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CĂLIN TEUȚIȘAN
COSMIN BORZA

LITERARY HISTORY BEYOND THE NATIONAL FRAME

The current special issue gathers sixteen contributions presented at the International Literary History Congress *Local Convertible Values: International Narratives of National Literary History*, hosted by the Cluj-Napoca Faculty of Letters between May 11th and 12th 2018. The event was organised by the Faculty's Department of Romanian Literature, Hungarian Literature and the Department of Comparative Literature, with the support of the "Sextil Pușcariu" Institute of Linguistics and Literary History, the Cluj-Napoca branch of the Romanian Academy, as well as the universities belonging to the *Universitaria* Consortium. The congress aimed at opening a debate platform on the historicity of the literary sphere, a space which would allow literary studies to connect to other fields regarding the historical nature of social realities (history, anthropology, sociology etc), as well as to investigate them in the broader context of regional literary cultures.

The most heated debates following the congress focused on the relationship between the nation and literary history, especially because – against a backdrop of accelerating Globalization and the ever-diversifying theories and methodologies within *World Literature* – both concepts underwent significant mutations during recent decades. In the critical discourse of the field's most reputed researchers, the vantage point on the "nation" has shifted from a tendency towards studying it within strictly defined geographical boundaries (and implicitly within ethnic and racial categories) to the concession of isolating networks of transcultural phenomena, territorial crossings or multilingual interferences. As a consequence, literary histories themselves could no longer be shaped after the ethnocentric model of "epical synthesis" fuelled by 19th century values and worldviews. Historiographical approaches aimed at establishing national narratives about canonical authors, about referential historical data, about the most representative literary movements or – in the case of so-called "semi-peripheric" cultures – about the intersections and synchronisations with "great" and "central" cultures have been replaced by theoretical standpoints built upon debating cultural confluences, intersections and hybridizations, precisely those phenomena that eschew inquiry within the confines of a single ethnic space. Since the early 2000s, the reconfiguration of literary history beyond the nation has not only generated intense debate, but has also prompted far-reaching research projects, of which transnational literary histories with regional focus (addressing Latin America, the Iberic Peninsula and Central and Eastern Europe, respectively) have proven the most prolific. At the same time, the national literary systems' presumed homogeneity has been dismantled during recent years by the Bloomsbury Academic series

Literatures as World Literatures, coordinated by Thomas O. Beebee. This collection, which has hosted extensive studies on world literatures (German, Brazilian, Danish, Dutch, Romanian and American, among others), has not only led to new variations in the field of comparative literature, but also to viable approaches to contemporary literary history. Among the major aims of these studies were the rehabilitation of a broad array of phenomena, directions and literary instruments previously neglected or downright rejected by literary historiography: literatures written by ethnic minorities, by exiled or diasporic authors, literatures preceding the nation-state in its current understanding, literatures that refuse any sort of national classification, circuits of translation and export, the profoundly heterogeneous phenomena of global literature, etc.

The contributions selected for this special issue of *Dacoromania litteraria* share the theoretical premises previously mentioned and have been organized in 3 separate sections.

The first one, *Alternative scenarios to national literary histories*, comprises, on the one hand, reflections on transnational literary networks and dissemination paths, and on the other, theoretical inquiries into the methodologies and concepts that allow for a decisive detachment from the rigid formulas of traditional literary history. In the opening article, Imre József Balázs emphasizes the importance of networking intercultural exchanges, crucial for the post-war survival and proliferation of surrealism, even more so because, when regarded from a strictly national perspective, the movement could have been considered already concluded in Central and Eastern Europe. The ways in which transnational and international relations help reassess the preconceptions of national literary historiography underlie the following studies as well: Tímea Berki works with literary history studies written in Hungarian about Romanian authors and literary phenomena in the absence of a broader literary system that could be labelled as Romanian. Mihaela Mudure goes through Romanian translations and adaptations of British and American literary histories, while stressing the ideologized, political strategies put into integrating English-language literatures into local historiographical projects. Network-type structures make the object of Anamaria Omer's paper as well; her proposal seeks to substitute the linear, chronological literary history through a hypertextual structure that would allow for authors and texts belonging to the most various movements and periods to be linked according to their underlying affinities and not by historical determinism. The first section ends with Constantina Raveca Buleu and Ion Manolescu's attempts at counteracting the excessive influence of literary history centred around the aesthetic experience (disproportionately more important in smaller cultures) through the employment of methodologies borrowed from "the academic esoterism" and from cognitive sciences, respectively.

The second section, *Transcending national literary historiography*, includes polemical debates on the conceptual renewal of literary history, either by turning to scientific disciplines that would more efficiently emphasize the hybridisations and

convergences inherent to literary phenomena or by allowing for the inclusion of spaces and periods where classical historiographical perspectives show their shortcomings. Denis Mellier pleads for the reassessment of literary history, which in its renewed form should correspond to the essentially *visual* character of recent times. In doing so, the author discusses the “intermediality” lying at the heart of most literary forms and formulas. Alina Buzatu’s article elaborates a similar meta-theoretical reflection, as the author goes through recent debates on the concept of *literary genre* (debates whose approaches vary from sociological and ideological interpretations to cognitivist and digital methods) and glimpses the possibility of ultimately freeing the study of literature from its inherently essentialist and aesthetic-formalist prejudices. Transcending the rigid boundaries of classical historiography represents the concern of the three remaining essays of this section as well: Dominique Privé, departing from an inquiry into the Quebecois cultural field, argues for a revision of literary history from a multicultural perspective which, according to the author, is the only one suited to account for contemporary phenomena such as nomadism and migration. Daniela Spina employs a significantly broader conceptual spectrum when writing about the literature of the Catholic community from the Indian state of Goa during the country’s Portuguese rule, insisting on the propensity of colonized communities to adopt to and adapt the colonizer’s national historiographical pattern; Anca Crivăț writes about Saint Isidor of Seville’s writings as she illustrates the various ways in which historiographical research has been conducted even before literary history had existed as independent discipline.

A third section of this special issue, *Avatars of national narratives*, gathers several contributions that help dismantle some of the widespread myths of traditional historiography by confronting them with cultural micro-histories that had remained hidden or that had been downright rejected by academic consensus, as well as by denouncing their essentialist-mythical foundations. Ioana Alexandra Lionte, in a study building upon *World Literature* theories, evaluates the mythicized “national poet” with respect to his trans-linguistical durability as she accounts for the poet’s translations to English. In the following two papers, Diana Blaga discusses several of the Romanian 19th and 20th century authors’ reflexions on gastronomy as possible ways to illustrate the evolution of the country’s “taste for modernity”, whereas Liliana Burlacu compares the attire worn by Caragiale’s characters with the garments worn by Caragiale himself in order to get a better insight into his aesthetic, existential and even ideological views. Another major myth of traditional historiography, inspiration, is analysed by Magda Wächter through interpreting the answers of a comprehensive literary inquiry from 1935. The issue closes with Cosmin Borza’s contribution, advocating for a revision of the essentialist approaches with respect to the rural world, one of the core national narratives in 20th century Romanian literary research.

IMRE JÓZSEF BALÁZS

***LE SURREALISME EN 1947: THE EXPORT AND
EXCHANGE OF IDEAS IN POST-WAR
INTERNATIONAL SURREALISM***¹

The International Surrealist Exhibition of 1947 entitled *Le Surréalisme en 1947*, organized at the Maeght gallery in Paris, may be considered as a conversion point in the history of Surrealism, opening up (short-term) possibilities for new groups and generations desiring to join the movement, while at the same time it represented the closing moment for several small-scale Surrealist projects set up by individuals and groups. Using the opportunity presented by the exhibition, young French and Belgian Surrealists turned against the group of artists gathered around Breton and initiated the establishment of a group of revolutionary Surrealists. Shortly afterwards, the relationship worsened between Breton and those members of the group personally committed to upholding the values of the pre-World War Surrealist group, and new exclusions and severances occurred as a result – not for the first or last time in the history of the movement. At the same time, one of the novelties of the exhibition, the relatively substantial presence of Eastern and Central European artists and theoreticians, proved to be an unrepeatable event, as a result of the consolidation of the Soviet-type cultural politics in Romania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, where political power soon drastically restricted the possibilities of contacts with Paris, stigmatising all sort of avant-garde artistic activity in these countries.

The direction of Surrealism in the post-war period was outlined by André Breton's works like *Mad love*, *Arcane 17* and *The Anthology of Black Humour*, focusing increasingly on an inward journey, a sort of utopia or, rather, eupsychia that related the changes in the external world to a change within the self. This new direction was connected to the surrealists' conflictual experiences regarding the Communist party and the war. In developing the new theories of Surrealism, Breton found allies in authors like Pierre Mabille, who, in 1940, published *Le miroir du merveilleux*, a kind of anthology including comments, where the term "marvellous" exemplifies a prominent feature in the works of the early stages of surrealism, which gained more and more importance during the 1940s. Authors like Victor Brauner and Jacques Hérold, Gherasim Luca and Árpád Mezei developed an increasingly strong and intense relation to Breton's theories during and immediately after the war.

¹ Research supported by a Bolyai Research Fellowship of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

As current research projects on Surrealism have already pointed out, the history of the current can be described as a space of a constant and mutual exchange of ideas. Delia Ungureanu has also pointed out that this exchange of ideas goes, in fact, far beyond the Surrealist groups themselves:

Surrealism was a group practice that benefited from a great world network of agents and mediators even beyond what the surrealists themselves imagined. This history challenges traditional notions of direct influence and unidirectional transfer, including the portrayal of surrealism in terms of in-group dynamics [...]. Instead, we find networks of mutual exchange and transformation, which far exceed the confines of the organized surrealist groups, with their constant struggles over hierarchies, subordination, and authority².

It is important, however, to document the exchange of ideas in its in-group aspects in order to see how major events like an international surrealist exhibition may trigger new ideas and new intellectual geographies. The 1947 exhibition represents, in many ways, a milestone in the history of international Surrealism, and an example of what Delia Ungureanu calls “challenges of unidirectional transfer”. In my article I will examine, from the point of view of the authors participating in the exhibition, involved in the preparations and submitting pieces for the catalogue, the kind of importance that was attached to the act of participating itself, and how these authors positioned themselves relative to Surrealism before and after the event. My goal is also to outline the Surrealist network structure of which, due to the above-mentioned cultural and political shifts, only the Western European nodes had remained active by the end of the 1940s.

1. The historical context and concept of organizing the exhibition

The exhibition of 1947 documented the reorganisation of Surrealism and its newly accentuated presence in Paris after the years of the Second World War, during which André Breton sought refuge first in Marseille and then in North America. The movement had to respond, on the one hand, to analyses inspired by Maurice Nadeau’s *History of Surrealism*³, which suggested that the movement – as well as the group – had ceased to exist. On the other hand, the movement had to find its place in the contemporary intellectual milieu in France dominated by the presence of Communists and Existentialists, as a kind of countermeasure to the country’s war experience.

In June 1947, the group also drew up a manifesto entitled “Rupture inaugurale”, in which it tried not only to clarify its approach to politics but also to

² Delia Ungureanu, *From Paris to Tlön: Surrealism as World Literature*, New York, Bloomsbury Academic, 2018, p. 3.

³ Maurice Nadeau, *Histoire du surréalisme*, Paris, Seuil, 1945.

respond to contemporary criticism regarding the activity of the group. The primary message of the manifesto, signed by fifty authors, is the announcement of abstention from any party politics, while the group continues to regard the revolutionary activity of the working class as close to its own programme. One of the fundamental questions in the manifesto is of a moral character. It starts from the premise that the capitalist state system must cease to exist as a result of historical necessity and targeted political activity. For this reason, the proletarian revolution is a desirable turn, but not the goal itself⁴.

An important part of the manifesto is the argument for the need to create a new myth – a doctrine that can replace Christianity and, in a moral sense, provide a more progressive foundation for the new society. The reason for this is that the signatories of the manifesto did not believe that the transformation of the social/economic system would automatically result in a moral and intellectual change as well. The above explanation makes it clear where Surrealism tried to position itself in the post-war environment: it saw itself as a leftist, revolutionary movement willing to co-operate with various parties (the anarchists and the Trotskyites are specifically mentioned in the manifesto), but only on a voluntary and sovereign basis, while firmly rejecting Stalinism. Surrealism would play a role in transforming mentality and morality. The last part of the manifesto refers back to those conceptual factors that André Breton added to the Surrealist myths in his various works. A desire for myth, black humour, objective chance and the like, according to the signatories' belief, may be the essential elements for accessing a new psychological dimension, the aim of which is to overthrow the previous seemingly insoluble opposition between desire and necessity⁵.

Therefore, the option suggested by Breton, also reflected in the design of the 1947 exhibition, was the demonstration of a belief in the positive, healing character of myth and the principle of Eros, and the exploration of this principle after the group had refused direct participation in politics. By this time, Surrealists had very concrete experiences of the limited possibilities of arts defined by party politics, and they had rejected the concept of party art in the name of spiritual freedom.

The 1947 exhibition followed the script of an initiation ritual. Breton had prepared a detailed preliminary plan, which was sent to the group members and the international network of sympathizers. One of the most important authors of the exhibition was Jacques Hérold, born in Romania and living in Paris since 1930, who displayed the myth of the Great Transparent One in his memorable creation. Apart from Hérold, his compatriot Victor Brauner also fit well into the system of views that had taken shape as a result of the magical turn of Surrealism.

⁴ "Inaugural rupture", in Michael Richardson and Krzysztof Fijalkowski (eds.), *Surrealism Against the Current. Tracts and Declarations*, London–Sterling, Pluto Press, 2001, p. 44.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 46.

The reaction of the audience was controversial. Although the surrealists' success was unquestionable, in many cases the echoes pushed the current toward its past: it was regarded as something that was undoubtedly a great product of French culture, but seemed more acceptable out of habit rather than due to its values.

According to the summary written by Sarane Alexandrian, then a member of the group, the point of the exhibition was the creation of a collective myth. The walk through the exhibition area was planned in such a way that the visitors became participants in the myth as they were progressing: ascending movements, delusions, tentative movements appealing to visceral anxiety reactions were all written into the exhibition space. The exhibition presented works by eighty-seven artists representing twenty-four countries. Among these, there were many young artists at the beginning of their career who at that time were approaching the system of views of Surrealism, according to Alexandrian⁶. Béla Bán and Endre Bálint, the two Hungarian participants in the exhibition, were probably considered to be among these.

Marcel Jean, a veteran member of the group at the time of the event, reports himself on the concept and preparation of the exhibition and its catalogue. He connects the basic idea of the exhibition to Breton's earlier trip to Haiti, and regards the predominance of the mythical and magical themes as the result of this experience. Jean also offers a detailed account of the moments of spiritual progression/initiation, and also mentions some anecdotal episodes that arise from the perspective of the eyewitness and insider, such as the unrealized plan of the "Surrealist kitchen", or the collection of the painters called "Surrealists against their will", which, in the end, was not exhibited either. Jean writes about the billiard table set up in accordance with Duchamp's idea, from the top of which the billiard balls suddenly disappeared, migrating into the visitors' pockets as souvenirs⁷.

Alexandrian's and Jean's reports on the exhibition are ultimately defined by the writers' insider status, as well as by the fact that both of them would soon enter into a conflict with Breton and leave the Surrealist group. The narrative that the exhibition fits into becomes part of a story of decline, not because of the concept and the partial success of the exhibition, but as a result of the ensuing debates. Although the Surrealist group remained active, publishing works and organising exhibitions, its membership changed significantly after the Second World War.

Alyce Mahon's counter-narrative, which greatly appreciates the performance of the Surrealists in the spirit of the politics of Eros after 1938, indicates the 1968 Parisian student riots as the end of the story and as the moment of realisation of a

⁶ Sarane Alexandrian, *Surrealist Art*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1970, pp. 190-194.

⁷ Marcel Jean in cooperation with Árpád Mezei, *Histoire de la peinture surréaliste*, Paris, Seuil, 1959, pp. 336-344.

Surrealist utopia of some kind⁸. During the Paris riots, Surrealist slogans and sentences were indeed propagated in the demonstrations and several Surrealist artists also joined the demonstrations. A specific addition to this interpretation is Marcel Jean's short and succinct response to a survey questioning the validity and presence of Surrealism in 1971, which is "May 1968"⁹.

II. The preparations: surveys and letters

Surrealists enjoyed taking surveys. At the end of June 1947, that is, on the days preceding the opening of the international exhibition, the international sympathizers of Surrealism received a questionnaire on letterhead paper containing eight questions posed by Cause, the Surrealist "secretariat" comprising three members whose names were displayed on the header: Sarane Alexandrian, Georges Henein and Henri Pastoureau. The questions are related to the present and possible tasks of Surrealism. Árpád Mezei received the questionnaire from Georges Henein. His answer to the letter is unknown at present, but on 10th July he reports on this development to Claude Serbanne, a mutual acquaintance:

Henein replied. He also seems to exist in two copies, and one of these is the official secretary of the Surrealist movement. He even sent a questionnaire of eight questions. If I were serious about answering the questions, I would need about 2000 pages¹⁰.

Alexandrian connects the event of contacting Gherasim Luca to the same questionnaire. In a letter dated 29 June 1947, Luca writes a detailed response to Alexandrian on his position, including many references to his works published at that time and to the activities of the Surrealist group in Bucharest. Although he considers the survey necessary, he calls for a quick step forward from the static/statistical mapping of "where we stand" to the concrete and pragmatic steps of "what to do"¹¹.

If we are looking for the motivations behind the setting up of Cause, we may assume that Breton's overwork was probably the trigger: at this time, after having returned home to France, Breton was assaulted by his "fans" and by many young men belonging to the contemporary bohemian society, whose main interest was not necessarily the essential program of Surrealism.¹² Based on their participation in the exhibition catalogue, we may assume that artists such as Mezei or the Bucharest Surrealists eventually passed through the filter that ended in some sort of

⁸ Alyce Mahon, *Surrealism and the Politics of Eros, 1938–1968*, New York, Thames & Hudson, 2005.

⁹ Arnost Budik, "Enquête sur le surréalisme d'aujourd'hui", *Gradiva*, 1971, 1, p. 34.

¹⁰ Letter from Árpád Mezei to Claude Serbanne, 10 July 1947. Árpád Mezei's estate, OSZK Manuscript Archive, Budapest. (Own translation, IJB)

¹¹ The complete letter was published by Sarane Alexandrian in his volume *L'évolution de Gherasim Luca à Paris*, Bucharest, Vinea-ICARE, 2006, pp. 9-12.

¹² Sarane Alexandrian, *L'évolution de Gherasim Luca*, p. 8.

clearing up of the 1947 turmoil, as well as in many older and newer members leaving the group.

Breton transferred a fragment of the text entitled “*Le sable nocturne*”, written by the Bucharest group, directly into his introduction to the 1947 exhibition catalogue, as a thought coinciding with the central question of the exhibition: “According to the lucky wording by our friends in Bucharest, ‘knowing through unknowing’ [connaissance par la méconnaissance] remains an important Surrealist slogan”¹³.

On the basis of several reports on the preparations for the exhibition, we now know about the feverish efforts and constant gatherings during the preceding few weeks. As an additional detail, some artists including Victor Brauner and the Bucharest Surrealist group had had a relatively clear concept of and information on the planned exhibition for as far back as a year earlier, since the summer of 1946. As early as August 1946, Luca and Gellu Naum exchanged letters about the plan to be drafted; according to Luca’s summary, Brauner speaks about the overall image of the exhibition as a church of freedom/ heresy and expects collective/anonymous works from his friends in Bucharest¹⁴. In a letter written to Brauner on 12 March 1947, Luca still complains that the official invitation from Breton has not arrived. The plan, however, with which the group would participate in the exhibition, is now in place¹⁵. In a single week the events would accelerate, and on 20th March Luca writes that they have sent their collective text *Le sable nocturne* for the exhibition catalogue by air mail¹⁶. Thus, the text sent had preserved the anonymous, collective nature called for in the original plan.

In the case of the “nocturnal sand”¹⁷ experiment, the insertion of objective chance into the plan, or the radicality of the endeavour, besides which the text serves solely as a kind of documentation, obviously gained Breton’s appreciation. However, a direct continuation proved impossible: not having received a passport from the Romanian authorities, Luca and Trost attempted to cross the border illegally at the end of 1947, without success. It was only in 1950 that they could once again write detailed, sincere, uncensored letters from Israel to Paris, trying to rekindle lost connections, but by this time the circumstances were different from those in 1947. In a letter dated 30 October 1950, Luca writes to Brauner, from Tel Aviv, that he really trusts Breton’s ideological “purity” and regrets Brauner and

¹³ André Breton, “Devant le rideau”, in André Breton and Marcel Duchamp (eds.), *Le Surréalisme en 1947*, Paris, Maeght Éditeur, 1947. (Own translation, IJB.)

¹⁴ Letter from Gherasim Luca to Gellu Naum, August 1946, “Athamor: Caietele Fundației Gellu Naum”, 2008, 2, pp. 26-27.

¹⁵ Letter from Gherasim Luca to Victor Brauner, 12 March 1947, in Victor Brauner, *Écrits et correspondances 1938–1948*, Paris, Centre Pompidou–INHA, 2005, pp. 226-227.

¹⁶ Letter from Gherasim Luca to Victor Brauner, 20 March 1947, in Victor Brauner, *Écrits...*, p. 227. The authors of *Le sable nocturne*: Gherasim Luca, Gellu Naum, Paul Păun, Virgil Teodorescu, Trost.

¹⁷ See the interpretative description in Sarane Alexandrian, *Le surréalisme et le rêve*, Paris, Gallimard, 1974, p. 225.

Breton's divergence, especially since their friendship seemed to be at its peak at the time of the 1947 exhibition¹⁸. 1947, Maeght Gallery: the last virtual meeting point for the entire company.

III. The threads converging in Budapest, with Árpád Mezei

A letter written by Árpád Mezei and dated February 6, 1947, was preserved in the Breton archives.¹⁹ Here he mentions the invitation received via Marcel Jean and tries to respond to it by presenting a study plan which, in his view, is both a reconsideration of the system of sciences and a theory of Surrealism. As a result of this letter, Mezei's "*Liberté du langage*" was published in the exhibition catalogue.

Breton could feel that Mezei's contribution at that time was of major importance to the movement, at least in three respects: 1. Mezei's theoretical inclination, which, in its partiality, showed a similar direction to Breton's; 2. His interest in and vast knowledge of hermetic sciences, as manifested in the works he produced in collaboration with Marcel Jean; 3. His being a *Maldoror* expert: Mezei and Jean's volume entitled *Maldoror* was finalized and published in Paris in the year of the exhibition²⁰, and a part of the volume, namely an analysis of the sixth book, was published in the exhibition catalogue. Consequently, Mezei is one of the exceptional authors who had not one, but two entries included in the publication. In his study, Mezei projects onto Surrealism the analogy from natural science according to which light behaves both as a wave and as a particle at the same time. In Mezei's thought experiment, this principle is extended to meanings as well, outlining an equivalence relation that follows a dialectic logic of some sort. Mezei considers Surrealism suitable to emphasise this so-called vision according to the principle of equivalence, and also to suggest the dual nature of reality by a synthesis of the conscious and unconscious spheres. According to Mezei, both words and reality are multi-dimensional – and they are in an analogous relation with each other, according to the way described above; in Mezei's opinion, therefore, hermetic theory based on the above principle can contribute to strengthening this recognition. It is clear that Mezei's presence in the catalogue, as well as Béla Bán's and Endre Bálint's participation in the exhibition, was mediated by Marcel Jean. However, another piece of the preliminary history of their participation is that Jean did not meet the two young painters while in Budapest, where he lived between 1938 and 1945, and until leaving Budapest he had considered that Hungarian paintings were pervaded more by abstractionism, at the

¹⁸ Letter from Gherasim Luca to Victor Brauner, 30 October 1950. Bibliothèque Kandinsky, inv. 8818-763.

¹⁹ Árpád Mezei, *Plan d'un article*, 6 February 1947. Fonds André Breton 10592, Boîte de la vente, <http://www.andrebreton.fr/fr/item/?GCOI=56600100591490>. Accessed February 26, 2019.

²⁰ Marcel Jean et Árpád Mezei, *Maldoror: Essai sur Lautréamont et son œuvre*, Paris, Pavois, 1947.

expense of Surrealism. It may be supposed that his position somewhat changed in the summer of 1947, but in April 1947 he still writes to Mezei that he considers him the only Hungarian Surrealist²¹. One month later, as per Mezei's observation, he expects Bálint and Bán to arrive in Paris – some of the aspects of the meetings are later reported by Bán in his letters sent to Budapest. From these letters, we learn that Bán and his group initiated contact with both abstract and Surrealist galleries in Paris, which caused some technical difficulties, since the planned exhibitions of these galleries were to take place simultaneously. In May, Jean is looking forward to meeting the young painters, whom, even though he does not know them yet, he trusts as members of the European School:

As about the painters you have mentioned – I am looking forward to their visit. [...] Otherwise, I think that historically Hungarians have been more prominent in poetry and philosophy than in fine arts; of course this does not mean that there are no good Hungarian painters at present, but I do not know enough about the ones you wrote about. As far as Rozsda and Barta are concerned, back then it seemed to me that they were far from Surrealism, but that does not mean that they could not have moved in that direction?²²

As we know, Bán and Bálint finally did participate in the international Surrealist exhibition, and their perspective can be outlined on the basis of their reports on the exhibition.

IV. *The testimonies of Béla Bán and Endre Bálint*

In a letter to Imre Pán dated 3 June 1947, Endre Bálint indicates that the preparations for the exhibition are under way, and he proudly writes that Breton has chosen one of his paintings to be included in the material of the exhibition²³. In the same letter he also indicates that he is planning to write about the exhibition for a Hungarian newspaper. The young painter did write about his impressions of the exhibition, and in 1972 he also included the text in his volume entitled *Hazugságok naplójából* [*From the Diary of Lies*]²⁴.

In his notes, Endre Bálint jots down his personal experiences first, exemplifying the reality and physical experience of anxiety and speaking about the effect the Surrealist exhibition had on him, described as similar to the experience of

²¹ Letter from Marcel Jean to Árpád Mezei, 11 April 1947, Árpád Mezei estate, OSZK Manuscript Archive

²² Letter from Marcel Jean to Árpád Mezei, 12 May [1947], Árpád Mezei estate, OSZK Manuscript Archive. (Own translation, IJB)

²³ Letter from Endre Bálint to Imre Pán, in Péter György és Gábor Pataki, *Az Európai Iskola és az Elvont Művészek csoportja* [*The European School and the Group of Abstract Artists*], Budapest, Corvina, 1990, p. 132.

²⁴ Endre Bálint, *Hazugságok naplójából* [*From the Diary of Lies*], Budapest, Magvető, 1972.

a visit to an old city park panopticon²⁵. As Bálint points out, in the context of war physical existence exceeds its usual proportions and seeks a new balance. This is also one of the important directions of Surrealism when experimenting with the sensation of space:

the illusion of infinite space and microscopic “objectivity” in the representation of objects, this major contradiction that can only be explained by a proportional shift: the magnified character of the fear of death is a constant acknowledgment of its proximity²⁶.

Thus, the experience of war is an important element in Bálint’s interpretation of the exhibition: he identifies war as some sort of spirit of the age, or at least as a pervasive experience whose dark reality legitimizes the disturbing, sometimes grim colours of the Surrealist exhibition. Besides the Czech Toyen who, according to Bálint, provides the base note of the exhibition by representing the “average”, the latter mentions the names of four more artists among the Surrealists: Joan Miró (“who knows that behind the surface there lurks a world of ancient cultures, still alive, and therefore possible to portray – and this is why his mythical figures are so convincing”); Hans Arp, who is mentioned as an example of reconciling the spirit of abstraction and Surrealism (from the perspective of contemporary Hungarian art, this is a key issue causing many rifts); Salvador Dalí, the great absentee; and Max Ernst, whom Bálint calls “the most significant one among the Surrealists”, but whose two works included in the exhibition are not among the most successful²⁷.

However, the anecdotal aspects of the exhibition are rich in detail. The billiard table, also mentioned by Jean and Alexandrian, appears here as being in use, although the inclusion of such effects seems frivolous to the young Hungarian painter. We should remember, however, that in his opinion the most important factor contributing to the overall effect is the constant presence of the experience of the proximity to death.

