

Fantastic Realia: Some Lexical Correspondences (Russian-Romanian)

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Abstract: The traditional folkloric substratum of different cultures and the mythological one are still very noticeable nowadays, and the modern person cannot disregard them, as they are intensely reinterpreted, reimagined, and promoted in a vast array of fantasy books, fantasy films, etc. The protagonists of fantasy culture are the imaginary, supernatural, magical, demonic beings, the totemic animals, the fantastic objects, etc. In relevant literature they are defined as mythemes. Moreover, another present-day function was assigned to folkloric, mythological elements (the mythemes) through their animated metamorphosis into the realm of video games, already being annotated, listed online. The present paper aims to emphasise the role of realia-mythemes in traditional and current culture on one hand, and on the other hand to present a series of means of conveying, mainly in Romanian, the fantasy (i.e., folkloric, mythological) realia-words with Russian cultural characteristics (cf. *Баба-Яга* [Ro *Baba-Iaga*], [En *BabaYaga/Jaga*]; *Богатырь* [Ro *bogatîri*], [En *bogatyr*]; *Василица Премудрая* [Ro *Vasilisa Premudraia*], [En *Vasilisa Premudraya*]; *Жар-птица* [Ro *jar-ptița*], [En *zhar-ptitsa*]; *Русалка* [Ro *rusalca*], [En *rusalka*], etc.). The transfer of realia elements constitutes a complex process that has been drawing the attention of researchers for a long time, especially since there is no “sole” translation solution, and the “ideal” rendering of these units is performed by considering certain intra- and extralinguistic, intra- and extra-translational aspects.

Keywords: culture, folclore, myth, fantastic realia

1. Introduction. Folklore and Myth Nowadays

1.1.

Traditional folklore level and mythological level are very visible nowadays in various fields, because folkloric elements “defy temporal limits and ethnic borders”, and mythology and its components “ignore the history and the spatial-temporal concreteness.” (cf. Evseev 1999: 8).

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1.2.

Modern man cannot ignore the folkloric or mythological (ancestral) motifs of various cultures, these being popularized and reinterpreted (reimagined) in a wide range of fantastic books and films, etc. In fact, at the same time, another use of folkloric, mythological elements has been found by their animated transformation into the world of video games that it populates, being already glossed, listed in the online environment, e.g., *The Witcher Bestiary*ⁱ, an e-bestiarium that has the following categories: *beasts, cursed ones, draconids, elementa, hybrids, insectoids, necrophages, ogroids, relicts, specters, vampires*. Their rich repertoire is a sign of a “folkloric and mythological thinking and sensibility” (Evseev 1997, 1999) that cannot be limited in time and space, at least from the moment the formula “once upon a time...” was used.

1.3.

Imaginary, supernatural, fabulous characters, demonic creatures, totemic animals, and magical objects are the protagonists of the fantasy culture (popular or cult). They are *mythonyms* (cf. Evseev 1999: 9). A particularly important clarification related to their understanding is that their circumscription “to the mythological (*i.e.* the fantastic / fictional, our addition DG) sphere depends on the amount of the addition of fantasy, which transfers the work of the real and pragmatic to the horizon of the imaginary” and not on “its ontological reality or unreality”. The statement of the linguist I. Evseev seems essential in defining the specificity of these elements.

1.3.1.

The category of mythonyms includes, for example: magical birds (*Pasărea-Măiastră* (E Master-Bird), in Romanian; *Жар-птица* (E Fire-Bird), in Russian (see below); Phoenix, in Greek; “*anka* of Arabic lore and the *garuda* of Hindu mythology” (cf. Lenz 2005: 84); “the Taoist’s *oiseau de cinabre (tan-niao)*, the Chinese *feng-huang* (or *-hwang*), and the *Siva* of Hindu mythology” (Lenz 2005: 84); “the Persian *simorgh* and the Turkish *kerkes*” (Lenz 2005: 84); *Mael Dúin*, in Irish story (Lenz 2005: 85)), fish-beasts, dragons, ogres, giants, etc., but also bears, undead, ghosts, werewolves, evil spirits, good spirits, etc. (for Romanian mythology, see Șăineanu 1895; Niculiță-Voronca 2008 [1903]; Pamfile 1916; Călinescu 1965; Chițimia 1971; Bîrlea 1976; Coman 1980, 1986, 1988, 1996; Evseev 1983, 1987, 1997, 2001; Vulcănescu 1985; Oișteanu 1989; Ghinoiu 2001; Talos 2001; Olteanu 2010; Bârlea and Panțu 2014, etc.). Another defining fact in understanding mythonyms must be emphasized: “most mythical (*i.e.* fantastic / fictional, our addition DG) symbols belonged to the sphere of religious beliefs and practices” (Evseev 1999: 14).

