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What's in a Name? Modest Considerations on the Situatedness of Language and Meaning¹

Abstract: In this paper I tackle the relationship between language, knowledge and power. To this end, I try to give some reasons for the non-arbitrariness of some words, as well as for the non-arbitrariness of grammatical genders in Romance languages, especially Romanian and French. I focus on several specific linguistic structures and uses of particular words in these two languages. I particularly deal with the construction of a third grammatical gender, the neuter, in Romanian, in comparison to the two grammatical genders existing in French, trying to see how the application of Irigaray's theory on the gender of nouns functions for Romanian language. There is no third grammatical gender in French, and therefore Irigaray's argument is proved to be invalid for Romanian. The questions that lead my analysis are: What corporeality does the third grammatical gender, the neuter in Romanian, point to? How are we to consider neuter words? Is the neuter a necessary and sufficient proof for considering Romanian a less sexist language? Is the neuter the guarantor of impartiality and equilibrium in a grammatically gendered language?

But here I become uncomfortable with the language of truth.
(Nancy Hartsock)²

Adam named his wife Eve.
(Gen. 3:17, 20)

Prologue

It is becoming more and more difficult to write in gender studies. Almost (and I use "almost" for fear of generalizing!) all the concepts have already been critiqued and dismantled. Even *gender*, once the fundamental basis for feminist theorizing, is now questioned and many critiques are directed against it. Overgeneralization, misrepresentation, exclusion, marginalization, and essentialism are only a few of the many accusations brought upon feminist theories and writing by feminists themselves. If gender, the cornerstone of feminism, is revealed to be so

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East-West Divide (2004).

KEY WORDS:

language, gender, knowledge, power, feminist theory, sexism, the neuter gender.

multifaceted and therefore controversial and misleading, than what can be said about language? Language, following the line of these critiques (constructing or dismantling?), is even more controversial, and it is even more difficult to produce theories and to analyze language, as any theory and analysis presupposes a certain degree of generalization. And how can one possibly believe that generalizing about language would ever be accepted as valid by academics? For language is one of the most difficult issues, as there is not only one language, but rather thousands of languages, each with its specific features. Therefore, theorizing about language is an almost (again, I say almost in order to avoid any critique of overgeneralization and to give my article a chance) impossible task.

I point out this dilemma because I am aware of that my modest analysis of a few sexist aspects of language is not all encompassing. Furthermore, I acknowledge the debatable character of the arguments I will present here.

The power of naming: language and the construction of meaning and knowledge

Much feminist criticism has dealt and continues to deal with sexist aspects of language. For “[language] encodes the culture’s values and preoccupations, and transmits these [...] to each new generation”³ and, furthermore, “linguistic representations both give a clue to the place of women in the culture

and constitute one means whereby we are kept in our place.”⁴ Most of these critiques of language conclude that the languages we use are sexist, that it is not reality, as loudly claimed, that shapes languages, but, on the contrary, languages are what shape reality, which consequently is perceived according to a masculine stereotyped perspective:

“Many feminists have made the claim that the names we give our world are not mere reflections of reality, nor arbitrary labels with no relation to it. Rather, names are a culture’s way of fixing what will actually count as reality in a universe of overwhelming, chaotic sensations, all pregnant with a multitude of possible meanings.”⁵

Feminist critiques and views on language are diverse and complex, a thing that in itself suggests the profound importance and influence of language for feminist theory and therefore for a knowledge production that would make women’s experiences visible. They are centered on aspects ranging from the vehement rejection of the (mis)use of the generic *he* and *man*⁶ and the titles that indicate women’s marital status (“Miss”, “Mrs.”, arguing for the introduction of the neutral “Ms”), as formal forms of address, and the informal forms of address (“baby”, “chick”, “bitch”, “honey”), to dissatisfaction with the language of literature. Feminists’ quest for new ways of expressing experiences and feelings specific to women in literature reveal the incapability of male language when it came to conveying female experiences. The challenge faced by women was one of in-

venting a new language that would allow them to represent themselves, a different language, free of male forms and structures. For “‘difference’ in women’s writing does not only refer to what is written about, but also to the language in which it is written.”⁷ Thus a new way of writing would emerge, a writing specific to women, metaphorically named by Hélène Cixous “writing in milk,”⁸ as opposed to men’s writing, which I would call, for the sake of parallelism, “writing in sperm.”