Béla Bán, who participates in the exhibition as Endre Bálint’s fellow scholarship student, also writes a description that remained in manuscript and was published only in 1984 by Gábor Pataki and Péter György in the periodical “*Ars Hungarica*”²⁸. This piece of reporting is somewhat more objective than Bálint’s, and it was most certainly written with the aim of being published in a newspaper. Bán’s stance is the same as Bálint’s in that he also seeks the essence of Surrealism beyond the games and anecdotal elements, as if separated from these, and he regards the organisers’ “tricks” as a means to attract the audience. In this regard, he

²⁵ Endre Bálint, “Exposition internationale du surréalisme Paris, Galerie Maeght”, in Endre Bálint, *Hazugságok naplójából*, p. 69.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 70.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 71.

²⁸ Béla Bán, “A nemzetközi szürrealista kiállítás Párisban” [“International Surrealist Exhibition in Paris”], *Ars Hungarica*, 1984, 2, pp. 289-290.

considers the experiment successful. As he remarks, despite the high entry fees, the exhibition is constantly packed with visitors.

Bán writes about some of the exhibited works in more detail than Bálint, combining technical descriptions and interpretations to describe works by Yves Tanguy, Max Ernst, Joan Miró, Picasso and Marcel Duchamp. In addition to these, he reflects positively on his encounter with the outstanding works of the following authors: Arp, Matta, Toyen, Stirsky, Brauner, Gorky, Man Ray, Baskine. In their cases, he specifically praises their qualities as painters, while their conceptual framework appears to be secondary to these qualities: “in our opinion, among the many artists who represent Surrealism, these are the ones that do so by means of art, and free from literature-like nuances”²⁹.

Bán also lists all Hungarian participants in the exhibition by name, as artists who ensure the Hungarian presence with “honesty and painterly qualities”. Besides Endre Bálint and himself, he also mentions the Parisian-Hungarian Ervin Marton, who is in fact described in the exhibition catalogue as coming from “Hongrie”, as well as Henri Nouveau (Henrik Neugeboren), born in Braşov and former resident of Budapest, who, according to the catalogue, represents France³⁰.

In his writing, Bán summarises the contemporary goals of Surrealism, but also envisions the emergence of his own art and the “art of the future” as heading towards another, synthetic direction, perhaps under the influence of the developments in Hungary, as well as of the talks and events taking place in Paris³¹. In a letter written in Paris, dated September 1947, Bán calls himself a Communist, and this – in the context of the “Rupture inaugurale” manifesto – also indicates one of the reasons why Bán considered himself justified to keep himself at arm’s length from the Surrealist group of Paris³².

Béla Bán’s oeuvre, as noted by Gábor Pataki and Péter György, had developed in the spirit of a sincere endeavour to create “liberal” socialist art until 1949; afterwards, however, as a result of his dogmatic socialist realism period, he wrote himself out of the history of fine art, writing himself in among the privileged of power relations³³. Later, moreover, he was also affected by the news embargo imposed on the emigrants of 1956³⁴. As opposed to Bán, Endre Bálint became part of another alternative story – (also) in line with the Hungarian counter-culture

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ The list of Hungarian-related works in the catalog: Bán, *L’homme errant*; Balint, *Solitude*; Marton, *Nu assis*; Nouveau: *Joséphine, Le roi de Thulé*. See also 1947. Exposition internationale du Surréalisme, Fiches intérieures du catalogue, <http://www.andrebretton.fr/fr/item/?GCOI=56600100506400#>. Accessed February 26, 2019.

³¹ Béla Bán, “A nemzetközi szürrealista”, p. 290.

³² Letter from Béla Bán to Imre Pán, 10 September 1947, *Ars Hungarica*, 1984, 2, p. 291.

³³ Péter György és Gábor Pataki, “Dokumentumok Béla Bán hagyatékából” [“Documents of the Béla Bán Legacy”], *Ars Hungarica*, 1984, 2, p. 283.

³⁴ György Várkonyi, *Egy életmű újrafelfedezése [Rediscovering a Life Work]*, http://www.virtuarnet.hu/frontend_dev.php/szerzo/ban-bela/eletrajz. Accessed February 26, 2019.

narratives of the 1960s and 1970s. Together with some other painters and art historians, Bálint is among those who represent the link between the Hungarian avant-garde and neo-avant-garde generations³⁵.

V. Concluding remarks

The 1947 Surrealist exhibition and preceding preparations represented one of the last opportunities for “free” expression for Central and Eastern European artists, before the establishment of the Stalinist cultural politics. For example, the text *Le sable nocturne*, written by the Romanian Surrealist group and published in the exhibition catalogue, is the last publication of this kind, next to the many-authored *Éloge de Malombra*, signed by all the group members. In Budapest, the European School would cease its activity shortly afterwards. The study of the history of the exhibition and its echo provides indication as to how the history of Hungarian fine art and literature would have evolved after a period of relative freedom between 1945 and 1947, in the absence of the intervention of an aggressive, monopolizing kind of cultural politics. Undoubtedly, the unique combination and alliance between abstraction and Surrealism promoted by Ernő Kállai and the European School would have remained an important feature of Hungarian art. At the same time, it is also likely that the leftist artists in Hungary would still have had to face the dilemma of direct political action versus artistic autonomy, given that this dilemma led to sharp debates even in the politically freer post-war circumstances in France. In Hungary, however, such a debate was out of question after 1948. The issue was settled by the dominant power for the ensuing years and decades.

As the examples cited above show, the 1947 exhibition may serve as a model for describing mutual exchanges of ideas, since it was an exchange process that occurred within a network of artists who communicated with each other directly, but also through network nodes situated in France. We can see how the radical ideas of the Bucharest Surrealists, including the anonymous character of their contribution, resonated with Breton’s ideas about the exhibition – and also how Árpád Mezei’s theoretical inclinations became important for highlighting the initiatory aspects of the event. The accounts of young Central-European painters about the exhibited works also reveal the dilemmas that were encoded into the differences in the intellectual and political background of the participants, and that soon afterwards led to divergences and conflicts within the Surrealist movement.

³⁵ Péter György, *Az elsüllyedt sziget [The Sunken Island]*, Budapest, Képzőművészeti Kiadó, 1992, p. 24.

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**LE SURREALISME EN 1947: THE EXPORT AND EXCHANGE OF
IDEAS IN POST-WAR INTERNATIONAL SURREALISM**
(Abstract)

Post-war Surrealism was often considered by contemporaries as no more than an appendix to the current’s glorious interwar period. However, the international dimension and impact of Surrealism was prominently acknowledged after the Second World War. The present article identifies the 1947 International Surrealist Exhibition as a site and model of mutual intellectual exchange and examines, from the point of view of the authors participating in the exhibition, the sort of importance that was attached to the participation itself, and the way in which these authors positioned themselves relative to Surrealism, before and after the event. Through these contributions and their preparation documented in letter exchanges, a post-war Surrealist network structure is outlined.

Keywords: Surrealism, network, mutual exchange, exhibition, Le Surréalisme en 1947, Bucharest Surrealist group, European School, post-war period.

*SUPRAREALISMUL ÎN 1947: EXPORTUL ȘI SCHIMBUL DE IDEI ÎN
SUPRAREALISMUL POSTBELIC INTERNAȚIONAL*

(Rezumat)

Suprarealismul postbelic a fost adeseori considerat de contemporanii săi drept o simplă anexă a glorioasei perioade interbelice a curentului. Totuși, caracterul și impactul internaționale ale suprarealismului s-au făcut remarcate după cel de-al Doilea Război Mondial. Acest articol, fundamentat pe ideea că expoziția internațională *Suprarealismul în 1947* a constituit o platformă și un model de interacțiune intelectuală autentică, examinează, pornind de la punctele de vedere exprimate de participanți, tipul de importanță acordat prezenței la expoziție, precum și modurile în care autorii s-au raportat la suprarealism înaintea și în urma desfășurării evenimentului. Prin intermediul respectivelor raportări, exprimate prin schimburi de scrisori, o întreagă rețea a suprarealismului postbelic poate fi reliefată.

Cuvinte-cheie: suprarealism, rețea, interacțiuni, expoziție, Suprarealismul în 1947, grupul suprarealist de la București, Școala Europeană, perioada postbelică.

**INTERFÉRENCES DE L'HISTOIRE LITTÉRAIRE.
TRAITÉS EN LANGUE HONGROISE SUR LA
LITTÉRATURE ROUMAINE AU TOURNANT DU XX^e
SIÈCLE**

L'année dernière on a célébré la 145^e anniversaire de la fondation à la fois de L'Université royale hongroise François-Joseph – prédécesseur de l'actuelle Université Babeş-Bolyai –, et de sa Faculté des Lettres et de la chaire de Langue et littérature roumaine à Kolozsvár (Cluj)¹, à ce moment-là ville de l'Autriche-Hongrie. Cette occasion solennelle nous met dans l'heureuse obligation de passer en revue les moments clés de cette chaire, dont les cours en hongrois ont été également suivis, pendant le plus que 100 ans, par des étudiants d'ethnie roumaine.

L'université de Kolozsvár était le deuxième établissement de ce rang dans le Royaume de la Hongrie (par rapport à cinq universités du côté autrichien), bien excentrique géographiquement à Budapest, la capitale. De cet emplacement résultait une confrontation et une concurrence permanentes entre les universités des deux villes. L'université élevait Kolozsvár au rang de capitale intellectuelle de la Transylvanie, l'une des plus grandes provinces de l'Empire. À quoi s'ajoutait, pour les étudiants roumains de l'établissement, une influence venant de l'autre côté des Carpates, des Roumains du Vieux Royaume, situation qui les avait contraints à prendre toujours une position dans la pluralité et la divergence des perspectives sur d'inhomogénéité culturelle environnante.

Lors d'une recherche antérieure², j'avais essayé d'identifier qui parmi les étudiants de cette chaire était d'ethnie roumaine, en réalisant une base de données prosopographiques et j'avais essayé également de reconstituer leur profil professionnel et leur avancement dans la carrière. Cette base de données a déjà mis en évidence que l'ethnie de ces étudiants-là se trouvait à la base des problèmes identitaires. La colonne *ethnie (nemzetiség)* n'apparaît dans les registres matricules de l'université qu'en 1895. Avant cette date, elle n'était pas considérée comme un trait distinctif suffisamment important. J'ai réussi à recenser – en tenant compte de

¹ Les noms des localités seront mentionnés selon la forme utilisée à l'époque avec, entre parenthèses, la forme actuelle. Pour les noms des personnes nous suivons leur première publication en mentionnant si ça changera par la suite. Les noms de famille en petites majuscules fait visible un ordre à l'hongrois (nom suivi de prénom) ou à l'indo-européenne (prénom suivi de nom). – NDLR

² Berki Tímea, *Magyar-román kulturális kapcsolatok a 19. század második felében. Értelmisségtörténeti keret* [Les relations culturelles hongroises-roumaines dans la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle. Cadre d'histoire intellectuelle], Cluj-Napoca, Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2012, pp. 255-267.

leur appartenance religieuse, colonne obligatoire des matricules universitaires – 42 étudiants orthodoxes et 102 étudiants grecs-catholiques de 1872 à 1919. Au total, ils représentaient 5% de tous les étudiants de la Faculté des Lettres (2831). Les spécialisations doubles choisies étaient le hongrois–latin, le hongrois–allemand, le latin–grec, le roumain ou le latin–histoire, l’histoire–géographie ou de différentes combinaisons de celles-ci. Les premiers professeurs roumains qui enseignaient à la chaire ont été Grigore Silași et Grigore Moldovan. Ont été nombreux les étudiants roumains qui, à la fin de leurs études à Cluj, étaient devenus professeurs aux écoles de leur enfance, revenant dans leurs localités d’origine. Mais il y a eu aussi de ceux qui ont suivi d’autres parcours professionnels, tout en gardant un vif intérêt pour la littérature : soit ils ont été écrivains, soit auteurs de traités scientifiques, après des doctorats, soit rédacteurs de manuels scolaires et de grammaires, soit journalistes.

En m’appuyant sur cette recherche préalable, je vais présenter en ce qui suit quelques traités d’histoire littéraire, le rôle que ces thèses ont joué dans la carrière et la destinée de leurs auteurs roumains, tout en insistant sur les difficultés apportées par l’application, dans ces cas, du concept de la littérature nationale.

La présence du mot *hongrois* dans le nom de l’université François-Joseph indique la langue de l’enseignement, à côté du latin, ces langues étant toutes les deux utilisées afin de soutenir une ligne de spécialisation dans la langue et la littérature roumaine et une autre de langue et littérature allemande, également assumées par Hugó von Meltzl. La pratique d’enseigner une langue et une littérature étrangère à travers une autre langue, nationale, entravait à la fin du XIX^e siècle le processus de nationalisation des cultures et des littératures. En Hongrie, l’approche nationaliste de la littérature avait commencé dès la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle, mais sur l’aire linguistique roumain il était scindé en deux (beaucoup de Roumains ne vivant pas dans le Vieux Royaume de la Roumanie, mais dans l’Autriche-Hongrie). Ce phénomène était pourtant un peu plus complexe, à cause du fait que par manque d’un concept unitaire de la littérature et de la culture roumaine, les identités régionales et leurs caractéristiques restaient assez fortes. En Transylvanie, l’identité professionnelle des étudiants d’ethnie roumaine se réalisait dans une université située au centre d’une province pluriculturelle, pluriconfessionnelle et plurilingue et avec une histoire particulière. Cette université se présentait comme la filiale régionale de l’université de Pest, la capitale de la Hongrie, avec laquelle elle se comparait et rivalisait sans cesse. À part Kolozsvár, il y a eu d’autres centres régionaux ou périphériques assez appréciés en Transylvanie ou dans le Vieux Royaume pour avoir attiré de jeunes intellectuels roumains. Pour eux Bucarest, la capitale roumaine, était de nature à offrir une toute autre perception sur leur culture. Cette pluralité des perceptions de la langue et de la littérature roumaine engendrait des histoires littéraires parallèles ou divergentes sous l’influence des perceptions et des pratiques culturelles locales ou régionales.

Parmi les étudiants d’ethnie roumaine de l’université de Kolozsvár, on retrouve quelques auteurs de traités d’histoire de la littérature roumaine, qui, le plus

souvent, représentaient la publication de leur thèse de doctorat écrite et soutenue en hongrois.

Branisce Valer ayant obtenu son diplôme à l'Université de Budapest en 1891 dans la spécialisation roumain-allemand, a publié sa thèse sur Andrei Mureșanu dans la capitale hongroise³. Les historiens littéraires du XX^{ème} siècle et nos contemporains considère comme une rareté l'édition originale de cette thèse. Ion Buzași, spécialiste de l'œuvre de Mureșanu, lui a assuré la rédaction en roumain, en 2009.

La thèse comprenait 29 pages et a été citée dans plusieurs publications périodiques dans l'année même de sa parution.

L'article publié dans l'hebdomadaire *Unirea*⁴ confronte les idées de la dite thèse avec le canon littéraire roumain formulé par l'incontournable critique littéraire de l'époque, Titu Maiorescu. L'auteur de la notice voit dans l'analyse de Braniște une apologie de la poésie de Mureșanu, que l'on considère plus apte à susciter l'appréciation de la critique que celle de Mihai Eminescu, déjà érigé, à ce moment-là, au rang de poète national roumain : « Cette brochure est une étude sur le poète Mureșanu. Mais on peut dire qu'elle est aussi une apologie de son talent poétique à l'encontre de Maiorescu et d'autres *minorum gentium* qui n'accordent à Mureșanu aucun mérite poétique. Apologie auquel s'ajoute le succès »⁵.

Futur journaliste et ministre de l'éducation après la première guerre mondiale, Braniște a démontré l'importance de ce poète dans la littérature roumaine de Transylvanie et ses connexions avec la littérature roumaine du Vieux Royaume.

Fait notable, les données bibliographiques de la thèse apparaissent dans *Egyetemes Philológiai Közlöny* dans la colonne de nouveaux titres publiés en Hongrie⁶.

Racz János, plus connu sous le nom de Ion Rațiu, diplômé en 1899 à Kolozsvár, est l'auteur d'une autre monographie concernant l'œuvre du poète : *Muresán András élete és költészete. Tanulmány a román irodalom köréből*⁷. Il a

³ Branisce Valer [connu comme Valeriu Braniște], *Muresianu András : Tanulmány az erdélyi román irodalom köréből* [Andrei Mureșanu. Essai sur l'histoire de la littérature roumaine de Transylvanie], Budapest, Rózsa nyomda, 1891.

⁴ ***, « Muresianu András. Bibliografie » [« Andrei Mureșanu. Bibliographie »], *Unirea*, 1891, 27, p. 216 : http://documente.bcucuj.ro/web/bibdgit/periodice/unirea/1891/BCUCLUJ_FP_PIV1902_1891_001_0027.pdf.

⁵ On a gardé l'orthographe originale du texte. Traduction française : « Broșura acésta este un studiu asupra poetului Mureșanu. Putemă însă să dicemu, că este și o apologie a talentului poeticu a lui Mureșanu în contra lui Maiorescu și alții dii minorum gentium, cari negă lui Mureșanu ori ce capacitate poetică. Și ca apologie putemă să dicemu, că este și succesu ». Traduit en français par B.T.

⁶ Branisce Valér, « Muresianu András. Tanulmány az erdélyi román irodalom köréből. Bölcsészettudori értekezés » [« Une étude de la littérature roumaine de Transylvanie. Dissertation »], *Egyetemes Philológiai Közlöny*, 1891, 7, p. 816 : http://epa.oszk.hu/02300/02392/00073/pdf/EPA02392_egy_phil_kozl_15_1891_07_816.pdf.

⁷ Racz János, *Muresan András élete és költészete. Tanulmány a román irodalom köréből* [Vie et poésie d'Andrei Mureșanu. Essai sur la littérature roumaine], Kolozsvár, Gombos, 1900.

commencé sa carrière comme professeur à Balázsfalva (Blaj), puis au début du XX^e siècle il avait concouru à l'invitation de Grigore Moldovan au poste de maître de conférence pour l'enseignement du roumain à l'Université de Kolozsvár.

C'est à cette occasion-là qu'il va rédiger le deuxième traité sur la poésie de Mureșanu, après celui paru à Budapest, plus long cette fois-ci (100 pages), et écrit après une expérience didactique, avec l'intention d'approfondir par un doctorat cette direction de sa carrière intellectuelle. Ce n'était pas la première publication dans la carrière professionnelle de Rațiu mais, chose bien importante, c'était le premier texte à être republié en roumain, sa langue maternelle, l'année prochaine⁸. Cette double parution visait à capter un public plus large, mais était destinée également à pouvoir être utilisée par ses étudiants roumains. Détail tout aussi significatif, la variante roumaine a été publiée à Balázsfalva (Blaj) où Rațiu avait été professeur après avoir fini ses études.

Petre Dulfu, diplômé en 1880 à Kolozsvár, est l'auteur d'une thèse de doctorat sur la vie et l'activité de Vasile Alecsandri, soutenue en 1881⁹. Ce genre de traité monographique s'inscrit dans la tradition positiviste de l'interprétation littéraire pratiquée à l'époque par l'historiographie littéraire hongroise : les données biographiques de l'écrivain sont au cœur de la monographie, elles sont considérées incontournables pour la présentation d'une œuvre littéraire. La partie la plus méritoire de la thèse de Dulfu est constituée par les annexes, qui contiennent des fragments traduits en hongrois des poèmes d'Alecsandri. Les lecteurs hongrois pouvaient ainsi mieux accéder à la connaissance de la vie et de l'activité du poète et surtout à ses poésies.

Il est encore plus important que ce traité a été publié à Kolozsvár par le typographe Stein János et distribué par son réseau international (il distribuait ses publications non seulement en toute l'Autriche-Hongrie, mais il les exportait aussi en Amérique, à l'université Harvard, comme les œuvres de Brassai Sámuel par exemple, professeur de la même université et rédacteur de l'*Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum* entre 1877 et 1887). Le traité de Dulfu bénéficie, la même année, d'une présentation de la part du critique littéraire hongrois Szana Tamás¹⁰. Sa position lui permettait de publier ses comptes rendus dans plusieurs revues et hebdomadaires, par exemple *Pesti Hírlap* et *Arad és vidéke*, assurant une publicité plus large aux sujets traités. En examinant sa réception critique, on peut affirmer que le nom d'Alecsandri n'était point inconnu pour les Hongrois. Szana souligne qu'il s'agit du poète contemporain le plus important de la littérature roumaine et qu'il est l'auteur d'un hymne reconnu au niveau international. En ce qui concerne

⁸ Balázsfalva (Blaj), lieu de publication de la variante roumaine en 1900, était un important centre d'éducation grec-catholique en langue roumaine.

⁹ Petre Dulfu, *Alecsandri Vazul működése a román irodalom terén [L'activité littéraire roumaine de Vasile Alecsandri]*, Kolozsvár, Stein János nyomdájá, 1881.

¹⁰ Szana Tamás, in *Vasárnapi Újság*, 1881, 26, p. 413 : <http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00030/01425/pdf/01425.pdf>

l'ouvrage de Dulfu, il ne cache pas que même si c'est une première tentative d'écrire, ce jeune homme a en plus essayé de traduire des poésies d'Alecsandri – traductions assez réussies, mais pas excellentes – et a collecté un matériau assez important sur la vie et l'œuvre de ce poète. Il mériterait donc l'appréciation des lecteurs. En ce qui concerne la réception roumaine du traité, George Călinescu a mentionné son nom dans son histoire de la littérature roumaine. Dans le champ littéraire et culturel roumain, Dulfu est plus connu pour ses contes écrits en roumain et pour son activité didactique. C'est un intellectuel qui avait quitté l'Autriche-Hongrie pour faire carrière à Bucarest. La communauté de sa région natale cultive pourtant sa mémoire.

Toutes ces œuvres nous montrent comment est édifié la triade classique des auteurs roumains présentés au public hongrois : Andrei Mureșanu–Dimitrie Bolintineanu–Vasile Alecsandri. Les premières thèses de doctorat et les essais sur la littérature roumaine publiés dans les revues et les hebdomadaires hongroises ont une importance majeure en ce qui concerne l'exportation de la littérature roumaine de la Transylvanie ou celle du Vieux Royaume. Bien que ces thèses ne concernent pas strictement la littérature d'Autriche-Hongrie, elles sont pourtant inventariées par les bibliographies des publications en langue hongroise (*Egyetemes Philológiai Közlöny*, *Magyar Könyvészet* stb.). Le sujet abordé et la langue maternelle des étudiants les lient en même temps à la littérature et à la culture des Roumains du Vieux Royaume.

Szabo Emil, diplômé à Kolozsvár en 1900, ensuite professeur à l'École normale de Balázsfalva (Blaj), soutient sa thèse de doctorat en février 1904 devant le comité composé des professeurs Grigore Moldovan et Hugo von Meltzl et de deux représentants de la chaire d'histoire, Szadeczky Lajos et Schilling Lajos. Le 4 février 1904, selon le rapport de soutenance de doctorat retrouvé dans les fonds de l'Université déposés aux Archives Nationales de la Roumanie, ceux-ci ont accordé à la thèse la distinction *summa cum laude*¹¹. Appréciation qui se montre encore plus méritoire si l'on prend en considération que le poète analysé était Coșbuc György¹² – George Coșbuc, ancien étudiant roumain de l'université entre 1884 et 1886, et qu'il s'agit d'une thèse scientifique, d'un traité d'histoire littéraire, et non pas seulement d'un texte de critique littéraire ; il se constitue également comme un apport à la canonisation et la panthéonisation de ce poète.

¹¹ Archives Nationales de la Roumanie, Direction Départementale de Cluj : Fond 315 Ms 112. *Magyar Királyi Ferenc József Tudományegyetem Bölcsészeti-, Nyelv- Történettudományi Kara szigorlatai és doktorai* [L'Université royale hongroise François-Joseph, examens et doctorats de la Faculté des Lettres, des Langues et d'Histoire], 1904/1905, n° 131.

¹² Szabó Emil, *Coșbuc György: Tanulmány a román irodalomtörténet köréből* [George Coșbuc : *Essai sur la littérature roumaine*], Balázsfalva, 1904.

En 1905, l'hebdomadaire d'expression roumaine *Răvaşul* publie à Kolozsvár un compte-rendu sur la thèse de Szabó¹³. L'auteur anonyme fait une présentation détaillée de la structure de la monographie. Il apprécie – tout comme Szana – les traductions en hongrois des poésies de Coşbuc réalisées par des traducteurs reconnus de la littérature roumaine comme Revai Károly (qui signe la même année le premier recueil de poésie roumaine traduit en hongrois), mais en même temps il se demande pourquoi ce genre de traité n'existe-il pas en roumain ? Cette question restera sans réponse jusqu'au changement d'État de 1919, quand l'administration jusqu'à-là hongroise de l'Université sera remplacée par une administration roumaine, et le nom de l'institution deviendra Université de Cluj. À ce moment-là, tous les doctorants, roumains ou pas, qui avaient préparé leurs thèses en hongrois, devaient les traduire en roumain pour être admis à la soutenance.

George Coşbuc est inscrit dans la réception hongroise parmi les poètes roumains préférés et l'on se plaint que les parallélismes entre Coşbuc et le Hongrois Petőfi ne soient mieux accentués ou détaillés. Dans sa thèse, Szabó cherchait à relever les points communs entre les deux littératures, tendance assez habituelle dans l'histoire littéraire de cette époque, qui, dès nos jours, tient des méthodes spécifiques de la littérature comparée.

Les étudiants de l'Université vont effectuer, après cette date, d'autres travaux de recherche encore, vont rédiger des traités de philologie ou de linguistique, comme, par exemple, la thèse de doctorat distinguée *cum laude* de Pavel Constantin, en juin 1904, sur l'activité de B.P. Hasdeu et les phénomènes qui ont influencé l'évolution de la littérature roumaine¹⁴, qui sera publiée en 1913 dans la revue littéraire *Nyugat* à Budapest (c'est la revue qui avait eu le plus grand impact dans la littérature hongroise de l'époque).

En conclusion, on peut dire que ces thèses de doctorat issues de la formation assurée à cette université ont été dans leur plus grande majorité des publications scientifiques essayant de tracer l'histoire de la littérature roumaine. Parmi les allumés se sont retrouvés quelques intellectuels qui étaient ensuite devenus eux-mêmes des professeurs à cette université, sans être pour autant répertoriés par l'histoire littéraire roumaine, à cause de leur langue de formation et d'expression : le hongrois. Leurs travaux n'ont fait l'objet d'intérêt que très récemment. Si l'œuvre de Dulfu a bénéficié d'une quelconque attention dans la littérature roumaine, c'était à cause de ses contes en roumain et non pas de sa thèse en hongrois. Le doctorat représentait une étape essentielle dans la carrière d'enseignant des jeunes diplômés, mais le plus souvent leur spécialisation n'a pas évolué vers le développement d'un projet plus ample d'histoire littéraire. Cette époque-là de l'histoire de la Transylvanie n'a en effet pas été favorable aux projets

¹³ ***, « Carte unguerească despre Coşbuc » [« Livre en hongrois sur Coşbuc »], *Răvaşul*, 1905, 3, p. 13: http://dspace.bcucluj.ro/bitstream/123456789/8542/1/BCUCLUJ_FP_PII970_1905_003_003.pdf

¹⁴ Pavel Constantin, *Haşdeu Petriceicu Bogdan mint nyelvész : Tanulmány a román philológia köréből* [Bogdan Petriceicu Haşdeu comme linguiste : Étude de la philologie roumaine], 1904.

de ce genre. Dans un autre ordre d'idées, on peut voir dans ces thèses, qui ont été, toutes, mentionnées dans la presse hongroise, les prémices de l'exportation et de la promotion de la littérature roumaine vers les lecteurs hongrois. Comme leurs auteurs ne s'exprimaient pas en leur langue maternelle (le roumain), qui n'était ni la langue de l'administration régionale, ni celle de la formation universitaire, ces textes sont devenus inaccessibles pour le public roumain du Vieux Royaume, pour lequel le hongrois restait une langue étrangère. Par conséquent, ce public ne pouvait pas connaître et reconnaître ces traités, bien qu'ils concernent la littérature « nationale » roumaine. Ces travaux témoignent donc d'une période de transition de l'histoire littéraire roumaine et sont des documents précieux pour l'histoire des relations entre la littérature hongroise et la littérature roumaine.

