verses]* (București: Typ. Curții (Lucrători associați F. Göbl), 1877).

14. Florin Faifer, "Dramaturgia Independenței [Dramaturgy of Independence]," *Cronica* XII, no. 20 (1977): 4.

the Budapest newspaper *Lupta*, of 30 November - 13 December), Ion Luca Caragiale had apparently expressed openly his dislike of sentimental ruralist literature ("poporanism"), ending with the following advice for the young audience: "You know, from now on, you should stop writing about the long haired peasants who play the pipe. The train is the new pipe. You should turn the peasants into a European nation. Do not write about their dirty opanak. Clean it and wash the foot and give it something new to wear. That's it! Enough is enough! That's it! (…) we should be men of action…"[15]. Earlier, in 1899, Caragiale was doing just this thing in *100 de ani* – he was offering "new footwear" to Romania. In fact, the author was already flirting with the idea of emigrating toward the west, being increasingly more attracted – mentally – to "fresh" Europeanity. In the end, in 1905, he settled with his family in Berlin (in the motherland of King Carol I!), where he remained until the end of his life. Ion Vartic dedicated an exceptional chapter to this topic („Caragiale și complexul lui Fiesco" ["Caragiale and the Fiesco Complex"] in his book *Clanul Caragiale*[16].

Scene IX, the penultimate, the one with the inauguration of the railway bridge on the Danube (work by the engineer Anghel Saligny), brings on stage, "in the rhythm of a parade", all the characters of the "revue": "Romanian people", "all the historical and allegorical personalities of the revue, arranged by order of the scenes", it goes without saying that Moldavia, Wallachia and Romania are also included, followed – a very important aspect – by an "international audience wearing specific costumes and their national flags", "the Romanian general staff, soldiers of all arms and audience in festive apparel". This is a celebration of both the triumph of modern technology and the country's integration among the civilised populations, a celebration of the connections with the wider world, connections obtained under the rule of King Carol I. (So, we've been gently carried away from the fairytale-like world of the first scene of the play to the modern world of high-tech.)

15. Apud Șerban Cioculescu, *Viața lui I.L. Caragiale [The Life of I.L. Caragiale]*, III (București: Humanitas, 2012), 332.

16. Ion Vartic, *Clanul Caragiale [Caragiale Family Clan]* (Cluj-Napoca: Biblioteca Apostrof, 2002), 150–72.

In July 1898, less than one year before the premiere of the stage play *100 de ani...*, Caragiale had taken part in the banquet held for the inauguration of the Târgu-Neamț-Pașcani railway study; there, he toasted for the engineer Peretz and he stated: "the priest is always a sign for the beginning of a society, the soldier is the power sustaining that society, while the engineer is always a beginning of civilisation"[17].

In the last scene ("THE APOTHEOSIS"), which is a "*tableau vivant*", the armed Romania appears to the left of the royal throne, "standing", and "she adorns the throne with a laurel wreath". On one side and the other of the throne there are "a little hunter presenting arm" (a little soldier) and a "tiny fairy, on her knees, praying, her eyes looking in the sky", and:

> D-asupra tabloului întreg fâlfâie tricolorul și în nouri strălucește cu lumini deviza:
> NIHIL SINE DEO.
> Imnul regal cu cor, orchestră și fanfară.
> (Cortina încet)
>
> [*The flag flutters overhead and the slogan*
> NIHIL SINE DEO
> *lights up in the clouds.*
> *Royal hymn, with choir, orchestra and band*.
> (*the curtain gently*)]

With regard to this last scene (wherein, beyond the artificial costumes and stance, the characters resemble a patriarchal family), we may wonder whether Romania does not occupy a subservient position in relation to the "great captain", King Carol I, represented metonymically by the royal throne, around which the whole mise-en-scene is structured; or, on the contrary, Romania has the upper hand and it bestows power to the sovereign. I tend to favour the former possibility: the male royal figure seems to dominate the whole scene. Apart from the great invisible presence, Romania looks rather like a favourite daughter – the likes of Pallas Athena, the warrior daughter of Zeus, the governor of Greek deities, or of Wagner's Valkyrie,

17. Apud Virgator, "Inaugurarea studiului liniei ferate Tg. Neamț-Pașcani [The Inauguration of the Study of the Tg. Neamț-Pașcani Railway Line]," *Evenimentul* VI, no. 1584 (1898): 3.