1.3.2.

Mythonyms, popular or cult, work on the basis of the specific principles of archetypes: *beneficial-evil, sacred-profane, bad-good*, etc. (the descriptors introduced by C. Lévi-Strauss) and are based on their *ambivalent character*.

1.3.2.1.

For example, the mythonym created by J.R.R. Tolkien, *hobbit* (“an imaginary creature like a small human, described in books by J.R.R. Tolkien” – *Cambridge Dictionary*, see *hobbit*) is built in his book based on the principles listed above. Moreover, we believe that similarities can be identified with some characters, present in the folklore of many language communities. For example, a mythical being of small stature, characterized by cleverness and skill is *Barbă-Cot* (Șăineanu 1895: 178-186; 562-563): in Romanian: *Barbă-Cot*, *Piticot*, *Statu-palmă*, *Statu-palmă-barbă-cot*, *Tarta-Cot*, *Șchiopu-cu-barba-cât-cotul*, *Statu-palmă-barbă-cot-pe-jumătate-de-iepure-șchiop*ⁱⁱ; the French: *Le petit Poucet*, *Petit Bonhomme*; in German: *kleiner Mann mit einem seiben Ellen langen Bart*; in Bulgarian: **Педя човек – лакът брада** [Span Person – Elbow Beard] or the character pattern of the *Tom Thumb* (Șăineanu 1895: 178-186; 562-563): in Romanian: *Neghiniță*, *Pipăruș*, *Sfredeluș*, *Prichidușă*; in German: *Der kleine Däumling*; in Russian: *Мужичок с ноготок, а борода с локоток*; in French: *Grain-de-Millet*, *Perpelet*; in Italian: *Cecino*, *Detto-Grosso*; in Portuguese: *Grãos-de-Milho*; in Greek: *Τοσοδούλης*; in Bulgarianⁱⁱⁱ: *Покату-горошек etc.* They are found in various cultures under various names. Of course, ambivalence – the specific feature of such characters – cannot be missing. Thus, all these mythical/ folklore creatures also have negative features, among which are, in the case of the mentioned characters, a certain dose of malice, of unpredictable, contradictory behaviour, in the key moments of the story. So, as in folklore, the hobbit has the qualities of a folk / fairy tale character: his mood changes – sometimes playful, sometimes threatening (the principle of the mentioned dualities) (“The hobbits in the film look and behave like children, albeit in adult clothing.”, “Even after recovering his strength and returning home to his hobbit-hole he is not happy or at peace.”, cf. *Cambridge Dictionary*, see *hobbit*).

1.3.2.1.1.

Practically, we get in touch with the appearance of another magic word: *hobbit*.

1.3.2.2.

Let's take another example. The *bear* becomes a demonic tool in video games because it is attributed hyperbolized characteristics. The *bear* has a “double ontological status” being both a “component of the real”, but also a “semiotic cultural unit” (Evseev 1999: 9), being described as follows: “the bear is a beast of the forests (. . .), but also a totemic animal, a reincarnation of the mythical ancestor.” (Evseev 1999: 9). It is considered the “zoomorphic twin of man” because, in various ethnos, there is a belief that the bear was originally a human^{iv} (Evseev 2001: 202). Anthroponyms contain etymons meaning “bear” (cf. Evseev 2001: 202-203): *Arthur* (<*artos* “bear”); *Mieszko* (a euphemism for bear representing the name of the dynasty of Polish princes); *Zamolxis* (<*zalmos* “bear skin”, represents the supreme god of the Dacians). Here is how it is described in the mentioned e-bestiaary:

