

COMPTE RENDUS / BOOK REVIEWS

LAURA ALBULESCU, *Sfinxul. Pierre Bourdieu și literatura. [Le Sphynx. Pierre Bourdieu et la littérature]*. Préface de Mircea Martin. Postface de Bogdan Ghiu, București, Art, 2014, 318 p.

Suivre le trajet d'introduction de P. Bourdieu au public lettré roumain donne l'occasion de réfléchir une fois de plus sur les conditions d'importation et d'inscription d'un schéma théorique contemporain dans une aire assez éloignée (localement, mais aussi en termes de production des savoirs) de son centre d'émergence. Le choix d'un sujet qui porte sur un nom célèbre que celui de P. Bourdieu, universellement plus cité que rigoureusement lu et commenté, suppose au moins deux directions interdépendantes dans l'effort du questionnement réflexif : premièrement, c'est la position du chercheur pionnier, qui fait de son sujet de recherche et de la condition de primauté les noyaux de son effort légitimant – introduire pour la première fois un certain système théorique imprimé à ce genre de travail un air enthousiaste et orgueilleux de 'passeur' primordial ; deuxièmement, c'est la question du terrain d'accueil, plus ou moins préparé à recevoir fécondement l'importation théorique et qui impose au chercheur autochtone un certain dosage entre information, prise de position fonctionnaliste et attention au trajet d'imposition d'un certain thème. L'étude de Laura Albuлесcu, première synthèse roumaine de la pensée théorique de Pierre Bourdieu, favorise visiblement la première direction : 'son' Bourdieu est un Bourdieu dont le profil se construit à travers une biographie de l'œuvre, dans l'effort soutenu de dévoiler sa boîte d'outils sociologiques, ses crédo et ses autoanalyses, son vocabulaire, ses polémiques et ses détracteurs. Mais l'auteure en question jouit d'un double panache : Laura Albuлесcu a fait de Bourdieu le sujet de ses études doctorales (ce *Sphynx*, rappel livresque à la prose gnomique de E. A. Poe, étant la variante largement modifiée de sa thèse), mais elle est également traductrice et éditrice d'une bonne partie des œuvres du sociologue français, parmi lesquelles on distingue de loin la traduction complète des *Règles de l'art* (avec Bogdan Ghiu, 2007, deuxième édition 2012).

En six sections de longueurs variables, l'étude restitue les principaux axes de la pensée sociologique de l'auteur de *La Distinction* ; cette restitution transversale n'oublie rien de principaux termes opératoires devenus 'marque déposée Bourdieu', de *habitus* à *légitimité* et *violence symbolique*, ni de la position essentiellement anti-substantialiste du sociologue français dans le climat intellectuel contemporain. Pour l'auteure roumaine, le système bourdieusien « ne s'accommode pas au schéma du découpage, [il] doit être lu dans son intégralité » (p. 12), puisqu'il est « suffisant, autarchique et relativement fermé. Le *habitus* appelle le champ, la violence symbolique appelle la domination, la trajectoire appelle le vieillissement social etc. et tous ensemble s'appellent réciproquement » (p. 60). Laura Albuлесcu privilégie ce type de lecture tout au long de son étude, en insistant sur l'effort de mobiliser la théorie dans sa totalité pour garantir l'accès à l'interprétation (p. 105) ; ce qui en résulte serait, selon l'auteure, une troisième voie bourdieusienne, qui explique finalement pourquoi le système est vu en tant que 'relativement' fermé, ce qui peut signifier également totalement articulé et interdépendant : « La recherche impatiente d'une tierce solution, ni dualité, ni monisme, c'est pour Bourdieu une *forma mentis* qui parcourt comme un courant souterrain toute son œuvre; elle se traduit par l'incroyable articulation de tous les plans: stylistique ou rhétorique (l'oxymore ou le chiasme comme figures de choix), morphologique (le *habitus* est, en acte, une 'troisième voie') et syntactique (la méthode bourdieusienne est irrémédiablement marquée par l'obsession du relationnel, de la médiation, des homologies). C'est ici que l'on trouve, probablement, la vraie ambition de Bourdieu » (p. 155). On pourrait lire dans cette citation, dont le mirage intentionnaliste est à peine voilé, la substance de l'étude entière : on est devant un travail de

compréhension de la pensée bourdieusienne, un travail de mise en lumière de son *making of*, suivi d'une description de ses effets de connaissance dans la pensée critique de notre temps.

C'est un travail que l'on ne peut qualifier que de très utile dans le champ roumain, où le trajet d'imposition de P. Bourdieu ne bénéficie d'aucune linéarité convaincante: dès les années 1990, son nom s'impose difficilement, à travers des études qui cherchent à mettre au profit l'un ou l'autre de ses concepts (*habitus* pour les sociologues, *légitimité* pour les politistes, *champ* et *autonomie relative* pour les lettrés etc.). Les premières traductions sont publiées avant la chute du communisme (*L'économie des biens symboliques* en 1986, un recueil d'articles de ARSS en 1988), mais sans écho notable : le traducteur, le sociologue Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu, quitte la Roumanie en 1989 et devient l'un des doctorants de Bourdieu lui-même à l'EHESS. La pensée bourdieusienne fait son entrée dans l'espace académique en tant que référence obligatoire des sciences socio-humaines mais en l'absence d'une traduction systémique : il est lu en français ou en traduction anglaise, et l'espace intellectuel roumain approprié premièrement la démarche bourdieusienne, la mise en question et la mise au travail de ses *modi operandi*, dans des études où on vérifie la mobilité d'un tel concept et d'une telle théorie, ses capacités de faire retravailler les faits et les formes du réel. C'est comme si on fait le test pratique, 'l'application' de la réflexion théorique, premier pas d'une opération d'autant plus compliquée et plus laborieuse. La synthèse de Laura Albuiescu vient après quelques remarquables études de sociologie littéraire qui voient le jour au début des années 2000 et où le système bourdieusien est mis au plus large profit : Ioana Popa sur les traductions de l'espace communiste vers la France, Lucia Dragomir et Petru Negură sur les institutions littéraires de Roumanie, Bulgarie et l'ancienne Moldavie soviétique, Ioana Macrea-Toma sur les formes de légitimité officielle des écrivains etc. Une fois prouvée la souplesse méthodologique, le terrain semble préparé pour l'apparition d'une biographie de l'œuvre, qui n'a plus nécessairement le rôle d'introduire Bourdieu au public roumain (en 2014 on compte déjà une dizaine de titres traduits, presque tous avec un solide appareil de présentation – préfaces ou postfaces, études introductives, dossiers critiques), mais de marquer une étape réflexive dans le trajet d'importation : ne plus penser avec Bourdieu, mais penser sur lui, sur son système et sa postérité.

Dans l'étude de Laura Albuiescu, cet effort de compréhension est rendu plus visible surtout dans la première section (*Quelques concepts opérationnels*) et dans la cinquième (*L'autobiographie entre personnel et impersonnel*), où le travail de réflexion dépasse la démarche descriptive et place la pensée sociologique de Bourdieu dans une logique de la rupture admirablement tracée. En ce qui concerne le rapport de sa pensée à la littérature même, la substance de la deuxième et de la troisième section, les choix de l'auteure vont vers un découpage qui privilégie toujours le fonctionnement relationnel du système bourdieusien. Selon l'auteure, « le piège de cet volume était d'enclaver artificiellement les contenus, selon une 'spécialisation' quelconque, c'est-à-dire de ne lire que les textes sur la littérature, déjà identifiés par la bibliographie, à travers une lecture hâtée » (p. 274) ; par conséquent, elle regarde de près le fondement de la théorie des champs (à partir de l'article « Haute couture et haute culture », repris dans *Questions de sociologie*, qu'elle qualifie comme ayant « le poids d'un vrai manifeste », p. 119), déclare l'espace littéraire un objet privilégié de cette théorie et utilise le volume de Pascale Casanova de 2011, *Kafka en colère*, comme exemple définitif de la pertinence et viabilité théorique du concept de champ littéraire : « probablement la plus créative, la plus ample et la plus élaborée tentative d'appliquer le concept de champ (littéraire) à une autre espace, sans s'inscrire d'aucune manière dans l'orthodoxie des épigones, [ce volume] nous dit que oui, le champ garde son efficacité analytique. Donc la théorie des champs, malgré son évidente perfectibilité – d'ailleurs reconnue par son auteur même – n'est pas du tout une théorie régionale » (p. 123).