Linguistic structures and grammar were exposed as carrying and reproducing sexist stereotypes. Thus, a critical study of grammar and linguistic patterns emerged as a *sine qua non* condition for a true understanding of language and the way in which it creates and perpetuates biased views of the world in those who use it.

There is an intimate relationship between language and knowledge, between the act of naming and that of knowledge production, a relationship in which the former influences, structures, and constructs the latter. Knowledge is a finite (however large this may be) block of accumulations and can not be (and it is not), as claimed by men, universal or all-encompassing, the so-called “view from nowhere.”⁹ Unlike knowledge, language, whose most important feature is its (supposed) capability of infinite combinations and therefore conveying infinite meaning and representations, should really be the “view from nowhere.” However, this is not really true for language either, since language has a specific location: it is socially, culturally and politically located, and this particular locus of language is male.

It is generally accepted, since Ferdinand de Saussure forward, that the linguistic sign, i.e., the word, is arbitrary,¹⁰ that there is no internal pre-existing connection between the signified *sister* and the sequence of sounds (signifier) s-i-s-t-e-r, the signal or the word designating it.¹¹ It could be represented by any other sequence of sounds (letters, for the written word), and the proof of this fact is the difference between languages and the very existence of different languages. If there are different words for the same concept (*sister* in English, *soeur* in French and *sora* in Romanian), then no one can possibly deny the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign. Similarly, no one can deny the arbitrariness of the word *man* and the *non*-arbitrariness of the word *woman*, seemingly derived from *man*, therefore defined in relation to it, and meaning *wife of man*.¹² The woman has always been defined in relation to a man, be it her father, brother, husband, and even son. This dependence of women on men is reflected in language, in the words and the grammatical structures of language.

It is not by accident that language is constructed in such a way as to place women in the inferior position, to depict them as dependent, secondary, subordinated. Men have always appropriated the higher position for themselves, no matter what the field, and the same thing happened with language. Since language is one of the most important “battlefields” of power, as it is through language that one perceives reality, it became vital for men to construct it according to their need for primacy. One need only do a study of several languages in order to realize the profoundly gendered character of words and

language structures and their influence upon the construction of knowledge.

Feminist critiques have argued that women should work to name their specific experiences, that until language became free of sexist implications there would be no knowledge that truly conveyed and represented women. It is therefore evident how and why it became necessary for women to name the world according to their reality, for the word is not a mere instrument that makes dialogue possible, but a powerful means of structuring the world and rendering it available to inquiry and knowledge production by those (men until recently) who are in the privileged position of using it to their advantage. In this light, naming is a vital precondition for knowledge production, and since “knowledge is power,” it follows that naming is power as well. However, naming is also an action that occurs in a political context, and therefore naming is a political action.

Luce Irigaray made a pertinent remark in that “[t]he grammatical gender is neither motiveless, nor arbitrary [...] the distribution of grammatical gender is based on semantics and it has a meaning related to our corporeal and sensory experience.”¹³ Although most linguists consider the grammatical gender to be arbitrary, totally independent from sexual connotations, feminist linguists have proved in their analyses that words are in fact profoundly sexed, and moreover, those words whose grammatical gender is masculine are usually more valued, have positive connotations and meaning, whereas the feminine words are devalued and ranked lower:

“To guarantee loyalty to its authority, the male people consciously or unconsciously represents whatever has value as corresponding to its image and its grammatical gender. Most linguists state that grammatical gender is arbitrary, independent of sexual denotations and connotations. In fact this is untrue. They haven’t really thought about the issue. It doesn’t strike them as being important. Their personal subjectivity, their theory is content to be valorized like the masculine, passing for an arbitrary universal. A patient study of gender of words almost always reveals their hidden sex. Rarely is this immediately apparent.”¹⁴

Irigaray illustrates this point by the example of “un fauteuil” (a sofa) and “un château” (a castle), both masculine words in French, according to their grammatical gender, on one hand, and “une chaise” (a chair) and “une maison” (a house), feminine words, on the other.¹⁵ One could argue that there is no implied (or gendered) meaning in these words, but, at a closer look, as Irigaray pointed out, the first two words refer to “higher-class” goods, are luxurious, elegant. The latter pair of words, whose grammatical gender is feminine, represent common things, things that are not special, mere tools for the use of *men* (I purposely used “men” in this context, because it is men who have “the privilege” of owning objects).¹⁶ So those words, marked as masculine by the “arbitrary” grammatical gender, are valued far more positively than the words perceived as feminine. For men have always tended to appropriate for

themselves those objects of higher value and give them their own “sex” (or “gender”), they have therefore tended to sexualize the objects around them. And Irigaray argues that this example of different (and I might say hierarchized) valorization of masculine and feminine words is not a unique or isolated case, and that a thorough analysis of the lexicon would reveal the words’ sex and therefore their gendered semantics.

From this “work” of engendering the words, and therefore the objects, through assigning them a grammatically inscribed gender, emerges one more aspect in which language is proved to have sexist implications. Irigaray speaks about the possibility and impossibility of owning objects through language. Since in French, and also in Romanian, the possessive pronoun agrees in gender (and number) with the object possessed rather than with the possessor, women are faced with the impossibility of really owning objects:

“Owning a few goods equivalent to those men have doesn’t solve the problem of gender for women who speak Romance languages because these goods don’t bare the mark of their owner’s subject. We say *mon enfant* (my child) or *mon phallus* (my phallus) whether we are men or women. For valuable “objects,” the mark of ownership is the same. As for other “objects,” they are generally devalued when they are likely to be used or appropriated by women alone.

The problem of the object and its conquest can not therefore solve the problem of inequality of sexed rights in all languages.”¹⁷

A third grammatical gender: the “neuter” in Romanian

What I would argue, with respect to Irigaray’s argument about the gendered character of substantives, is that in Romanian there are three grammatical genders, which makes the analysis more difficult and therefore the result controversial. So, although for the singular form of the above words in Irigaray’s example the argumentation would not only be valid and pertinent but also revelatory, when it comes to the plural form of the very same words the situation seems to change. “Un fauteuil – des fauteuil” (a sofa – sofas) in French is still masculine, but in Romanian “un fotoliu – fotolii” is neuter, and a neuter noun in Romanian is defined by the fact that for the singular form, the noun’s grammatical gender is masculine, but in the plural form it becomes feminine. The same can be said about “un château – des châteaux” and “un castel – castele”: in French the form is masculine, whereas in Romanian the plural form is feminine. So there is a different situation here, somewhat puzzling and unexpected, a word that is masculine in the singular form becomes feminine when it is in the plural form. How can this be interpreted from Irigaray’s perspective? Are we to conclude that Romanian is a less sexist language due to the fact that there is, besides masculine and femi-

nine, one more grammatical gender, called neuter? I think an analysis of this aspect, of the very name and existence of this “extra” gender, would reveal interesting things, for the dichotomy masculine/ feminine seems to be broken here by the interference of a third gender. What is the corporeality, the referent of the neuter grammatical gender? What kind of “reality” does it point to?