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THE INTERFERENCES OF THE LITERARY HISTORY. HUNGARIAN
LANGUAGE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE ROMANIAN LITERATURE
AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY
(Abstract)

The delimitation of a literature according to the ethnicity of the authors is problematic in the case of the Romanian men of letters who, at the beginning of the 20th century, wrote and published in Hungarian studies in the history of Romanian literature. Both the professional status, and the multilingualism played a major role in their scientific development. The basic criterion of judging the literature values is usually the aesthetic one; this is why writing in a foreign language, in this case – Hungarian, did not increase the literary recognition. It is the bibliographic value of such a corpus that makes it useful for the research of intercultural relations.

Keywords: the turn of the century, Kolozsvár / Cluj, Transylvania, university, Romanian literature, Hungarian language, national identity.

INTERFERENȚELE ISTORIEI LITERARE. DEZBATERILE ÎN LIMBA
MAGHIARĂ DE LA FINALUL SECOLULUI AL XIX-LEA ȘI ÎNCEPUTUL
CELUI DE-AL XX-LEA DESPRE LITERATURA ROMÂNĂ
(Rezumat)

Delimitarea unei literaturi în funcție de originea etnică a autorilor ridică probleme în cazul literaturii române care, la începutul secolului al XX-lea, au scris și au publicat în limba maghiară studii de istorie a literaturii române. În cazul dezvoltării științifice a fiecăruia dintre ei, atât statutul profesional, cât și multilingvismul au jucat un rol major. Criteriul fundamental de stabilire a valorii literare este de obicei cel estetic; tocmai de aceea, studiile într-o limbă străină, în cazul de față – maghiară, nu au generat creșterea recunoașterii literare. În schimb, valoarea bibliografică a unui astfel de corpus îl face foarte util pentru cercetarea relațiilor interculturale.

Cuvinte-cheie: finalul secolului al XIX-lea, începutul secolului al XX-lea, Kolozsvár/Cluj, Transilvania, universitate, literatură română, limba maghiară, identitate națională.

MIHAELA MUDURE

ROMANIAN ENGLISH STUDIES SPECIALISTS AND NATIONAL LITERARY HISTORY

The present paper is divided into two parts. The former part analyses the relationship between English Studies specialists from Romania and the English cultures they serve through their activity. In other words, we look from Romania to the Anglophone cultures as a study object. The latter part of this study changes the perspective, namely we deal with the way in which the reception of English literature is or should be integrated into the national literary histories.

The ambition of any literary historian, his *opera magna*, is a literary history. The test of supreme complexity is writing a literary history, preferably from the beginning of a literature to its contemporaneous stage. It is a test of impressive difficulty because it supposes a lot of knowledge and the perusal of an amazing number of studies. Taking into account the prestige of literary history, we wonder: how many literary histories of Britain by Romanian scholars are there?

The catalogues of the most important Romanian libraries include several books whose titles contain the syntagma “History of English literature”. Chronologically speaking, the *History* authored by Anixt and translated by Leon Levițchi and Ion Preda in 1961 is to be mentioned. Anixt’s *History* was a research model imposed but also necessary at that time and at that stage of development of the English Studies in Romania. After World War II, Romania entered the orbit of the Soviet Union. Without losing its political independence *de facto*, Romania got into a state of semi-colonial dependence from the Soviet Union. Economically, Romania was deprived of many of its resources under the guise of the war debts obligation. The war debts were the exaggerated¹ costs of the damages Romanian army had caused the Soviet Union during World War II. Culturally, the newly installed political authorities supported a real cult of Soviet culture and science. Everything had been invented by Soviet minds. Consequently, English Studies also had to reinvent themselves under the Soviet orbit. The result of this policy was the translation of the *History of English Literature* by Anixt. The unsigned paratext of the *History* contains a tribute to the Soviet culture which respects “the works of the great masters from other countries”². The Soviet scholar Anixt wrote his work together

¹ *Vae victis!*

² Alexandr Abramovic Anixt, *Istoria literaturii engleze [History of English Literature]*. Translated by Leon Levițchi and Ion Preda. Bucharest, Editura Științifică, 1961, p. 6: „Cultura sovietică, pătrunsă de spiritul internaționalismului, se caracterizează prin respect față de cuceririle culturii, ale științei și ale artei altor popoare. Însuflețiți de o legitimă mândrie pentru contribuția adusă de literatura noastră la tezaurul artei universale, noi dăm prețuirea cuvenită operelor marilor maestri din celălalte țări”.

with another colleague M.D. Zabludovski who died on the front and the book is dedicated to his memory. Anixt's *History* is not without merits. The author has detailed knowledge of the literary texts, the historical context of each work is amply and competently presented according to the type of Marxist approach cultivated during that time. Unfortunately, the political criterion is excessively used. Critics and writers are divided into two groups: progressive and decadent. A typical representative of decadentism is James Joyce³. Other decadents are D. H. Lawrence, T.S. Eliot or Aldous Huxley. For a long time and in the absence of any possibilities to get access to English and American sources, Anixt's *History* was a main source of information for English Studies students, teachers, even scholars. A scholarly proof of what it meant to be in the "socialist camp"!

We can criticize the imposition of Anixt's *History* as a sort of Bible of English Studies in Romania. Neither can one forget that the English Studies specialists from Romania have not been able yet to give a *History* of English or American literature from beginnings to contemporary evolutions. In 1961 Valeria Alcalay dared challenge Anixt with a *History* that covers only the periods safe from the ideological point of view. The farther the literary historian was from the contemporary literature, the safer he was. No wonder, therefore, that Alcalay preferred to deal with the period from the beginning of English literature to Shakespeare. Her book was a study dedicated to the students in the English Departments of the country. A huge gap followed until 1978 when Aurel Curtui published another *History*. This one was from Ben Jonson to Jonathan Swift and it was also dedicated to the English Studies students. This study was incorporated into the *History of English Literature: From the Beginning to Preromanticism* signed by Nicolae (sic) Crețiu⁴, Nicolescu, Curtui and published in 1991. It is an ominous transformation because in 1999 Corneliu Nicolescu recycled the whole text under the title *A History of English Literature: From the Anglo-Saxons to Restoration* and under his signature (forgetting to add the other authors). The same text was re-published by Nicolescu under the same title in 2000 and 2002, in some kind of editorial frenzy.

A well documented *History of English Literature* covering the period from Walter Pater to Wells gave Virgil Stanciu in 1981. The intention of continuity is suggested by the indication from the title that this is just Volume I. Unfortunately, Stanciu, well versed translator, stopped here. Translation became his favourite scholarly activity. Another version of this *History* changes the paratext from the writers' names (Pater and Welsh) to the crossroads between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Ileana Galea published, in 1985, another *History*, which, in fact, covered only the Victorian Novel. Both Stanciu and Galea revisited their texts after 1990 and published new versions benefitting from the post-1990 freedom of

³ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

⁴ Actually, the author's name is Ioan Crețiu.

information. Galea published *Victorianism and Literature* in 1996. Stanciu's *The Transition to Modernism in English Literature* came out in 2007.

The targeted readership of all these *Histories* were the students of the English Departments from Romania. Consequently, thorough documentation and exact, correct information are considered to be extremely important. Authors are not interested in offering challenging, original interpretations of the literary texts. These are classical, disciplined *Histories* whose main purpose is informative. The difficulties of accessing international bibliography led to the appearance of these partial *Histories* which were vital in the training of the students from the English Departments. After 2000 the necessities of the newly founded or recently developed English Departments all over Romania led to the publication of other didactic *Histories* of the type mentioned above. In 2004 Procopie Clonțea published a *History* from the beginnings to Shakespeare, which was followed, in 2005, by another edition going from the beginnings of English literary history to the Restoration. In 2008 Arleen Ionescu published another *History* (textbook) going from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance.

The Romanian scholar who was the closest to the ideal of covering all the historical unfolding of English Literature from the beginnings to contemporaneity was Leon Levițchi. It was he who published a first volume of *The History of English and American literature* at Dacia Publishing House, in 1985. The intention of a larger project was evident.

In the *Foreword* to this first volume, Levitchi says: "I thought it to be our duty to give quotations from the criticism by Romanian Anglicists and scholars. The statistics of their contributions is modest, but the substance of many of them is not below what we can find elsewhere"⁵. Ion Barbu is quoted in connection with Roger Bacon⁶, Mihnea Gheorghiu is mentioned for his study *Scene din viața lui Shakespeare*⁷, Ion Marin Sadoveanu for his analysis of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*⁸, Alexandru Olaru is remembered for his psychiatric study on Shakespeare⁹. A quotation from an article published by Eminescu in *Familia*, issue 8/1870, "Shakespeare must not be read, but studied"¹⁰, is used by Levițchi in order to give more credibility to his discourse. As the year 1985 when he published his *History* was also one of the years of blatant and aggressive communist nationalism in the Romanian public life, this reference could also be a cautious gesture. Quoting

⁵ Leon Levițchi, *Istoria literaturii engleze & americane [History of English & American Literature]*, vol. I, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 1985, p. 13: "am considerat ca o datorie a noastră să reproducem și citate din critica angliștilor și oamenilor de cultură români. Modestă este statistica luărilor lor de cuvânt; dar substanța multora nu e cu nimic mai prejos decât cea pe care o aflăm aiurea".

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 48.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 193.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 195.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 183.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 237: "Shakespeare nu trebuie cetit, ci studiat"

Eminescu you could not be accused of cosmopolitanism. The memory of the Stalinist campaign against cosmopolitanism was not dead yet. Other Romanian scholars used in order to give a more serious foundation to Levițchi's scholarly discourse are: Adrian Marino in defining the Renaissance, Petre Solomon for his monograph on Milton, and Ioan (Iancu) Botez¹¹ in reference to John Dryden.

The Aesopic discourse was a characteristic of the time. From this point of view, one cannot miss a very interesting remark quoted by Levițchi from Ion Omescu who referred to Hamlet and Cymbeline in the following terms: "Denmark is a prison, prisons are man, the matrimonial relationship, the feudal state, the universe" (224)¹². The reference to the carceral universe was not without a certain echo in the mind of the Romanian reader who had just escaped from the terror of the Stalinist Gulag.

Omissions of Romanian anglicists in the scholarly foundation of Levițchi's *History* are also significant. Dragoș Protopopescu and Haig Acterian censored by the Communist regime because of their far-right political ideas are also censored by Levițchi. One can understand these absences thinking of the political and historical context. Less understandable is the omission of Zoe Dumitrescu-Bușulenga, the author of a very good study on Chaucer, and a scholar who was accepted by the ideological authorities of the time.

Some kind of continuity with the previous Soviet bound scholarship that used to be compulsory in Romania in the 1950's is ensured by quoting Anixt¹³ although Levițchi's *History* was published in 1985. The text may have been drafted earlier. In any case, besides Anixt, other Soviet scholars, Alexeev, Kozîntev, Amonsova, and Morozov¹⁴ are referenced. They offer a kind of good scholarship backup. A huge change is the overwhelming presence of British and American scholars who constitute most of the references in this 1985 book. It is clear that that some members of the then Romanian intellectual elites were allowed to travel abroad and get scientific information from beyond the Iron Curtain.

Most of the quotations from the literary texts analysed in the *History* are by Levițchi himself. Still, occasionally, other translators' work is also used: Șt. O. Iosif, Ion Vinea, Dan Duțescu, or Teodor Boșca.

Volume II of Levițchi's *History* goes from 1700 up to Romanticism and it was published under the signature of Leon Levițchi, Sever Trifu, and Veronica Focșăneanu, after the death of the main author (1991), in 1994. This *History* incorporates Jane Austen into the chapter dedicated to Romanticism without too much arguments in this respect. Volume II will be republished under the signature

¹¹ Ioan Botez (1871–1947) introduced the English language into the Romanian middle and high schools and taught English at the University of Iași.

¹² Leon Levițchi, *Istoria literaturii engleze & americane*, p. 224: "Danemarca este o închisoare, închisorii sunt omul, relația matrimonială, statul feudal, universul".

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 59.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 56, 101, 147, 187.

of the same trio by All Publishing House in 1998. The often republishing of the *Histories* of English literature by Romanian scholars shows that there was a need, probably even a hunger for such studies. Unfortunately, till now Romanian anglicists have only offered partial histories of English literature¹⁵. The original voice of Romanian anglicists was almost completely stifled during the early decades of Communist dictatorship but it is high time we regained our own voice and avoid the inverse complexes: neglecting Romanian scholarship and relying our studies only on international sources.

If we look around at our post-communist neighbours, we see that in 1966 Piotr Graff translated George Sampson's *History of English Literature* into Polish. He offered the general as well as the specialized public from Poland access to a genuine source of British scholarship. In-between sources of Soviet origin were avoided. The Czech Nenadál Radoslav already gave *A Brief Outline of English and American Literature* in 1958 and the Slovak Eva Kolárová published a similar work in 1974. In Poland, Andrzej Kopcewicz and Marta Sienicka published a complete history of American Literature in 1982–1983 and Liliana Sikorska gave *An Outline History of English Literature* in 2002. All these works are complete overviews of English or American literature. How can one explain these different cultures of English in the communist and post-communist space¹⁶? How can one explain the different practices of adoption and adaptation of English in countries which share a twentieth-century commonality: the imposition of the Communist regime? Does the answer lies in the different levels of aggressiveness of the Communist regimes? Was censorship more lenient in some Communist countries than in others? Or do we have here the well-known Romanian complex of the work forever begun and never finalized? Possibly all these factors influenced, to a certain extent, attitudes, private as well as personal policies in English Studies from Romania: a certain hesitation of Romanian anglicists to get rid of the imposed Soviet model and also to finalize such a challenging work as a complete history of English literature or of any other Anglophone literature.

The second part of this paper deals with the strategies to integrate the reception of foreign literatures (particularly the Anglophone ones) into national literary histories. In other words, the Damrosch from *What Is World Literature?*¹⁷ is not without predecessors. Huck Gutman published, in 1991, a collection of articles entitled *As Others Read Us: International Perspectives on American Literature*. In the introductory study, Gutman recommended the integration of the studies by the

¹⁵ Romanian Americanists are even more indebted to their readership than their colleagues, the Romanian Anglicists. Up to now there is no History of American literature by a Romanian scholar. This is also due to the later reception of American literature in Romanian culture.

¹⁶ See Adriana Neagu, "The Cultures of English: Anglophone Sensibility, Regional Confluences and the Romanian Difference", *American, British and Canadian Studies*, 2010, 14, pp. 59-75.

¹⁷ David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2013.

Americanists from abroad into the history of American literature. This de-centred perspective has several advantages, according to Gutman: firstly, “enriching perspectives, greater self-definition for all concerned”¹⁸; secondly, such an approach “also testifies to the ways in which cultures in general interact with one another, and the importance of national history, ideology, indigenous social structure, in transcultural interaction”¹⁹. Consequently, Gutman conceptualizes the metatext about American literature as a historical and international research in the sense developed by Pascale Casanova in her 1999 book *La République Mondiale des Lettres*, which focuses on the Francophone space²⁰. Still her conclusions can be extrapolated, or at least taken into account when analysing other cultural spaces as well.

In 2015 Suman Gupta analysed in a seminal essay the “global penetrations and pluralistic formation”²¹ of the English Studies. Translations in and from English are an important segment of English Studies scholarship. Anglicists should abandon the centralized perspective on English and also consider the condition of English as a cultural import and the significance of this import. Therefore, research should be made on the “[v]arious narratives of the emergence, development, and contemporary condition of English Studies”²². Two examples can be relevant for this approach. The first Romanian translation of Jane Austen²³ – Gheorghe Nenişor’s version of *Pride and Prejudice* – was published in 1943 while Romania was at war with Great Britain. Was this cultural act a hidden manifestation of sympathy with the enemies of the alliance Romania belonged to in 1943²⁴? Not impossible. The paratext clearly shows the translator’s sympathy for everything that is British. An even more powerful example is that of Roman Dyboski, author of *Wielcy pisarze amerykańscy* [*Great American Writers*]. He went into hiding in the building just opposite the Warsaw headquarters of the Gestapo. It was during this period of isolation that he wrote this collection of essays on great American writers. An admirable gesture of cultural defiance to dictatorship! In 1940, the Nazis started the so-called “Aktion AB” directed against the Polish intelligentsia, as a result of which many intellectuals were either shot, or sent to concentration camps to die there. Roman Dyboski went into hiding in order to avoid the fate of many of his colleagues who had been sent to the camp of Sachsenhausen already in October 1939.

¹⁸ Hugh Gutman (ed.), *As Others Read Us: International Perspectives on American Literature*. Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1991, p. 16.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

²⁰ Pascale Casanova, *La république mondiale des lettres.*, Paris, Seuil, 1999.

²¹ Suman Gupta, *Philology and Global English Studies: Retracings*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 9.

²³ *Surorile Bennet*, the first Romanian version of *Pride and Prejudice*.

²⁴ In 1943 Romania was an ally of Nazi Germany.

In his admirable meditation on what is world literature David Damrosch pleads for the inclusion of translations and their avatars into the comparative study of literatures. Attention should be paid to “tracing what is lost and what is gained in translation, looking at the international shifts of language, era, region, religion, social status and literary context that a work can incur as it moves from its point of origin out into a new cultural sphere”²⁵. In Romanian literature translators and translations (both ways, meaning from and into Romanian) have been included in reference books. The dictionary compiled by Zaciu, Sasu and Papahagi, published in 2000, the dictionary compiled by Aurel Zaciu, published in 2006, or the dictionaries of Romanian Literature published under the auspices of the Romanian Academy in 1979 or between 2004–2009 – the latter under the authority of Eugen Simion – they all include entries on translators and translations. More than that, it is also under the auspices of the Romanian Academy that chronological dictionaries of the Romanian novel (from the beginning up to 2000) and of the novel translated into Romanian (from the beginning up to 2000) were published. The lexicographic policy was the same: translations were included²⁶. Romanian literature has always paid attention to its reception abroad and to what it should receive from abroad in order to catch up and not be left behind. Its marginality from the great centres of literary and political power was both a spur and a backlash.

The inclusion of literary translations into the courses of Anglophone literary histories can also be very beneficial in surpassing this painful duality. First of all, sequences about the reception of certain English literary works in Romanian culture will include the new information into the system of literary knowledge that the student already has from high school. Or this system that precedes the University is based upon the national literary histories. For instance, the study of Jonathan Swift’s work proper can be enriched by the study of his reception in Romanian culture. How can one explain the transition from an infantilized Swift in his nineteenth century Romanian reception to a very different Swift in the twentieth

²⁵ David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?*, p. 34.

²⁶ However, this valorization of translation considered to be part of the national literary project coexists with a different attitude. The Romanian Academy has never admitted a specialist in foreign cultures among its members. Dan Grigorescu, eminent Anglicist and Americanist, was not a member of the Philology Section. The Writers’ Union awards prizes for translations but there is no clear policy in the definition of the translation. Most of the time it was translations from foreign languages into Romanian that were awarded. But there were also some occasions when translations of Romanian books into English were awarded by the branches of the Union. Last but not least, literary translators themselves can belong to several professional guilds: the Writers’ Union, the Association of Translators from Romania or the Association of Literary Translators from Romania. This indicates a democratic environment but also some confusion about one’s professional identification. The accreditation committees of the Ministry of National Education do not differentiate between specialists in Romanian literature and foreign literatures. They are all included into the Philology committee, which can prevent a very correct evaluation of doctoral or habilitation theses.

century? Ion Eremia offered us an anti-totalitarian Gulliver in his distopia *Gulliver în Țara Minciunilor*, while in *Călătorie în Capricia*, Mircea Oprea obliges Gulliver to confront Romanian post-communism in a savoury story. Dragos Protopopescu wrote a eminent doctoral thesis on Congreve under the guidance of the well-known literary historian Émile Legouis and defended it at Sorbonne during the inter-war period. Protopopescu's study is significant for the appearance of a Romanian elite well informed, sophisticated and transnational in its aims and achievements. The enthusiastic reception of Milton by the 1848 literary generation can be relevant for an inside-out understanding of the republican and the revolutionary ideals of the Romanian elite at mid-nineteenth century. How can we explain the belated reception of a writer such as Laurence Sterne in Romanian culture although he was very popular in Russian culture (Orthodox and East Europeans like the Romanians) or in French culture (which was a conduit for many English writers in their navigation toward Romanian territories)? And such queries could go on...

In conclusion, we are convinced that the divisive difference national/international can no longer work in today's global world as it functioned during the nineteenth and the twentieth century. On the one hand, Romanians have always been more receptive to the ideas of reception and travelling texts than their colleagues from the centres of literary power. On the other hand, there is a sense of protectiveness from everything that represents foreign-ness which comes from the minoring status of Romanian culture, a status that has been internalized for a long time. Looking at the English language and the cultures it represents as a mode of cultural production overpassing these antynomical attitudes can help both insiders and outsiders of Romanian culture and language articulate the specificity of Romanian culture in a new way.

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THE ROMANIAN ENGLISH STUDIES SPECIALISTS AND NATIONAL LITERARY HISTORY

(Abstract)

The study analyses Romanian specialists' attempts to compile histories of Anglophone literatures. Special attention is paid to Leon Levițchi's contribution to the Romanian historiography of English Literature. The second part of the paper deals with the strategies to integrate the reception of foreign literatures (particularly Anglophone ones) into national literary histories, emphasizing the fact that David Damrosch has some valuable predecessors among the authors of Romanian literature dictionaries.

Keywords: English literature, foreign literatures, Leon Levițchi, Romanian historiography, translation.

ANGLIȘTII ROMÂNI ȘI ISTORIA LITERARĂ NAȚIONALĂ

(Rezumat)

Studiul analizează demersurile cercetătorilor literari români de a realiza istorii ale literaturilor anglofone. O atenție specială e acordată contribuțiilor istoriografice despre literatura engleză semnate de Leon Levițchi. A doua parte a lucrării abordează strategiile de integrare a recepției literaturilor străine (în special, a celor anglofone) în istoriile literare naționale, accentuând că David Damrosch are câțiva precursori însemnați printre autorii dicționarelor literare românești.

Cuvinte-cheie: literatură engleză, literaturi străine, Leon Levițchi, istoriografie românească, traducere.

ANAMARIA OMER

A NEW CONCEPT OF LITERARY HISTORY. ROMANIAN LITERATURE AND THE NETWORK STRUCTURES

If we take into account the new technologies of the 21st century, could we imagine a concept of literary history which, in terms of its structural criteria, is fundamentally different from the traditional concepts we are accustomed to? Could we imagine the content of an alternative literary history abandoning the usual classification (based on literary epochs, literary currents or literary moments) and functioning on a network of interdisciplinary intersections between authors and texts? The present study attempts to draw the picture of a literary history based on network structures which connect authors and texts belonging to different epochs and currents by means of hypertextual nodes and links, rather than through linear chronologies.

There are two possible starting points for such an endeavour, compatible with one another.

The first starting point is related to the field of hypertextual theory. This type of non-linear theory can be associated, on the one hand, to the contributions of the Tel Quel group, particularly to those of Gérard Genette, on the categories of transtextuality¹. On the other hand, it has to do with the hypertextual structures encountered in computer science. The transtextual theories developed by the Tel Quel group suggest a tree-shaped, interrelated, trans-historicist model of the literary text. It could benefit the field of literary history via a selection of authors and texts quite different from the chronological, historicist pattern. The hypertextual structures identified in computer science project a 3-D model of textuality, based on the “depth” of the digital text and on its star-shaped structures.

¹ In *Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré* (1982), Gérard Genette defines *transtextuality* as “everything that connects, directly or indirectly, a text to another text”. Genette identifies five types of transtextuality: *intertextuality* (“the presence of a text within another text”, be it a quotation, an allusion or a type of plagiarism), *paratextuality* (associated with everything that accompanies a text: title, subtitle, preface, epilogue etc.), *metatextuality* (the nonnominal relation between texts, which excludes quotation), *architextuality* (the most abstract and implicit kind of transtextuality, represented by the typological definition of the text: novel, short story, essay, etc.) and *hypertextuality* (“everything that connects a text B (hypertext) to a text A (hypotext) in a manner different from that of a comment”). See Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes. La literatura en segundo grado*. Traducción de Cecilia Fernández Prieto, Madrid, Taurus, 1989, pp. 9-10. The translation of Genette’s quotations from Spanish to English belongs to me.

They could also be used in order to depict a non-linear, geometrically variable structure of literary history. In both these theoretical perspectives, the very concept of literary history may become relative or even irrelevant.

The second starting point for shaping an innovative literary history deals with network science, a relatively new field of research theorized, among others, by physicist Albert-László Barabási in his volume *Linked. The New Science of Networks*. Barabási discovers and validates the existence of apparently chaotic, still regular, mathematical structures, conventionally called *networks*. These networks can sometimes have a fractal aspect, as mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot called them in the seventies and are, nowadays, in use in fields such as biology, sociology, economics, Internet science. Hence, why would literature and, more precisely, the history of literature, not be possibly structured on the basis of such models that rely on self-similarity, self-organization, self-reproduction or, in other words, on organized chaos? In order to observe the differences and the potential for success of a chaotically organized history of literature, let us first see what traditional literary history looks like and on what criteria authors and texts are being regarded as eligible.

In Romanian culture, but not only, the customary way to structure the content of a particular literary history is to take into account order, fluency and a deterministic organization, as in: an epoch follows another epoch, a literary current generates a literary counter-current and so on. From this perspective, the most frequently used criteria in Romanian literary histories, either separately or combined, are *historicism* (the content of a literary history is structured according to periods, epochs, decades, moments), *typology* (the content of a literary history is divided into parts that reflect the way in which authors and their texts illustrate one typology or another) and *ideology* (the content of a literary history takes into account the authors' affiliation to a specific ideology or the manner in which their texts illustrate or reject that specific ideology).

For instance, literary histories such as those written by G. Călinescu or I. Negoïtescu follow a linear, chronological frame (a decade follows another decade, a century another century and so on). On the other hand, the historical, chronological criterion is almost unavoidable when conceiving the structure and content of a literary history, as not only our perception of the cultural field, but also that of time are, traditionally, linear (the so-called arrow of time: from year 0 to present).

However, from the second and third decades of the 20th century onward, quantum physics and quantum mechanics did come up with a new model of space and time, called space-time, from which linearity, regularity and the principle of causal determinism (A generates B) are excluded. For instance, from a quantum perspective, it is normal for multiple strips of space-time to coexist without having any direct, perceivable contact points. Obviously, such a potentially variable model is far from the network one, which still has to connect its components via star-shape 3-D links, but this model can help understand the way in which *history* (as in

literary history, for instance) does no longer or not necessarily represent a succession of moments, events, authors and texts.

The usual literary histories are, in fact, histories in the literal sense of the word (linear, successive, deterministic), applied to the field of literature. Consequently, the authors of literary histories who use other criteria (such as typology or ideology) are forced to take into account a chronological organization of content. On the other hand, the network perspective and structures diminish or even dismiss the role of chronology and linearity in content organization by making use of leaps over the expanse of what is conventionally known as past, present and, once again, past.

A non-linear history of literature, one based on network structures, would establish connections between “reticular” authors and texts belonging to epochs and currents far apart from each other. It would profit a critical and theoretical debate and could lead to an innovative mapping of Romanian literature. One of the interesting aspects of this seemingly chaotic cartography would be that non-linearity not only becomes a feature of such a star-shaped history of literature, but also what we might call a *hub*, a node of multiple links between authors illustrating different aesthetic currents and tendencies. These authors’ texts are themselves a reflection of the non-linearity principle, as both their structure and their content follow the “chaotically ordered” pattern. Further on, we will provide examples to testify to this particular aspect. But first, let us examine the defining features of non-linear literary structures.

Narrative non-linearity is usually associated to a network structure consisting of multiple textual nodes and links. These nodes and links are visible both in individual texts and in the connections between different texts and authors who do not necessarily find themselves in temporal, aesthetic or ideological proximity. The unifying element would reside in the hypertextual manner in which some texts are being structured as networks, generating an effect of “star-shaped resonance” (a kind of inter- and trans-textual “controlled echo effect”, in the words of postmodernist fiction writer Mircea Nedelciu). From the standing point of the new theories of communication, the term *network* would no longer be defined as an *ensemble* made out of criss-crossing lines, but as a 3-D structure which deconstructs and reshapes linearity in the form of a hologram.