D'habitude très attentive à démanteler la moindre objection de ceux qu'elle appelle, d'une manière assez téméraire, « les détracteurs » de Bourdieu (de Jeannine Verdès-Leroux à Pierre Verdrager, mais la série inclut également des noms qui font une sociologie critique tout à fait respectable, comme c'est le cas de Luc Boltanski), l'auteure enregistre sans trop de commentaires les deux théories concurrentes, celle d'Alain Viala sur la naissance de l'institution littéraire et celle de

Bernard Lahire sur l'homme pluriel (mais, assez surprenant, sans renvoyer au concept de *jeu littéraire* de ce dernier). On ressent également comme nécessaire, dans une étude qui marque dans son sous-titre la relation de la pensée bourdieusienne avec le domaine littéraire, un rappel à l'ouvrage coordonné par Jean-Pierre Martin, *Bourdieu et la littérature* (Nantes, éditions Cécile Defaut, 2010), ne fût-ce que pour la contribution de Marielle Macé sur la présence du style chez Bourdieu. La question du style, substance de la quatrième section de l'étude, doit beaucoup à l'expérience de traductrice de Laura Albuлесcu : elle identifie exemplairement « la fondamentale cohérence entre langage et pensée » (p. 205) et dresse une liste d'indices rhétoriques de positionnement, de l'oxymore aux guillemets et à la chiasmophilie, vus comme partie intégrante d'une « rhétorique de la dissociation » (p. 210).

Toutes les sections contribuent, dans cette étude, à la reconstruction savante d'un système de pensée. Enthousiaste pionnière et consciente de son imbattable position, Laura Albuлесcu marque une étape essentielle dans la réception roumaine de P. Bourdieu. Ce serait d'autant plus instructif de suivre les étapes futures du trajet d'imposition du sociologue français dans le terrain roumain, de voir ce qui viendra après une synthèse critique : une véhémence délimitation, une deuxième synthèse, une traduction monographique ou une nouvelle « étude de cas » ?

Magda RĂDUȚĂ
University of Bucharest
Faculty of Letters

CAIUS DOBRESCU, *Plăcerea de a gândi, moștenirea intelectuală a criticii literare românești (1960-1989), ca expresie identitară într-un tablou cultural al culturilor cognitive [The Pleasure Of Thinking. The Intellectual Heritage of Romanian Literary Criticism (1960-1989), as an Identity Marker within a Global Map of Cognitive Cultures]*, București, Editura Muzeului Național al Literaturii Române, 2013, 322 p.

The presence of the literary critic at the center of Romanian cultural life seems like a natural occurrence at first, given that there were very few to have either questioned this matter-of-course centrality, inquired as to its origins or, indeed, think it anything else than innate to a culture whose modern intellectual history has been written, and in a certain – positive – sense, overrun by its humanists.

In his book, Caius Dobrescu doesn't question it either. What he does is something far less easy and, as will be evident shortly, necessary. When talking of Romanian literary criticism after the Second World War and, specifically, of the critics that were active under the communist regime, the scholars of the period have settled into the legitimate habit of analyzing the shadow that state power throws over the practice of criticism, how state sanctioned practices collide with – and sometimes annul – academic liberties (and all other liberties altogether) and lastly, how Romanian philologists have had to walk a thin line between obeisance of political oppressive norms and their own work, which either had nothing to do with the norms it had to follow or, as was sometimes the case, went against them. Dobrescu focuses not on the warring cultural terrain where literary judgment meets power, but on providing us with an explanation for why it was the literary critic in particular that was so often caught in these clashes, having to mediate, to translate, to explain, to find midways or to

offer opposition to interferences that might have threatened the already fragile autonomy of the cultural field.

On borrowing from Norbert Elias' *The Civilizing Process*, the center-point of his theory runs as follows: if the critic is a charismatic figure in Romanian cultural life, as indeed he is, this isn't merely the result of a historical glitch, but the outcome of a long-term series of events starting as far back as the Enlightenment. Unlike his West-European counterpart, over-specialized and weary of any theory reminiscent of *la grande critique* of past centuries, "in the tradition of Romanian modernization, the literary critic hails from *le philosophe* of the nineteenth century, a synthesis of the liberal aristocrat, establishing himself ["*împământenit*"] through the feeling that it is his right to take part in the tradition of the local social elites."

As such, Dobrescu adds, the Romanian critic's "intellectual curiosity", his employment of "rhetorical elegance", his laboring from inside a tradition of cultural sovereignty has turned him into a "vector of modern sociability", a source of "manifest social discourse", has made him an agent "of the local version of what Norbert Elias termed the civilizing process". In Dobrescu's view, Romanian critics think criticism not merely as the craft of reading and reacting to literary texts, of ranking masterpieces and writing prolegomena, but as the updated, modernized ethos that permeated and made possible the culture of the French salons of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The intricate rules and mannerisms of the salons, their model of polite conversation, the emphasis on taste, the high standard of civility of that ethos – all these are things which have found their way into the *conceptual toolbox* of the critic and may explain why he occupies such a central position in Romanian cultural life, a centrality which, be it noted, does not close in on itself but remains inherently open.

However, Dobrescu is careful to state that, even if literary criticism is born at the same time as the literary salon, by the end of nineteenth century it is "no longer a reflex or a component of salon culture. It has become autonomous, it has absorbed and made virtual a structure and communicative culture that were based on the pleasure, freedom and aristocratic gratuity of thinking which were then articulated with bourgeois preoccupations for rigor, precision, coherence, merit, careful use of concepts, and intellectual property."

And it is precisely this culture "of the pleasure of thinking" that the communist regime had tried to undermine and even actively sought to destroy through bureaucratization, censorship and the requirement that intellectuals concede to the politico-philosophical norms of the communist dogma.

In the second part of the book, Dobrescu analyzes works by three Romanian critics of the postwar period: Eugen Simion, Nicolae Manolescu and Mircea Martin, trying to prove how each transfers the desiderata of the Enlightenment ethos into his own work, making criticism into a trans-disciplinary, open, "cognitive practice". Acknowledging that sometimes critics need to pretend and *play nice* under the watchful eyes of the regime, it is Dobrescu's belief that the discipline's core is so profoundly democratic that it cannot but remain independent, open and sometimes even antagonistic. Each of the three critics are aware that a critical endeavor is also, genuinely, a civic enterprise. Or, in Mircea Martin's words: "a meditation on our contemporary literature becomes, in the precise meaning of the term, a meditation on Romanian society".

The often-quoted and as often barely proved "resistance through culture" thus gains new meaning. The thesis that Romanian postwar criticism holds out against the repressive nature of the regime by its innate civility and fundamental openness is believable, argued with much acumen and relying on a (at times frightening) wealth of sources. I would argue, though, that trying to prove what is essentially a societal theory with close-readings of critical texts is useful, but not sufficient. What critics wrote shows what they thought and only obliquely, if at all, how they acted or how they shaped the cultural scenery or how the cultural scenery changed about them as a result of their theories and practices. It would have been interesting to see how criticism performs what it theorizes, through what channels, if any, it leads to a form of civic commitment that might remain deeply cultural and, at the same time, of a profoundly social importance, mirroring, however slightly, the changes that were afoot in the French Enlightenment.

But this of course would require another book, and we can not blame the author of having not written it, since he has already written one which gives us the most interesting and studied explanation to date of why it was the critic, and not the philosopher or the scientist, that occupied the junction point of Romanian culture.

Iulian BOCAI
University of Bucharest
Faculty of Letters

OANA FOTACHE, *Moșteniri intermitente. O altă istorie a teoriei literare* [*Des héritages intermittents. Une autre histoire de la théorie littéraire*], București, Editura Universității din București, 2013, 170 p.

L'idée qui traverse ces essais est bien synthétisée dans le titre qui parle de l'« intermittence » de l'héritage théorique. Oana Fotache situe d'emblée sa réflexion dans l'espace périlleux des entraves qui menacent le transfert du savoir théorique : l'incompréhension ou l'aveuglement face à la visée des idées, l'éloignement géographique, l'appartenance à une culture périphérique ou démunie de ressources littéraires, la clôture politique ou économique. L'intermittence – c'est-à-dire la transmission irrégulière des théories en fonction des décalages, des découvertes imprévisibles et des résurgences inattendues – participe à une véritable pathologie de l'isolation qui conditionne toute activité réflexive dans le monde des lettres. Il faut se rappeler la célèbre modélisation anthropologique du travail intellectuel faite par Tony Becher et Paul Trowler en 1989 (*Academic Tribes and Territories*) et reprise par Jean-Marie Schaeffer, dans son essai de 2011, *Petite écologie des études littéraires*. Entre le modèle de connaissance dans les sciences dures et celui des sciences humaines il y a la différence entre une organisation « urbaine » (forte concentration des chercheurs, agglomération sur des terrains de travail partagés, communication intense) et une organisation « rurale » (des espaces de réflexion individuels, écartés à l'instar des fermes isolées, et surtout une faible fréquentation des lieux communs, de rencontre avec les autres spécialistes). C'est notamment ce manque d'homogénéisation du champ lettré, réitéré dans une longue histoire de la méconnaissance des traditions théoriques à l'Est ou à l'Ouest, qui nourrit le fort pessimisme à l'égard de la possibilité d'accommoder les études littéraires aux nouvelles exigences de la recherche empruntées des sciences exactes.