There is one more aspect, rather contradictory, revealed in this example. This is the fact that when it comes to the plural, the words become feminine. And this seems to contradict the grammatical rule of making the plural in Romanian, as well as in French. Because in Romanian, similar to French, the plural retains its gender mark: *ei* (they), the masculine form in Romanian, and *ils* (they), the masculine form in French, are used for both an exclusively masculine plural and for a plural constituted by masculine and feminine nouns. However, *ele* (they), the feminine form in Romanian, and *elles* (they), the feminine form in French, can only be applied to exclusively feminine nouns. So, if there are one thousand women and one man the masculine form *ei* or *ils* will be used to refer to them. Why does language allow for such a disproportionate ratio, and make a rule out of it? One sexist explanation is that quality outranks quantity!

Thus, in the light of this grammatical rule of forming the plural in both Romanian and French, it is even more puzzling and contradictory that when it comes to neuter nouns in Romanian (French only allows, as grammatical genders, masculine and feminine) the plural is feminine. It seems that the grammar is not consistent: on the one hand it favors the

masculine, as the prevalent gender, the one that reduces the feminine to itself, and on the other, in a different context, also when it comes to forming the plural, it is the feminine that prevails. How can one understand this? What does this linguistic “fact” prove? Can it be said that Romanian is “less coherently sexist” than French?

It would be difficult and dangerous to conclude from only one example that Romanian is more “sensitive” to gender. However, there are additional considerations that seem to support this view and I will try to analyze some of them.

The case of the word *dor*

Much criticism of language, as I have already pointed out, refers to its inability to convey experiences specific to women, emotions that are considered to be specific to women. One of the means suggested by feminists of overcoming these disparities and this lack was to create a new language,¹⁸ sensitive to women’s experiences and feelings. However utopian these attempts might seem, they should not be totally ignored, because they emphasize, at the same time, the lack of words and the need for them. And this is not utopian, as long as there are languages “richer” than others with respect to their capability of expressing certain feelings and emotions.

For example, the word *dor* in Romanian has no correspondent in English or French and a translation in only one word would be impossible. *Dor* is the conveying of the feeling of “I miss you” (or

should I say “I miss *to* you”?¹⁹), just like love is the conveying of the feeling of “I love (to) you”.

Furthermore, the word “dor” has a special resonance, the resonance of love and pain because of love and missing (!). The word *durere* (pain) has the same etymological root as *dor*, and the verb *a dura* (to hurt, to be in pain), when conjugated at the third person plural,²⁰ becomes *dor*, like in “ma *dor* ochii” (my eyes hurt). Thus, the only way of intelligibly translating into English the Romanian “Mi-e dor de tine” is “I miss you.” But this is not what it literally means, for in English, as well as in French, “I miss you” and “Tu me manques” involve a feeling of missing something or someone, but no pain is conveyed in it, you can as well miss a book because you do not find it. “Mi-e dor de tine” means “I am (in) pain of you,”²¹ you are so important to me and I feel pain when you are not with me.

In English, as well as in French, “I love you” and “Je t’aime” is the way of expressing love. Irigaray argues that this way is reductive and subjugating, the person who expresses it subordinates and appropriates the other to him/herself.²² The introduction of the preposition “to” in English and “à” in French would soften or even elude this aggressive appropriation, allowing subjectivity to the one loved, conferring each of the subjects in love the same position and allowing them to retain their own unconditioned identity. The “to” and “à” break the relation of dependency, the intent of reduction, function as a “guarantor of two intentionalities: mine and yours.”²³

It is true that the Romanian “Te iubesc” (I love you) has the same restricting, appropriating and ob-

jectifying meaning as its English and French counterparts. However, the same cannot be said about “Mi-e dor de tine” (I miss you). For “Mi-e dor de tine” means more “I miss *to* you,” than “I miss you.” The preposition “de” can be said to have the same role as “to” from “I love *to* you”. “De” is the mediation between the *I* and the *You*, between my feeling of “dor” and you; as a subject, it is the “guarantor of two different intentionalities,” each with a recognized right to self-determination, autonomy and non-objectifying. What is unique about “Mi-e dor de tine” is that this is and has been the way of expressing the feeling of missing (to) someone long before the emergence of the critiques of language.