For instance, Ion Budai-Deleanu’s “mock-heroic, satirical” epic poem *Țiganiada* [*The Gypsies’s Camp*] can be regarded as the first example of non-linear literature in Romanian culture. The oldest of the poem’s versions was published by Teodor Codrescu in the *Buciumul Român* magazine of 1875 and 1877, while a second version was later published, în 1925, by Gheorghe Cardaș². Should we apply a postmodernist perspective to *Țiganiada*, it could lead to a textualist reading of the poem, similar to the Tel Quel group’s transtextual theories. Such a

² See D. Popovici, *Studii literare I*, Cluj, Dacia, 1972, p. 465.

perspective would confirm both the complexity of the textual network used by Budai-Deleanu and the distant connections it establishes with postmodernist texts written a couple of centuries later.

If we analyse the footnotes that accompany Budai-Deleanu's poem, the hypertextual structure of *Țiganiada* becomes obvious from the very first pages. Here, the term *hypertext* could be associated to two different meanings. We could consider either Gérard Genette's *hypertext* and its connections with the *hypotext*, which is any text originated by a previous text via simple transformation or imitation³, or the digital *hypertext* we are accustomed to in the *online* world. The latter is generally defined as a *software* system allowing the deep, simultaneous crossing from one section of a text to another, or from a text to a different visual content (photograph, video etc.).

Should we establish a network connection between epochs and non-linear texts placed in different time frames, Budai-Deleanu's *Țiganiada* would find itself in the vicinity of another significant epic poem, equally rich in inter-, meta- and hypertextual references: Mircea Cărtărescu's *Levantul* [*The Levant*], particularly attractive from a hypertextual standpoint in the 2016eEdition of Cosmin Ciotloș. Although Budai-Deleanu's and Cărtărescu's texts are not fiction works, their epic component, together with their hypertextual structure, show strong similarities with the Romanian postmodernist fiction of the eighties and nineties.

Taking one step ahead in illustrating network structure literary texts, we can find at least a couple of Romanian modernist fiction authors who are relevant in terms of star-shaped literature: Camil Petrescu, Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, Anton Holban. Their works are all published in the first half of the 20th century.

Although Camil Petrescu's *Patul lui Procust* [*The Bed of Procrustes*] may seem the most obvious example due to the number of self-explanatory footnotes in the novel, network structures of narrative may also be found in Petrescu's *Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război* [*The Last Night of Love, the First Night of War*] (1930), in Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu's *Femeia în fața oglinzii* [*The Woman in front of the Mirror*] (1921) and *Concert din muzică de Bach* [*A Concert of Music by Bach*] (1925) and in Anton Holban's *O moarte care nu dovedește nimic* [*A Death That Proves Nothing*] (1931), *Ioana* (1934), and *Jocurile Daniei* [*Dania's Games*] (1971). The narrative structures of these novels and novellas are all of the hyper type, allowing the reader to make deep-level connections in each text, rather than surface ones.

Let us take the example of the characters Lică and Sia in Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu's novel *Concert din muzică de Bach*. First, the reader is told, via an observer watching from a distance, that Sia might be Lică's girlfriend. Later on, another character in the novel explains that the two of them are, in fact, father and

³ Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestos*, pp. 9-10.

daughter. The alternative, fluctuating, “multiverse” reality provided to the reader in terms of narrative information and textual structure may be associated with the star-shaped structures in Mircea Cărtărescu’s later postmodernist fictions.

Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu may also be considered a pioneer of the postmodernist non-linear literature because of the frequent presence in her fiction of multidimensional characters, as far as perspective is involved. For instance, reflecting characters play an essential part in the author’s texts, as they always submit conflicting perspectives on events and on the other characters. The information provided by these self-aware characters distorts reality, bending it into the shape of a type of multiple consciousness which, in turn, leads to a sort of *quantum reality* of the narrative. Such characters may be regarded as *node-characters*, as they help form the network links of the text through irradiation of fluctuating realities and permanent multiplication of the narrative perspective.

As far as Anton Holban’s novels are concerned, their non-linear features can be mostly found in the relative, contradictory information provided to the reader by the main character, Sandu. In all three of Holban’s novels, Sandu’s thinking is, in itself, non-linear, based on conflicting assumptions, radical changes of action and a fluctuating perspective on the events that are being narrated in the first person. Contradictions, the clashes of variants, the displaying of information on two opposing mental screens (Irina, in *O moarte care nu dovedește nimic*, is on some occasions smart, on others stupid; Ioana, in *Ioana*, sometimes has no taste at all in choosing her clothes and sometimes shows great taste in similar circumstances; the narrator’s emotions in *Ioana* are always subject to a two-fold split) are just some of the mental hypertexts shaped by Holban in his novels.

A brief analysis of Camil Petrescu, Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu and Anton Holban’s fiction show that all three modernist authors may be better understood if we take into account their networking relation with distant texts and authors. They may be either considered predecessors of the postmodernist non-linear fiction, in which case we would be able to discover solid and convincing links between epochs and currents which have little in common, or regarded as autonomous authors of non-linear fiction, to whom postmodernist authors are related rather by coincidence, than by filiation. Only a detailed analysis of each novel and novella could tell us which one of the two perspectives is closest to the realities of their texts.

A step further from modernist fiction, at the crossroads of Romanian late modernism and postmodernism, that is in the seventies, we find a new writer illustrative of non-linear fiction: Mircea Horia Simionescu, a member of the so-called Târgoviște School. In the cycle entitled *Ingeniosul bine temperat* [*The Well-Tempered Wise Guy*], Simionescu experiments with non-linear fiction by suggesting a kind of reading very similar to that of dictionaries and of the future Internet hyperlinks. Both the narrative chronology and the reading order of Simionescu’s fiction are shattered and recomposed in the depths of a multidimensional textual game.

A decade later, in the eighth decade of the 20th century, postmodernist fiction authors Mircea Nedelciu and Gheorghe Crăciun also testify to the hyperlink structure of narrative content. From Mircea Nedelciu's display of the text on two separate paper columns, to Gheorghe Crăciun's networking text appearing on a wall which protagonist Vlad Ștefan discovers, in *Alte copii legalizate* [*Another Certified Copies*], as his own life story, the narrative non-linearity shown by these two authors has mostly to do with arranging and rearranging the text in its typographic variations of form.

On the other hand, this particular form of non-linearity is less present in the nineties, when other Romanian postmodernist fiction writers tend to abandon the formal approach to narrative and replace it with a more content-centred approach: the 3-D star-shaped perspective in constructing a text. As a result, the networking feature of these authors' texts shows fewer similarities to the *Tell Quel* patterns of transtextuality and more to the network patterns of the Internet, as well as to the neural networks of hyperlinks in the human brain. Consequently, we could identify a *virtual quality* of such texts, underlined by the presence of virtual reality technologies (as in Sebastian A. Corn and in Adrian Oțoiu's novels), mental hyperstructures (as in Ion Manolescu's *Derapaj* [*Sideslip*] or in Simona Popescu's *Exuvii* [*Exuviae*]) or phantasmatic networks of perception (Mircea Cărtărescu's *Orbitor* [*Blinding*] trilogy and his novel *Solenoid* [*Solenoid*]).

The project of an alternative history of literature, based on non-linear connections between authors and texts, is still dependent on the fact that each author and text is situated in a specific timeframe (epoch, publishing year, etc.). This specific detail is generally used by the traditional literary historians in order to create the necessary, familiar arrow of time of their work. However, a star-shaped history of literature would differ substantially from the traditional linear model, since its structure and even its graphic concept would look more like a hyperlinked 3-D website than like a flat paper book. Consequently, in order for the project to become effective, the definitive shape of a new, alternative literary history could possibly be that of a digital hyper-book.

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A NEW CONCEPT OF LITERARY HISTORY.
ROMANIAN LITERATURE AND THE NETWORK STRUCTURES
(Abstract)

If we take into account the new technologies of the 21st century, could we imagine a concept of literary history which, in terms of its structural criteria, is fundamentally different from the traditional concepts we are accustomed to? Could we imagine the content of an alternative literary history abandoning the usual classification (based on literary epochs, literary currents or literary moments) and functioning on a network of interdisciplinary intersections between authors and texts? The present study attempts to draw the picture of a literary history based on network structures which connect authors and texts belonging to different epochs and currents by means of hypertextual nodes and links, rather than through linear chronologies.

Keywords: literary history, hypertextuality, network structures, postmodern literature, nodes, links.

UN NOU CONCEPT DE ISTORIE LITERARĂ
LITERATURA ROMÂNĂ ȘI STRUCTURILE DE TIP REȚEA
(Rezumat)

Pe baza noilor tehnologii ale secolului XXI, am putea imagina un concept de istorie literară care să nu funcționeze după criteriile structurale cu care suntem obișnuiți? O istorie literară alternativă, al cărei conținut să nu mai fie clasificat în funcție de epoci, curente sau momente literare, ci în funcție de intersecțiile sale interdisciplinare, atât cu alți autori/texte, cât și cu domenii conexe? Pornind de la aceste întrebări, lucrarea de față își propune descrierea și analiza unei istorii literare structurate asemenea unei rețele, în care autori și texte ce aparțin unor epoci și curente diferite să poată fi uniți prin intermediul unor noduri și legături hipertextuale.

Cuvinte-cheie: istorie literară, hipertextualitate, structuri de tip rețea, literatură postmodernă, noduri textuale, conexiuni.

ESOTERICISM AND SECRECY IN ALTERNATIVE LITERARY HISTORIES

The academic field of esotericism has been structured by the research on the marginal domains of religion and philosophy, like astrology, alchemy, Gnosticism, the hermetic disciplines, the Kabbalah, the secret societies, the Rosicrucian practices or theosophy, aiming to crystallize an interdisciplinary domain whose main discourse exploits transversally philosophy, art, literature, the socio-human sciences as well as the history of religions and the consumer culture, in order to delineate a so-called “repudiated knowledge” (the term belongs to Wouter J. Hanegraaff, probably the best European specialist in the field nowadays), namely a type of knowledge which challenges the mainstream philosophical and religious discourses but it’s obviously difficult to ignore on the cultural stage of the recent decades. Due to its multifaced expressions, esotericism ends by becoming a more or less volatile and methodologically difficult domain, prone to being structured and systematized by several devoted scholars.

Promoted in the French academic milieu of the 1950s, the so-called *scholarly esotericism* (*ésotérisme savant*) openly targets the scientific objectivity of the field by identifying and deciphering in a systematic way the sub-textual, hidden or openly esoteric references of different literary texts. The champions of this effort of bringing together under the same umbrella a heretic discipline like esotericism and the history literature are Robert Amadou and Robert Kanter, who have had several works published so far, besides co-authoring a seminal anthology entitled *Anthologie littéraire de l’occultisme*. By taking into consideration several esoteric disciplines like astrology, alchemy and theosophy, Robert Amadou¹ proposes a general theory of esotericism, conceived as a cluster of hybrid doctrines and practices based on the assumption that all the objects of the assemblage are linked together by necessary, intentional, non-temporal and non-spatial relationships. Actually, the author is driven by the old thesis of the universal correspondences existing all over the world, which he uses to scrutinize literature from an esoteric point of view.

Amalgamating discourses of secrecy, philosophy and literature, the emergence of French scholarly esotericism is also accompanied by the strong tendency to scientifically legitimize the popular level of esotericism. The work that manages to conciliate both the scholarly and the popular halves of esotericism is Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier’s *The Morning of the Magicians* (1960), in which the authors

¹ See Pierre Lagrange, *Renaissance d’un ésotérisme occidental (1945-1960): L’ésotérisme contemporain et ses lecteurs: Entre savoirs, croyances et fictions* [en ligne], Paris: Éditions de la Bibliothèque publique d’information, 2005. Accessed August 3rd 2017.

openly mix science and popular esotericism, together with an effort to provide valid keys for understanding the secrecies existing inside our modern world.

Antoine Faivre, a professor at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Sorbonne) conceives esotericism as a special „form of thinking”² and makes an inventory of its assets, classified by the author into five main orientations³, each characterized by variables and fluctuations. The first one of them, „esotericism understood as a heterogeneous assemblage”, lists under the umbrella of the domain any production marked by mystery, which outlines a rather shadowy territory governed by an infinity of crisscrossed symbolic relationships and including practically everything from images and themes to motifs and symbols. Obviously, such a generous, if not vague, opening requires a strict methodological constraint, obtained by Faivre by limiting the domain to phenomena delineated by secrecy and initiation. This brings forth the second orientation, that is esotericism as a set of “*teachings and facts deliberately hidden*”, which equals esotericism with initiation. This is an equation which, on the one hand, easily concedes to the thesis of conspiracy, fuelling all sorts of literary myths, and, on the other, suggests that secrecy is universal and ubiquitous, that there are hidden meanings even in the smallest things of the world, which does not seem to be entirely true since, despite its etymological meaning, esotericism may manifest itself as facts, items and messages which go well beyond secrecy itself and are openly heralded as “exoteric”.

The third dimension of esotericism suggested by Faivre lies not far from the connection established by *secrecy requires initiation*, and is emphasised by targeting a mystery “inherent to anything that exists”. Antoine Faivre defines it by saying that it is almost common knowledge and a universally accepted cultural fact that reality is offered to us as something hidden by its very nature. Thus, not only is nature oversaturated by occult “signatures”, but the history of humanity is also “hidden”, but not because those who have written it have deliberately omitted any events, but because history contains in itself messages and signs which become accessible only to a historian who has been initiated.

Initiation is also essential in the next dimension identified by Faivre, which is the “Gnosis”, a type of knowledge embedded in the myth and the symbol, both conceived as existential values, rather than forms of discourse dominated by dogmatic exactness or sheer rationality. In this respect esotericism becomes a form of “*marginal religion*”, very close to what Wouter J. Hanegraaff understands by his term of “repudiated knowledge”.

Finally, the last dimension enumerated by Faivre narrows down the domain, perhaps too much in our opinion, towards a fundamental landmark, shared by many

² Antoine Faivre, *Căi de acces la esoterismul occidental. Vol. II. Teozofie, imaginație, Tradiție [An Itinerary to the Western Esotericism. 2nd vol.: Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition]*. Translated by Ion Doru Brana, Bucharest, Nemira, 2008, p. 21.

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 10-13.

forms of esotericism (in a long historical row from Ficino up to Guénon), namely “the quest for a ‘Primordial Tradition’”. Due to Guénon’s unchallenged prestige in the epoch, associated to the international success of his theories, this is precisely the dimension which dominates the interest in esotericism in the Romanian cultural life during the interwar period (1919–1938). Perennialism, as it is usually called, starts from the assumption that wisdom is the outcome of an ancient, primordial Tradition, accessible only to the initiates through the given religions, which are only partial remnants of it. In his seminal *Guénon ou le renversement des clartés*, Xavier Accart analyses Guénon’s influence on a tremendous number of European first-hand intellectuals (Queneau, Artaud, Gide, Paulhan, Daumal, Bosco, Drieu La Rochelle, Pauwels, Daniel Halévy, Léon Daudet, Jean Grenier, Simone Weil), while Claudio Mutti’s *Guénon in Romania* [*Guénon în România*] detects the Master’s influence on the most prominent Romanian intellectuals of the period (Mircea Eliade, Mihail Vîlsan, Vasile Lovinescu, Anton Dumitriu, Mihail Avramescu).

But let us stick to Antoine Faivre’s categories for a while. Being aware that all his outlined “dimensions” are more or less vulnerable or shaky, but also convinced that esotericism has to be scrutinized through the lenses of a historical and critical approach, Faivre defines esotericism as a “set of complex particular historical tendencies”⁴ having precise chronological relationships and connections, delineated geographically by a Western civilization consciously “permeated” by specific Oriental traditions and ideas. The time coincides with the emergence of a heterogeneous Modernity experienced by the Renaissance, when numerous cultural sediments borrowed from the antiquity are restructured again into a new type of epistemological mould. It is the time of the so-called *philosophia perennis*, a particular type of hermeneutics based on the belief in the existence of the Great Sages of the past and in their spiritual teachings transmitted especially by oral means. The new trend of knowledge includes the neo-Alexandrian Hermetism, the Christian Kabbalah, the *philosophia occulta*, the Rosicrucian belief, the Christian theosophy and the new occultism of the 19th century. According to Antoine Faivre, the quest for the perennial philosophy provides, in the first centuries of early Modernism, “the autonomy of an extra-theological discourse related to cosmology, and the idea of a possible revelation inside the Revelation”⁵. This means a personal, inner revelation inside the outer revelation of the Christianity, both of them conceived as complementary to the official study of religions.

By scrutinizing the texture of the esoteric discourses, Antoine Faivre⁶ identifies two series of characteristics which belong to Western esotericism seen as a field of study. In the first, considered to be the *essential* pool, he places four intrinsic characteristics: the idea of universal correspondences (all the symbolical, visible or

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 19-23, 46-50.

invisible correspondences of the universe considered real), the idea of nature seen as a living being (the Cosmos seen as a network of incessant, intense relationships), the importance of mediation and imagination (as complementary tools in the process of deciphering the world), as well as the experience of transmutation, according to which life is a process of expanding spiritual experiment. The second, subsidiary pool contains frequently encountered, but not obligatory features. They include: the practice of *concordance* (by which different traditions might share one or multiple characteristics), and the practice of *transmission*, based on the assumption that a secret tradition is relayed through peculiar “channels of transmission” such as, for instance, the connection between a Master and his disciple. By combining all these characteristics, the author asserts, we will eventually understand Western esotericism as a peculiar mind structure, or “form of thinking” (*forma mentis*). Moreover, due to their explicit non-dogmatic flexibility, the five characteristics can function as “containers for different types of imaginary things”⁷, hence the consequent need for an interdisciplinary approach to the domain.

In his turn, Pierre A. Riffard⁸ suggests a completely different perspective, based on a special type of “*esoterology*”, conceived of as a kind of global and synthetic wisdom, able to compare and interpret everything in an effort to identify laws and frames, structures and functions which determine the general status of cultural secrecy. Riffard⁹ subsequently identifies a form of *ecstatic esotericism* whose essence is life engaged in an effort to imbue the conscience with an energetic mood of frenzy (the best example is the Dionysian kind), a form of *metaphysical esotericism* devoted to philosophy and to ways of thinking whose origins can be identified precisely in the past (for instance, the Pythagorean tradition), a form of *operational esotericism*, the occult practice nurtured by the idea that the universe is something which can be improved (as the Freemasons do), and a form of *symbolic esotericism*, a domain of liminality suspended between what is real and what is spiritual and whose essence is imagining. There is no esotericism without images, Pierre A. Riffard sharply asserts¹⁰.

By focusing his effort on systematising the domain of secrecy and esotericism, Pierre A. Riffard¹¹ identifies eight invariants, each of them with a large number of subclasses. These eight invariants are: the author’s impersonality, the contrast between the profane and the initiated, the gift of subtlety, the belief in analogies, the science of correspondences, the power of numbers, the occult arts and sciences, as well as the practice of initiation. By confronting Pierre A. Riffard’s model,

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 22.

⁸ Pierre A. Riffard, *L’Ésotérisme, Qu’est-ce que l’ésotérisme? Anthologie de l’ésotérisme occidental*, Paris, Éditions Robert Laffont, 1990, p. 54.

⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 216-223.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 226.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 310.

Antoine Faivre¹² challenges his universalistic assumption and the lack of historicity, but praises Riffard's invitation to set up a comparative study of esotericism.

According to Wouter J. Hanegraaff, quoted by Faivre¹³, the scholar of esotericism must work as an archaeologist in order to trace the evolution of certain ideas, not guided by the assumption that these ideas share some sort of trans-historical or meta-historical common ground, but with the intention of explaining why several people absorb and reshape ideas from the past, while others are apparently not capable of doing so. The scholar must also explain the spatial migration of these ideas, both among different forms or expression of the esoteric wisdom, and within the arts, literatures or the field of ideas.

Precision is nevertheless a must, because, when dealing with ideas, the Dutch scholar does not see them as ideologies, but as forms of the imaginary, and in this respect his attitude coincides with Antoine Faivre's. In a paper published in 2007 in a volume entitled *Political Encounters*¹⁴, Wouter J. Hanegraaff analyses the selective affinity between the scholarly approaches of Western esotericism and the study of images, also dedicating some generous space to Faivre's appraisal in the first part of his text. His analysis focuses on the compatibility between the French author's perspective on esotericism and the study of the imaginary. It deals with the prevalence of the symbolic and mythical dimension over rational doctrine and also underlies the fact that there is a measure of similitude between Faivre's ideas and the approach promoted by the scholars meeting at the Eranos intellectual debates, where one of the invitees is Mircea Eliade himself. The Dutch scholar also notices that Western culture has always had an iconoclastic bias by favouring a kind of abstract and ubiquitous God engaged in unequal competition with His pagan counterparts represented by statues and images. Another idea is related to the practice of cultural suspicion, Hanegraaff suggesting that the increasingly powerful domain of the imaginary in European civilization has generated a gradual process of rejection, with esotericism itself as one of the victims, proclaimed to be a field full of traps and dangers.

Furthermore, Wouter J. Hanegraaff considers that Western scholarly esotericism represents the historical outcome of a so-called "Grand Polemical Narrative", a process through which the Western culture has built, over the centuries, its own identity by freely combining elements belonging either to cosmotheism or monotheism. If we accept – the Dutch scholar also asserts – that personal and cultural self-identity are constructed by generating narratives related to who, what and how we intend to be, we shall also have to accept that these narratives become

¹² Antoine Faivre, *Căi de acces la esoterismul occidental*, pp. 51-52.

¹³ See *Ibidem*, p. 59.

¹⁴ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "The Trouble with Images: Anti-Image Polemics and Western Esotericism", in Olav Hammer and Kocku von Stuckard (eds.), *Polemical Encounters. Esoteric Discourse and Its Others*, Leiden–Boston, Brill Academic Publishers, 2007, pp. 107-136.

what they are only by constructing a counter-narrative, a negative mirror image or “significant Other, in which we project what *we do not want to be*. In the collective imaginary of the 18th century, esotericism played the very role of the “significant Other” and was therefore treated with cautiousness, hatred or suspicion.

There also exists – Wouter J. Hanegraaf says¹⁵ – a sharp distinction between the way in which the esoteric devotee and esotericism are presented in the popular polemical imagination and the way they really are when we scrutinise them in a critical, scientific way. In order to demonstrate his idea, and following the urge for necessary historical corrections, the Dutch scholar deconstructs several rejection mechanisms within the “Grand Polemical Narrative”, by drawing a further distinction between “*mnemohistory*” (history filtered through the informal channels of the collective imagination) and *historiography*, the scientific, objective approach to the field. Since esotericism appears as a construct which is formed primarily inside the channels of the collective imagination, an analysis of the imaginary involved in the “Grand Polemical Narrative” becomes essential.

In Kocku von Stuckrad’s view¹⁶, the problem of esoteric identity in Europe has always been permeated by tension, because esotericism has always claimed to offer a *higher* type of knowledge than any other epistemological discourse. The German scholar says that, during its evolution, the European history of culture has always mixed rejection and fascination into the collective perception of esotericism¹⁷ precisely because esotericism has elevated secrecy to the level of a privileged social value¹⁸, also claiming that there is only one kind of “perfect knowledge”, namely esoteric knowledge¹⁹. The Swedish scholar Henrik Bogdan²⁰ adds a further layer to this latest dimension by saying that esotericism can be conceived as a peculiar and defining Western concept of spirituality, based, on the one hand, on the individuals’ quest for personal, not collective spiritual freedom, and, on the other, on Gnosis, that is on an attitude that establishes a direct connection between the individual and the divine dimension of existence.

Following Antoine Faivre’s considerations, Gerald Messadié defines esotericism as a “mental attitude”²¹, but he approaches it from a broader perspective than his predecessors, both chronologically (by formulas like: “esotericism is as old as the relationship between the human and the divine”²²) and

¹⁵ Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *The Trouble with Images*, p. 111.

¹⁶ Kocku von Stuckrad, *Locations of Knowledge in Medieval and Early Modern Europe. Esoteric Discourse and Western Identities*, Leiden–Boston, Brill Academic Publishers, 2010, pp. 60-64.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 54.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 54-59.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 59-67.

²⁰ Henrik Bogdan, *Western Esotericism and Rituals of Initiation*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2007, p. 5.

²¹ Gerald Messadié, *Patruzeci de secole de esoterism [Forty Centuries of Esotericism]*. Translated by Claudia Dumitru, Bucharest, Nemira, 2008, p. 6.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 7.

from the perspective of its manifestations. Thus, the French author promotes a premeditatedly eclectic and arbitrary selection, derived from a so-called culture of fraternisation, which explains why different esoteric doctrines are actually similar to one another. Messadié ends by saying that the knowledge of secrecy is an “innate structure and function of the mind”²³.

Way beyond any polemic or battle of concepts, the European academic destiny of esotericism has suffered substantial relocations if we take into account the backlash of heresiology, which exiled esotericism to the damned and repudiated margins of knowledge. The metamorphosis of a formerly condemned domain into an openly desirable academic field, full of lucrative scientific approaches, is due to the group of scholars at the Eranos meetings (Carl Gustav Jung, Mircea Eliade²⁴, Henry Corbin, Gilbert Durand, Joseph Campbell) whose dedication to the history of religious ideas re-oriented the researchers’ interest to esotericism, a challenging, off-mainstream reservoir of knowledge that can prove inspirational to our “*disenchanted*” (Max Weber dixit) world. Paying tribute to their role, Antoine Faivre nevertheless distances himself from the Eranos Masters’ apologetic approach to esotericism, as well as from their tendency to promote trans-historical discourses, believing that the scholarly study of esotericism must rely on strict facts existing in the historical and critical approach to the domain.

The trust placed in initiation and in the priority of symbolic wisdom provides the basis for Radu Cernătescu’s *Literatura luciferică* of 2010 [*The Luciferian Literature*], the most challenging Romanian approach concerning the relationship between the occult and literature, although a great deal of secret institutional affiliations is not documented by the author, being promoted on more or less speculative grounds. The author explains the Romanian writers’ inclination for the domain of occultism and secrecy by their wish to reach the upper limit of imagination, as well as by a psychological ingredient called “*Luciferian vanity*”²⁵, manifested as a desire to belong to a spiritual elite, and by the wish to acquire and share a privileged form of symbolic wisdom, inaccessible to the masses.

Starting from such an assumption, Radu Cernătescu’s literary history is converted into a history of subterranean contents, where literary texts are

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

²⁴ The conclusion of a paper written by Eliade, entitled *The Occult and the Modern World*, presented at a conference dedicated to Freud’s commemoration in 1974 is interesting: „Thus, to sum up, contemporary scholarship has disclosed the consistent religious meaning and the cultural function of a great number of occult practices, beliefs and theories, recorded in many civilizations, European and non-European alike, and at all levels of culture, from folk rituals – such as magic and witchcraft – to the most learned and elaborate secret techniques and esoteric speculations: alchemy, Yoga, Tantrism, Gnosticism, Renaissance Hermeticism, and secret societies and Masonic lodges of the Enlightenment period.” (Mircea Eliade, *Occultism, Witchcraft, and Cultural Fashions. Essays in Comparative Religions*, chapter IV, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1974, p. 58).

²⁵ Radu Cernătescu, *Literatura luciferică. O istorie ocultă a literaturii române [The Luciferian Literature. An Occult History of the Romanian Literature]*, Bucharest, Cartea Românească, 2010, p. 7.

conceived either as vehicles for hidden archetypes and symbols, or as subtle containers for a type of long- forgotten, occult wisdom. It is a type of literary history which cannot be deciphered in the traditional way of the usual literary histories accredited by the canons, first of all because aestheticism is downgraded or openly driven out of the context. Thus, G. Călinescu's massive history from 1941, the landmark of all Romanian literary histories, becomes Cernătescu's preferred counter-example, as it has no consideration for the occult aspects of Romanian literature, based on initiation. Radu Cernătescu argues that a more desirable alternative would be a history of the Romanian literature

centered not on the text, but on its metaphysical context, not on aesthetic decoding, but on the multi-sided infrastructure of the message, a trans-disciplinary approach able to exhume the common denominator of the great works, the everlasting archaic subtext of themes, symbols and codes that channel the transcendence which eventually provides the identity and greatness of a given culture²⁶.