Le rapport de Oana Fotache avec l'« intermittence » est plus complexe. Plutôt que de la stigmatiser, l'auteure essaie d'en faire la principale articulation d'une réflexion générale sur la littérature. Envisagée comme seule possibilité de penser la réalité des idées dans le champ littéraire, l'« intermittence » y devient un moyen indispensable pour la description de tout geste théorique. Les repères les plus importants de ce questionnement proviennent de l'espace anglo-saxon où depuis une trentaine d'années on privilégie l'interprétation contextuelle des idées littéraires. Ce sont des analyses qui mettent en évidence la manière d'appropriation et les déformations impliquées par les usages locaux, tout en montrant la rupture avec la source d'origine. Oana Fotache articule cette perspective autour de la notion d'« héritage », également mise en vedette par le titre du recueil. L'essai qui ouvre le livre, « Des rythmes de la succession. Héritage et tradition dans la théorie littéraire », développe l'« héritage » comme un concept fort, pour désigner une dimension particulière de la transmission des idées. La notion est soigneusement différenciée des autres formes de la filiation – de l'influence et de la tradition. Tandis que ces notions expriment une dette envers la source originelle du savoir théorique, assumée par l'engagement individuel (l'influence) ou collectif (la tradition), l'héritage désigne une « actualisation en fonction de la forme mentale des successeurs ». Au cœur de cette

distinction se trouve une opposition par rapport à la logique du don : ce qui est « hérité » engage le sujet dans une entreprise de réévaluation massive des contenus, libérée de toute « donation », au point d'effacer l'autorité de l'origine.

Si on la compare aux analyses d'Edward Saïd, souvent évoquées dans les pages du livre, on saisit la visée radicale de cette proposition. Dans ces célèbres démonstrations qui suivent la réception des théories de l'Hongrois Georg Lukács à Paris, à Oxford ou en Inde on voit non pas seulement les altérations dues aux différents contextes sociaux et intellectuels, mais aussi la présence des médiateurs, des points de relais ou des personnages ayant des rapports privilégiés avec la source. Ce n'est pas par hasard qu'au centre de ces narrations se trouve Lucien Goldmann, celui qui apporte à Paris les idées de Lukács et qui était l'élève de celui-ci. Avec Saïd on est toujours dans la logique d'une succession linéaire : il y a un sens du voyage, du chemin parcouru, bref, de la carrière d'une thèse à travers des espaces, des cultures et des temporalités. En revanche, Oana Fotache s'intéresse plutôt à la redécouverte soudaine – sans continuité sensible – des grandes idées qui caractérisent de manière stable, anthropologique je dirais, le domaine des lettres. Je retiens, parmi les exemples qu'elle donne, celui de la redécouverte brusque de l'idée de *Weltliteratur* au début des années '90. Bonne illustration des « intermittences », ce thème revient dans l'histoire selon un rythme irrégulier et imprévisible, qui écarte d'emblée toute forme de filiation. Jérôme David, qui fait la synthèse du parcours sinueux de la littérature mondiale dans son livre de 2012, *Les Spectres de Goethe*, intitule ses chapitres en fonction des dates et des lieux qui scandent les retours de cette idée. Ce procédé met en évidence l'hétérogénéité irréductible des contextes, l'émergence essentiellement discontinue de l'idée : Weimar 1827, Bruxelles 1847, Chicago 1911, Istanbul 1952, New York 1999 etc.

Ce qui soutient une telle narration de la récurrence de la théorie n'est plus ni telle « dette », ni tel contact, mais la rencontre du théoricien avec une réalité du monde, de la société ou de l'être humain. L'idée de *Weltliteratur* refait surface de manière si abrupte parce qu'une nécessité – d'un temps ou d'un espace – la réclame. Autrement dit, la redécouverte de la théorie engage, même avant sa dimension doctrinaire, une dimension éthique. Je rapprocherais la perspective historique de Oana Fotache des « survivances » que Giorgio Agamben essaie de penser de nos jours en partant de Walter Benjamin. Ce que l'auteure tente de décrire ce sont les réapparitions du savoir théorique sans parcours, sans chemin et sans « friction » culturelle, comme une brusque réincarnation dans un autre lieu. Une belle citation, empruntée de Northrop Frye, évoque cette pureté de l'héritage théorique : « des conventions ignorées ou oubliées se matérialisent soudainement de nouveau, comme les anges qui ne se déplacent pas dans le temps ou dans l'espace mais tout simplement deviennent visibles ailleurs ». On aspire ici vers une histoire de la théorie libérée de ses sous-entendus et surtout des « lois » qui articulent son inscription dans le temps et dans l'espace (prééminence temporelle des inventions théoriques et primauté géographique des centres culturels). Une histoire composée uniquement des émergences soudaines, sous la seule emprise d'une urgence locale : « je crois qu'on peut écrire une histoire de la théorie, surtout celle contemporaine, tout en comptant les récurrences, les reprises, les fidélités et les hérésies » (p. 21).

Le sommaire du livre évoque plusieurs contextes d'accueil de la théorie. Un essai sur l'inscription de la nouveauté dans la théorie littéraire moderne (« La Fascination de la nouveauté. Des topoï de l'histoire littéraire chez Frye, Guillén et Moretti »), un autre sur la théorie est-européenne et son destin tardif (« L'héritage central et est-européen dans la théorie littéraire »), un article sur la notion du nœud dans l'histoire littéraire contemporaine (« Des nœuds et des creux. L'histoire littéraire comparée, une carte schématique de la littérature »), un autre sur la situation de l'exil roumain par rapport au champ national (« Le refus de l'héritage ? Monica Lovinescu et la tradition esthétique dans la critique roumaine ») etc.. Sur ces contextes – visiblement différents – l'auteure essaie de porter le même regard. C'est un effort de décentrer la théorie littéraire, en montrant qu'elle émane à l'Est ou à l'Ouest, dans les débats spécialisés ou dans les problèmes de l'histoire littéraire, dans des questions abstraites ou dans les préoccupations éthiques. Car ce que Oana Fotache essaie de circonscrire n'est pas une production de théorie (avec tout ce que cela suppose – inventivité, écoles, prestige), mais plutôt une *activité de théorisation*, accessible partout et à n'importe qui. Elle est liée à l'usage libéré

des références, et à une certaine énergie critique par rapport aux repères donnés d'une discipline. Il suffit une simple distance par rapport à ses instruments de pensée ou par rapport à la représentation de sa propre littérature, pour engager la force créatrice d'une intermittence. Je cite la phrase finale de l'essai sur l'histoire littéraire contemporaine : « Si la nouvelle histoire comparée offrait au moins un regard aliéné sur ses objets et sur soi-même, et une attitude lucide par rapport à ses objectives et à ses possibilités, cela constituerait un progrès... » (p. 54).

On ne peut pas apprécier les retombées d'une telle proposition sur la base des articles qui doivent leurs enjeux – au moins en partie – aux circonstances. Je peux toutefois me risquer de dire que Oana Fotache reconstruit cette « liberté » propre à l'activité théorique autour du *habitus* individuel. La disposition qui décide l'actualisation du savoir théorique n'est pas celle d'une société, d'une époque ou d'un événement historique, mais elle tient plutôt à la posture et aux choix faits par le théoricien comme sujet singulier. Oana Fotache insiste – et cela démarque sa perspective – sur les déterminations personnelles qui encadrent l'articulation des idées. L'usage de la théorie dépend des expériences de vie ou de lecture : en revenant sur le trajet de Tzvetan Todorov (« L'histoire d'une carrière intellectuelle : Tzvetan Todorov »), elle explique sa brusque découverte de l'anthropologie et son abandon de la sémiotique non pas par un changement de génération, ni par un effet de mode, sinon par des expériences individuelles. Dans un autre essai dédié à la figure de l'exilé roumaine Monica Lovinescu, cette liberté est située en fonction du positionnement éthique individuel par rapport à l'espace littéraire et politique national. D'ailleurs, il faut souligner l'intérêt de Oana Fotache pour la conduite de l'exilé, une réalité spécifique aux pays de l'Europe de l'Est pendant le régime communiste. Un peu comme le concept de « dissidence » chez Blanchot, l'exil conjugue l'engagement éthique et la solitude. Il représente la possibilité d'un individu de penser autrement et de s'affranchir non pas d'une discipline, ni d'une tradition – mais du *habitus* du champ national, d'une manière de faire qui est propre à une communauté historique, des pratiques collectives de valorisation et de représentation de la littérature. Néanmoins, il faut remarquer que cette interprétation de l'activité théorique comporte une certaine ambiguïté morale : dans un mélange caractéristique, l'exil est en même temps la chance d'une prise de distance et une condamnation à l'isolement, une expérience ambivalente de l'individualisation, à la fois comme liberté qu'on gagne et comme peine qu'on subit.