Bears are generally found far from human habitation, either in the high mountains or in the deep woods. Opposite of dogs and wolves, bears are solitary creatures, which is probably for the best considering how strong a killing machine they are. It is simple enough a thing to avoid fighting a bear, but that is not always the case. A bear may be clumsy but they run at high speeds despite their bulky sizes, so running away may not always be an option, especially if you have already angered the bear. (*The Witcher Bestiary*)

1.4.

By building these types of characters, we keep in touch with the so-called traditional culture, these situations being a testament to our attitude towards a certain part of traditional culture. In this context, we can talk about a renewal (quasi-renewal) of the magico-religious attitude of current cultures that cannot get rid of ancestral images no matter how hard they try. One fact is, however, certain, that the mythological / fantastic representation is as present as ever, in the collective imaginary (and, of course, in the individual-authorial imaginary, which is the main propagator today). Since a certain receiver is quasi-conscious of them, it is not difficult to understand the role of such a character. The pattern on which mythonymic characters are created is unchanged, it is the same as in archaic, traditional culture from various geographical areas. Therefore, even if a certain mythical-fictional character or object is the creation of an author, among the features that the author attributes to it, elements from various traditional cultures can be recognized.

2. Fantastic Realia

2.1.

Mythonyms are realia words.

2.1.1.

Recently, in the international literature of translation studies, the concept “irrealia” was created (Loponen 2009: “fictional realia – non-existing *realia* tied to a fictional setting, whose effect is to define and determine the fictional cultural, geographical and historical settings – thus *irrealia*”), with the help of which the items from cultural fiction / fantasy literature are described, which represent the fantastic/ fantasy realia words such as *dwarf*, *orc*, *gnome*, *goblin*, etc. (Loponen 2019).

2.1.2.

If we were to borrow this concept, we would consider that it is a subcategory of folklore or mythological realia, the only difference being their authorial / cult nature. We have shown briefly, above, how analogies can be found between “established” and newly-appeared mythonyms (*hobbit*; see also Chevereşan 2016). In fact, this type of characters restore the well-known path of the characters from fairy tales / stories / legends / myths, so the receiver (target-reader, target-viewer) understands them with some ease and can predict their features and role in the story.

2.1.3.

In addition, “irrealia” (in Loponen definition) entered the international cultural and linguistic consciousness much faster, being a process supported by the dissemination of the printed book (through translations) in many linguistic spaces, media communication (including social media), and filmography (*The Hobbit*, *Lords of the Ring*, *Harry Potter*, etc.) (see also Percec 2016, Pungă 2016, Chevereșan 2016).

3. Study case: Russian Fantastic Realia and their Romanian Lexical Correspondences

3.1.

Claude Lévi-Strauss (1963: 210), concerned with the understanding and translation of myths (to apply to fictional/ fantasy literature as well), states that “whatever our ignorance of the language and culture of the people where it originated, a myth is still felt as a myth by any reader anywhere in the world” and that “the mythical value of the myth is preserved even through the worst translation” because, it is further explained, “its substance does not lie in its style, its original music, or its syntax, but in the story which it tells”. These statements can target all folk productions: fairy tale, legend, story, etc. of popular or cultured nature. At the same time, we consider that (re)identifying cultural items contributes to the in-depth understanding of the specific features of a linguistic-cultural area.

3.2.

In this section, we present a series of realia words with Russian cultural specificity and the ways of rendering them in Romanian (see also Gheltofan 2019; Gheltofan and Pungă 2018).

3.3.

The translation solutions of the Russian realia-mythonyms presented below are those specified in the reference studies in the field of translation studies (cf. Fedorov 1983 [1953]; Vlakhov and Florin 1980; Newmark 1988; Baker 1992; Moldovan 2000; Lungu-Badea 2004; Dejica & Stoian 2018). The following Russian realia-mythonyms (see also Danilov 2007) will be the articles of a dictionary of Russian realia with their Romanian correspondences, so we considered the translation solutions that target the Romanian language in particular.