The project is full of ambition but unable to avoid all the risks involved, the most obvious of them being that of over-interpretation. The hasty historian starts from the assumption that the multi-layered writings of the authors included in his book share a common "*mystogenetic*" matrix²⁷ whose presence explains the validity of the works and the reason why they are still read. Distancing himself from G. Călinescu's comprehensive literary history, which is systematically condemned for its simplicity, Radu Cernătescu surprisingly reconstructs, for instance, the occult layers of G. Coșbuc's poems and their initiatory, Freemason motivation, although it's difficult to believe that the poet created his cadenced patriotic verses by referring to an occult, difficult-to-understand, non-popular imaginary. Mircea Eliade, Mihail Sadoveanu, Vasile Voiculescu, Mihai Eminescu and, rather surprisingly, G. Călinescu as a novelist suffer the similar fate of over-interpretation.

Diachronically, Radu Cernătescu's literary history starts with Johann Heinrich Alsted and Gabriel Bethlen (in a chapter entitled "Romanian Rosicrucian Traditions"), but it rapidly turns into a book obsessed with Freemasonry, a fixation which is also responsible for the great majority of over-interpretations scattered throughout the work. For instance, in a chapter entitled "Pre-Romanticism – a mythology of the Romanian spiritual mountaineering", all references to mountains or high places are explained by the authors' Freemason engagement and by some sort of hidden Rosicrucian devotion, which is far from being true or at least satisfactory if we rely on verifiable documents and facts.

Another ambitious synthetic Romanian work concerning the secret aspects of the Romanian history of literature belongs to Cornel Ungureanu, an accomplished literary historian showing a real documentary interest in writers with a secret

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 11-12.

identity. Entitled *O istorie secretă a literaturii române* [*A Secret History of the Romanian Literature*], Ungureanu's work is fuelled by the desire to provide an alternative domestic literary history by retrieving, from the thick archival dust, a special cultural and literary domain which has suffered a process of deliberate tabooing under the political and ideological censorship of the Communist era. In order to achieve his task, Ungureanu relies on the methods of literary geography and geopolitics, finally assembling an intricate mixture of socio-historical contextual analyses, while he also intentionally or unintentionally omits biographical details in order to assert the existence of a "secret depository of the Romanian literature"²⁸.

In a strenuous effort to explore it, the author sweeps together data taken from the secret files of the authors (kept, some of them, in the archives of the Romanian Secret Police) and from literary works lost in oblivion, while he also calls back to life those privileged moments when several Romanian authors were directly connected with theosophy or esotericism. For instance, by writing an *Intermezzo* dedicated to Gala Galaction (a prose writer and translator of the Bible), Cornel Ungureanu inserts an episode recalling Josephin Peladan's 1898 visit to Bucharest as a guest of Alexandru Bogdan-Pitești. The literary description of the visit is full of esoteric suggestions, because – as Ungureanu says –

when Sar Peladan delivered his conference at the Athenaeum dressed in an Indian outfit, the youngster [Gala Galaction] was driven into ecstasy. He was charmed, fascinated and ransacked by the handsome and famous speaker. He was terribly impressed by Bogdan-Pitești's invitee, the newly converted Josephin Peladan. But Bogdan-Pitești, a man who has just returned from Paris, a rebel against the traditional norms, was he not himself one of the initiated? [...] Wasn't he a paradoxical individual himself, having created, in a world dominated by traditions, an underground which would nurture a long series of fundamental authors belonging to the «new literature», like Galaction, Arghezi, Mateiu Caragiale and Ion Vinea?²⁹

The collection of the more or less unknown, or long-ignored, details gathered in Cornel Ungureanu's history require a flexible and associative analysis, especially when we come across ideological shifts or sensationalist theories related to different secret societies. Some of these aspects are visible in the text dedicated to Mihai Eminescu, the Romanian national poet, whose creation is analysed through the lenses of a spiritual geography, while the author does not fail to mention the "traditional" wisdom hidden well beneath Eminescu's poetry and the hypothesis that it could be the outcome of an initiatory affiliation.

The book also includes a chapter entitled "Generația ezoterică" ["The Esoteric Generation"], whose protagonists are Marcel Avramescu (with a vivid picture

²⁸ Cornel Ungureanu, *O istorie secretă a literaturii române*, ediția a II-a revăzută și adăugită [*A Secret History of the Romanian Literature*. 2nd, revised ed.], Bucharest, Tracus Arte, 2016, p. 78.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 68.

including memories related to his magnetic personality, his initiation into Guénon, the publication of *MEMRA*, the very first Romanian openly esoteric literary journal, and the presentation of his avant-garde texts) and Vasile Lovinescu. The great absentee from the chapter might be Mircea Eliade himself, who is nevertheless the protagonist of several further approaches dedicated to his esotericism, conceived as the primeval layer of his thinking. To sum up – Cornel Ungureanu states –, “in Eliade’s world, created by repeated dismissals and taboos, Evola and Guénon must be treated cautiously.”³⁰ Nevertheless, the author cannot finish his assumptions without enthusiastically quoting other, less cautious works, like Marcel Tolcea’s *Eliade, ezotericul (The Esoteric Eliade)*, a controversial book published in 2002 which, however, still has its adherents.

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³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 286.

ESOTERICISM AND SECRECY IN ALTERNATIVE LITERARY HISTORIES (Abstract)

Following the end of WW2, a literary trend called “scholarly esotericism” (“ésotérisme savant”) emerged in the writings of the French historians of culture and literature, designating the tendency to identify and decrypt, in a systematic and objective approach, the sub-textual, esoteric and secret references in the literary texts. Two important landmarks of this sub-domain of the literary history are Robert Amadou and Robert Kanters’ *Anthologie littéraire de l’occultisme* and Xavier Accart’s *Guénon ou le renversement des clartés*, dedicated to Guénon’s influence on the French history of literature and of ideas from 1920 to 1970, that is well beyond the Master’s death in 1951. The final aim of these specific intellectual approaches is to construct an alternative, so-called secret literary history, already translated into the Romanian literary studies by two intriguing challenges to the mainstream aesthetic literary history, proposed by Radu Cernătescu (*Literatura luciferică* [*The Luciferian Literature*]) and Cornel Ungureanu (*O istorie secretă a literaturii române* [*A Secret History of the Romanian Literature*]). The paper intends to analyse the methodology and inner life of these specific literary histories, by relating them to the classical, official histories of literature, as well as to the main patterns of the national and international collective identity.

Keywords: literary history, histoire littéraire, esotericism, secrecy, Romanian literature, cultural identity.

ESOTERISM ȘI DOCTRINE SECRETE ÎN ISTORIILE LITERARE ALTERNATIVE (Rezumat)

După sfârșitul celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial, și-a făcut apariția în scrierile istoricilor francezi ai culturii și literaturii un curent ideatic numit „esoterism academic” („ésotérisme savant”), care își propunea să identifice și să decripteze, într-un mod sistematic și obiectiv, referințele subtextuale, esoterice și sibilnice ale textelor literare. Principalele repere exegetice ale acestui subdomeniu de istorie literară sunt *Anthologie littéraire de l’occultisme*, semnată de Robert Amadou și Robert Kanters, respectiv *Guénon ou le renversement des clartés*, lucrarea lui Xavier Accart dedicată influenței exercitate de către Guénon asupra istoriei literaturii și a ideilor din Franța perioadei 1920-1970, adică și dincolo de trecerea în neființă a Maestrului în 1951. Scopul acestor abordări intelectuale specifice îl reprezintă construirea unei istorii literare alternative, așa-zis secrete, care translează în două incitante studii literare românești – *Literatura luciferică* a lui Radu Cernătescu și *O istorie secretă a literaturii române* a lui Cornel Ungureanu –, menite să concureze istoria literară esteto-centrică. Studiul de față își propune să analizeze metodologia și morfosintaxa internă a acestor istorii literare alternative, punându-le în relație, pe de o parte, cu istoriile literare canonice și, pe de altă parte, cu structurile dominante ale identității colective naționale și transnaționale.

Cuvinte-cheie: istoria literaturii, esoterism, doctrine secrete, literatură română, identitate culturală.

ION MANOLESCU

LITERARY HISTORY AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE. A PSYCHO-NEUROLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ROMANIAN INTERBELLUM FICTION

Nowadays, cognitivism is regarded as one of the most innovative means of expanding the boundaries of science, as it opens a significant number of possibilities for interdisciplinary research. Cognitive neurology, cognitive psychology, cognitive philosophy or cognitive linguistics are just a small part of the bigger cognitive picture in which almost every aspect of our life is related to inner, structural theories of the mind and brain. One of these theories, called *the computational theory of mind*, states that we exist as living computing machines, where the body represents the carcass, the brain acts as the hardware, while the mind, animated by its neuroprograms, plays the part of the software¹.

Some would argue that the novelty of this theory is questionable, since philosophers like Descartes or fiction writers such as Philip K. Dick have long debated over the issue of mechanical structures and functions existing in living organisms. However, the computational theory of mind enables us to better understand how the electro-chemistry of the brain and the mathematically structured operations of the mind, that is *we*, perform during complex processes such as perception, representation or decision-making. Combined methods from recent neurology, psychology and computer science, all related to cognitive instruments of research (for instance, helmets with electrodes or magnetic imagery devices, which tell the tale of our inner thoughts or physical reactions in terms of tracking the blood irrigation of our cortical areas or in terms of mapping the trajectory of axons inside our neurosynaptic brain circuitry) allow a more complete exploration of one's behavior, when consciousness is involved.

At this point, my main question is: could we import such methods of investigation from cognitive science and implement them in the field of literature? To what extent and benefit, when it comes to confronting them with the traditional methods which give shape and structure to the history of literature (chronological separation; typological separation; ideological separation)? Could we, for instance, define Romanian Interbellum fiction and the main histories of literature which encompass it by means of the psycho-neurological separation? Ultimately, what would that mean: a selection of authors within a *Cognitive History of Literature*, whose texts and characters suffer from schizophrenia, paranoia, borderline syndrome, and so on?

¹ See, among others, Stephen Michael Kosslyn, *Image and Mind*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, Harvard University Press, 1980, pp. 171-72.

From a cognitive perspective, we would have to get inside the novels of Camil Petrescu, Anton Holban or G. Ibrăileanu and place the computer-linked network of electrodes on the heads of Ștefan Gheorghidiu, Sandu or Emil Codrescu, in order to fully understand what is going on in their minds and why their conflicting actions inside their brains and within the frame of 20th century modernist fiction may or may not help their authors come out of the usual histories of literature and embark on a new *Psycho-Neurological Encyclopedia of Romanian Fiction*.

Despite the fact that they use the traditional frames of historicism, typology and ideology, in order to select authors and works and build hierarchies according to debatable criteria (such as reflecting or rejecting modernist ideology or supporting or undermining moral values within the literary text), some of the main Romanian histories of literature dealing with the Interbellum period do take into account psychology as a factor in content selection and text evaluation. Such is the case with E. Lovinescu's *Istoria literaturii române contemporane* [*History of Contemporary Romanian Literature*] (1926–1929) and Nicolae Iorga's *Istoria literaturii românești contemporane* [*History of Contemporary Romanian Literature*] (1934).

In the fourth part of his history of literature, *Evoluția prozei literare* [*The Evolution of Literary Prose*] (1928), Lovinescu asserts that the value of fiction should be related to two criteria: the evolution from rural to urban literary environments, and the evolution from subjective to objective storytelling². In Lovinescu's view, which blends psychology and narratology within a modernist ideological matrix, a novel and its author are at their best when sticking to these criteria and at their worst when ignoring them. His perspective is similar to that of fiction writer and interdisciplinary theorist Camil Petrescu, who bluntly states in his study *Noua structură și opera lui Marcel Proust* [*The New Structure and Marcel Proust's Work*] (1935) that modern psychology should play the leading part when conceiving literature in the 30's of the 20th century:

Once we acknowledge that in a given age literature intertwines with contemporary psychology, and once we admit that psychology itself is driven by the psychological explanations favoured by the respective age, then we should even more justifiably assert that literature must be structurally synchronous with contemporary science and philosophy³.

² E. Lovinescu, *Istoria literaturii române contemporane* [*History of Contemporary Romanian Literature*], II, Bucharest, Minerva, 1973, pp. 9-15.

³ Camil Petrescu, "Noua structură și opera lui Marcel Proust" ["The New Structure and Marcel Proust's Work"], in *Teze și antiteze. Eseuri alese* [*Theses and Anti-theses. Selected Essays*]. Edition by Aurel Petrescu, Bucharest, Minerva, 1971, p. 4: "Dacă afirmăm că literatura unei epoci este în corelație cu psihologia acelei epoci, și dacă stăruim să arătăm că psihologia însăși este în funcție de explicația psihologică a timpului, ne reîntoarcem cu și mai multă îndreptățire la afirmația că o literatură trebuie să fie sincronică structural filosofiei și științei ei...". When not specified otherwise, the English translations from Romanian are mine.

Understandably, both E. Lovinescu, and Camil Petrescu do not use terms such as *neurology* or *psycho-neurology*, in an epoch when, as far as reality description and narrative perception are concerned, literary historians and theorists were more accustomed to hearing Freud and Jung's fictional accounts of the human mind, rather than Einstein or Bohr's quantum theories of space-time which could, eventually, lead to a quantum computational theory of mind, brain and perception. A selection of authors and texts based on the psycho-neurological complexity of network narratives (such as those enriching Camil Petrescu's novels *Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război*, [*The Last Night of Love, the First Night of War*], 1930, and *Patul lui Procrust* [*The Bed of Procrustes*], 1933) or on the psycho-neurological diversity of the characters' brain-mind dysfunctions (Sandu in Anton Holban's novel *Ioana*, 1934, or Emil Codrescu, in G. Ibrăileanu's novel *Adela*, 1933) might have proven decisive for a *Cognitive History of Literature*, still involving Lovinescu's theories.

However, E. Lovinescu's example of neglecting the importance of the psycho-neurological criterion in the selection and evaluation of literary works can hardly be compared to Nicolae Iorga's utter and complete misuse of psychology in his 1934 literary history. *Istoria literaturii românești contemporane* rejects any attempts by Romanian modernist authors to use psychology in their works, while applauding the insertion of moral values in fiction by traditional authors. In Iorga's view, content selection and value attribution are both dependent on one single criterion: the presence or absence of ethics within the literary text. The peak of Nicolae Iorga's misjudgment can be found in his vituperating pages on naturalist, Zola-inspired fiction writer Liviu Rebreanu, nowadays considered the founder of Romanian literary realism. This is how Rebreanu's novel *Ion* (1920), a masterpiece of hard realism, is depicted by Iorga:

The eighty-character novel, replete with rapes, murders, and all displays of the most primitive instincts whose crude depiction resembles shaking a rotten corpse's leg, relies on the same realism of raw authenticity: the lowest parts of our race's animal life, which the author seems to have glimpsed in some wretched corner of Transylvania, are exhibited here like the testimony of a hopeless inferiority, in the cold style of a constable who is merely taking note of the ignominious deeds that occurred in his district. Slavici's mellow Transylvania, or Mr. Agârbiceanu's strongly ethical vision of the same land, are dismantled, in order to reveal the unbearable dirt, and all the fatalities that are supposedly lying underneath. This recalls the stench exuded from Zola's *La Terre*, which narrates a similar story of basic passions, in the same vein of moral numbness, yet in higher artistic terms⁴.

⁴ N. Iorga, *Istoria literaturii românești*, II: *În căutarea fondului (1890-1934)* [*The History of Romanian Literature, II: In Search of the Substance*]. Edition coordinated, notes and index by Rodica Rotaru. Preface by Ion Rotaru, Bucharest, Minerva, 1986, p. 326: „În romanul cu optzeci de personaje, cu violuri și omoruri, cu toate manifestațiile brutei, prezentate crud, ca un cadavru putred pe care l-ar scutura cineva de un picior, e același realism de o sălbatecă autenticitate: ce e mai josnic

Emblematic for the perspective of a traditionalist historian of literature, whose titles of chapters look like epic battles against preposterous enemies (“Lupta cu modernismul” [“The Battle with Modernism”] or “Împrăștierea puterilor tineretului” [“The Scattered Strengths of the Youth”]), Iorga’s moral devaluation of Liviu Rebreanu’s novel shows a complete misunderstanding of the psychological qualities involved in the realistic depiction of situations and characters and in the naturalistic perspective of storytelling. These precise qualities, which Iorga ignores or condemns, provide value to Rebreanu’s novels, turning them into textbook examples of Romanian objective hard realism.

However, when it comes to screening the titles of chapters in literary histories concerning the Romanian Interbellum period, Nicolae Iorga is not the only author to surprise the reader with what we might call “an excessive use of ideological force”. E. Lovinescu also chooses titles which illustrate his *parti-pris* for modernism (for instance, “Contribuția modernistă a *Sburătorului*” [“The *Sburătorul* Circle’s Contribution to Modernism”]), in an attempt to prove that the very literary current he supports provides the most significant basis for literary selection.⁵

On the other hand, G. Călinescu, in his *Istoria literaturii române de la origini pînă în prezent* [*History of Romanian Literature from its Origins to the Present*] (1941), avoids taking sides in the ideological dispute traditionalism vs. modernism. His criteria of content selection and text evaluation are related to historicism and typology, in a mix that sometimes seems close to the field of psychology, yet without clearly stating it. Titles of chapters such as “Romancierii 1920–1930”, “Romanul gloatei”, “Romanul copilăriei”, “Proustienii” or “Noua generație”, “Momentul 1933. Filozofia ‘neliniștii’ și a ‘aventurii’”, “Literatura experiențelor” [“The 1920–1930 Novelists”, “The Mob Novel”, “The Childhood Novel”, “Proustian Writers” or “The New Generation”. “The 1933 Moment. The Philosophy of ‘Unrest’ and of ‘Adventure’”, “The Literature of Experiences”] seem closer to a psycho-neurological investigation of Interbellum fiction, as part of a possible cognitive project of reshaping and rewriting literary history⁶.

The closest to such a challenging project is Ovid. S. Crohmălniceanu, in his *Literatura română între cele două războaie mondiale* [*Romanian Literature between the Two World Wars*] (vol. I, 1972). Terms such as “automatisms”,

în viața animalică a rasei, cum i se pare autorului că a văzut-o în cine știe ce colț blăstămat de Ardeal, se expune aici ca un testimoniu de iremediabilă inferioaritate, într-un rece stil de jandarm care constată infamiile petrecute în raionul său. Ardealul cuminte al lui Slavici, cel de o înaltă valoare etică al d-lui Agârbiceanu sînt spintecate ca să se vadă nespusa mizerie ce ar fi înlăuntru, cu toate fatalitățile sale. E ca duhoarea care se desface din *La Terre* a lui Zola, povestea acelorași patimi elementare, prezentată însă acolo cu altă artă, deși cu aceeași indiferență morală”.

⁵ E. Lovinescu, *Istoria literaturii române contemporane* [*History of Contemporary Romanian Literature*], I, Bucharest, Minerva, 1973, p. 651.

⁶ See G. Călinescu, *Istoria literaturii române de la origini pînă în prezent* [*History of Romanian Literature from its Origins to the Present*]. Edition by Al. Piru, Bucharest, Minerva, 1982, pp. 1057–1058.

“psychological analysis”, “obsessive projections” are to be found in titles of chapters that testify to the author’s preference for the use of psychology and psychoanalysis in attributing significance and value to Romanian Interbellum fiction: “Comedia automatismelor”, “Analiza psihologică”, “Universul proiecțiilor obsesive” [“The Automatism Comedy”, “The Psychological Analysis”, “The Universe of Obsessive Projections”] and even “Literatura ‘autenticității’ și ‘experienței’” [“Literature of ‘Authenticity’ and ‘Experience’”] – which is quite similar, in content selection criteria, to G. Călinescu’s “Literatura experiențelor” [“The Literature of Experiences”].⁷

Let us see now to what extent a psycho-neurological perspective, based on recent evolutions in cognitive science, may prove useful to finding new meanings and, consequently, new values in Romanian Interbellum fiction. Camil Petrescu’s characters Ștefan Gheorghidiu (in *Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război*) and Fred Vasilescu (in *Patul lui Procust*) are perfect examples of mind-brain conflicts and, possibly, defective cortical electro-chemical nanowiring. In the thirties, Henri Bergson’s psychological theories on time elapsing and time simultaneity or Edmund Husserl’s philosophical courses on the phenomenon of consciousness and inner time were already pre-neurological warnings that, inside one’s head, things are never what they seem to be.

Obsessively jealous of his wife, whom he suspects of cheating on him, Ștefan Gheorghidiu, a modern, self-centered intellectual from the first decades of the 20th century, reacts to his painful doubts in the most astonishing way. He simply rewards Ela for her constant, yet never proven, infidelities: “I must write the donation letter this very evening”⁸. Or:

I gave my wife for the second time the same sum of money she asked for when we were in Cîmpulung, and I inquired what were the formal procedures for *gifting her* [my underlining, I.M.] the Constanța houses. I told her she could have absolutely everything that was in the house, from valuable objects, to books... from personal items, to memories⁹.

Vanity? Financial masochism? Stockholm syndrome reactions, indicating gender submission to the psychologically dominant Alpha female? None of these explanations seem to fully encompass the contradictory behavior of our devastated, still highly grateful hero. Perhaps Gheorghidiu’s actions are best understood if we take into account the conflict between the rational programs of the mind and the

⁷ See Ov. S. Crohmălniceanu, *Literatura română între cele două războaie mondiale* [Romanian Literature between the Two World Wars], I, Bucharest, Minerva, 1972, p. 662.

⁸ Camil Petrescu, *Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război* [The Last Night of Love, the First Night of War]. Preface by Paul Georgescu, Bucharest, Editura pentru Literatură, 1965, p. 45: “Trebuie să fac chiar în astă seară scrisoarea de donație...”.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 206: „I-am dăruit nevastă-mi încă o sumă ca aceea cerută de ea la Cîmpulung și m-am interesat să văd cu ce formalitate îi pot *dărui* [sublinierea mea, I.M.] casele de la Constanța. I-am spus că-i las absolut tot ce e în casă, de la obiecte de preț la cărți... de la lucruri personale, la amintiri.”

uncontrollable activities of the brain. Although Camil Petrescu's character solemnly states that he hates his wife for her supposed infidelities (the executable of duty, inside the software of traditional, unbreakable marriage, kicks in here), he is dependent on her affairs, in order to feel alive (the dopaminergic circuit of the brain, which rewards him with a flow of pleasure hormones, may get activated as a response to Ela's powerful flirtation signals): "Full of gratitude, I was telling myself that woman deserved any kind of sacrifice"¹⁰.

In a way similar to Gheorghidiu's, in *Patul lui Procust*, Fred Vasilescu, Camil Petrescu's other main male character, rewards doamna T, one of his mistresses who causes him quite some trouble, as he is so attracted to her intellect, that he feels the need to abruptly end their relationship, by leaving her everything he owned, after his death: "She left behind quite a considerable fortune: a plane, the car, the race horses, a large strip of land near the city"¹¹.

This is the same Fred Vasilescu who, apparently, could not and would not allow any woman step on his freedom: "I realized how much I had let that paralysing daily surrendering drag me out... The whole situation could only be redeemed by some kind of desperate gesture"¹². And, further on: "– Madam, I think you are making a confusion... I treasure immensely your intelligence... and I enjoy your presence ... but as a woman, I am just not into you"¹³.

The character's "stupid contradictions", to quote his own words, may be explained *via* a precise scientific examination of his brain, in terms of magnetically scanning Vasilescu's cortical and sub cortical activity: perhaps, inside his brain, the blood irrigation of the physical pleasure area is connected to that of the moral duty area? To do something right to somebody who is not necessarily the right person for you may prove the only way to obtain dopamine and serotonin, inside a body accustomed to adrenaline rushes (let us not forget that Fred Vasilescu is a sportsman, keen on flying small planes and riding automobiles at the edge of risk)?

Contradictions also arise in Anton Holban's novels, centered on the individual's mental inability to pinpoint the nature of reality, especially when it comes to human relationships. Sandu, the main character in the novel *Ioana* (1934), a young intellectual keen on reading Racine and listening to classical music, is incapable of perceiving his lover, Ioana, in a coherent, satisfactory way: she is either "a strange beauty", or ugly as "a goose", while her dresses, on some

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 251: "Mă gîndeam, cu recunoștință, că femeia aceasta merită toate sacrificiile din lume".

¹¹ Camil Petrescu, *Patul lui Procust* [*The Bed of Procrustes*]. Preface and chronology by Constantin Cubleşan, Bucharest, Minerva, 1982, p. 320: „Avea pe care a lăsat-o e destul de mare: un avion, automobilul, caii de curse, un teren mare în apropierea orașului”.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 230: "Mi-am dat seama cât de mult mă lăsasem târât de această paralizantă cedare din fiecare zi... Numai un gest disperat putea restabili situația...".

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 231: „– Doamnă, cred că faceți o confuzie... Vă prețuiesc nesfîrșit de mult ca inteligență... și-mi place prezența dumneavoastră... dar nu mă interesați ca femeie”.

occasions, look “attractive”, and on other seem to show “no taste at all”¹⁴. Could Anton Holban’s character suffer from severe mental conditions, such as those described by neurologist Oliver Sacks in his book *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* (1985)?¹⁵ Could Sandu have some kind of a brain damage, so as to see conflicting realities simultaneously? Or is he simply a fraud, an astute “soft actor” who simulates psycho-neurological disorders, in order to gain attention from Ioana and keep her close to him?

The idea does not seem too far-fetched, should we take into account the behavior of Anton Holban’s other self-centered, contradictory character, also named Sandu, in the novel *Jocurile Daniei* [*Dania’s Games*] (1937). This particular Sandu is also helpless in understanding human relationships, but, still, has the ability to alter reality, by means of neurological shape shiftings: Ioanid Park, in Bucharest, looks “pale yellow” because of his anger, while it changes to “fiery red”, as he relaxes¹⁶. On such occasions, Sandu’s changing moods, directly related to his fluctuating brain activity, create a false experience of what is going on in the external world. To put it in neurologist Chris Frith’s words, Sandu may experience an “electro-neural dysfunction” in his brain, which generates a mistaken image of reality and sends it to his mind, persuading it to be true – the so-called “false knowledge” of the physical world¹⁷.

Finally, let us turn to the strange case of Dr. Emil Codrescu, in G. Ibrăileanu’s novel *Adela* (1933), a Romanian *Lolita*, published 20 years before Nabokov’s novel. Also a hyper-analytical, self-centered intellectual, very similar, in his monomania, to Gheorghidiu and Sandu, Emil Codrescu embarks on a mental trip to happiness with a woman 20 years younger than him, whom he knows from her childhood. Codrescu loves Adela desperately, yet he never shares his intense feelings with her; he is always charming and affectionate, still without trying to physically seduce her. However, not to seduce somebody does not mean to ignore that person or to avoid meeting him or her. On the contrary, it means exactly the opposite, especially when your mind (and not your words or your actions) does the whole job for you: “It was Adela who *told* me that I loved her: ‘I knew you would come to see me in the morning’, can not have another meaning. What happened today is all clear: Adela encourages me – by no means does she try to defend herself...”¹⁸.

¹⁴ Anton Holban, *O moarte care nu dovedește nimic. Ioana* [*A Death that Proves Nothing. Ioana*]. Edition by Petru Livius Bercea, Timișoara, Editura de Vest, 1993, p. 105.

¹⁵ Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, London, Picador, 2011, p. 9-24.

¹⁶ Anton Holban, *Opere I* [*Works I*]. Edition by Elena Beram, Bucharest, Minerva, 1997, p. 371.

¹⁷ Chris Frith, *Making up the Mind. How the Brain Creates our Mental World*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2009, p. 36.

¹⁸ G. Ibrăileanu, *Adela*. Postface by Eugenia Tudor-Anton, Bucharest, Minerva, 1976, p. 74: „Adela mi-a spus că o iubesc: „Știam că ai să vii dimineața la mine” nu poate avea alt înțeles. Tot ce s-a petrecut azi e clar: Adela mă încurajează – în nici un caz nu se apără...”