Cette hypostase extrême nous aide à comprendre la véritable visée de la liberté engagée par l'activité théorique. Au moins en partie, la démarche de Oana Fotache est justifiée par la situation de la théorie dans les cultures est-européennes. Au demeurant, cette solitude de l'activité théorique reflète la posture fragile du théoricien dans le cadre d'une littérature mineure. Doublement marginalisé, d'un côté par les grands producteurs de théorie et de l'autre par les principaux acteurs du champ littéraire, il est obligé à mener un combat pour la reconnaissance, à la fois à l'intérieur de l'espace national, et à l'extérieur de celui-ci. C'est pourquoi, au cœur de la notion d'« héritage » se trouve une idée d'émancipation qui vise simultanément une certaine géographie symbolique de la théorie littéraire et les conditionnements nationaux qui contraignent l'activité théorique. Il s'agit, avec une expression que Oana Fotache utilise dans un de ses essais, de « gagner son héritage », d'obtenir son droit de penser la littérature.

La redécouverte brusque des théories ou des lectures, par dé-territorialisation et dislocation, est un enjeu fort pour notre époque que l'on appelle, dans sa version politique, « actualisation ». Il ne manque pas les voix qui en font une « arme », un programme d'action des études littéraires, comme c'est le cas de nombreuses interventions récentes de Yves Citton. Je crois que c'est notamment ce mouvement entre connaissance et politique qui doit être retenu du livre de Oana Fotache. Plus qu'une histoire de la théorie littéraire contemporaine, *Les héritages intermittents* soutiennent une réflexion sur la possibilité-même de la théorie littéraire. Elle est d'autant plus importante qu'elle constitue une des rares tentatives d'engager dans ce combat le positionnement singulier du théoricien est-européen.

Adrian TUDURACHI

Romanian Academy Cluj-Napoca Branch

“Sextil Pușcariu” Institute of Linguistics and Literary History

ALEX GOLDIȘ, *Critica în tranșee. De la realismul socialist la autonomia estetică* [*Criticism in the Trenches. From Socialist Realism to Aesthetic Autonomy*], București, Cartea Românească, 2011, 288 p.

Romanian criticism during the first decades of communism has been often regarded as embodying an absence: the lack of what might be called authentic voice, that is, a type of discourse which does not dissimulate its belonging to a certain tradition of thought. The majority of authors manifesting their presence in the field of literary criticism play against their own beliefs concerning aesthetic value and the principles of representation of reality. The title chosen by Alex Goldiș for his thesis on this shady interval of thought points out to the underlying tension between the official culture supported by the Communist Party and the resistance of the directions aiming to pursue the Interwar literary tradition. The book exploits the dimensions of conflict between ideology and literary aestheticism as it progresses through the first decades of Romanian communism, and it proceeds from an uncommon angle, that of delineating unacknowledged or even involuntary mixtures and negotiations of the two nuclei. The author states that although originally the focus of his research was to point out “the main theoretical frameworks in Post-war Romanian criticism”, the purpose of his study gradually developed towards decoding and discussing what was hidden behind the permanent mutual “jamming of intentions and stakes” in Romanian culture during the communist regime. Goldiș relentlessly underlines that the two main directions in approaching literature hardly ever faced each other openly in gripping confrontation. Instead, the opposition rather consisted of duplicitous strategies of the belligerents, and of tactical discursive manoeuvres focused on avoiding to challenge the opponent explicitly.

The first chapters of the book focus on the functions of the dogmatic socialist realism critic, who had to be able to provide the general directions for the “evolution” of literature, mainly by succeeding in eliminating the former aesthetic principles developed by Romanian writers. In this first part of his analysis, Goldiș proves that if the critic needed to attack a writer’s position, this already represented a partial failure in accomplishing his mission. The forces at work during the first decade of communism tended towards achieving a levelling of the discourse, an “absence of perspectivism” (p. 37) in what the author names “integral socialist realism”. The critic must become the “absolute administrator of the Romanian literary heritage” (p. 42), a mission which is bound to fail due to its radical claims. Therefore, Goldiș’s study becomes not so much the analysis of a battle, but a history of the fall of socialist realism, as engendered by internal causes. As Bianca Burța-Cernat noticed in her review from *Observatorul Cultural* (no. 610, February 2012) or Mihaela Urso also wrote in *Revista Apostrof*, no. 2/ 2012, the author acts as the narrator of a peculiar smoldering conflict, based rather on the perseverance of both sides than on spectacular “troop movements”.

Initially, we are faced with an unprecedented amount of debates, all of them engaging in the same type of demarche, strengthening the position of ideological rough statements such as denying any kind of reality except for the one postulated by the intentions of the political regime. Literary texts which may seem only vaguely disconnected from the guidelines of the Party are quickly dismissed as inimical. *Criticism in the Trenches* follows this ruthless and, above all, discretionary campaign and identifies its main strategies and resources as they occur fundamentally in the periodical publications, which are found to be often more relevant for the tension of the directions than the criticism books themselves.

The author coins the concept of “minimalist socialist realism”, as a milder stage of the “integral” version, stemming after 1953 from the discontent with the “gratuitous embellishment of reality” (p. 45) practiced originally by the dogmatic writers. He also delineates the role of the few critics who timidly tried to suggest, around 1956-1957, a widening of the scope of literary trends and approaches to reality, by referring to modes of integrating features of classicism or modernism into the validated directions. Critics such as Vera Călin or G. Munteanu attempted to complain about the scarcity of

variations on the topics provided by the “legitimate” focus on the new social arrangement. Therefore, G. Călinescu or Tudor Vianu are reinvested, to some extent, with the symbolic authority of models in criticism, for their unparalleled proficiency in stylistic analysis or in the “art of the critical portrayal” (p. 63). Although the efforts to building up the discourse of desired autonomy are frequently neutralized by the critics remaining faithful to the political engagement, such as Horia Bratu, Ion Vitner, Ov.S. Crohmălniceanu, or Eugen Luca, their statements remain significant as endorsers of the fact that the aesthetic direction was still trying to resist under the veil of “wooden language” (*langue du bois*). The abnormality of this restrained survival consists in the fact that aesthetic criticism has to permanently dwell on the topics allowed by the dominant voices and that all of its utterances have a prophylactic sense rather than a combative one.

After listing and illustrating the main discursive traits of the opposing groups of the decade, Goldiș moves on to highlighting the amplitude of the effects of “ideological thaw”. In discussing the “Transition Period. Trench Warfare”, he investigates the discrete rise to prominence of young critics who gradually managed to deactivate the clichés of the ‘50s. This chapter is relevant for stressing the role of the first occurrences of the names of those which were going to become the main representatives of aesthetic autonomism – Matei Călinescu, Eugen Simion, G. Dimisianu, N. Manolescu, Mircea Tomuș, George Gană, and so on. By means of refreshing the critical vocabulary and pointing out the perfunctory character of the so-called polemical texts, they succeeded in encouraging a reconnection with the literary tradition before the War. In spite of the damage caused by works such as Crohmălniceanu’s *For the Socialist Realism*, the infamous label designed to be synonymous with critical legitimacy almost disappears until 1964, as Goldiș remarks. The young critics resisted the accusations of being “retrogressive”, “cosmopolitans” or “decadent” and managed to subtly impose their preferences in reading and to alter the spectrum of references which became models for Romanian criticism and theory. An important feature of the first half of the seventh decade is the simultaneity of literary and critical debuts. Along with the new generation of critics, poets such as Nichita Stănescu, Cezar Baltag, Gh. Tomozei or prose writers such as Fănuș Neagu, D.R. Popescu, Vasile Rebreanu contribute to the revival of a certain degree of authenticity in literary discourse on all of its levels.

Goldiș’s effort to systematize the options of criticism in this decade results in outlining a few cases of reassessing the literary heritage. He also allots serious analytical attention to the path towards debating the “Realism Without Shores”, a subtitle alluding to Garaudy’s book on *realisme sans rivage*, which has stirred manifold reactions around the idea of determinism in literature: “the dogmatists were actually militating for a limited realism, while the liberalists were pleading for a «borderless nonrealism».” (p. 97).