Again the question whether Romanian is a language that is more sensitive to gender emerges, and no answer can be given. Are these examples enough to conclude that a language is more favorable to women, to their need for expressing feelings? There are many sexist aspects in Romanian that would contradict an attempt to describe it as gender sensitive. For each example, a counter-example comes to mind.

For instance, the French “le livre” (the book) is masculine and Irigaray argues, as I have pointed above, that it is so because the book is the asset of the privileged ones, of men. Women speaking Romance languages cannot appropriate a book for themselves,²⁴ as possessive pronouns in French (and in Romanian) retain the gender (and the number) of the object possessed rather than the gender (and number) of the possessor, like in English. Therefore, a woman would say “mon livre” (my book), but the adjective “mon” is masculine, so she would never

succeed in totally appropriating, completely making the “masculine” object her own.

The same is true for Romanian, with respect to the masculine nouns: “copilul meu” (my child) in which “meu” is masculine, in opposition to “copila mea”²⁵ (my baby-girl), where “mea” is the mark for feminine. However, in Irigaray’s example with the book, if applied to Romanian, the situation is again rather strange and unexpected, because “cartea” (the book) has a feminine grammatical gender, as opposed to French. So, not only is it that the book, in Romanian, can be successfully appropriated by women, but it *belongs* to women, if I were to follow Irigaray’s argumentation, because it is feminine from the beginning, it does not have to “become” feminine through the use of a possessive pronoun.

Furthermore, I would suggest an exercise of imagination. Can one imagine the phallus as being feminine? Can one imagine the word “penis” to have a feminine gender (even a grammatical one)? Can one say “la penis(e)” (the penis - feminine)? I doubt that the English linguists or the French Academy would accept such an outrageous “appropriation” of masculinity’s most valuable asset. It is true that in Romanian the word “penis” also has a masculine form in the singular, but it is in fact neuter, because the plural is feminine.²⁶ So, when there are more penises, they become feminine, and when referring to them one would use the feminine form of the third person plural, “ele” (they). That is not to say that the penis *can* actually be considered feminine and that Romanian culture is less sexist or less male-oriented than others; the contrary might be said. Nonetheless the existence of a third grammatical gender makes it

difficult to analyze and interpret the gender of words in Romanian, and such examples as the ones above can only prove the manifoldness and controversy of the use of words.

One more aspect I would like to briefly discuss in this paper is the “sex of occupations.” There are professions and words to name the people performing those professions that are only used in the masculine form, although there are many women working in those fields. The Romance languages seem to be more sexist than English, for instance, from this point of view, because the existence of grammatical genders allows an even more pronounced segregation of the sex (sexes?) of occupations.

In Romanian, as well as in French, there are many professions in which there are many women, but there are no words to designate the women who perform these occupations, at least not accepted ones (ones that one could find in the dictionary). For example, avocat (lawyer), ministru (minister), decan (dean) etc., are all masculine names of professions used for both, men and women who perform them. In the few cases when there is a feminine correspondent for that particular profession, it usually has a negative connotation, as in “doctoriÎă” (female medical doctor), a word formed through the linguistic process of derivation with the suffix “-iÎă” from the word “doctor” which is the masculine name for the occupation. The derogatory connotation of the word “doctoriÎă” lies in the fact that the suffix “-iÎă” is a diminutive suffix, which therefore diminishes and lessens the features or the qualities of the “original” word to which it is suffixed. Thus a “doctoriÎă” is not, according to the Romanian lan-

guage, a real physician, she is *less* than a physician. Furthermore, the language is also “sexist” in that it concerns some predominantly (not to say exclusively) female occupations, where there is only the feminine word for it: *femeie de serviciu* (cleaning lady). It is obvious why no male critique of language would ever argue for the introduction of a male correspondent word for this profession.