- (1) *Баба-Яга* [Ro *Baba-Iaga*] – a positive deity of the Slavic pantheon, protecting the family and children, but a negative symbol in Christianity. In Russian fairy tales, *Baba-Yaga*, with anthropo-phage inclinations, lures humans, children or animals.

Translation solutions:

- a. transliteration: *Baba-Jaga* [E *Baba Yaga*]
- b. phonetic/graphic adaptation: *Baba-Iaga*;
- c. functional analogue: *vrăjitoare*, *vidmă*, *hârcă*, *baborniță* (E *witch*, *sorceress*);

- d. Romanian traditional, local variant: *Baba-Hârca/ Cloanța (-Cotoroanța), Vâj-baba, Muta-Pădurii, Muta-Ciumei, Gheonoaia, Sf. Vineri, Sf. Miercuri, Marțolea*, etc. (E *witch, Hag, the Old Hag*);
- e. explanatory periphrasis + approximation: *demon, din basmele rușești, asemeni vrăjitoarelor* (E *demon, from Russian fairy tales, witch-like*);
- f. hypernym with cultural allusion + explanatory periphrasis: *babușka din izbă, starușka din izba* (E *old woman from Russian peasant house; babushka*);

It is found in expressions such as: Ru *Баба-Яга, костяная нога* [Ro *Baba-Iaga, picior de os*] (E *the Old Hag, bony-leg*) – Ro *Baba-Cloanța, cotoroanța* (rhythm playback, on phonetic bases) (E *the Old Hag from the bag*).

- (2) *Богатырь* [Ro *bogatîri*] – a hero of the Russian epic; character of Russian stories; a hero of Russian fairy tales. He is distinguished by courage, incredible strength, intelligence. Among them: Алёша Попович [E *Aliosha Popovich*], Илья Муромец [E *Ilya Muromets*]. The painting *Богатыри* (E *Bogatyrs*; Ro *Vitejii*) by V. Vasnetsov is well-known.

Translation solutions:

- a. transliteration: *bogatyř* [E *bogatyř*];
- b. phonetic/graphic adaptation: *bogatîri*;
- c. local variant: *voinic, viteaz* (E *strong man, brave man*);
- d. traditional variant: *bogatîri* (E *bogatyř*);
- e. international variant: *colos, gigant, titan, semizeu* (E *colossus, giant, titan, demigod*).

- (3) *Василиса Премудрая* [Ro *Vasilisa Premudraia*] – a heroine of Russian fairy tales. She is endowed with beauty, loyalty, wisdom, having the ability to metamorphose. In most stories, she is the daughter of the emperor of the seas. To fulfil his love, the main hero must save her from the clutches of dragons. Its synonymous ethnonyms are: “Царь-девица” [E *Tsar-devitsa*], “Василиса Прекрасная” [E *Vasilisa Prekrasnaya*], “Елена Прекрасная” [E *Elena Prekrasnaya*], “Елена Премудрая” [E *Elena Premudraya*], “Синеглазка” [E *Sineglazka*], “Марья Моревна” [E *Marya Morevna*], etc. She appears in the fairy tales: *Марья-Моревна – прекрасная королева* [E *Marya-Morevna – prekrasnaya koroleva*], *Елена-королевна и Иван-царевич* [E *Elena-korolevna i Ivan-tsarevich*], *Елена Прекрасная* [E *Elena Prekrasnaya*], *Василий-царевич и Елена Прекрасная* [E *Vasilij-tsarevich i Elena Prekrasnaya*], *Царевна-лягушка* [E *Tsarevna-lyagushka*], etc. At the same time, we find the anthroponym *Василиса* in Russian stories (*byliny*), where it does not represent the emperor’s daughter, but a strong girl, being the offspring of riches, a prototype of the Amazons („*Василиса Микулишна*” [E *Vasilisa Mikulishna*]). The anthroponymic, hypochoresic derivation of the ethnonym *Василиса* is particularly rich: *Василиска* [E *Vasiliska*], *Василька* [E *Vasil'ka*], *Вася* [E *Vasya*], *Васа* [E *Vasa*], *Васёна* [E *Vasyona*], *Васеня* [E

Vasenya], *Васюня* [E *Vasyunya*], *Сюня* [E *Syunya*], *Васюха* [E *Vasyukha*], *Васюша* [E *Vasyusha*], *Васяня* [E *Vasyanya*], etc.