This central part of the book, the only one with a title chosen as to explicitly repeat the idea in the main one, brings to the reader’s attention a phenomenon as obvious as it was often overlooked by other analyses focusing on the same period. Just like with any other thing or principle which has long been the object of interdiction or of paucity, aestheticism and the literature which takes its distance from the confines of socialist realism tend to fall into the trap of overuse, of exaggeration. Thus they are an easy prey for the (still) dogmatic critics, who do not cease to plead against what they define as abuses of the “oneiric”, the “inner universe”, the “intimacy”, the “originality” and other recurrent notions which prevail in the new critical discourse and in the new literary texts.

Goldiș emphasizes that these exercises in compromise and negotiating nuances of key concepts of the decade gradually leads to the critics’ earning a more skillful use of ambiguity. We are provided with several types of examples, such as the neutral, yet “politically correct” phrase employed by Matei Călinescu when referring to Nina Cassian’s Stalinist poems: “ethical values specific to our contemporaneity” (p. 111). These types of constructions, minor as they may seem, slowly open a space towards inserting the preoccupation for traits of literary language and devices, thus making the transition to the so-called structuralist direction in Romanian criticism. Another major point of the study is the firm statement that the *Instauration of Aesthetic Autonomy* was actually a favor granted by the political power as one of the chief measures adopted by the Ninth Congress held in 1965 under

the Ceaușescu regime. The rehabilitation of the aesthetic criticism is represented, amongst other emblems, by G. Călinescu's symbolic authority, rising again to prominence after the critic's death.

Before proceeding to the analysis of ten books typical for the seventh decade "immanent criticism", Goldiș attempts to structure another main section of the book around the affinity of the Romanian literary field with the French one, by pointing out the strong resemblance between the opposing forces and the adversity between Roland Barthes and Raymond Picard, with the former's demonstration of the symbolic and plural nature of language. The analogy is sustained by some features of the Romanian debates and leads to the development of the chapters concerning the triumph of the essay and the study of the "autonomous universe" instated by the work of art.

One of the achievements of Alex Goldiș's book is the consistency of the demonstration with the premise, as indeed "most of the times it is hard to decide to what extent a text belongs to the individual author and how large the contribution of the superindividual author is (the Party, the censorship, self-censorship, etc.)" (p. 8). The "trenches" which shelter or, on the contrary, accidentally expose the critical discourse are clearly mapped by the study, therefore making it possible to understand more thoroughly the dynamics of the peculiar Post-war literary field.

Roxana EICHEL
University of Bucharest
Faculty of Letters

ANDREI TERIAN, *Critica de export. Teorii, concepte, ideologii* [*Export Criticism. Theories, Concepts, Ideologies*], București, Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române, 2013, 346 p.

Romanian researchers of literature have been preoccupied, since 1990, more with domestic issues, such as aesthetical or ethical revisions of national writers, than with the influence of international theory at home and with the place of Romanian studies on the international academic market. In the last decade there has been a Romanian boom in studies on the discourse and institutions of literary criticism which coincided with the turn in the foreign policies of financing research. Both of them led to the constitution of a metadiscourse that came to overcome the old obsession of the need to "synchronize" with Europe and to formulate more precise methodological suggestions.

Meanwhile, the new generation of critics and literary theorists, in which Andrei Terian himself takes part, has witnessed a crisis in literary studies on multiple levels. On the one hand, there has been an unprecedented diversification of theories and instruments that may be applied in the analysis of cultural processes, thanks to globalization and to the fields of study that, rather than investigating the aesthetic and textuality, are concerned with political ethnic, regional, and gender issues. At the same time, prestigious schools came to question from the inside their paradigms, narrowly investigating their core assumptions, such as in comparative literature. However useful this auto critical inspection might be, in a space where centres of authority fade away, the circulation of theory becomes very problematic. Which principles may guide the import of theory, in a space where authority is relative and subject to competition?

Andrei Terian's book *Export criticism. Theories, Concepts, Ideologies* discusses several of these problems with regard to Romanian literature and criticism in the last decades. I shall discuss here Terian's book having in mind the topic of localizing theory. The author defines export criticism as „that critical discourse which retains some relevance beyond the strictly locally, regional or national context where it has arisen”. In his opinion, literary criticism – even when produced inside a semi-

peripheral culture such as Romanian culture – is more exportable than the literature that it used as support. Therefore, for Terian criticism mustn't be defined as a secondary discourse that elaborates on a primary one, which is literature. After all, criticism is not bound to speak about literary works, writers, themes and narrative strategies. Without stating this explicitly, the author signals in several places in his book criticism's divorce from literature, for example in the rhetoric of his *Argument*: criticism is more easily transmissible to a foreign audience than literature because „it has a much more pronounced conceptual structure than purely literary genres, which makes it more exportable even when there is no translation of the works it comments”. But if literature, once the linguistic barrier is overcome, has a universal communicative potential, this is not the case of criticism. To prove itself relevant outside of its culture of provenance, criticism must carefully construct the intelligibility of its own discourse. If literature and its old values no longer represent a common language inside the discipline, theory is called to edify a critical language that is comprehensible outside national boundaries.

One question may be if Romanian criticism is exportable as such, with its tradition of already sedimented theory imports, or if it is in need of an import of theory in order to become exportable. Andrei Terian's answer leans towards the second alternative, making clear that the solution is not the import of contemporary “hip” theory, but rather the adoption of a set of practices that might help autochthonous criticism escape its entrenchment with the “national” horizon. His main methodological propositions are the adoption of rigorousness and adequacy in the critical discourse, evading the allusiveness and impressionism of the post-war decades, practicing historical and geographical framing in order to situate Romanian literature in the system of world literature, and a stronger inclusion of this object of study in several disciplines: Romance studies, East-European studies or semi-peripheral literatures (as opposed to the inadequate equivalence between postcommunism and postcolonialism).

The five sections of the book: *A Bit of Theory, Looking (from and) towards the East, Criticism and Ideology in (Post)communist Romanian Culture, Figures and Discourses, The History of Romanian Literature in the Age of Globalization* offer not only an analysis of the complex factors that prevent the spread of Romanian criticism abroad, but also configure possible starting points for the process of becoming relevant on a world stage. One such occasion is the “space turn” in contemporary historiography which, putting aside the risk of losing a historical perspective, offers several alternative frames in which to situate Romanian literature and culture in a transnational “imagined community” (to quote Benedict Anderson). *Looking (from and) towards the East*, one of the most interesting chapters in the book, analyses closely the projects of such literary histories, among which there are those coordinated by Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer (*History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe*) or by Franco Moretti (*Atlas of the European Novel: 1800-1900*). However, according to Terian, cultural geography loses sight of “the strongly fictionalized genres, such as poetry and anti-mimetic prose”, favouring „factual genres, such as cultural histories or travel literature”. In the case of Romanian culture, another alternative would prove more effective: that of a spatial reading that would rely not on imagology, but on the relation of national literatures in a certain region with the system of world literature, as defined by David Damrosch in *What is World Literature*. National literatures in the Second World (a phrase coined in the 1950s by historian Alfred Sauvy) cannot be reduced to a type and judged by the rote of postcolonial studies. Andrei Terian convincingly demonstrates that there is no Central and East-European (post)colonialism, because such a hypothesis is neither legitimate, nor efficient. As a political reality, the thesis of a “remote” (post)colonialism of Central and East-European countries indebted to England and France is not tenable. And as a frame for reading, postcolonialism has no utility in the East-European space: “if we simply identify colonialism with any form of dependence/ domination”, the specificity of the concept is lost, and its explanatory potential is nullified.

The answer to the question I formulated in my second paragraph is given by the practice of this distant reading: for Andrei Terian, the legitimacy and efficiency of a concept are the two essential criteria in the process of importing theory. Returning to the case of Romanian culture, Terian pleads

for defining it as a “system”: “like any other product with identitary virtues, [literature] is the place of a continuous negotiation, a system which is constantly (re)producing”. Watched from a distance, all literatures (“minimal ethno-literary communities”, as Dionyz Ďurišin defined them) interact with those in their vicinity, generating forms of interdependence that function in a determined time and space. Using *world-system analysis*, a theory elaborated by Immanuel Wallerstein, the power relationship between a major culture and its satellites may be perceived in a much more nuanced manner, since a culture may play, at the same time, the role of centre and periphery. On this map of interdependence that is continuously redefined, Romanian literature may find its place among the “semi-peripheral literatures”, if one accepts as its satellite post-1989 Bessarabian literature.

The ideas formulated by Andrei Terian in *Export Criticism* have the double quality of proposing a way to follow, and at the same time opening several themes for future conceptual debates. However, the concern for nuance and dissociation is lessened in some subchapters of his book, for instance in the one discussing the influence of translated theory on the critical discourse in Romania, from its beginning to postcommunism. The “methodological delay” of autochthonous criticism diagnosed by Terian will not be resolved by the import of new methods, but by the capacity to bring old ones to a new life. The international popularity of Mihail Bahtin’s studies nowadays, to give only one example of a theorist who was early and constantly read in Romanian literature, demonstrates that the bridges with the European critical discourse may equally be found in our local cultural tradition.