An additional impediment faced by women in their attempt to introduce a feminine name for their profession comes from the fact that often there is no available feminine word for it because the natural term has already been taken up and used for something else. Irigaray argues that men have attributed subjectivity to themselves and surrounded themselves with feminine objects that they use:

“Living beings, the animate and cultured, become masculine; objects that are lifeless, the inanimate and uncultured, become feminine. Which means that men have attributed subjectivity to themselves and reduced women to the status of objects or to nothing. This is true for actual women as it is for the gender of words. *Le moissonneur* (a harvester) is a man. But if, in the line with current debate on names of occupations, a linguist or legislator wishes to name a woman who harvests *la moissonneuse*, the word is not available for a female subject: *la moissonneuse* (harvesting machine) is the tool the male harvester makes use of, or else it doesn't exist in the feminine.”²⁷

The same thing happens in Romanian for certain professions where the feminine word is used for the machine: *semănător* is the masculine word for sower, while *semănătoare*,²⁸ the feminine word, designates the sowing machine, not the woman who sows. And this is not an isolated example in Romanian.

Conclusion

There are two issues revealed in my analysis. If Irigaray's argument of the engendered character of substantives is true for French, the same analysis of Romanian nouns raises several questions. The third grammatical gender in Romanian, the neuter, does not exist in French and therefore her argument is proved to be invalid for Romanian. But what corporeality does this third grammatical gender point to? How are we to consider the neuter words? Is this third grammatical gender, the neuter, a necessary and sufficient proof for considering Romanian a less sexist language? Is neuter the guarantor of impartiality and equilibrium in a grammatically gendered language? These are questions that can not be answered in one single article, but a more profound and thorough analysis of Romanian linguistics might shed more light on this issue.

A second outcome of my analysis is the apparent inconsistency of the grammatical rules of the Romanian language. On the one hand, it favors the masculine grammatical gender over the feminine form with respect to forming the plural, through the use of *ei*

(masculine form for *they*) when referring to a group of both masculine and feminine objects or persons. On the other, in the case of neuter nouns, the singular is masculine, whereas the plural is always feminine.

Moreover, through the existence of certain words and constructions that carry a heavy load of emotions and feelings, Romanian seems to be a more woman-friendly language than is French, as women can better express themselves and find words that convey their emotions. Again, the need for a more profound and extended analysis of Romanian appears as necessary in order to be able to draw a conclusion (if that is ever possible) whether or not it is a less sexist language.

Knowledge is both discursively and linguistically constructed. Lorraine Code thinks that “[l]anguages and discourses reflect, structure and are structured by embedded metaphysical assumptions about the nature of reality.”²⁹ Language is not a neutral means of conveying reality and transposing pure experience into knowledge; the reality and the experiences thus conveyed are not left untouched, they are shaped by the very medium of conveying, that is, by language. It is therefore not surprising that feminist theorists exposed language as sexist and patriarchal, arguing that women have been excluded from language, from the process of naming and meaning construction, and that women’s experiences are excluded from everyday and philosophical vocabularies and distorted in the discourses built upon them:

“Linguistically, it is a man’s world, where woman’s place is defined and maintained by

‘man made language’ in innumerable subtle ways. Hence women must learn to speak a language that does not, in effect, speak of ‘their own’ experiences. [...] [These analyses and critiques of language] open an area of discussion that is particularly valuable to feminist epistemological inquiry. [...] If the language is tailor-made to express those experiences, and if women’s experiences simply fall through the spaces in that same language, the androcentricity of the theory is scarcely a surprise.”³⁰

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Notes:

¹ A version of this paper was presented at the 5th Feminist European Research Conference, August 19-26, 2003, Lund University, Lund, Sweden.

² Nancy C. M. Hartsock, *The Feminist Standpoint Revisited & Other Essays*, Colorado and Oxford: Westview Press, 1998, p. 77.

³ Deborah Cameron (ed.), *The Feminist Critique of Language – A Reader*, London & New York: Routledge, 1999, p. 12.