In terms of mistaking one's thoughts and wishes for reality, Codrescu's words resemble the words of Romanian sports commentator Teoharie Coca-Cosma during the penalty shoot-out at the end of the Barcelona–Steaua București final of the European Champions Cup in 1986: the sentences *Adela loves me. Adela must love me!* look strangely similar to *Lăcătuș trebuie să înscrie! Lăcătuș va înscrie!* [*Lăcătuș must score! Lăcătuș will score!*] (which he did).

Contradictions, mind-brain conflicts, false knowledge of reality, based on mistaken suppositions – all, in the novel *Adela*, are illustrative of the constant psycho-neurological texture of the narrative, which the author, despite his not mentioning it directly, seems quite found of: “cerebral hypertrophy”, “hallucinations and ghosts” (in the mind), “smoke on the brain” and “superstructures” (of the brain?) are just some of the expressions used by Ibrăileanu's first person narrator¹⁹.

Such examples help us speculate that recent discoveries in cognitive science may profit the study of literature, since they enrich the significations of fictional texts and refresh the canonic status of their authors. Rereading Romanian Interbellum fiction and rewriting literary history via postmodern interdisciplinary means (such as the blending of psychology, neurology and aesthetics) seems, at present, a tough challenge both to literary historians and to the general public. However, as neurotechnology becomes more and more accurate, as we go deeper into the realm of cyberknowledge and cyberperception, the results of such an endeavor may prove surprisingly fruitful to the field of humanities.

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¹⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 145-146.

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LITERARY HISTORY AND COGNITIVE SCIENCE. A PSYCHO-
NEUROLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ROMANIAN INTERBELLUM
FICTION
(Abstract)

In the 21st century, literary history can no longer be perceived as an autonomous, monolithic discipline. To what extent is it open to structural and methodological influences from non-literary disciplines, such as cognitive science? In terms of content selection and value attribution, what would the benefits of connecting literary history and cognitive neurology and psychology be? The aim of my study is to provide answers to these questions, while rereading the works of 20th century Romanian novelists (Camil Petrescu, Anton Holban, G. Ibrăileanu) and authors of literary histories (E. Lovinescu, N. Iorga, G. Călinescu) from a neuroscience perspective.

Keywords: literary history, cognitivism, modernism, neuroscience, Romanian fiction, interdisciplinarity.

ISTORIA LITERARĂ ȘI ȘTIINȚELE COGNITIVE. O PERSPECTIVĂ PSIHO-
NEUROLOGICĂ ASUPRA ROMANULUI ROMÂNESC INTERBELIC
(Rezumat)

În secolul al XXI-lea, istoria literară nu mai poate fi percepută ca o disciplină autonomă, monolitică. În ce măsură este ea totuși deschisă influențelor structurale și metodologice provenite din sfera disciplinelor ne-literare, precum științele cognitive? Care ar putea fi beneficiile corelării istoriei literare cu psihologia sau neurologia cognitivă în ceea ce privește selecția conținuturilor și atribuirea valorilor? Scopul studiului meu este să răspundă acestor întrebări prin recitirea dintr-o perspectivă neuroștiințifică a operei unor romancieri (Camil Petrescu, Anton Holban, G. Ibrăileanu) și istorici literari (E. Lovinescu, N. Iorga, G. Călinescu) de secol XX.

Cuvinte-cheie: istorie literară, cognitivism, modernism, neuroștiință, roman românesc, interdisciplinaritate.

DENIS MELLIER

DE L'HISTOIRE LITTÉRAIRE (CONTEMPORAINE) EN RÉGIME INTERMÉDIAL : PERSPECTIVE INTERNISTE ET ÉPREUVE DU DEHORS VISUEL DE LA LITTÉRATURE (XX^e–XXI^e SIÈCLES)

Maître d'œuvre d'une importante histoire de la littérature française parue en 1993, et conçue depuis les États-Unis, Denis Hollier écrit, dans son introduction, une réflexion dont la portée méthodologique et théorique est essentielle pour la notion même d'histoire littéraire, telle que cette « vieille » question peut / doit s'envisager à la toute fin du XX^e siècle :

Les débats sur la méthode en histoire littéraire tournent tous autour d'une question : comment une œuvre est-elle engendrée à partir de ce qui n'est pas elle ? Peut-on passer des propriétés de l'œuvre aux circonstances de sa production ? Les partis pris varient : le critique peut se proposer de démontrer qu'un texte ne devient littéraire que lorsqu'il s'est dégagé de son contexte ; il peut se proposer au contraire de décentrer le texte vers une historicité qui n'est pas la sienne. Mais, dans chacun de ces cas, est présupposée la possibilité de tracer une ligne de démarcation entre texte et contexte, entre l'interne et l'externe. Établir un tel partage est la tâche spécifique de l'histoire de la littérature. Son objet est moins l'inventaire monumental d'un territoire existant de toute éternité, qui s'appellerait la littérature, que le questionnement des critères à partir desquels la littérature se constitue, se distingue de certains champs, s'allie à d'autres ; la mise en évidence des masques qu'elle doit porter pour survivre, des raisons sociales qu'elle doit invoquer pour pouvoir exister¹.

L'histoire de la littérature en tant que mise en intrigue (Ricœur), construction d'un point de vue narratif spécifique (De Certeau) ou fiction (au sens de Hayden White) est donc inséparable de son dehors² et s'en distingue (contexte historique et social bien sûr mais surtout, pour mon propos, l'ensemble de relations complexes, et souvent conflictuelles, que la littérature entretient avec d'autres discours, d'autres arts et médias : relations de dialogue, de confrontations – qu'exprime l'idée peut-être idéalement irénique d'inter- et de trans-médialités – mais qui n'évitent pas pour autant la plus franche des concurrences).

L'histoire de la littérature qu'envisage Hollier dans son projet éditorial et scientifique s'assigne certaines tâches parmi lesquelles trois peuvent retenir l'attention. Tout d'abord, sa définition : ce qui est tenu à un moment donné comme

¹ Denis Hollier (ed.), *De la littérature française*, Paris, Bordas, 1993, p. XXVII.

² Christine Baron, *La Pensée du dehors ; littérature, philosophie, épistémologie*, Paris, Editions de l'Harmattan, 2007.

littéraire, pour relevant de la littérature, et la façon dont s'organise à partir de ce point de vue une origine, une archéologie, un récit, éventuellement, une fin ; ensuite, le jeu des distinctions, des partages, des passages et des alliances (à d'autres domaines, champs, arts, formes) etc. ; et enfin, la question de sa survie.

Faire de l'histoire littéraire dans notre premier quart du XXI^e, c'est écrire et penser les (in)déterminations de la littérature selon une triple donnée, qui peut identifier le contexte critique dans lequel nous tenons nos discours. On peut les formuler selon trois types de caractérisations : 1. l'abandon ou la relativisation des modèles nationaux au profit d'une pensée de la littérature mondiale ; 2. la valorisation des formes multiples de l'hybridation, des croisements et des interactions entre les discours et les formes. D'une part cela revient à condamner tout type d'essentialisation (la Littérature, et sa majuscule surplombante, occidental-centrée, porteuse des traces variées de toute l'histoire des hégémonies dont elle fut un des agents majeurs) ; De l'autre, cela arrive à privilégier les modèles de la traversée, de la migration, de la trans-médialité sur les imaginaires anciens de la limite, de la frontière, de l'identité. Des notions dont la critique idéologique a été menée aussi bien du côté de la théorie littéraire, que des articulations entre études littéraires et sciences humaines et sociales. 3. enfin, envisager une actualité, dont la chronologie reste encore en débat, la disparition possible de ce qui a été pensé, depuis l'émergence romantique de l'histoire littéraire, comme littérature.

On trouve, également, dans les multiples raisons avancées pour penser cette situation d'affaiblissement, de retrait, de crise – quels que soient les termes qui la nomment ou la dramatisent – trois types d'explications ou d'arguments : 1. Dilution dans un ensemble considérable de textes produits de ce 1^e, selon l'argument qu'avance Franco Moretti, de textes considérés comme canoniques et sur lesquels se sont constitués les études littéraires. Cela quand ce sont 99% des textes parus qui ne sont pas intégrés dans la pensée interniste de la littérature. La prise en compte des littératures exclues des normes de la canonicité, la reconnaissance des littératures populaires, les développements, depuis les années 70 des *cultural studies*, apparaissent comme autant d'éléments qui concourent à étendre les corpus et, partant, à défaire des identifications normatives, essentialisantes ou des axiomatiques esthétiques, expressions directes de constructions idéologiques produites par l'Occident, ses valeurs et sa domination. On retrouve, là, le motif de la querelle du canon tel que Harold Bloom (1994) la porta en son temps. Il affirme, d'abord, la perte de la place sociale et symbolique de la littérature dans la culture. Ce constat repose sur le récit d'une centralité de la culture lettrée : elle émerge avec la naissance technologique de la galaxie Gutenberg pour révéler sa puissance de modélisation du monde politique et intellectuel durant les Lumières, pour atteindre sa pleine hégémonie au XIX^e siècle. C'est le grand récit que nous connaissons et que l'on peut hypostasier de Milton (*L'Aeropagetica*, 1644), Montesquieu ou Voltaire au Zola de *J'accuse* (1898). Bien sûr, il y a d'autres acteurs, d'autres mises en intrigue, d'autres héroïsmes et

défaites. C'est bien là un des enjeux des histoires littéraires, dans leurs orientations, leurs successions, leur projet de rupture avec la tradition historiographique qui précède, que de proposer des formes narratives, des constructions herméneutiques et des plus-values symboliques. William Marx a, par exemple, soutenu l'histoire de cette dévalorisation en un récit parfaitement cohérent : elle serait le fait d'un effondrement « interniste » de la littérature³. Cette « dévalorisation » dépendrait alors de propriétés, de projets, de formes de réflexivités strictement internes à la littérature, ses pratiques, ses productions, son métadiscours. Mythographie de sa propre mort, goût du silence et de la crise du vers, dissociation de la pratique haute de la littérature et de la vulgarité des productions courantes de la modernité et de ses industries culturelles, autotélisme coupable de la littérature abandonnant ses lecteurs (leur goût du récit, de la fiction, du personnage) – tout cela au profit des formalismes et d'une intellectualité revendiquée, désertant la prise en charge de l'histoire et du social. L'essai de William Marx identifie la perte de centralité de la littérature, dans un lexique gramscien de la littérature et de son « hégémonie », à des causes qui, d'une certaine façon, relèveraient de sa propre responsabilité.

A l'inverse, ou, plus exactement, comme un complément de cette focale interniste, c'est la perspective qui consiste à attacher l'histoire de cette crise (qui se sera accentuée durant tout le XX^e siècle) aux relations de la littérature avec son dehors, et notamment à la concurrence médiatique qu'elle affronte dès la fin du XIX^e siècle. Cela suppose alors d'intégrer des jeux de causalité externes, non seulement pour penser le statut de la littérature dans un moment historique particulier, mais également pour identifier ses traits définitoires en synchronie.

Mon propos se concentrera désormais sur ce dernier aspect. Cependant, il ne s'agit pas d'en revenir à une discussion classique dont Hollier rappelle clairement les contours selon le jeu du texte et du contexte, de l'histoire et de la littérature, de la distinction lansonienne du monument et du document⁴. C'est au regard de l'écologie contextuelle dans laquelle se constitue toute histoire littéraire comme conception de la littérature, que les éléments jusque là évoqués doivent être replacés. Hayden White rappelle qu'il n'y a pas d'historiographie sans philosophie de l'histoire qui la « situe », et de la même façon il n'y a pas d'histoire littéraire sans théorisation et définition de la littérature qui en organise le récit de façon idéologique et téléologique.

Hollier ou Moretti utilisent, tous les deux, le terme d'écologie – et d'éthologie également – pour envisager des interactions de type naturaliste, c'est-à-dire posant l'action déterminante d'un milieu. Or, la confrontation d'une thèse interniste,

³ William Marx, *L'Adieu à la littérature, Histoire d'une dévalorisation. XVIII-XX^e siècle*, Paris, Minuit, 2005.

⁴ Pierre Bourdieu a montré, dans *Les Règles de l'art. Genèse et structuration du champ littéraire* (Paris, Seuil, 1992), les enjeux de la structuration du champ littéraire entre les perspectives internaliste et externaliste.

comme celle de William Marx, avec une position externaliste, comme celle adoptée par Vincent Kaufmann dans *La Faute à Mallarmé*, amène à penser très différemment l'influence écologique du milieu dans l'explication d'un retrait, d'une diminution ou d'une perte de valeur collective de la littérature⁵. Il est essentiel, pour Kaufmann, de prendre en compte, pour comprendre l'aventure théorique qui s'est jouée entre 1960 et 1980, la préséance des arts et des discours de l'image, du cinéma, de la télévision, de la bande dessinée, de la publicité, la mutation des rapports entre les médias, pour mesurer la position de « secondarité » de la littérature. Si la théorie peut être envisagée dans la perspective de Kaufmann comme une réaction foncièrement politique susceptible d'opposer une ultime absolutisation de la littérature à son dehors économique et culturel, la lutte qui se mène se fait bien sur fond d'une situation de domination médiatique et, si ce n'est entièrement nouvelle, elle est pour le moins, spécifique.

En amont de la période qu'étudie Kaufmann, c'est toute l'histoire des relations interartistiques depuis la naissance du cinéma et l'âge de son triomphe comme média hégémonique (à partir des années 1920) qu'il faudrait convoquer pour faire l'histoire de son évolution. C'est aussi l'histoire des conflits d'hégémonie médiatique entre télévision et cinéma à partir des années 1950 qu'il faudrait prendre en compte, ce dont le classicisme hollywoodien finissant se fait ouvertement l'écho. Et en aval des vingt années qu'étudient Kaufmann, depuis les années 1980, comment ignorer, autant qu'elle est la condition même de toute histoire littéraire à écrire, la gigantesque mutation des technologies de l'image qui affecte la culture dans son ensemble, bien au-delà des seules formes du cinéma. Ainsi vaut-il peut-être mieux adopter le registre englobant, océanique ou panoptique que Virilio ou Debray appelaient la « dromosphère » ou la « vidéo-sphère » pour confondre en un même terme toutes les déclinaisons de la médialité visuelle, les nouveaux espaces et les temps, et les vitesses qu'induisent celles-ci. L'histoire de la littérature, parce qu'elle s'écrit toujours au présent, est donc insécable du dehors visuel de la littérature. Quelles que soient les formes partagées de sa présence aujourd'hui dans la culture ou celles repliées et obsidionales de sa survie, la littérature est inévitablement située, en 2018, au sein d'une écologie médiatique presque entièrement numérique. Les formes culturelles vidéoludiques s'y sont imposées pragmatiquement et économiquement, très au-delà de la littérature et désormais du cinéma lui-même.

L'écologie médiatique contemporaine impose un contexte techno-dynamique dans lequel les modifications du milieu sont incessantes, parce que déterminées selon les cycles de développement propres aux médias et au support qui se succèdent. Un média s'impose, fort de la séduction de ce que Gaudreault appelle

⁵ Vincent Kaufmann, *La Faute à Mallarmé. L'aventure de la théorie littéraire*, Paris, Seuil, 2011.

son « effet *novelty* »⁶ qui n'a qu'un temps, et cette séduction sera, à son tour, supplantée par l'apparition d'un autre média plus efficace, simple et fonctionnel⁷. Se pose alors la question de la survie du média précédent ou de la redéfinition de son champ originaire d'action (économique, artistique, symbolique) au contact du nouveau média qui l'absorbe ou, en tout cas, lui redéfinit profondément les conditions d'usage. L'hégémonie croissante des formes visuelles dans la culture, depuis le début du XX^e, a connu une accélération considérable avec les améliorations technologiques qui touchent les conditions de projection, d'émission, de réception, la démocratisation et le taux d'équipement domestique. La consommation, la conservation, l'anthologisation privée de tout un univers d'images est désormais, perpétuellement, accessible à tous, dans les flux communicationnels d'une société liquide⁸. Sont ainsi encouragés tous les nomadismes contemporains : voyages et transhumances qu'agrémentent un flux continu et consommable de récits, d'images, de fictions. La connectabilité absolue constitue aujourd'hui l'état ordinaire de cette condition. Un tel contexte médiatique spécifique, en s'imposant comme le dehors visuel de la littérature, produit une série d'implications formelles jouant tout autant sur les types d'écriture ou de productions, qu'elles redéfinissent les conditions pragmatiques de réception et de consommation des textes littéraires dans un espace commun. Ils sont désormais accessibles sur tous les supports possibles, véritables images numériques de textualités accessibles en tout lieu, exportables, fragmentables, augmentables de toutes les explorations réticulaires possibles et qui, d'hyperliens en fenêtres s'ouvrant, les dé-assignent à leur *locis* anciens. L'hypothèse interniste est devenue de plus en plus intenable, et dans l'épreuve de son dehors visuel, la littérature fait l'expérience de sa « secondarité ».

Mais parler ici de secondarité de la littérature ne dit rien, bien évidemment, de la valeur intrinsèque des textes littéraires, ni de celle qu'ils conservent dans une communauté interprétative (un groupe de lecteurs professionnels comme le constitue l'assemblée d'un colloque) ou pour un lectorat spécifique (le public fréquentant un festival littéraire, par exemple). Quelles que soient les implications axiologiques et les investissements psychologiques ou existentiels qu'il est spontanément tentant d'opposer au constat de cette dimension secondaire, le propos est finalement assez simple, peu polémique, pas même empreint de déploration. Il s'agit plutôt de prendre acte que le statut de la littérature, sa préséance culturelle, son prestige symbolique ne sont plus les mêmes, par exemple, que dans les années où Bourdieu décrivait encore l'effectivité du capital symbolique des héritiers, un capital en grande partie constitué sur le prestige toujours élevé de la culture littéraire, ou qu'en France, un même ethos littéraire

⁶ André Gaudreault et Philippe Marion, *La fin du cinéma ? Un média en crise à l'ère du numérique*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2013.

⁷ Marshall McLuhan, *Pour comprendre les médias*, Paris, Seuil, 1968.

⁸ Peter Bauman, *La vie liquide*, Paris, Rouergue-Chambon, 2006.

pouvait tracer une continuité culturelle sur une lignée lettrée de chefs d'état (De Gaule, Pompidou et Mitterrand).

Quand bien même telle poétique d'auteur ou tel mouvement s'émanciperait ponctuellement dans son projet littéraire du poids de ce dehors visuel, ce désengagement serait-il encore pour la plus grande part réactif, interprété comme tel, et partant, finalement déterminé en creux par le régime de visualité dominant. Ainsi, quelles que soient l'authenticité ou l'effectivité d'une telle recherche d'autonomie de pratiques littéraires, elles ne peuvent suffire à modifier en profondeur les usages et les rapports de force médiatiques contemporains. Et d'ailleurs rien n'assure que nous soyons satisfaits dans nos idéalizations de la littérature de l'identifier à la simple résistance spectaculaire du livre dans le marché des produits culturels. Le CNL (Centre National du Livre) a établi qu'en 2017 en France, en matière de ventes, le romancier Musso arrivait en tête devant une compilation du chanteur Renaud, le jeu vidéo *Grand Theft Auto* et le dernier avatar cinématographique de la série des *Star Wars*⁹.

Si nos poétiques contemporaines sont volontiers prêtes à envisager les bienfaits toujours féconds des *inter-* et des *trans-*médialités, assurées que les hybridations et les rencontres sont par nature novatrices, décloisonnées et positives, on sait qu'il n'en a pas toujours été ainsi. Sans remonter à l'ancienne question du *paragon* et aux conflits entre les arts, sans évoquer, non plus, les querelles axiologiques des formes supérieures et inférieures de pratiques artistiques (par exemple la querelle de la plume et du crayon pour la génération des illustrations françaises de Doré à Granville ; ou les relations, ces vingt dernières années, entre cinéma et jeu vidéo), on peut tout simplement évoquer la méfiance d'un grand médiologue, Marshall McLuhan, quant à la bonne entente pacifique et paritaire des médias entre eux. Selon McLuhan, la vocation d'un média qui émerge est d'absorber celui qui le précède. A en juger par les rapports contemporains du cinéma et des médias numériques, sa position ne semble pas d'un pessimisme excessif. Il ne manque pas de caractérisations de l'intermédialité et de la transmédialité, ou de thèses américaines comme celle de la remédiation¹⁰ ou de la culture de la convergence¹¹, qui défendent, tout au contraire de la perspective critique de McLuhan, l'idéal de relations fructueuses, de modifications équilibrées et progressives (voire progressistes) qui seraient en partie déterminées par l'intelligence collective des lecteurs, joueurs et spectateurs. Cette intelligence partagée est grosse de promesses de démocratie et espère (?) de la participation éclairée d'une communauté

⁹ Rapport Ipsos CNL, Mars 2017, établi par Armelle Vincent Gérard et Natacha Chomet. Pdf disponible en ligne sur le site du CNL.

¹⁰ Jay David Bolter & David Gruisin, *Remediation. Understanding New Medias*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1999.

¹¹ Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture. Where Old and New Media Collide (Revised with a New Afterword)*, New York, NYU Press, 2006.

émancipée d'usagers (voir sur ce point les travaux de Pierre Lévy, notamment, et la reprise optimiste qu'en fait Jenkins).

Mais de manière moins irénique, ne serait-il pas plus pertinent de parler d'une dimension désormais résiduelle de la littérature ? L'expression n'a rien d'une provocation, d'un paradoxe rhétorique ou d'un cynisme décliniste. Elle n'implique pas non plus une position de déploration qui n'est nullement la mienne. Ce qui reste – le résidu – est aussi une résistance, et non une version mineure, dégradée. Le terme précis de *résidu* situe le statut contemporain du littéraire dans la dynamique des formes culturelles et médiatiques décrite par le sociologue britannique, Raymond Williams, qui distinguait, dans leur développement des phases d'émergence, d'hégémonie et de résidualité¹². Si la phase hégémonique de la littérature peut s'imaginer entre les Lumières et la puissance d'effectivité de la parole publique de l'écrivain au XIX^e (Hugo ou Zola, par exemple), on peut envisager que nous serions désormais dans sa phase de résidualité. Cet état n'est pas celui de sa disparition, mais bien de sa persistance sur un mode secondaire. La littérature demeure bien, on en écrit, on en lit, elle poursuit son histoire, connaît ses mutations, les rituels de ses célébrations institutionnelles (colloques, programme de concours, prix littéraire) ou ses révolutions coperniciennes suramplifiées, le temps que durent les émois médiatiques. Ainsi, du prix Nobel de littérature décerné à Bob Dylan, *protest singer* et icône rock, en attendant, ce qui ne saurait tarder, ceux d'Art Spiegelmann ou de Chris Ware pour l'institutionnalisation absolue, ou l'assomption du roman graphique en littérature, le parachèvement de son « artification »¹³. Les soubresauts de ces manifestations pragmatiques ou symboliques sont finalement de peu d'importance. Mieux, elles sont elles-mêmes le témoignage que la place et l'effectivité du statut culturel, anthropologique et social de la littérature a perdu la préséance qui était la sienne à des époques antérieures. Cette voix désormais mineure – et ici, sans la modulation singulière et forte que Deleuze et Guattari donnent à la minorité d'une voix, d'une écriture dans leur lecture de Kafka¹⁴ – est à l'origine d'une inquiétude partagée au fil de très nombreux essais publiés¹⁵ partout dans les pays aux économies néo-libérales et

¹² Raymond Williams, *Culture et matérialisme*. Traduit de l'anglais par Nicolas Calvé et Étienne Dobenesque, Paris, Éd. Les prairies ordinaires, 2009.

¹³ Nathalie Heinich, « L'artification de la bande dessinée », *Le Débat*, 2017, 195, pp. 5-9.

¹⁴ Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *Kafka. Pour une littérature mineure*, Paris, Minuit, 1975.

¹⁵ Ainsi, pour ne rester que dans le champ français du débat, des ouvrages de Yves Citton, *Lire, interpréter, actualiser. Pourquoi les études littéraires ?*, Paris, Amsterdam, 2007 ; *L'avenir des humanités. Économie de la connaissance ou culture de l'interprétation*, Paris, La découverte, 2010 ; Antoine Compagnon, « La littérature, pour quoi faire ? », in *Leçons inaugurales du Collège de France*, Paris, Collège de France/Fayard, 2007 ; Vincent Jouve, *Pourquoi étudier la littérature ?*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2010 ; Vincent Kaufman, *La faute à Mallarmé* ; Dominique Maingueneau, *Contre Saint Proust : la fin de la littérature*, Paris, Belin, 2006 ; William Marx, *L'Adieu à la littérature* ; Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Petite Ecologie des études littéraires. Pourquoi et comment étudier le littérature*, Paris, Éditions Thierry Marchaise, 2011 ; Tzvetan Todorov, *La Littérature en péril*, Paris, Flammarion, 2007.

mondialisées, s'inquiétant tous de la possibilité, et, plus encore, de la pertinence du maintien même de l'enseignement littéraire dans les formations universitaires¹⁶.

Inséparable d'un modèle économique néolibéral et des technologies de communication et de diffusion qui permettent son expansion dans une telle écologie médiatique, le « dehors » visuel de la littérature rend caduque l'idée même d'une histoire littéraire nationale. La dimension mondialisée de la culture visuelle ne contredit nullement l'émergence de récits locaux et nouveaux. Ils sont nés, par exemple, des situations post-coloniales. Ils sont attachés aux émergences de nouvelles entités nationales et politiques ou à des cultures subalternes ou minoritaires cherchant l'établissement de leur récit identitaire au moyen d'une référence mémorielle et structurante à la (leur) littérature et, plus largement, à des formes d'expression culturelle. Mais c'est sans difficulté majeure que la dimension mondialisée de la culture visuelle intègre ces variations locales comme autant de micro-récits susceptibles de faire constater la richesse culturelle et symbolique de la diversité et de la pluralité des expressions, qui demeurent tout à fait impuissantes à entamer pragmatiquement la logique systémique de la culture médiatique contemporaine. La littérature a désormais perdu sa majuscule essentialisante (la Littérature) pour rejoindre le concert des faits sociaux et culturels qui la traversent et dont elle procède. Quel que soit l'accent textualiste que l'on fait porter sur la lettre, prétendre saisir la littérature pour elle-même, en elle-même, c'est inévitablement toujours l'envisager dans un jeu de relations complexes à son extérieur formel. Sauf d'assumer ouvertement une perspective immanentiste, interniste et ségrégative, qui est, aujourd'hui, très loin de représenter les tendances méthodologiques et critiques dominantes. Le « reste » se pense au terme d'un XX^e siècle, qui aura substitué à une culture textocentrée, un régime de visualité généralisée : livre illustré, presse, magazine, photographie, cinéma, accompagnés de toutes les technologies d'enregistrement privé et domestique (cassette audio, magnétoscope VHS, etc.), de conservation, de diffusion et d'anthologisation subjective, jusqu'à l'empire des formes de vie numériques contemporaines. Dans de telles conditions, quelle histoire littéraire est-il possible de mener, quel récit de la littérature comme pratique est-il possible de constituer au début du XXI^e, et selon quel type de point de vue et de méthodologie(s) ? Nostalgie des ruines et curiosité d'ethnologue du contemporain pour les formes encore résistantes. Dans une culture essentiellement visuelle, quelle autre histoire littéraire faire qui ne soit pas l'entreprise de son conservatoire, de sa patrimonialisation ou de la préservation de ses vestiges ?

Qu'on adopte une perspective ségrégationniste qui repose le plus souvent sur une axiologie des textes, des poétiques, des conceptions du langage ou, au contraire, qu'on l'envisage de manière largement intégrative pour étendre les

¹⁶ Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity – A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1997.

partages et les corpus vers une conception non-élitaire, non discriminante et non-savante de la littérature, il n'en demeure pas moins que la consommation de fictions et de récits ne s'effectue plus, depuis longtemps déjà, au profit des médias texto-centrés. On ajoutera pour faire bonne mesure, que cela fait plus d'une dizaine d'années déjà qu'il en va de même pour le cinéma dont les bénéfices sont inférieurs à ceux que génère le marché du jeu vidéo. En ce sens, la bibliographie des inquiétudes critiques sur la mort du cinéma au contact de ses dehors concurrentiels (télévision, puis numérique)¹⁷ est au moins aussi importante que celle qui porte sur la littérature. S'il est acquis que les enseignants de littérature savent depuis longtemps que leur public est avant tout fait de spectateurs, ceux de cinéma savent que c'est à des *gamers* et non à l'idéal du cinéphile qu'ils s'adressent désormais.