favourite daughter of the great god Wotan. (In fact, Caragiale's "revue" seems to have borrowed something from the splendour of Wagner's mises en scene; we could ask ourselves whether the author, a great melomaniac and member of the "Society of Wagner's Friends", allowed some influence from the former; or perhaps he got his inspiration from the shows staged by his uncle Iorgu Caragiali, who "loved grand shows, with Bengal flames, explosions, apotheoses, allegorical scenes and stately and magnificent characters"[18].) The origin of such performances, of the virile, warrior, armed female characters is explained by the psychoanalyst-clinician Didier Dumas (disciple of Françoise Dolto) as follows: "Fathers are well aware that there is a Joan of Arc in every daughter and she is ready to raise armies to protect them; in our democratic views, Marianne is a 'republican Joan of Arc'. She is a typically male phantasm, the one of the 'warrior mother' who thinks about what the man should do, in his place"[19]. In Caragiales' scenario, the woman is strongly anchored in the sphere of the symbolic while the man possesses individuality. All the male characters with real models are identified by their own names (Tudor Vladimirescu, Gheorghe Lazăr, Alecsandri, Bălcescu, Carol I), while Elizabeth, wife of King Carol I, is never called by her name, she is only… the Queen – "Mother of the wounded", "jewel", "star", "angel" – competing with Romania for the title of allegory of the nation. She is materialised on the stage by the portrait shown to the crowd by the soldier, which means an image aimed directly at the senses, while King Carol is present as text – "Nihil sine Deo" – , aimed at reason, rather than as image (since the royal throne is empty, it suggests an absence).

There's a paradox here: although the woman is left without individuality, being projected in the abstract, she is also synthesized to the aspects that drive the organs of sensitive perception. These are the effects, the reminiscences of 18th century sensualist psychology, as noted by Joan Landes in her book

18. *Dicționarul Literaturii Române de La Origini Până La 1900 [The Dictionary of Romanian Literature from Its Origins to 1900]* (București: Editura Academiei RSR, 1979), 169.

19. Didier Dumas, *Sans père et sans parole: La place du père dans l'équilibre de l'enfant* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 2009), 27. (In the original French: „Les pères savent bien que dans toute fille sommeille une Jeanne d´Arc prête à lever des armées pour les secourir et, dans nos ideaux démocratiques, Marianne est une «Jeanne d´Arc républiquaine». Elle représente un fantasme typiquement masculin, celui de la «mère guerrière» pensant, a sa place, ce que l´homme a à faire".)

Visualizing the Nation. Gender, Representation and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France[20]. According to the author, that was when the associations of the feminine with the senses and instinctual, sensory knowledge and of the masculine with the higher forms of cognition, with abstract, rational thinking were strengthened. From such a perspective, the images are closely linked with the feminine – the images are feminine (by extrapolation, the same may be stated about theatre). Later, Sigmund Freud would find that the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy was marked by the interdiction of illustrating God by images, which would mean the triumph of the spirit over the senses. This prohibition against making an image of God, claims Joan Landes, following on Jean-Joseph Goux (author of *Les Iconoclastes*, Paris, 1978) and on Maria Hélène Huet, should be linked with the taboo relating to the incest with the mother in Judaic tradition, because, as put by her:

> By carving images of Gods, one is making a material image of the mother and adoring the maternal figure through the senses. By tearing oneself away from the seduction of the senses and elevating one's thoughts towards an un-representable god, one turns away from desire for the mother, ascends to the sublime father and respects the law.[21]

In Caragiale's *100 de ani*, the soldier worships in the Queen's image this precise maternal figure (in his opinion, the portrait paints "the best mother"), while Carol I, the quasi-divine paternal figure, continues to be unrepresented. Instead, the King intercedes between the country and the "transcendent father", like the biblical Moses, and he decrees: "Nihil sine Deo". Of course, once the written law appears, no "illustration", no other "scene" may follow – the curtain falls. In this context, we may say that Caragiale's "armed Romania" enables the transition from the feminine images (Moldavia, Wallachia, the Angel, the brave Lelea, the Queen's portrait) to the masculine text: she "grows virile", she mans up, after she receives the law – "Nihil sine Deo" – (see the scene with the Sentry) and she assimilates it.

20. Joan B. Landes, *Visualizing the Nation. Gender, Representation and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (New York: Cornell University Press, n.d.), 33–34.

21. Marie-Hélène Huet, *Mourning Glory: The Will of the French Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1997), 46–47.

As noted by a number of commentators after the premiere, *100 de ani...* lacks any reference to the rule of Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1820-1873), the first ruler of the United Principalities (between 1859-1866) and the predecessor of Prince Carol I. This omission was severely criticized and, in general, it was assigned to Caragiale's intention to "butter up" the monarch. There can be many speculations with regard to this omission, but I cannot claim to know what Caragiale's intent was; however, I do not believe that the author's opportunism is a sufficient, strong enough explanation. That man was much shrewder and subtler than that. The king couldn't have been offended by the reminiscence of Cuza's personality. He had nothing to do with the February 1866 coup d'état; then, Alexandru Ioan Cuza had been removed by a coalition that included representatives of the main political parties. And, had he wanted to do so, Caragiale would have been able to evoke Cuza, without any demeaning aim at the personality of Cuza's successor. Writer and journalist Ion C. Bacalbașa, who had mentioned several times Caragiale's revue in the press of that time, added, to Cuza's absence, another criticism: the manner in which Caragiale had illustrated the "whole movement of 1848", choosing to limit it to the exile of Bălcescu and Alecsandri, "who, in the end, do not embody this movement"[22]. The same Bacalbașa pinned on Caragiale the fact that he "failed to do the work of an unbiased historian; instead, he focused on some feelings that cannot bring acclaim to a man who means something."