⁴ Cameron, p.10.

⁵ Cameron, p.10.

⁶ See, for example, Janice Moulton, "The Myth of the Neutral 'Man'," in Nancy Tuana and Rosemary Tong (eds.), *Feminism and Philosophy: Essential Readings in Theory, Reinterpretation and Application*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1995, pp. 124-147.

⁷ Cameron, p. 8.

⁸ Hélène Cixous, "Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks / Ways Out / Forays", in Hélène Cixous, *The Newly Born Woman*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1996, p. 99.

⁹ I am referring here to the concept introduced by Thomas Nagel in *The View from Nowhere*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

¹⁰ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, Paris: Editions Payot & Rivages, 1995 [Romanian translation *Curs de lingvistică generală*, Iași: Polirom, 1998], pp. 87-89.

¹¹ "The link between signal and signification is arbitrary. Since we are treating a sign as the combination in which a signal is associated with a signification, we can

express this more simply: *the linguistic sign is arbitrary.*" (Saussure, p. 87).

12 Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913): woman, womman, wumman, wimman, wifmon, w[=i]fmann, w[=i]mmann; w[=i]f woman, wife + mann. In this respect, feminist critics of language pointed out that the mere "naming" of woman as "woman" leads to the subordination of woman to man, puts woman in the position of being juxtaposed to man, not full and complete in herself, but a prefix to man. I would give another interpretation to this, maybe a more optimistic one, arguing that, on the contrary, "woman" is the whole from which "man" was extracted, thus "man" is part of "woman", and a part is always less than a whole.

¹³ Luce Irigaray, *Je, tu, nous – Toward a Culture of Difference*, New York & London: Routledge, 1993, p. 20.

¹⁴ Irigaray, *Je, tu, nous*, p. 69.

¹⁵ Irigaray, *Je, tu, nous*, p. 69.

¹⁶ Irigaray argues that because of the fact that in French (and this is true for Romanian also) the possessive adjectives have to agree in gender and number with the object and not person who owns the object, women can not own objects whose grammatical gender is masculine. For a more detailed explanation, see below.

¹⁷ Irigaray, *Je, tu, nous*, p. 73.

¹⁸ As, for example, in Triechler and Kramarae, *A Feminist Dictionary* or Mary Daly, *Intergalactic Wickedary*.

¹⁹ I am referring here to Irigaray's "I Love To You" in *I Love To You – Sketch for a Felicity Within History*, New

York & London: Routledge, 1996, pp. 109-113. Irigaray argues that the preposition *to* "maintains the relation of indirection" between the two subjects involved, it is the guarantor of indirection, of non-immediacy, the mediation between *you* and *me*, the sign of "irreducibility and potential reciprocity", of intransitivity.

²⁰ In Romanian, similar to French, when conjugated, verbs have a different form for each person and also for singular and plural.

²¹ Mi (To me) e (is) dor (pain) de (of) tine (you).

²² Irigaray, *I Love To You*, pp. 109-110.

²³ Irigaray, *I Love To You*, p. 110.

²⁴ Irigaray, *Je, tu, nous*, p. 72.

²⁵ It is useful to mention that in Romanian a feminine form for the word "child" exists, as opposed to French, where "l'enfant" (the child) is masculine and it designates both, boys and girls. However, it is uncommon to say, in Romanian, "am o copilă" (I have a girl-child), because the word "copilă" has a different meaning than simply baby-girl, its connotation being of one who is naïve, not responsible for her acts, like in "e o copilă" (she is a girl-child), meaning she is naïve, she can not be made responsible for what she does, she is not an adult.

²⁶ See the discussion above about neuter nouns in Romanian.

²⁷ Irigaray, *Je, tu, nous*, p. 71.

²⁸ The suffix "-oare" is added to the masculine noun in order to make it feminine.

²⁹ Lorraine Code, *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991, p. 58.

³⁰ Code, p. 59-60.