Translation solutions:

- a. transliteration: *Vasilisa Premudraja* [E *Vasilisa Premudraya*];
- b. phonetic/graphic adaptation: *Vasilisa Premudraia*;
- c. report with phonetic adaptation + semantic translation: *Preaiñteleapta Vasilisa* (E *Vasilisa the Wise*);
- d. report with phonetic adaptation + semantic translation + periphrasis: *Vasilisa cea iñteleaptă* (E *Vasilisa the Wise*);
- e. culture-target hypernym: *fiica țarului* (E *tsar's daughter*);
- f. functional analogue (culture-source hypernym): *fata de împărat* (E *emperor's daughter*);
- g. variant regarding the culture-target: *țarină* (E *tsarina*);
- h. local variant: *Ileana Cosânzeana*, *Ileana Simziana*, *Ileana Costănțeana*;
- i. international variant: *prințesă* (E *princess*).

(4) *Верни-вода* [Ro *Verni-voda*] – one of the characters of Russian stories (“byliny”), from the series of valiant titans.

Translation solutions:

- a. transliteration; phonetic/graphic adaptation: *Verni-voda* [E *Verni-voda*];
- b. ad litteram translation: *Întoarce apa* (E [he] *turns the water*);
- c. culture-target hypernym: *titan-bogatyř* (E *titan-bogatyř*);
- f. international variant: *colos*, *gigant*, *titan*, *semizeu* (E *colossus*, *giant*, *titan*, *demigod*);
- g. local variant: *uriaș* [E *uriash*].

(5) *Верни-гора* [Ro *Verni-gora*] – one of the characters of Russian stories (“byliny”), from the series of valiant titans.

Translation solutions:

- a. transliteration; phonetic/graphic adaptation: *Verni-gora* [E *Verni-gora*];
- b. ad litteram translation: *Răstoarnă Munții* (E *overturns the mountains*);
- c. culture-target hypernym: *titan-bogatyř* (E *titan-bogatyř*);
- d. international variant: *colos*, *gigant*, *titan*, *semizeu* (E *colossus*, *giant*, *titan*, *demigod*);
- e. local variant: *uriaș* [E *uriash*].

(6) *Домовóй* [Ro *domovoi*] – house spirit-guardian; the protector of the home and family; he is always making jokes.

Translation solutions:

- a. transliteration: *domovoj* [E *domovoy*];
- b. phonetic/graphic adaptation: *damavoi*;
- c. ad litteram translation: *de-al casei* (E [he] *of the house*);
- d. report + explanatory addition: *Domovoi, spiritul casei* (E *Domovoy, household god/spirit*).

e. hypernym: *spiritul/ duhul casei* (E *spirit of the house*).

(7) *Жар-птица* [Ro *jar-ptița*] – firebird; fantastic character from Russian fairy tales. It is like a peacock; shines like gold; and, while singing, it produces pearls. It feeds on golden apples, which gives it youth, beauty and immortality. Famous Russian composer Igor Stravinsky, best known for reviving ballet music, composed the ballet entitled “The Firebird”.

Translation solutions:

- a. transliteration: *žar-ptica* [E *zhar-ptitsa*];
- b. phonetic/graphic adaptation: *jar-ptița*;
- c. semantic translation: *pasărea de foc* (E *fire bird*);
- d. local variant: *Pasărea-Măiastră, măiastră* (E *The Firebird*);
- e. international variant: (*pasărea*) *Phoenix*.