My guess is that the playwright did not even intend, for a single moment, to "do the work of an unbiased historian" in *100 de ani...*, but he used the occasion for the illustration and promotion of the organicist-evolutionist view on history, a view he shared with the members of the cultural and political association Junimea (which I've mentioned before). Or, according to this view, a society's development – toward a natural, organic, substantial structure – needs time: it does not occur on the spur of the moment, by great spasms, by sudden leaps, by revolutions (Caragiale loathed the revolutionaries of 1848 and they would often become the target of his wit!). Otherwise, the risk is the occurrence of the "forms without

22. Ion C. Bacalbașa, "Cronica teatrală. 100 de ani, revistă istorică a secolului, în 10 ilustrațiuni, de d. I.L. Carageale [Theatre Review. 100 Years, Historical Revue of the Century, in 10 Illustrations, by Mr. I.L. Carageale]," *Adevărul*, 1899.

content/forms without substance" – as labelled by Maiorescu, the leader of Junimea –; these forms devoid of substance meant ornamental institutions and hollow cultural products. Titu Maiorescu (1840-1917) developed his theory of "forms without substance" while influenced by "German and English organicism and historic evolutionism (Herder, Fr. K. von Savigny, H.Th. Buckle, etc.)"[23], as shown by Marta Petreu in *Filosofii paralele [Parallel Philosophies]*. In another book, called *Filosofia lui Caragiale [Caragiale's Philosophy]*, the same author dedicated a very substantial chapter to the writer's "socio-political philosophy"[24] and she analysed at length Maiorescu's influence on him in this sense, so I will not dwell on it here. Cuza's accession to the throne (he had been elected ruler, at the same time, by both Principalities, which thus became unified in 1859) was, largely, the outcome of the struggles applied by the generation of the 1848 revolutionaries. His radical policies had stemmed from their programme. In order to be able to apply them, in 1864, Cuza restricted the powers of the parties represented in the Assembly of Romania by a coup d'état. Especially toward the end of his rule, he acted like a despot (an enlightened one, however), by ignoring the parliamentary majority. He became rather unpopular and, in the end, he was forced to abdicate. Unlike him, Prince Carol was a more balanced reformer and a monarch who never exceeded his constitutional prerogatives. Furthermore, owing to his longevity, under his rule, Romania went through an unexpected age of stability. In retrospect, Cuza's rule (during which the foundations of the modern Romanian state were laid, in fact) must have resembled to Caragiale to a syncope in the organic evolution in which he had put his faith, when the demon of disavowal would not possess him. Because, there were times when, and we need to stress this, the writer would challenge the idea of progress (see the parody that, according to Ștefan Cazimir, was the basis of the revue *100 de ani...*,); in this sense, Caragiale was a true "anti-modern", as put by Antoine Compagnon. Perhaps the same conservative vision pushed him toward avoiding the focus on episodes like the Revolution of 1848 or the War of Independence, which are not depicted in the peak moments of the

23. Marta Petreu, *Filosofii Paralele [Parallel Philosophies]* (Iași: Polirom, 2013), 22; See Also Marta Petreu, Ioan Muntean, and Mircea Flonta, "Romania, Philosophy In," The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2004, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780415249126-N108-1.

24. Marta Petreu, *Filosofia lui Caragiale [The Philosophy of Caragiale]* (București: Editura Albatros, 2003), 131–69.

fight, but rather in the *post-factum* scenes, i.e. those that recall and reassess (grievingly or festively, as appropriate). If, from the movement of 1848, he selected solely the exile enforced upon some of the revolutionaries, this was probably owed also to the fact that the author had started to contemplate seriously on the problem of emigration, a thing that his contemporaries could not really know. So, it is my contention that Caragiale's "national historical revue" is more than a minor piece of homage art: it is an exercise of historical re-evaluation underpinned by a certain philosophy of history (which just happened to be indebted, indirectly, to the Romantic anti-Enlightenment historicist school of thought). But, in order to better understand it and assess its implications, one needs historical perspective, enabling a retrospective view on Caragiale's life and writings, as well as on - to a larger extent - his age.

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