Andreea MIRONESCU

“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași
Department of Interdisciplinary Research

EUGEN NEGRICI, *Iluziile literaturii române* [*The Illusions of Romanian Literature*], București, Cartea Românească, 2008, 296 p.

The essay published by Eugen Negrici in 2008 lines up, due to its programmatic title and for other reasons as well, with a series of attempts to review and lay bare Romanian literary tradition and the local cultural heritage, classified, in Western terms, by phrases such as “the School of Resentment” (Harold Bloom) or the “hermeneutics of suspicion” (Paul Ricoeur). Nevertheless, Negrici’s book does not explicitly commit its analysis to Western deconstructive methodologies (since the obsession with conceptual synchronization is constantly mocked at) and, likewise, the Romanian anti-canonical orientations are not considered adequate theoretical models. For example, the moral, “East-ethic” revisionism (as launched by Monica Lovinescu’s criticism) seems to be influenced by ideological propensities when compared with the unifying and integrating approach of *Iluziile literaturii române*. While the ethic revisionism established during the decade subsequent to the 1989 Revolution relativized or challenged the canonical position of the writers who stood in with the communist regime or with the so-called “neo-communist” ones (in 1990-1996), Negrici rebukes the opportunism and moral compromises of the pre-/inter-war writers. Moreover, the critic also denounces the canonization of such figures at odds with the political power of the time as, for instance, Lucian Blaga, Ion Barbu, Vasile Voiculescu, or Mircea Eliade. Similarly, the revisions undertaken by the ‘80s generation of literary critics and historians are also rejected on grounds of their ideology, as generating – in a narcissistic-Bovaric manner – the myth of Romanian postmodernism.

Negrici is inclined to partially acknowledge two sources of inspiration, namely Mircea Martin’s 1981 study, *G. Călinescu și „complexele” literaturii române* (*G. Călinescu and the “Complexes” of*

Romanian Literature), and the historiographical revision promoted by Lucian Boia in *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească (History and Myth in Romanian Conscience, 1997)*, although the author of *Iluziile literaturii române* seems closer to the historian rather than the literary critic and theorist, in his definition of myth as: “a phantasm which sprang into existence from the collective imaginary as a response to some social discrepancies or internal/ external tensions, to situations of emptiness and frustration”, which “alter the data of the observation and act as a screen that distorts the requirements of knowledge” (p. 15). This grid of interpretation also allows the comprehension and, potentially, the justification of the specific difference of the local cultural field in relation to the mythologizations in the Western literary space: the Romanian authors’ pretense and idealizations are unique by their excessive nature, because the “psychological mechanism of compensation” was more active than anywhere else, given the two typical responses to a number of phases in the national (literary) history: the feeling of “emptiness/ frustration” (the regression and inferiority complexes) and the “hazard” (the book treated as a “magical object” became an antidote to a constantly calamitous history). Whether required/ guided by the political power or, on the contrary, established for ideologically subversive reasons, the Romanian “mytho-genetic effervescence” has emerged with the contribution – sometimes interested, other times tributary to the simplicity of ignorance – of literary critics and historians or of authors of scholarly handbooks, and it experienced major inflections especially during communism.

Thus, says the author, the “literature-centrism” of Romanian culture has been a source of constant motivation for the litterati to cite identity-related, sociological, psychological, political and, less frequently, aesthetic arguments in support of the national literature’s symbols of age and organic evolution, as well as of artistic uniqueness and value. The illusions of “exemplarity”, “classicism”, “perpetuity”, “continuity” or “stability” characterize to a great extent the Romanian historiographical and meta-critical discourse, applied both to old and contemporary literature. For this reason, the interpretation and classification of Romanian literary movements, orientations, directions, and even of concepts or generations (from Baroque and Romanticism, to Modernism and Postmodernism) display a chronic “resistance to revision”, since any attempt to renew the perceptive dogmas is met exclusively with the intensified and widespread resurrection of mythicization – from the postulation of the defense of the “besieged fortress”, of the “paradise lost”, or of the “golden age”, to quasi-religious “canonizations” of some writers (“civilizing heroes”, “leaders”, “legislators”, “founding fathers”, “providential men”, “directors of conscience”, “brilliant prices”, “torch bearers”, “national torchlights”, “retrieved Lares”).

Therefore, the legitimacy attached to a reconsideration of some canonical files apparently sealed forever or not even open for a professional rereading cannot be challenged. Even the time chosen for this demystifying approach is deemed favorable – past the first phase of post-communist transition, when the symbolical prestige of literature collapsed under the pressure of consumer society, and the worship of the writer as “beacon” of the common herd is secularized down to its disappearance. This is why many of the relativizing and debunking approaches outlined by Eugen Negrici do not actually overturn the horizon of expectations of the field’s professionals since they bring in no absolute novelty. The inflated expansion of the origins of Romanian artistic creativity or the artificial amplifying (by G. Călinescu, G. Ivașcu or D.H. Mazilu) of the representativeness/ value of Romanian old literature have experienced an already long history of disproof. Likewise, the assimilation of the 1848 generation to Romanticism, the synchronistic dimension of the “Junimea” literary circle, the modernism of inter-war lyric poetry, the subversive propensity of post-war poetry and prose, or the authenticity of postmodernism in the last communist decade have long since ceased to be exegetic “illusions”. Even the aesthetic exemplarity of Mircea Eliade’s or Marin Preda’s prose, of Vasile Voiculescu’s, Lucian Blaga’s or the avant-garde’s poetry have lately managed to escape mythicization. However, the main virtue of *Iluziile literaturii române* can be retrieved, beyond its integrating and synthetic worth, in the condensation of the metamorphoses experienced by the local “mytho-genetic” activity. Very diverse extra-aesthetic factors generate odd mythicizing similitudes, against the so-called organic evolution of the Romanian literature, which enables the possibility to

encounter, over time, identical strategies of ideological self-definition with the 1848 generation, or the Neo-modernists, the Traditionalists and at the Proletkult adepts, with “Junimea” members and later the Protochronists, with the inter-war Modernists and the post-communist postmodernists, etc. Some case studies grounded on situational mythicization are also very challenging. For example, with Marin Preda, the writer’s aesthetic failures and ethic inconsistencies may have been eluded because he built up an alternative to Eugen Barbu’s group. Although he was not a charismatic presence and many of his proses (in Negrici’s reading) are aesthetic failures, Preda was mythicized by the other writers because his contemporary literary “rival”, Eugen Barbu, organized, via the “Săptămâna” magazine, acts of symbolic lynching of the writers that were hostile to the communist regime (pp. 89-97). In a similar manner, and contrary to the common idea that the establishment of the literary canon has owed much to professional studies of literary criticism and history, Eugen Negrici finds that the “classicized” image of Romanian Romanticism or Modernism may have been set in place because of the popularization in school handbooks rather than due to the researches of literary critics and theorists such as Paul Cornea, Nicolae Manolescu, or Mircea Angheliescu (pp. 152-165).

On the other hand, all these observations remain just at the stage of (re)reading proposals, and do not evolve into revisions *per se*. Eugen Negrici’s analyses are always kept at the level of distant reading, acting as arguments for disenchantment, for awakening, rather than actually dismantling autochthonous literary myths. Thus, *Iluziile literaturii române* rejects the status of a ‘final’ book, by bringing together a series of potential studies, valuable for the Romanian literary historiography in the near future.

Cosmin BORZA

Romanian Academy Cluj-Napoca Branch
“Sextil Pușcariu” Institute of Linguistics and Literary History

MIHAELA URSA, *Identitate și excentricitate. Comparatismul românesc între specific local și globalizare [Identity and Eccentricity. Romanian Comparative Studies between Local Specific and Globalization]*, București, Editura Muzeului Național al Literaturii Române, 2013, 268 p.

Mihaela Ursa teaches comparative literature and is the chair of the same department at the Faculty of Letters in the “Babeș-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. She recently summarized a postdoctoral research in a book which investigates the identity issues of Romanian comparative literature within its theoretical, institutional and methodological constraints that marked the field between 1960 and 2010. As showed in her demonstration, the evolution of Romanian comparative literature could be divided into two distinct phases of approach and interpretation. The first one, which ends around 1990 – that is, immediately after the anti-totalitarian Revolution of December 1989 – was profoundly defined by the prevalence of the national culture and literature, either exalted or criticized, while afterwards (after 1990) the widely accepted international paradigm of globalization has changed the orientation of Romanian comparative literature, shifting its interest towards small group identity issues or specific problems of the professional, academic bodies (both local), favoring at the same time the scholars’ adherence to the so-called “world republic of letters”, as defined by Pascale Casanova in her seminal book with the same title. Mihaela Ursa considers that the last two issues reflect the worldwide discourse on “intermediality”; that is, on the branch of comparative literature studies which defines itself as filling in the gap between two different spaces and cultures, the national and the transnational one. This allows the author to propose a dynamics of

“eccentric repositioning” of comparative studies, as specific to transnational, transitional or translational cultural fields.