Noircir ici le tableau de façon légèrement polémique a pour objet de faire mieux entendre la thématization d'une telle situation au sein d'une très abondante littérature critique, théorique et essayistique qui s'est développée depuis les années 2000. On s'y s'interroge sur les mutations de la littérature, sa dévalorisation, éventuellement sa perte de qualité à l'heure où semblent attaquées de toute part, les humanités dans les réformes néo-libérales de l'Université. Désaffection des lecteurs contre pratique élitare, oubli du réel contre solipsisme réflexif coupable, culture lettrée dominante contreculture populaire ouverte, le livre contre l'écran, le zapping contre la lecture profonde, grand bain numérique immersif contre exigence émancipatrice de la littérature ou, au contraire, éloge de la vivacité des fictions et de la polyvalence des supports, des formes et des médias contre les pratiques normatives, sclérosées, hiérarchisantes, dynamique démocratique de l'actualisation chez Yves Citton, par exemple, pour que soient maintenus les enjeux les plus concrets de l'interprétation des textes littéraires dans leur pédagogie¹⁸. Et comme contre mesure résistante, on lira aussi une liste de prescriptions inverses : la littérature réparatrice¹⁹, comme style de vie²⁰, sa regramatisation salutaire comme éthique de la lecture²¹. Les arguments théoriques de ces diagnostics, tout autant que les conceptions de la culture à l'intérieur de laquelle la littérature et son histoire se voient décrites, constituent les déterminations concrètes à partir desquelles est produit le récit des enchaînements et des ruptures, celui des idées attachées à la naissance et à la cohérence d'une identité nationale ou aux enjeux qu'il y a à le déconstruire. Ces arguments déterminent également la plupart du temps, le nouage, ou son refus strict, entre histoire littéraire, littérature nationale, comparatisme et généralisme comme méthode, mais aussi comme philosophie ou théorie de la littérature.

¹⁷ André Gaudreault et Philippe Marion, *La fin du cinéma ?*

¹⁸ Yves Citton, *Lire, interpréter, actualiser*.

¹⁹ Alexandre Gefen, *Réparer le monde. La littérature française face au XXI^e siècle*, Paris, Corti, 2017.

²⁰ Marielle MACE, *Styles : critique de nos formes de vie*, Paris, Gallimard, 2016.

²¹ Hélène Merlin-Kajman, *Lire dans la gueule du loup. Essai sur une zone à défendre, la littérature*, Paris, Gallimard, 2016.

Dans une perspective qui n'est précisément pas celle d'élaborer une histoire de / des littérature / s, on peut lire dans les premières pages de la récente *Histoire Mondiale de la France*, mise en œuvre sous la direction de Patrick Boucheron, l'exposition d'un programme historique, pensé résolument selon sa situation contemporaine d'élaboration : « [son] ambition est politique, dans la mesure où [cette histoire] entend mobiliser une conception pluraliste de l'histoire contre l'étrécissement identitaire qui domine aujourd'hui le débat public »²². Faire éclater les frontières nationales, les interroger par la circulation, les exils, les migrations, mettre en crise les illusions identitaires – voilà un programme dans lequel peuvent se retrouver bien des comparatistes. Mais au-delà des frontières politiques et des identités culturelles des nations et des peuples, est-il possible d'appliquer le projet de Boucheron à une perspective historique circonstanciée à la littérature elle-même ? Un programme qui voudrait faire son histoire en envisageant son dehors visuel comme une condition positive, une dynamique de tensions et de conflits, et dans laquelle la perte de son hégémonie ne serait pas tant le récit tragique d'une perte que la condition d'une recharge. *Recharge*, je reprends ce terme de l'article que John Barth consacrait en 1979 à *The Literature of Replenishment*, dix ans après un autre article fameux qu'il écrivait au sujet de son épuisement (*The Literature of Exhaustion*, 1967).

Les perspectives que développent les essais évoqués plus haut – dont il ne s'agit nullement de discuter ici de la pertinence locale – supposent un double ancrage temporel : tout d'abord à chaque fois on (re)dit, plus ou moins explicitement, une origine, un récit, une conception de la littérature prenant forme dans le diagnostic qui est fait de sa situation présente. Ensuite, il y va, là encore, d'une manière plus ou moins implicite, d'une définition possible de la littérature et plus particulièrement de ses usages qui marquent sa contemporanéité, désormais attachée à sa résidualité²³. C'est dire alors l'instabilité constitutive de toute perspective attachée à une caractérisation historique de la littérature : ce n'est pas une limite de l'entreprise de l'histoire littéraire comme telle, mais tout au contraire ? constitue ses conditions de possibilité. Cette tension dynamique ou cette instabilité constitutive est induite par toute entreprise visant à ré-caractériser la littérature : elle s'entend très clairement au cœur du projet gouvernant *L'Histoire des poétiques* de Bessière, Kushner, Mortier et Weisgerber. Dès son introduction, se trouve établi un trait de toute histoire littéraire comprise comme :

[...] manière de caractériser le jeu de la tradition et de l'évaluation, du « canon » et de l'invention, de la persistance d'une pensée de la littérature et de la recherche d'une définition, adéquate aux déterminismes et aux attentes d'une époque, des moyens et des fins de la littérature. De toute évidence, ces réflexions ne sont pas sans tenir compte de la mise en doute postmoderne de

²² Patrick Boucheron, *L'Histoire mondiale de la France*, Paris, Seuil, 2017.

²³ Raymond Williams, *Culture et matérialisme*.

l'existence même d'une spécificité littéraire aussi larges ou étroites que soit les frontières de la littérature. Implicitement, notre ouvrage affirme, par la problématisation même, cette existence au sein du devenir des cultures²⁴.

Si l'on a insisté ici sur l'accélération du devenir visuel des cultures et sur la façon dont s'en trouve affectée la littérature, il est clair que de 1997 à 2018, la situation est à la fois identique et accentuée. Les fictions thématisent abondamment l'expansion à tous les domaines de l'existence des appareillages technologiques de visualité et de visibilité (surveillance, géolocalisation, numérisation, mobilité des supports et des appareils de lecture). La part que prennent les médias visuels (cinéma, jeu vidéo, communication numérique des réseaux sociaux) dans les divertissements et même dans les processus d'accession à la culture (y compris la plus élitaire, ou ce qui en reste) est désormais considérable. Quant à la forme du codex, elle passe, de plus en plus, pour un plaisant fétichisme. Enfin, on ne peut manquer d'évoquer les formes d'hybridation des arts de l'image, des formes technologiques numériques et d'expressions encore texto-centrées qui identifient encore pour beaucoup l'idée de littérature. Un nouveau champ transdisciplinaire est en pleine émergence, notamment institutionnelle, qui se pense comme « humanités numériques ». Ainsi de tous ces auteurs qui ont absolument assumé d'être des écrivains du numérique, comme d'autres au XX^e siècle furent des écrivains du cinéma : en France, François Bon ou Chloé Delaume ; aux États-Unis, Mark Z Danielewski, *House of leaves* (2000) ou Paul La Farge, *Luminous airplane*²⁵ (<http://www.luminousairplanes.com>, 2011).

Peut-on espérer s'accorder aujourd'hui sur le manque de pertinence qu'il y aurait à vouloir faire une histoire littéraire du XX^e ségrégationniste et indépendante des rapports de la littérature et du cinéma, qui penserait la question de la littérature depuis les années 1970, en faisant l'économie d'une confrontation à l'ampleur et la variété des expressions de son dehors visuel ? L'écologie visuelle généralisée tout autant que les dispositifs technologiques spécifiques redéfinissent la littérarité des œuvres tout comme les pratiques d'écriture ou les formes de la lecture : comme la notion d'hypertexte par exemple, les fan-fiction et les écritures collectives, la génération informatique de textes, etc. Enfin, comment les questions que développent les théorisations contemporaines de la littérature, telle que la narrativité ou encore l'essor continu, depuis les années 80, des théories de la fiction, pourraient-elles se déployer, sans limitations sérieuses, en se restreignant au champ de la seule littérature ?

Trois champs illustrent concrètement les effets de cette écologie médiatique, de ses corrélations théoriques et des déterminations qu'elles font alors peser sur ce qui

²⁴ Jean Bessière, Eva Kushner, Roland Mortier, Jean Weisberger, *L'Histoire des poétiques*, Paris, PUF, 1997, p. VI.

²⁵ Paul La Farge, *Luminous airplane*, 2011. <http://www.luminousairplanes.com>. Page consultée le 12 décembre 2019.

pourraient nourrir encore des projets des histoires contemporaines de la littérature : paradigme fictionnaliste, imaginaire (post)hollywoodien, cybernétique et pratique vidéoludique.

Je les évoque dans la perspective d'une conclusion.

En premier, le succès continu et croissant depuis les années 1980 du paradigme fictionnaliste dans les études littéraires et, partant, la nécessité d'articuler l'expérience littéraire de la fiction avec toutes les autres formes de fictionalité. Ce qui a pour conséquence immédiate de penser la littérature dans une généralité et de récuser le privilège de sa singularité. La métacritique de ce changement de pensée de la littérature s'effectue aisément avec ses étapes significatives, dans une production théorique considérable²⁶. Dans la perspective qui a particulièrement retenu notre attention, il faut également souligner que dès les années 1990, nombreux sont les essais, notamment anglo-saxons, qui articulent les dimensions des néo-épistémologies du numérique et de la littérature²⁷, comme ceux de Janet Murray²⁸, Espen Aarseth²⁹ ou les travaux de N. Katherine Hayles³⁰.

L'hégémonie hollywoodienne dans l'imaginaire narratif et fictionnel globalisé³¹ constitue une autre question essentielle, ne serait-ce que parce qu'elle détermine autant les adaptations et les adhésions que les résistances, et que ces réponses poétiques / politiques possèdent des inscriptions historiques et culturelles de nature à déterminer les rapports que les littératures nationales entretiennent / ont entretenu avec le grand Autre Américain. Mais cette idée, prégnante au XX^e siècle, n'appelle-t-elle pas à être nuancée et réévaluée au regard des mutations récentes qui sont survenues avec l'émergence d'autres centres de productions majeurs. On songe à la puissance des imaginaires portés, depuis les années 1990, par le cinéma asiatique, notamment japonais et coréen, et au-delà, à l'extension planétaire de la culture visuelle que diffusent les mangas et les *animes* (films d'animation), les productions de Bollywood, ou de Nollywood (le Nigéria étant aujourd'hui la deuxième puissance mondiale du cinéma). De la même façon que la littérature se voit affectée dans sa caractérisation contemporaine, par son dehors visuel, le

²⁶ Voir Thomas Pavel, *Univers de la fiction*, Paris, Seuil, 1988 ; Marie-Laure Ryan, *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1992 ; Marie-Laure Ryan *Avatars of Story*, Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 2006 ; Ruth Ronen, *Possible World in Literary Theory*, Cambridge University Press, 2009 ; Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Pourquoi la fiction*, Paris, Seuil, 1999 ; Olivier Caïra, *Définir la fiction : du roman au jeu d'échecs*, Paris, CNRS, 2011.

²⁷ Voir sur ces questions Samuel Archibald, *Le Texte et la Technique : la lecture à l'heure des médias numériques*, Montréal, Le Quartanier, 2009.

²⁸ Janet H Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck, the Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1998.

²⁹ Espen J. Aarseth, *Cybertext. Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1997.

³⁰ N. Katherine Hayles, *Writing Machines*, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2002, et *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary*, South Bend, University of Notre Dame Press, 2008.

³¹ Voir Franco Moretti, « Planet Hollywood », *New Left Review*, 2001, 9, pp. 99-100.

cinéma qui fait, tout autant, l'expérience complexe d'une mutation qui lui est imposée par l'écologie numérique, dans laquelle il est désormais produit et vu³².

Enfin, on peut retenir l'ouverture, depuis les années 1960, des pensées de la littérature – à l'imaginaire de la cybernétique et de l'informatique (Calvino, Perec, Roubaud, etc.) et, plus récemment, à l'imaginaire vidéo-ludique. Ces inscriptions ne sont pas à confondre avec le succès de la thématization de ces discours dans les fictions de genre (la science-fiction notamment) et dans la culture Pop plus largement. Exemple de cet enjeu est le chapitre que Franco Moretti consacre au jeu vidéo dans *Il Romanzo*, la somme de 5 tomes qu'il dirige sur l'histoire du roman, paru chez Einaudi entre 2001 et 2003³³.

C'est avec ce type de réflexions en tête que l'on peut entendre à nouveaux frais la question dont les termes se retrouvent chez Hollier, Bessière et Moretti, celle de la survie, de « l'existence même [de la littérature] au sein du devenir des cultures ». Dans *Graphes, cartes et arbres. Modèles abstraits pour une autre histoire de la littérature* (2008), Moretti fait de l'arbre la figure d'un déplacement des thèses de Darwin vers le champ de la littérature. Comment croissent et disparaissent-elles les formes littéraires ? Qu'est-ce qui fait que l'une résiste et que l'autre décline, que l'une s'adapte, qu'une autre s'hybride à la manière d'un porte-greffe et de son greffon ? Qu'on l'envisage d'une façon strictement graphique ou hautement métaphorique, la figure que propose Moretti fait inévitablement constater, à l'œil nu, dans les graphiques qu'il introduit dans son livre, que l'arbre permet la représentation de deux types de croissances. Selon un axe vertical, l'arbre qui pousse indique le rapport d'enchaînement des éléments diachroniquement pensés, selon le temps long des saisons, une poussée qui est une croissance en hauteur. Selon un axe horizontal, l'arbre produit des expansions par différenciations synchroniques de ses ramifications. L'arbre de Moretti pourrait bien être une figure intéressante pour représenter et penser les articulations entre les domaines conflictuels, et cependant complémentaires, qui caractérisent la situation contemporaine du littéraire. Du darwinisme théorique qui constitue l'arrière plan de l'interrogation de Moretti, nous héritons donc de la question de la survie (ce terme déjà entendu chez Hollier, chez Bessière) et de ces imaginaires darwiniens de la résistante et / ou de l'adaptation.

Confrontée à un milieu devenu hostile ou difficile, l'espèce peut échouer dans sa résistance et disparaître au profit d'une espèce plus apte. Mais c'est là peut-être où la métaphorique darwinienne de Moretti peut trouver sa limite pour nombre d'oreilles. Comment penser exactement, selon quels critères, *the survival of the fittest* (la survie du plus apte), en matière littéraire, culturelle, artistique ? Car

³² Francesco Casetti, *The Lumière Galaxy : Seven Key Words for the Cinema to Come*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2015.

³³ Franco Moretti, *Il Romanzo*, Torino, Einaudi, 2001–2003.

l'aptitude n'est jamais que relative au milieu, et, en l'occurrence, aux paramètres économiques, industriels et médiatiques qui le constituent.

Au-delà du pouvoir stimulant de son graphisme, celui heuristique de la métaphore s'épuise. En revanche, l'organisation diagrammatique qu'elle fait voir articule deux approches qu'il est nécessaire d'envisager conjointement pour interroger l'histoire du développement, de la modification des formes et de leur éventuelle disparition : la diachronie verticale d'une part, la synchronie horizontale d'autre part. La seconde oblige à prendre en compte la divergence et la distance qui existent entre les points extrêmes et le corps central, entre le bourgeonnement et le tronc. La poussée organique conjoint temps et espace, spatialise sans annuler la durée. L'arbre de la littérature dans son écologie médiatique contemporaine permet de représenter et de penser des données contradictoires qui sont au cœur des tensions entre internalisme et externalisme, pour revenir à la question que je soulevais avec Denis Hollier à l'ouverture de ce propos : entre convergence et divergence, entre hybridations et limites perçues, construites ou idéales, entre histoire et contemporanéité. C'est-à-dire ce point du temps et de l'espace d'où s'écrivent toujours les histoires littéraires et les théories sur lesquelles elles reposent.

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ON THE MODE OF INTERMEDIALITY IN (CONTEMPORARY) LITERARY HISTORY: AN INTERNAL PERSPECTIVE AND AN ATTEMPT TO REACH THE VISUAL BEYOND OF LITERATURE (20TH – 21ST CENTURIES)

(Abstract)

If “Literature” has lost its essentializing capital by joining the nexus of social and cultural phenomena which cross it and from which it emerges, and if the idea of nation and national identity is attenuated, debated, even condemned, in a world of globalized exchange and communication, what kind of literary history could still be written in the context of an essentially visual culture (cinema, graphic arts, digital media ecology)? This paper aims at emphasizing the difficulty of establishing national literary histories limited to a simple idea of exchange, mediation or translation in a space that has

become intermedial and where cultural phenomena determine one another. Are we in the position to consider that the idea of a history of literature(s) became untenable? This question is relevant especially if we approach literature from either an internal perspective (taking into account its “autocentrism”), or from a national point of view (which focuses on a conservative and totalizing type of identitarian narration). The same question stands for the perspectives that underline the processes of fragmentarity and recomposition (according to the metaphors of the kaleidoscope or of the rhizome), since what is called, in contemporary culture, “Literature” has as a visual exterior the “video sphere” (Virillio) or the culture of the media “flow” (Bauman, Sadin). Consequently, this research is based mainly on *L’Histoire des poétiques*, developed by J. Bessière and Ellen Kushner (1998), Franco Moretti’s *Graphs, Maps, Trees: The Abstract Models for a Literary History* (2005), respectively Patrick Boucheron’s new historiographic approach from *The World History of France* (2017).

Keywords: intermediality, visual culture, national literary history, digital media ecology.

DESPRE ISTORIA LITERARĂ (CONTEMPORANĂ) ÎN REGIM
INTERMEDIAL: O PERSPECTIVĂ INTERNISTĂ ȘI O ÎNCERCARE DE A
CONCEPE VIZUALUL DE DINCOLO DE LITERATURĂ
(SECOLELE XX ȘI XXI)
(Rezumat)

De vreme ce „Literatura” și-a pierdut majuscula esențializantă prin integrarea ei în rețeaua de fenomene sociale și culturale care o traversează și îi influențează devenirea, de vreme ce ideea națiunii și a identității naționale este tot mai atenuată, mai dezbătută și chiar condamnată într-o lume a globalizării comunicării și a schimburilor economico-culturale, ce fel de istorie literară ar mai putea fi scrisă în contextul unei culturi esențialmente vizuale (cinema, artă grafică, ecologie digitală)? Această lucrare îi propune să reliefeze dificultatea fundamentării unor istorii literare naționale, limitate la o percepție simplistă asupra ideii de interacțiune, mediere și traducere într-un câmp cultural care a devenit intermedial și unde fenomenele culturale se determină reciproc. Suntem oare puși în situația de a considera imposibilă realizarea istoriei literare? Această întrebare este relevantă mai ales dacă abordăm literatura atât dintr-o perspectivă autonomistă (luând în considerare „autocentrismul” ei), cât și dintr-un punct de vedere național (care se concentrează pe o narațiune identitară conservatoare și totalizatoare). Aceeași întrebare privește și viziunile care accentuează procesele fragmentarității și ale recompunerii (pornind de la metaforele caleidoscopului sau ale rizomului), de vreme ce, în cultura contemporană, „Literatura” ajunge să fie înțeleasă și prin intermediul “videoferei” (Virillio) sau a culturii „fluxului” comunicării mediatice (Bauman, Sadin). Prin urmare, această cercetare se fundamentează în principal pe trei repere teoretice: *L’Histoire des poétiques*, dezvoltată de J. Bessière și de Ellen Kushner (1998), studiul lui Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: The Abstract Models for a Literary History* (2005), respectiv noua orientare istoriografică elaborată de Patrick Boucheron în *The World History of France* (2017).

Cuvinte-cheie: intermedialitate, cultură vizuală, istorie literară națională, ecologie digitală.

ALINA BUZATU

GENRE AS A CONCEPTUAL TOOL

Throughout its semantic route to what it is today, the concept of genre has been under the auspices of ambivalence, traversing epochs of prestige and privileges and epochs of theoretical impasse. Like any concept of such amplitude, genre has the quality of a superordinate entity: the complex diachronic and synchronic relations developed with other conceptual families are a dialogic game of mutual interrogations, transformations, appropriations, quarrels or divorces. The concept of genre is present in the group photo of each episteme.

Should we reduce the prodigious multiplicity of socio-cultural situations that genre systems have crossed, we would find two main theoretical scenarios; in the first scenario, genres are represented as biological species, organized on the basis of their common characteristics, entities that live, grow up, reach maturity and die. In the second scenario, genres are seen as institutions that promulgate laws that methodologically regulate discursive structures. Both perspectives are incorporated in various texts that form the theoretical canon; both have strengths that have been exploited and weaknesses that have been objected to.

As we well know, before the beginning of the 20th century the taxonomies of genre were captive in a rigid triad – the epic/ the lyrical/ the dramatic – a representation whose effectiveness is, and has always been, questionable when confronted with the immense richness of literary facts. At present, we are obviously witnessing a transformation of genre as a conceptual tool, so it is important to ask questions about its validity and meaning. In other words, the very general questions that concern us – together with the many literary theorists who have recently formulated observations on the condition of this concept – are the following: Is it a resilient, appropriate and effective tool in the current socio-discursive circumstances, when confronted with the emerging forms of fiction/ literature/ literariness? What will its future uses be? Will it remain a specialized instrument or will it be a common convenience, shared by larger communities? Beyond the educated guesses, the affirmative answer – yes, genre is an instrument that will enter the conceptual kits of future generations – requires some nuanced arguments. It should be said that genre is an indispensable concept that deserves to be safeguarded if we respect its capital of theoretical and critical experience.

The antifragility¹ of the genre as a conceptual tool, its capacity to withstand shocks and replicate must be emphasised: in its recent history – from the beginning

¹ The term is borrowed from Nicholas Nassim Taleb's book, *Antifragile: Things That Gain from Disorder*, New York, Random House, 2012.

of the 20th century to the present – the concept of genre has gone through two revolutions that are commonly known as *the linguistic turn* and *the cognitive turn*. What does genre as taxonomic tool look like at present? First of all, genre has acquired not only other functions and values but also other “tags”. At this point, “tags” such as epic, lyrical, dramatic are terms used either in their categorial sense, without their historical, normative value, or with mechanistic meanings, as they are unfortunately perpetuated by school textbooks. These tags do not cover clearly defined territories – in each epoch they are subject to semantic reconfiguration – and do not index stable identity features; that is why many theorists prefer to use quasi-synonyms for it, such as *archigenre*, *mode*, *genre model*, *textual type*, etc., each displaying other critical specifications.

The definitions of genre are intrinsically related to the logic of literariness. For centuries, from Aristotle to the beginning of the 20th century, the definitions of genre were related to an essentialist logic, according to which some texts have a kind of literary aura, obtained by means of fiction, freed from the criterion of truth; Frege and those who followed him taught us that fiction is neither true nor false, only possible, based on the famous contract of mutual irresponsibility (or “willing suspension of disbelief”) between the addresser (author) and the addressee (communities of readers). For Aristotle and the whole tradition he opens, language is creative when it comes to fiction, and creativity is achieved not verbally, but at the level of invention, of the representation and combination of events (in two registers, narrative and dramatic and two levels of dignity of subjects, noble and vulgar). It is not by accident that Gérard Genette – who critically glosses upon these ideas in two essential metatheoretical textbooks, *Introduction à l'architexte* (Paris, Seuil, 1979) and *Fiction et diction* (Paris, Seuil, 1991) – translates (following Käte Hamburger) mimesis as fiction. On one hand, essentialism has incontestable merits – see Hamburger's *Die Logik der Dichtung*, in which only two fundamental genres are recognized: the fictional genre and the lyrical genre, both marked by different enunciative postures; on the other hand, essentialist logic is the source of deformed ideas, especially among less cultured communities which equate fiction, more precisely narrative fiction, with literature itself.

It is the merit of the 20th century to have changed the logic of the definition: essentialist approaches are replaced by conditionalism, which gives prevalence to formal (or rhematic) criteria. As the German Romantics, Mallarmé, or Valéry imagined and affirmed, literariness cannot be equated only with a set of privileged themes and images packed in a 'transparent' language. The 'package' (i.e. the signifier) becomes a layer that can no longer be separated from content; in other words, the discursive sublimations become intransitive, in the sense that they take a form that they become inseparable from, thus distancing themselves from the world and setting up a pseudo-referential level. Therefore, it is diction, not fiction that becomes prevalent and will command affiliation to one genre or another. The best known theoretical product of this conception is, of course, Roman Jakobson's poetic function.

The reconstitution of the contemporary theoretical issues concerning genre exceeds the intentions and possibilities of any limited research. There are so many titles of secondary literature, so many doctrines and schools of thought that the choice of a point of view or another becomes, in the end, a matter of taste. Nevertheless, in this nostalgic cartography, some landmarks cannot be eluded. The first conditional codifications of genre are the intellectual property of Russian Formalism: generic taxinomies are problematised by Boris Tomashevski, Victor Petrovski, Vladimir Propp, Sklovski, etc. Focusing on the narrative, the Russian formalists do not operate with sophisticated theoretical presuppositions: for them, the literary genre is related to procedures, understood as a sort of constructive blocks, linguistic prefabrications that can build (or, more precisely, counterfeit) a literary object. Following their directives, the progressive conceptual formalizations of genre incorporate the exaltations of narratology, which also relies on procedures in the work of edifying a text, and then the lucidity of semiotics. Narratology has succeeded in producing models of interpretation of narrative text that are extremely useful from the didactic point of view, even if they may be sometimes blind to aesthetic value; the various narratological schools have taught us to deconstruct a narrative sequence, identify the voices and the focalisation, follow the scenarios or discriminate among the actantial structures.

Another fundamental genre adjustment as a conceptual tool comes after the structuralist age. After the 1960s, genre ceases to be the natural property of literature and becomes an asset of the entire human discourse. If, for example, narrative is present in many cultural products other than linguistic texts (film, comics, drawings, librettos, ballet, as Roland Barthes states in a founding text²), why should genre remain only a literary notion? In his later writings (*Esthétique de la création verbale*, for example), Mikhail Bakhtin raises the concept of genre to another level of theoretical power, explaining that literary genres are a secondary case of the discursive genres; the experience of genre is part of a cultural instinct that is constantly educated and found in the mental foreground of any act of enunciation. Genre is an efficient aid in the vast interdiscursive field that is the socio-cultural life, providing us with a number of labelled boxes to organize our utterances and the utterances of others; in other words, genre grants identity to speech acts, asserts their duration, negotiates the semiotic contract, programmes memorisation. Bakhtin's theoretical solution is still valid today, although at this point it has to be said that there cannot be a simple inclusion ratio between the literary genres and the discursive genres. The genres of literature are secondary to the genres of discourse, but this does not mean that all their properties are the result of a derivation that is always intelligible or quantifiable. If literature does not exist as essence, at least the existence of the literary field is indisputable, displaying specific agencies, institutions, goods, interests and values. The literary texts have a

² See Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*. Translated by Stephen Heath, London, Fontana Press, 1977.

different symbolic status and a specific semiotic manifestation mediated by genre, which 'works' in a more complicated way in the space of literature and therefore cannot be labelled as readily as other discursive practices. This is the most legitimate protest of those who defend the historical claim of literature on the concept of genre and see these other improper uses as sad consequences of theoretical commodification.

An important recalibration of genre as a conceptual tool is to be found in the 1970s. Reputed theorists such as Jean Michel Adam, Dominique Maingueneau, Francois Rastier, Jean-Paul Bronckart, and especially Teun van Dijk, all affiliated to the vast field of research called discourse analysis, have brought the most substantial transformations to the concept in its recent history, establishing fortunate interdisciplinary alliances between language sciences, on the one hand, and cognitive (neuro)sciences, on the other. Through their effort, the instauration of the cognitive paradigm was not fatal to the concept of genre, but it meant a verification of its epistemological efficiency. Modulated by discourse analysis, the concept of genre was able to 'learn' from the discoveries of cognitivism and recalibrate itself, or, in the terms of Nicholas Taleb, demonstrate its antifragility.