(8) *Змей Горыныч* [Ro *Zmei Gorînici*] – a negative hero of Russian stories and fairy tales; a dragon with 3, 6, 9 or 12 heads. It appears in the following Russian stories: “Добрыня и Змей” [*Dobrynya i Zmey*]; “Чудесная рубашка” [E *Chudesnaya rubashka*], “Золотой конь” [E *Zolotoy kon’*], etc. It is present in the works of Russian painters: Viktor Vasnetsov: “Бой Добрыни Никитича с семиглавым Змеем Горынычем” [E *Boi Dobryni Nikiticha s semiglavym Zmeem Gorynychem*]; Ivan Bilibin: “Бой Добрыни со Змеем” [E *Boi Dobryni so Zmeem*]; Nicholas Roerich: “Победа” [E *Pobeda*], etc.

Translation solutions:

- a. transliteration: *Zmej Gorynyč* [E *Zmey Gorynych*];
- b. phonetic/graphic adaptation: *Zmei Garînici*;
- c. local variant: *zmeu, balaur, zgripsor* (E *flying monster*);
- d. international variant: *dragon, monstru cu aripi, monstru înaripat* [E *dragon, flying monster, fire Drake*].

(9) *Иван-дурак* [Ro *Ivan-durak*] – he is one of the most famous heroes of Russian stories; he is a young peasant who wears the mask of naivety, simplicity or even stupidity, but who proves skilful, clever and fearless in carrying out the orders of the tsar.

Translation solutions:

- a. transliteration; phonetic/graphic adaptation: *Ivan-durak* [E *Ivan-durak*];
- b. semantic translation: *Ivan-prostovan* (E *Ivan the Fool*);
- c. local variant: *Păcală, Dănilă*.

(10) *Иван-царевич* [Ro *Ivan-țarevici*] – the most popular male character in Russian fairy tales. He appears in well-known fairy tales: “Иван-царевич и серый волк” [E *Ivan-tsarevich i seryj volk*], “Царевна-лягушка” [E *Tsarevna-lyagushka*], “Василиса Премудрая” [E *Vasilisa Premudraya*], etc.

Translation solutions:

- a. transliteration: *Ivan-carevič* [E *Ivan-Tsarevich*];
- b. phonetic/graphic adaptation: *Ivan-țarevici*;
- c. culture-target hypernym:
- d. culture-source hypernym: *fiul de împărat* (E *emperor's son*);
- e. local variant: *Făt-Frumos* (E *Prince Charming*);
- f. international variant: *prinț* (E *prince/ Prince Charming*).

(11) *Илья Муромец* [Ro *Ilia Muromeț*] – a hero of the Russian epic, the older brother of Dobrynya Nikitich and Alyosha Popovich. Anthroponymic variants are encountered: *Ieyko*, *Ilya Ivanovich*, *Ilya Murovets*, *Ilya Muravlenin*, *Ilya Svet Ivanovich*, *Ilyusha*, *Ilyushka*, *Ilyushenka*, etc.

Translation solutions:

- a. transliteration: *Il'ja Muromec* [E *Ilya Muromets*];
- b. phonetic/graphic adaptation: *Ilia Muromeț*;
- c. traditional variant: *Ilia Muromeț*.

(12) *Макош* [Ro *Makoș*] – the main female goddess of the Slavic pantheon, Perun's wife. There are variants: *Mokosh*, *Mokusha*, *Makesh*, *Makesha*. Her name contains two parts, meaning “mother of full baskets”, which explains why she is considered the goddess of fertility, rich harvests and well-being and abundance.

Translation solutions:

- a. transliteration: *Makoš* [E *Makosh*];
- b. phonetic/graphic adaptation: *Makoș*;
- c. local variant: *Sfânta Parascheva*, *Sfânta Vineri*, etc.