By analyzing Romanian comparative literature as an issue of “identity”, the author also takes into consideration the intrinsic limitations of a self-proclaimed global discipline, which nevertheless, both through its terminological controversies and its object of study, continues to promote a legitimating discourse. The study also analyzes the institutional evolution of comparative literature within the academia, be it domestic or international, which makes the book relevant in terms of teaching strategies within the field. These and similar ramifications chart the complex, tree-like geography of the work, where each specific hermeneutical approach preserves, in its core, the flexible evolution of the next chapter. To take an example, the first section of the book, in which the reader is invited to choose between *The Crisis of a Discipline* and *The Crisis of a Concept*, starts from the methodological challenges comparative literature is facing nowadays due to cultural studies, and then embarks on a quest for the so-called crisis of comparative literature. This is accompanied by subtle interpretations of the responses provided in the current debate.

By taking into consideration the scholarly apprehensions of those who dubbed the term “comparison” inappropriate, as well as the difficulty to circumvent it or avoid its elusiveness, Mihaela Ursa’s work provides a synthesis of the international debate on the crisis of comparative literature. The author puts together an inventory of the ideas promoted by Albert Guérard, Robert S. Mayo, or the Romanian Adrian Marino, deploys the implications of René Wellek’s criticism on Paul van Tieghem’s *Littérature comparée*, and finally focuses on several conclusions formulated by Basil Munteanu – a Romanian scholar in comparative literature, resident in Paris since the mid-war years – regarding the internal causes of the crisis (that is, the scholars’ lack of solidarity within the field and the terminological confusions fuelled by them).

The chapter entitled *The Archaeology of a Methodological Deadlock* investigates the French reactions stirred by Paul van Tieghem’s binary relationship theory, channeled in René Étiemble’s urge to revive the aesthetic trend within comparative literature, together with the difficulties his proposal generated afterwards, especially in the translation field. The inventory couldn’t have been complete without mentioning the detractors of comparativism – among others, Benedetto Croce, who launched the idea that comparative literature does not exist as a field, or those scholars who promote comparative literature as “some sort of world religion”, in Susan Bassnett’s terms. Ursa wisely challenges both extremes, but acknowledges their deep imprint on the never-ending debate over the crisis of comparative literature. Its implications are analyzed in a chapter entitled *Comparative Literature: Between Triumph and Autopsy*, where the present turmoil of the discipline obliges the author to scrutinize the historical roots of the comparative tradition.

The chapter *Definition, Object, Purpose* reconstructs the historical evolution of comparative literature, starting with Philarète Chasles’s discourse from 1835, where the discipline was conceived as a study of the cultural influences taking place in interpersonal or international relationships. It continues by analyzing the way in which the discipline established itself all over Europe during the 19th century, entering Romania through Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu’s comparative proposals. Later on, the field was brilliantly illustrated by Tudor Vianu’s lectures on world and comparative literature, which he held from 1948 onwards at the University of Bucharest. Ursa argues that the relatively short but tormented international history of comparative literature is crisscrossed by ambiguities and terminological controversies, as well as by the obsession to strictly delineate and define the domain, whose echoes are still heard today.

If the first section of the book looks closely into the crisis of comparative literature by bringing together Romanian and international references, its second part, entitled *National and Universal*, focuses on the identity issues of the domestic comparative literature tradition, relying on terms such as *national, universal, global* and *local*. This section identifies the existence of a “national complex” within the Romanian tradition from its very beginning, that is, the early 20th century. This trend was later exaggerated during the communist period, but proves to be completely anachronistic nowadays. On the other hand – the author asserts –, by deconstructing the semantic sphere of the “national”, and

by substituting the “universal” with the “global”, we mark a shift within the identity debate, the new accent being laid on regional identities and on what Aihwa Ong calls “flexible citizenship”, as a form of participation to the already termed “world republic of letters”. This is exactly the affiliation that scholars in comparative literature have always experienced, as individuals who live in-between, in the so-called (by Victor Turner) “liminality”, belonging to “intersected nations” (as proved by the Romanian Adrian Marino, along with Fernand Baldensperger, Ernst Robert Curtius, Erich Auerbach, Djelal Kadir, Basil Munteanu, Virgil Nemoianu, Al. Ciorănescu or Matei Călinescu). By investigating the temporal dynamics of the four seminal terms – that is, the *national*, *universal*, *local*, and *global* – Mihaela Ursa concludes that comparative literature has always had a tendency to go beyond the limitations imposed by the national as such. On the other hand, precisely in doing this, comparative literature has always been eccentric, a vital discipline existing outside the usually accepted norms.

The third section, entitled *How to Build a Discipline*, treats the diachronic articulation of the domain, the way its discourse crystallized into an institution. Accordingly, the book analyzes the historical context and the cultural atmosphere which allowed comparative literature to function as an institution, on both shores of the Atlantic (Europe and the USA, respectively), and finishes by investigating the origins and the evolution of comparative literature in Romania. Here the discipline was founded by the publication of *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum* (1877), Hugo Meltzl de Lomnitz’s academic journal, generally considered the very first comparative literature publication in the world. Avoiding any priority claim, the thoroughly documented chapter entitled *Romanians in the Republic of Letters* examines the way in which the persistence of a “foreign model” has contributed to the re-shaping of the national identity complex. A little bit further, in a chapter on *Imitation and Influence. Simulation and Stimulation*, grounded on Titu Maiorescu’s idea that simulating leads to actually stimulating, Mihaela Ursa focuses on several “patriotic literary hoaxes” which were meant to re-write history: the Bohemian mediaeval poetry manuscripts, “brought to light” at the beginning of the 19th century by a group of philologists led by Václav Hanka, Ossian’s purported epic on *Fingal*, actually written by James Macpherson, or the Romanian Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu’s cultural and mythological fakes, through which he tried to provide a more prestigious cultural identity to his countrymen by pushing their cultural roots far back into the past.

The fragile impact of Hasdeu’s “simulations” onto Romanian culture, as well as the persistence of a shame complex generated by the conscience of activating in a relatively young and minor culture, yielded a large space for imitating foreign, especially French and German models, as part of the paradoxical propensity towards treating Romanian culture as a “national” and an “original” one. The essays on *Construction Stages* and *Acquiring an Identity* highlight the transposition of the early “domestic comparative manifestations” into what will become “the Romanian comparative literature”, starting with the already mentioned comparative literature course held by Tudor Vianu in Bucharest in 1948, in order to further analyze how the Romanian field has synchronized itself with the Western tradition. This process started by internalizing the crisis syndrome, and finished by adopting the methodology of cultural studies rather than a more ‘literary’ one. The institutional identity of the field is discussed in a special chapter, entitled *Comparative Literature as an Academic Object in Today Romania*, which provides a thorough inventory of the Comparative Literature Chairs and Departments existing in Romanian universities today.

The essay which closes the third section of the book, entitled *One Subject, Several Usage Instructions* represents a stepping stone towards the typological description of the Romanian comparative literature tradition from section IV. This is called *Distinctive Signs* and its subchapters are dedicated to the various defining aspects of the field as practiced here before 1990. It starts with the topic of *Spontaneous Comparativism* (a concept concocted by Al. Dima in order to speed up the birth of the domestic comparative tradition) and goes on with the so-called “*avant-la-lettre comparative literature*” proposed by the theorist Paul Cornea. The other identity issues of the field, as revisited in the book, are: *Philological Roots*, *Synchronism*, *Methodological Crisis: Formal and Contextual*, the latter being conceived as a clash of the formal and the contextual elements. The

authors called to defend them are Adrian Marino, Ion Zamfirescu, Romul Munteanu, Tudor Vianu, and Al. Ciorănescu; the debate called forth notions such as *Theory and Method, Polemic Universalism vs. Assumed Nationalism*, as well as *National Values. Critical, Anti-Imitative Encyclopedic Writing*. The following issue of *Localism* emerges within the discussion concerning post-colonialism, but – the author asserts – it has been empirically anticipated by several debates in the 70s, while the interest to define and discuss imagology raised after 1990, as a field with firm anchors in the traditional and modern Romanian culture, which are fluently transferred into comparative studies.

Present day comparative literature studies are analyzed in the fifth chapter of the book, entitled *Romanian Comparative Literature Today*, when – the author asserts – the scholars are interested in topics like intermediacy or eccentricity. The thorough examination of domestic comparative literature studies from 1990 to 2010 reveals the persistence of an umbrella topic, that of exile/ estrangement/ anxiety generated by the destruction of a previous, reassuring order, feelings with successfully substitute the *national* theme, dominant until 1990. *The Themes of Exile* are illustrated by Matei Călinescu's interpretation of Eugène Ionesco (*Eugène Ionesco: Identity and Existential Topics*). The topics of mutation and of postmodern deconstruction are found in Liviu Petrescu's *Poetics of Postmodernism* and in Călin-Andrei Mihăilescu's *Antropomorfină*, while an essay dedicated to *Themes of the Rejection of the Local Prejudices* focuses on Mircea Martin's impeccable interpretations of local eccentricities. Further on, *The Themes of Cognitive Anarchy* chapter deals with Corin Braga's concept of "anarchetype"; *The Themes of Nostalgia* are decrypted in the works of Toma Pavel, Nicolae Balotă, and Mirela Roznoveanu, while the chapter entitled *The Themes of Transgression and Translation* is illustrated by authors such as Cosana Nicolae, Paul Cornea, and Monica Spiridon.

The last two essays in this section fully display the book's originality. One aspect to be noted is a terminological invention, triggered by the author's considerations on the so-called "comparativism of ex-centric repositioning". By making an inventory of the topics discussed in the fifth section of her book, Mihaela Ursa concludes that they are generally characterized by the dynamics of an "ex-centric repositioning", which is defined as "the new formula of the present day, both Central or Eastern Europe and the postcolonial, comparative tradition, which does not share the crisis syndrome experienced by the Westerners, because its identity complex is utterly sufficient to provide the supply and demand of its discourse." A later chapter, entitled *A Comparative Literature for Digital Beings*, provides a sketchy approach to how comparative studies may look like within the offensive of digital culture.

This intention to glimpse into the future evolutions of comparative literature is also present in the concluding part of the book, where Mihaela Ursa reviews several trends of the field. A first one, taken from Susan Bassnett's *Comparative Literature – „once divorced from key questions of national culture and identity, comparative literature loses its way”* – is completed with the necessity to adapt and transform comparative literature into an "eco-comparativism", to be shaped by revisiting traditional landmarks and approaching them in the light of new topics. Another perspective of comparative literature will be, the author says, the future blending of the Eastern and Central European comparative literature discourse with much wider cognitive approaches, as well as its study as an alternative praxis.

Mihaela Ursa concludes by asserting that any hermeneutic dogmatism must be swept apart within the field, as proving superfluous if one considers comparative literature as a historically determined convention, prone to continuous, metamorphic changes. At the same time, the author steps forward by asking that comparative literature may be accepted as a cognitive discourse, urging its scholars to adopt a flexible, open-minded, integrative, and analytic attitude.

Constantina Raveca BULEU

Romanian Academy Cluj-Napoca Branch

"Sextil Pușcariu" Institute of Linguistics and Literary History

VASILE MIHALACHE, „*Noli me tangere*”? *Despre legitimitate și autonomie în literatură* [„*Noli me tangere*?”. *Sur la légitimité et l'autonomie dans la littérature*]. Préface de Mircea Martin, București, Tracus Arte, 2013, 248 p.

Parmi les tentatives de synthèse dans les études littéraires roumaines récentes il faut noter le livre de Vasile Mihalache, „*Noli me tangere*?”. *Sur la légitimité et l'autonomie dans la littérature*. Thèse de doctorat à l'origine, l'essai du jeune auteur bucarestois se propose d'identifier et d'analyser les facteurs qui contribuent de manière décisive à la consécration des œuvres et des écrivains dans le champ littéraire.

Le livre se situe ouvertement dans le cadre créé par Pierre Bourdieu dans les *Règles de l'art*, dont il reprend le support théorique, ainsi que les moyens conceptuels (et jusqu'aux éléments de discours et de vocabulaire). L'étude doit à Bourdieu l'idée du champ littéraire organisé comme champ autonome, avec des règles et des critères propres d'évaluation, en dépit des facteurs hétérogènes, sociaux et idéologiques, qu'il mobilise. « L'objectif principal de cette recherche est d'attribuer un sens spécial à la légitimité, dans le cadre du champ littéraire, sans exclure les autres usages historiques et disciplinaires du terme, et sans aspirer non plus à une définition totalisante » (p. 25), souligne l'auteur dans son introduction.

Mircea Martin, qui accompagne cet essai d'une préface, y remarque l'influence de l'École du Ressentiment (Harold Bloom) et des représentants radicaux des études culturelles. Néanmoins, la démonstration favorise plutôt l'éclectisme des références au lieu d'une perspective unique. En effet, pour décrire le rapport entre la légitimité et les individus, Vasile Mihalache propose une synthèse des deux écoles : l'une, wébérienne, qui parle d'une croyance naturelle dans la légitimité, l'autre, marxiste, qui justifie l'obéissance par l'intervention de l'idéologie, de l'interprétation ou des préjugés.

C'est par cette vision totalisante et surtout en absence d'une définition concentrée de la légitimité (concept qui n'y est pas distingué de l'autorité) que Vasile Mihalache poursuit les mécanismes qui participent à la consécration symbolique dans le champ littéraire. Dans un discours souvent prolixe, on envisage de la sorte les procédés internes de la consécration symbolique, ainsi que les stratégies externes, institutionnelles. Pour la première série, Vasile Mihalache retient comme règle générale de la légitimité littéraire le refus des conventions et la recherche à tout prix de l'originalité et du caractère singulier : « La transgression systématique des conventions devient une règle du champ littéraire et une de ces stratégies qui, dans certaines conditions peuvent contribuer à la légitimité des auteurs » (p. 92), remarque le chercheur.

La perspective de Bourdieu, reprise sans réserve, favorise la réflexion sur les mécanismes institutionnels de la légitimité littéraire. À la fondation de cette reconstruction sociologique on trouve une règle que l'auteur définit par la métaphore du titre, « *noli me tangere* ». En tant que principe générateur de la légitimité littéraire, celui-ci représente une interprétation de l'idée romantique de la gratuité artistique, filtrée par la théorie barthesienne du caractère « atopique » de l'écriture : « On n'a pas le droit d'utiliser l'objet esthétique parce qu'il est gratuit et fabriqué uniquement en vue de la contemplation ou de l'interprétation » (p. 101). Le mérite du livre consiste dans la réunion, dans le cadre d'une seule narration théorique, de plusieurs stratégies de la consécration littéraire. Ainsi, on envisage l'« influence » – sans la dimension psychanalytique envisagée par Harold Bloom – comme une modalité de légitimation symbolique, tout en montrant que les acteurs qui la nient sont toujours extérieurs au champ littéraire. Le chercheur s'appuie sur les textes de Foucault pour réfléchir sur le rôle de l'« auctorialité » dans le processus de consécration symbolique comme forme privilégiée de « construction culturelle » et de « négociation de l'identité ». La forme la plus complexe de la légitimation littéraire est le canon, conçu « comme autorité légitime établie en fonction des valeurs et des règles d'appréciation » (p. 134).

Selon l'auteur, le processus de la canonisation est étroitement lié au rapport entre les positions hégémoniques et les positions subalternes du champ littéraire. C'est à la première catégorie d'élaborer les mécanismes de légitimation les plus complexes ; en revanche, la deuxième catégorie se laisse décrire en termes d'« obéissance » et de « consentement ». Ce qui ne signifie pas que *Noli me tangere* envisage la légitimité littéraire exclusivement dans la perspective d'une compétition pour le pouvoir symbolique. À cet égard, il faut remarquer le commentaire du concept d'« interpellation » lancé par Althusser dans *Idéologie et appareils idéologique d'État* : l'« obéissance » par rapport à la consécration canonique n'est pas pour Vasile Mihalache une forme d'intrusion idéologique mais, selon un modèle webérien, une acceptation naturelle de l'autorité canonique. C'est pour cette raison que la sphère de la légitimité littéraire y inclut des problèmes tels que l'« apolitisme », l'intertextualité, l'épigonisme, ainsi que des stéréotypes de lecture tels que mineur/ majeur, convention/ originalité, canonique/ contre-canonique, central/ périphérique, forme/ fond.

Le danger évident d'une telle approche est l'élargissement démesuré du champ d'application de la légitimité littéraire, afin de comprendre entièrement la gamme des critères d'appréciation et de valorisation de la littérature. Bien que notable, l'effort de réflexion sur le problème de la légitimité en dehors des cadres de l'École du Soupçon est miné par la tentation de l'exhaustivité et par la composition éclectique des références bibliographiques. *Noli me tangere* n'est ainsi qu'une promesse qui réclame des éclaircissements ultérieurs.

Alex GOLDIȘ

“Babeș-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca
Faculty of Letters