(13) *Перун* [Ro *Perun*] – the god of lightning, thunder and spring storms; god of Heavenly and Earthly Fire; god of spring; patron of farmers. He is the son of Svarog, the supreme god of the Universe, in Slavic Pantheon. In Christianity, the attributes of Perun are taken over by Sf. Ilie (E *Saint Elijah*). There is the expression *метать перуны* [E *metat' peruny*] (Ro *a tuna și a fulgera*; *a se enerva*, *a se supăra*; E *breathe thunder and lightning at smb.*). Also, the lexeme *перуны* [E *peruny*] can be synonymous with Ro *tunete și fulgere* [E *thunder and lightning*].

Translation solutions:

- a. transliteration; phonetic/graphic adaptation: *Perun* [E *Perun*].

(14) *Святогор* [Ro *Sveatogor*] – a mythological character and valiant giant (богатырь-великан) of Russian stories (“*Святогор и Илья Муромец*” [E *Svyatogor i Ilya Muromets*], “*Святогор и гроб*” [E *Svyatogor i grob*], etc.), which, as his name *святой* (E *saint*) + *гора* (E *mountain*) suggests, lives in the Sacred Mountains.

Translation solutions:

- a. transliteration: *Svjatogor* [E *Svyatogor*];

b. phonetic/graphic adaptation: *Sveatogor*.

(15) *Соловей-Разбойник* [Ro *Solovei-Razboinic*] – evil character in Russian stories, opponent of Ilya Muromets.

Translation solutions:

- a. transliteration: *Solovej-Razbojnik* [E *Solovey-Razboynik*];
- b. phonetic/graphic adaptation: *Salavei-Razboinic*;
- c. semantic translation: *Privighetoare-tâlhar* (E *Nightingale the Robber/Bandit*);
- d. traditional variant: *Solovei-Tâlharul*.

(16) *Русалка* [Ro *rusalka*] – spirit of the waters, which lures people with her voice to smother them. It was believed that Rusalkas were the souls of girls, women and children; the celebration of Rusalkas takes place on the night of the summer solstice, the night of Kupalo. The word “русалка” comes from “русы” (blond, light colour). Aleksandr Dargomyshky (Александр Сергеевич Даргомыжский), famous during the imperialist period for his patronage activities, composes the opera “Русалка” (E *Rusalka*) in 1856, the libretto being signed by Russian writer A. S. Pushkin.

Translation solutions:

- a. transliteration: *rusalka* [E *rusalka*];
- b. phonetic/graphic adaptation: *rusalca*;
- c. local variant: *iele, știme, vâlve, lostriță* (E *wicked fairies, pixie, pixy*);
- d. traditional variant: *rusalcă* (E *rusalka*);

international variant: *sirenă, nimfă, ondine* (E *mermaid, nymph, undine*)

4. Conclusion

4.1.

Natural language is a metasystem that encompasses in itself all signs relevant to a national culture”, and “fantastic fairy tales and folk legends [including myths and other folk productions] are not simple productions of amusement and verbal delight, but true treatises of folk philosophy, truthful documents about the thinking and feeling of people from bygone eras. (Evseev 1999: 6)

4.2.

Studies in the field of folklore, mythology, symbolism, cultural anthropology, and cross-cultural studies are necessary in interpreting the “new” forms (mythonyms) that we find in fantasy literature, film productions, the world of video games, etc. Just as “there is no serious reason to isolate fairy tales from myths” (Lévi-Strauss *apud* Monin *et al.* 2019), there is no reason to isolate folk creations from cult ones when it comes to their mythological dimension, since they can be studied together.

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ⁱThe guidance in the world of video games was offered by Andrei Greculescu, a 3rd year student in Modern Applied Languages, majoring in English and Russian.

ⁱⁱȘăineanu remarks a very interesting fact related to the fact that only in the Romanian fairy tale we find the variant *Statu-palm-beard-elbow-on-half-lame-rabbit*, whose segment “on-half-lame-rabbit” it is found only in the Avars fairy tales (Caucasus) (or in Indian fairy tales, it appears on the back of a mouse). This is in deed remarkable, since it is considered that there was no contact between these cultural spaces.

ⁱⁱⁱ For Bulgarian culture, see Angelova 2020.

^{iv}“Hunters know that the body of a skinned bear reveals disturbingly close shapes to those of man.”(cf. Coman 1986: 174).