Although methodological differences are many, all practising theoreticians in the field of discourse analysis – be it Jean Michel Adam, Jean Marie Schaeffer, Dominique Maingueneau or Francois Rastier – agree on a new name/ tag for genre matrices: *type*. The types (5 for Jean Michel Adam: narrative, descriptive, dialogical, argumentative, explicative) represent global and abstract modes of textual organization, stable and invariable, grounded in the deep structure, on universal cognitive operations and actualised at the surface level according to historical and cultural circumstances. The fundamental role of genre/ type is that of mediation, as Rastier points out, along the lines of a hermeneutical approach: symbolic mediation by articulating the individual with the social and semiotic mediation between the actual world and the worlds of (discursive) representation. Rastier is also the one who renounces excessive formalizations, discussing genre signals (or genre markers) not only at the level of the signifier but also at the level of the signified, following the thematic, dialectical, dialogical and tactical game of contents and thus establishing the conceptual framework of a genre semantics.

The theorist who manages to reconcile the concept of genre (after decades of linguistic formalization) with the cognitivist paradigm is Teun van Dijk; his methodology, called socio-cognitivism, is broadly discussed in several books, of which the most important are *Discourse and Context* and *Society and Discourse*. First of all, Teun van Dijk recalls an intuitive idea exploited by linguistics, psychology, sociology and anthropology: the genres/ types carry mental schemata and scripts – or scenarios if you prefer – that is, matrices of thought and behaviour that organize categories of information and relationships between them. When we learn to deconstruct a literary text, discriminating, for instance, narrative from descriptive sequences, we operate with a kind of prior knowledge, with something that we already know. It is amazing how few people realize that similar processes

are always active in our minds. At every moment of our discursive existence, we know - even if we do not know that we know – how to identify participants, assign roles, measure variations in style and register, because our private encyclopaedias – discreet, indeed, but always in charge – contain genre rules and conventions. Van Dijk's theories are the sociolinguistic extension of the formulations of Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner in their fundamental book *The Way We Think. Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*, according to which conceptual blending, the mental process with a decisive role in human existence, choreographs vast semantic construction networks such as categorizations, analogies, scientific constructions, and, in the most interesting case, the construction of the unreal. In all these cases, we operate with mental schemata. However, these mental schemata are never “empty” of meaning, nor are they indifferent to the context in which they are represented, because they are not just a set of steps in an algorithm written only at the level of the signifier. Their meaning, inherently plural, as we know, comes – as Teun van Dijk underlines – from the context, in relation to the enunciation scene and the way the enunciators define their (subjective) point of view. Here, many scholars say, some problems of understanding may appear. If it is true that genre rules are being metabolized simply by living in a culture, maybe a little examination of the process would not hurt. Those who learn about genre from trustful sources possess metagenre competences, that is, the metacognitive abilities to represent and evaluate their own understanding of genre. Those with little interest in metacognitive operations adopt genre rather mimetically, in a genre atmosphere.

The situation of genre as a conceptual instrument able to operate in the entire space of human discourse appears more complicated when we examine not only the emerging genres of literature and art, but also the genres whose “ontological” status is nonfictional but becomes fictional at exponential speed: blogs and social networks are just two examples. Speaking of the circulation of forms/ forms of circulation of cultural goods in the current global context, anthropologists (Arjun Appadurai, among others) note that these change radically: if literature had (and still has) a constant but slower cultural transfer rate (because we are still talking about books, not just digital products), other forms of cultural communication such as blogs, social networks, photography etc. have infinitely higher transfer rates. They even have an obsession for instantaneity (they are “just one click away”) and, very importantly, they create paths and circuits that did not exist previously. These emerging genres, especially those circulating in cyberspace, pose a big problem: fantastic transfer speed and viral dissemination can raise issues regarding the intelligibility of the mental schemata they transport, leading to serious semantic (and, unfortunately, cultural) conflicts.

We cannot fully predict what genre will become. Studies from a cognitive perspective are becoming more consistent – see Peter Stockwell, Lisa Zunshine, Frederick Luis Aldama, J.M. Mandler, John Frow, Marie-Laure Ryan, etc. In my opinion, two ideas excerpted from their studies are of particular interest. The first

one is the definition of genre as an autopoietic system, i.e. a self-reproducible and self-sustaining system, a definition that comes from Maturana and Varela, goes through Niklas Luhmann and reaches a series of recent researchers (for example, Jerome McGann). Another idea is accredited by Mary Laure Ryan, who investigates the genres of digital artifacts. In the digital environments, Mary-Laure Ryan identifies three (*archi*)genres/ regimes of textuality: 1. the computer as (co) author; 2. the computer as transmission medium; 3. the computer as theater. The first genre, the computer as co-author, includes computer-generated experimental projects, or ELIZA, the computer program written by Joseph Weizenbaum in 1966 that simulates the dialogue between a patient and a psychotherapist. The second, the computer as transmission medium, includes electronic hybrids of already established genres, such as collaborative fiction or electronic series, while the third, the computer as theater, includes, on one hand, the subgenre of the hypertext in which a text is 'broken' into fragments (lexies, textrons) and stored in a network whose nodes are connected to other electronic pages, and, on the other hand, the important category of videogames.

Although these recent taxonomies seem exotic to classical philology, Marie-Laure Ryan argues that the emergence of digitality could have unpredictable effects on the condition of literature: it could fulfil Brecht's or Artaud's dream of total language, combining text, music, dance, visual elements; it could bring us closer to Rimbaud's multisensory poetic language with coloured vowels or to Joyce's instances of synaesthesia; it could reach Lautréamont's ideal of poetry that must be created by all, not by one; or it could invent a multidimensional language with endless semiotic potentials.

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GENRE AS CONCEPTUAL TOOL

(Abstract)

My paper is a metatheoretical reflection upon genre as a conceptual and taxonomic tool. Whether we refer to its semantic values (which describe the “spirit”, “vision” or “mode” of the texts) or the syntactic ones (which analyse the structuring laws and functions), genre is, essentially, a socio-discursive contract and a user’s guide to cultural artefacts. My research is particularly interested in a conceptual history of emancipation and resistance, investigating the complex ways in which genre proves its anti-fragility, resisting change and adapting to the 20th century critical paradigms.

Keywords: genre, archigenre, metagenre, essentialism, conditionalism, literariness, formalism, cognitivism.

GENUL CA INSTRUMENT CONCEPTUAL

(Rezumat)

Lucrarea propune o reflecție metateoretică despre gen ca instrument conceptual și taxonomic. Indiferent dacă ne referim la valorile sale semantice (descriind „spiritul”, „viziunea” sau „modul de a fi” al textelor) ori la cele sintactice (vizând legile și funcțiile compoziției textuale) genul reprezintă, în primul rând, un contract socio-discursiv și un ghid pentru înțelegerea artefactelor culturale. Astfel, această cercetare discută mai ales o istorie conceptuală a emancipării și rezistenței, analizând modurile prin care genul își demonstrează „anti-fragilitatea”, rezistența la schimbare și adaptarea la paradigmele critice ale secolului XX.

Cuvinte-cheie: gen, arhigen, metagen, esențialism, condiționalism, literaritate, formalism, cognitivism.

DOMINIQUE PRIVÉ

POUR UNE NOUVELLE HISTOIRE LITTÉRAIRE QUÉBÉCOISE, DU LOCAL A L'UNIVERSEL : LA LITTÉRATURE MIGRATOIRE

L'histoire culturelle d'un peuple et son histoire nationale vont souvent de pair. Cependant, la vitesse à laquelle le paysage culturel se modifie, spécialement dans une nation terre d'accueil comme le Québec, rend parfois les catégories littéraires préexistantes obsolètes et inefficaces. La prépondérance du chauvinisme impose à la littérature des limites dues aux contraintes de classement qui font de la langue et du territoire les aspects déterminants, facteurs qui laissent supposer une certaine homogénéité, voire même une exclusivité culturelle.

La rencontre entre les histoires littéraires nationales et les perspectives globalisantes appelle une redéfinition du concept de nationalité. L'ouverture des frontières et la mondialisation permettent aux individus de voyager, d'aller vivre à l'étranger, de changer de nationalité. Le nomadisme et la migration créent une ouverture sur le monde et sur les cultures et donne lieu à un pluriculturalisme de plus en plus présent. Cela entraîne une difficulté à classer les œuvres dans les histoires littéraires nationales, notamment en ce qui concerne le Québec.

Afin de discourir de la littérature québécoise, la devise du Québec est un bon point de départ :

Je me souviens
Que né sous le lys
Je crois sous la rose.

Il s'agit d'un appel à la mémoire qui fait référence aux débuts de la colonie que fut la Nouvelle-France, « sous le lys », représentant la France, tandis que la rose, symbolisant la Grande-Bretagne, évoque le développement de ce qu'est devenu le Québec sous la domination anglaise à partir de 1763, lorsque la France céda sa colonie aux Anglais.

Ce rappel met de l'avant le fait que la présence de la langue française dans un territoire désormais anglais s'explique par un désir des colons français de conserver leur identité à travers la langue. La situation unique du Québec, contrairement à d'autres colonies où la langue française est celle de la classe dominante, s'explique par cette coupure d'avec la métropole française très tôt dans l'histoire du Québec.

Histoire littéraire québécoise

L'histoire littéraire du Québec est plutôt jeune. Son folklore est principalement constitué de contes et de légendes peuplés de diables à queues de bœuf et de chasse-galerie. Du roman de la terre, on passe progressivement, au milieu du XX^e

siècle, à une littérature de la ville et à une littérature plus nationaliste, voire revendicatrice¹. Cette littérature des années 1960–1970, orientée vers l'identité nationale, est fortement marquée par des revendications linguistiques, puisque la cohabitation avec la langue anglaise de la classe dominante présente une menace d'assimilation. C'est donc par la littérature, et la révolution tranquille des années 1960, que les Québécois francophones continuent d'exister.

Dans les années 1980, après la désillusion des référendums perdus et les espoirs d'indépendance du Québec relégués à la trame de fond, le Québec continue d'évoluer et de changer au rythme de la mondialisation et de l'immigration. La littérature devient plus intimiste, voire individualiste.

C'est également dans les années 1980 qu'apparaît dans les études consacrées à l'histoire littéraire québécoise la catégorie dite « littérature migrante ». On y classe les œuvres des auteurs venus d'ailleurs et, pendant une ou deux décennies, ces œuvres semblent avoir en commun des thèmes tels que l'exil, la nostalgie, l'errance, l'identité, etc.².

Situation de la littérature migrante

Dans un pays comme le Canada, l'immigration a un effet direct sur le paysage humain et culturel. On le remarque particulièrement dans une ville comme Montréal, interface entre l'Europe et l'Amérique anglophone, qui est souvent choisie par les auteurs nouvellement arrivés.

L'étiquette de littérature migrante accolée aux œuvres d'auteurs qui sont venus s'installer à Montréal avait une signification plutôt limitée, voire même contestée³, dès le départ et elle s'est rapidement révélée insuffisante. La diversité toujours plus grande des auteurs dits migrants amènent des écrivains aux origines les plus diverses à être rassemblés sous cette étiquette. Pourtant, ils sont plusieurs à contester cette appellation, notamment Ying Chen et Dany Laferrière, pour ne nommer qu'eux.

Dany Laferrière est né en Haïti, a vécu à Montréal, où il a publié un certain nombre de ses œuvres, et vit maintenant à Paris. Voici ce qu'il dit à propos de cette classification : « Y a-t-il quelqu'un au Québec qui va expliquer à ceux qui font les anthologies que cela n'existe pas, un écrivain immigré ? [...] Je n'écris pas parce que je suis en exil, donc je ne suis pas un écrivain exilé »⁴.

¹ Michel Biron, François Dumont, Élisabeth Nardout-Lafarge, « Refus global », in *Histoire de la littérature québécoise*, Montréal, Les Éditions du Boréal, 2007, pp. 289-292.

² Michel Biron, François Dumont, Élisabeth Nardout-Lafarge, « L'écriture migrante », in *Histoire de la littérature québécoise*, Montréal, Les Éditions du Boréal, 2007, pp. 561-567.

³ La sous-catégorie « littérature migrante » est contestée par ces auteurs que l'on qualifie de migrants, notamment par Dany Laferrière et Ying Chen (voir notes 4 et 5).

⁴ Dany Laferrière, « Est-il possible d'aller n'importe où, Lise? », in Lise Gauvin (ed.), *Les littératures de langue française à l'heure de la mondialisation*, Montréal, Hurtubise, 2008, p. 95.

De son côté, Ying Chen est née à Shanghai, a vécu au Québec un certain temps et elle vit maintenant à Vancouver, en Colombie-Britannique. Sans refuser l'étiquette en tant que telle, elle demande qu'on ne s'y limite pas ! : « Si vous devez me mettre des étiquettes, de grâce, mettez-m'en le plus possible »⁵.

Ces auteurs qui ont vécu à Montréal suffisamment longtemps pour être inscrits dans la liste des auteurs québécois, mais dans une catégorie réductrice, et qui ne vivent plus nécessairement au Québec, sans être retournés dans leur pays d'origine, sont-ils des auteurs migrants ou simplement des citoyens du monde ?

La lecture de certaines de leurs œuvres ne donne pas l'impression de lire de la littérature « migrante ». Bien que l'imaginaire romanesque soit marqué par les origines respectives des auteurs, le lecteur, peu importe ses origines, peut facilement s'identifier à certains protagonistes. Par exemple, *Pays sans chapeau* de Dany Laferrière et *L'Ingratitude* de Ying Chen proposent tous deux une rencontre des deux univers : l'univers du pays d'origine et l'univers occidental.

Dans *Pays sans chapeau*, le narrateur retourne au pays d'origine, soit Haïti, après une période de vingt ans. Malgré cette longue absence, les mêmes conflits subsistent entre les générations : entre le narrateur et sa mère, mais également avec d'autres personnages plus âgés. Ces conflits intergénérationnels sont doublés d'un choc des cultures qui creuse la distance entre les protagonistes.

Un phénomène semblable peut être observé dans *L'Ingratitude* de Ying Chen. La narratrice, une jeune femme de vingt-cinq ans vit des conflits avec sa mère, qui la domine. Pourtant, au-delà du conflit mère-fille, un choc des cultures est également présent. La jeune fille tente de se libérer non seulement de sa mère, mais aussi des valeurs chinoises, plus traditionnelles, que cette dernière représente. En cela, les valeurs de la jeune femme se rapprochent davantage de celles de l'Occident.

Les deux auteurs vont également exploiter le monde des esprits. Bien que cela soit fait différemment on peut observer certains recoupements.

Ainsi, par l'analyse de ces grands motifs et du traitement qu'il en est fait dans ces romans, nous pouvons relever les correspondances entre diverses œuvres littéraires du monde. Dans les motifs comme le choc des cultures, les conflits intergénérationnels, la vie et la mort, il y a une universalité qui transcende la nationalité. Si l'étude des œuvres locales nous conduit vers le transnational, peut-être est-ce le moment de sortir de nos frontières, et de nos catégories.

En prenant pour point de départ la littérature migrante, déjà soumise aux tensions territoriales et culturelles, on constate avec facilité que ces thématiques, qui semblent ponctuelles, dépassent pourtant les limites des catégories promues par l'histoire littéraire nationale. L'exemple de Haruki Murakami est édifiant en ce

⁵ Nancy Huston, « Traduttore non è traditore », in M. Le Bris, J. Rouaud (eds.), *Pour une littérature-monde*, Paris, Gallimard, 2007, p. 152.

sens puisque dans son roman *Kafka sur le rivage* on retrouve exactement les mêmes motifs.

Par conséquent, indépendamment des intentions, des origines ou des appartenances de l'auteur, les œuvres existent dans un monde où les frontières sont de plus en plus poreuses et les catégories de moins en moins étanches.

Enjeux de classification dans la littérature québécoise

Les difficultés de classification sont nombreuses au Québec et ne concernent pas seulement les auteurs venus d'ailleurs. Voici d'autres exemples d'auteurs qui se situent aux frontières des catégories linguistiques et territoriales qui sont opératoires dans la logique de l'histoire littéraire :

Nancy Huston, qui est canadienne, est née à Calgary. Elle a vécu aux États-Unis, à Vancouver et elle s'est installée à Paris depuis de nombreuses années. Sa langue maternelle est l'anglais, mais elle a choisi le français comme langue d'écriture. Elle vit et écrit à Paris. Est-elle une auteure française, ou québécoise, ou canadienne ? Il y a également des auteurs francophones qui écrivent en Ontario ou au Manitoba, comme Gabrielle Roy. Cette dernière, contrairement à Nancy Huston, se voit fréquemment qualifiée d'auteure québécoise. Est-elle plus québécoise que la première ? Et qu'en est-il des textes écrits à Montréal, mais en anglais ? Sont-ils moins québécois que les textes francophones ? Sont-ils moins québécois que ceux de Chen et de Laferrière ? Nous sommes également amenés à prendre en considération les œuvres bilingues, car il y en a de plus en plus dans une ville comme Montréal.

La multiplication des étiquettes et la quantité croissante d'œuvres se retrouvant aux frontières des catégories imposent, donc, une réflexion sur les modalités de l'histoire littéraire locale.

Les solutions

L'inclusion de la littérature des auteurs québécois parmi les autres littératures canadiennes francophones serait une option qui permettrait d'éviter le questionnement quant à l'identité québécoise. Ou, mieux encore, il serait possible de se joindre à toute la francophonie et de considérer la langue comme premier critère de catégorisation. Pourtant, cela soulève encore plusieurs questionnements comme nous avons pu le constater depuis la publication du manifeste pour une « littérature-monde »⁶, publié en 2007, qui a entamé une universalisation des littératures francophones et qui a fait l'objet de nombreuses contestations,

⁶ Michel Le Bris et al., « Pour une 'littérature-monde' en français », *Le Monde*, le 16 mars 2007, https://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2007/03/15/des-ecrivains-plaident-pour-un-roman-en-francais-ouvert-sur-le-monde_883572_3260.html. Page consultée le 12 mars 2018.

notamment concernant le « centre » qui serait toujours dominant. Il a cependant ouvert une porte à cette possible réorganisation.

Peut-être faudrait-il envisager l'idée que la littérature n'est pas qu'une affaire de langue et cesser de se cloisonner derrière une identité unique et limitée qui passe par une nationalité, une langue et une littérature. Cette conception de la littérature qui est tout à fait valable dans une perspective historique l'est, peut-être, moins aujourd'hui, compte tenu des grands mouvements de population dont est témoin le XXI^e siècle.

Pourquoi ne pas adopter une perspective encore plus globalisante, digne de l'ère numérique ? Au lieu d'avoir plusieurs littératures, on pourrait imaginer qu'il n'y ait que la Littérature, une littérature du monde, dans laquelle les sous-catégories nationales pourraient exister. Mieux encore, imaginons un instant que les œuvres ne soient pas soumises aux contraintes physiques (territoriales et linguistiques) et qu'elles puissent être répertoriées dans une gigantesque base de données qui permettrait tous les recoupements. En quelques clics, on pourrait classer et regrouper les œuvres par langue, par périodes, par genre, par pays, etc. Cette absence de classement prédéterminant permettrait toutes les possibilités de classement.

Cela n'est pas sans rappeler l'attitude prônée par Amin Maalouf dans son essai *Les Identités meurtrières* (1998). Selon lui,

chacun d'entre nous devrait être encouragé à assumer sa propre diversité, à concevoir son identité comme étant la somme de ses diverses appartenances, au lieu de se confondre avec une seule, érigée en appartenance suprême, et en instrument d'exclusion, parfois en instrument de guerre⁷.

Qu'elles soient linguistiques, nationales, religieuses, territoriales ou autre, l'auteur encourage les individus à embrasser les différentes appartenances qui les constituent et à concevoir les êtres humains comme des membres de la « tribu planétaire ».

En adoptant cette attitude, on pourrait ainsi accéder au décroisement des littératures, à une ouverture sur l'autre et sur le reste du monde qui permette de transcender les frontières physiques. Car, malgré les tensions liées à la porosité et à la mobilité des frontières, cette ouverture rend le dialogue possible. Le dialogue entre les œuvres et entre les diverses appartenances prend, donc, la forme de la fiction, fiction empreinte de vérité.

Comme l'analyse des œuvres de Laferrière, Chen, Murakami et de plusieurs autres auteurs le suggère, l'imaginaire est peut-être plus universel qu'on ne le croit.

⁷ Amin Maalouf, *Les Identités meurtrières*, Paris, Éditions Grasset et Fasquelle, 1998, p. 183.

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FOR A NEW LITERARY HISTORY, FROM THE LOCAL TO THE
UNIVERSAL: THE MIGRANT LITERATURE*(Abstract)*

In the context of a reflection on literary history, the concept of nationality is to be redefined, especially in so-called “terre d’accueil” [“welcoming lands for refugees/emigrants”]. The opening of borders, alongside globalization are changing and diversifying the cultural landscape of Quebec. Despite the tensions linked to the flexibility and the mobility of borders, this openness makes possible the dialogue between works and between various affiliations. Contemporary stories written in Quebec by foreign writers such as Ying Chen and Dany Laferrière are thus helping to rewrite Quebec’s literary history. By emphasizing great universal themes such as the clash of cultures, intergenerational conflicts, life and death, they promote the decompartmentalization and openness of the world.

Keywords: “terre d’accueil”, migrant literature, globalization, Quebec’s literary history, the clash of cultures.

PENTRU O NOUĂ ISTORIE LITERARĂ, DE LA LOCAL LA UNIVERSAL:
LITERATURA MIGRANTĂ*(Rezumat)*

În contextul unei reflecții asupra istoriei literare, conceptul de naționalitate se cere redefinit, mai ales în așa-numitele „terre d’accueil” [„teritorii ospitaliere cu refugiații/emigranții”]. Deschiderea frontierelor, alături de fenomenul globalizării modifică și diversifică câmpul cultural din Quebec. În ciuda tensiunilor legate de flexibilitatea și mobilitatea frontierelor, această deschidere face posibil dialogul dintre opere și dintre diversele lor afilieri. Așadar, scrierile contemporane din Quebec ale unor autori precum Ying Chen sau Dany Laferrière participă la rescrierea istoriei literare a Quebecului. Reliefând marile teme universale precum ciocnirea culturilor, conflictele intergeneraționale, viața și moartea, ele promovează decompartmentarea și deschiderea lumii.

Keywords: “terre d’accueil”, literatură migrantă, globalizare, istoria literară a Quebecului, ciocnirea culturilor.

DANIELA SPINA

**WRITING NATIONAL HISTORY WITHOUT A NATION:
THE CASE OF INDO-PORTUGUESE LITERARY
HISTORY¹**

Goa is a former colony of the long-lasting Portuguese Empire, annexed by India in 1961. After about 450 years of colonial rule, the application of the national model can already be detected in the very first attempts of writing its literary history. Although Goa has never had the political form of a nation, nor is its Portuguese literature actually a concrete literary system, the attempts of writing literary history were and still are presented in such a way that they idealize Indo-Portuguese literature as a national literary system. Even if Indo-Portuguese literature was never considered as national literature, this doesn't mean that its actors and readers never felt a sense of belonging to their land or didn't embrace any sort of cultural identity. On the contrary, it can be argued that Indo-Portuguese literature was the written expression of a small Catholic community among other diverse communities such as the Hindu and the Muslim ones. This community, who was speaking and writing in Portuguese despite being a minority, represented the most privileged castes of the Goan society during the years of Portuguese rule. Therefore, this Catholic community had to reimagine itself as a nation able to write its own literary history and, in some cases, to stand against the colonial power.

By means of a review of Indo-Portuguese literary historiography, the purpose of this article is to analyse this *corpus* for what Linda Hutcheon² states about the persisting attraction of the national model in literary history. In particular, I am interested in ascertaining the many shapes in which the national element appears in the historiography of this literature and how these shapes have changed over time. In this paper, Indo-Portuguese literary historiography is considered as the object of study and not just a one-time reference. This means that the texts selected are treated as active and autonomous sources, with their own epistemological value. Finally, some of the literary histories that I study are not just books, compendiums or dictionaries of literature. The *corpus* also comprises newspaper articles and essays published in literary and cultural reviews. This choice of incorporating in the *corpus* of the analysis not just literary history books is due to the very peculiarity of Indo-Portuguese literature and to the long periods of censorship in

¹ This work is part of my Ph.D. research in Comparative Studies, funded by FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia.

² Linda Hutcheon, "Rethinking the National Model", in Linda Hutcheon and Mario J. Valdés (eds.), *Rethinking Literary History: A Dialogue on Theory*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 3-50.

Portuguese India, a historical contingency that didn't allow a real book industry to develop in Goa³. Hence, both creative and scientific literature developed irregularly. This historical aspect can also be taken into account when we study texts of literary history. If it is common to find a novel or a collection of tales in the pages of a Goan newspaper, the same holds true for the case of literary history texts.

1. The persistence of the national model and the case of Indo-Portuguese literary history

In different stages of the 20th century, the lack of scientific objectivity has been one of the most argued motivations for determining the *state of crisis* of literary history. To a greater extent, the reason why its epistemological value has been branded as *inconsistent* was due to the fact that literary history, both as a field of study and as a textual genre, was born in 18th century Europe in order to legitimize the founding narratives of the nation state as the new dominant socio-political construct. Inside the theoretical frame of Postcolonial Studies, the standards of the national model of literary history have been defined as incompatible with the idea of rewriting history from the perspective of the colonized subject. In this sense, it can be argued that literary history has been stigmatized as *European* and *colonial* epistemology by many scholars, such as Walter Mignolo⁴ and Sheldon Pollock⁵. Take, for instance, Walter Mignolo's statement that the national model of literary history is "a particular historical version of the colonial model"⁶, seen as an epistemic imposition that persists even after the decolonization process. In his opinion, in those cultural contexts affected by a colonial past, in order that their epistemic value be considered as attested, every kind of non-Western cultural categories "have to become similar and assimilated to Western conceptualizations of cultural practices and social organization"⁷. That is what Mignolo defines as *colonial difference*, i.e. the peculiarity that non-Western knowledge was built on. He also underlines that in the case of literary history the *colonial difference* is even more evident, since the national narratives of this new countries produced a

³ See Vimala Devi and Manuel de Seabra, *A Literatura Indo-portuguesa [The Indo-Portuguese Literature]*, Lisbon, Junta das Investigações do Ultramar, 1971; Sandra Lobo, "Línguas, Culturas Literárias e Culturas Políticas na Modernidade Goesa" ["Languages, Literary Cultures and Political Cultures in Goan Modernity"], *Via Atlântica*, 2016, 30, pp. 45-63.

⁴ Walter Mignolo, "Rethinking the Colonial Model", in Linda Hutcheon and Mario J. Valdés (eds.), *Rethinking Literary History*, pp. 155-193.

⁵ Sheldon Pollock, "Introduction", in Sheldon Pollock (ed.), *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2003, pp. 1-38.

⁶ Walter Mignolo, "Rethinking the Colonial Model", p. 160.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

political discourse very similar to the one that permitted their own subjugation, thus allowing a sort of internal colonialism.

Another interesting position about the European and colonial nature of literary history has been presented by the Sanskrit scholar Sheldon Pollock. In his book *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia* (2003), he states that, in the case of the Indian subcontinent literatures, new and non-narrative paradigms of literary history are required. Given the fact that the first Indian literary histories were written by European orientalists in the 19th century, the consequently shaped idea of Indian literary history presents an image of this literature looking unified, written in one single language, namely, the Sanskrit, an old language at the centre of the orientalists' interests at that time. This is the reason why, according to Sheldon Pollock, most of the Indian literary histories written between the 19th and the 20th century paid attention largely to Pali and Prakrit literatures, languages that are closer to the Sanskrit. After the Partition of Pakistan in 1947 and, very importantly, after the setting up of the Sahitya Akademi of India in 1954, this idea of one great monolingual literature was substituted by the idea of a single literature written in many languages. For Pollock, this choice of promoting Indian literature as one yet multilingual was a sort of strategy aimed at placing all literary production under the control of the new Hindu nation state. The author writing in a certain language is not aware of the work of his/her colleagues writing in different ones, which thus prevents the creation of a common literary consciousness, with the nation state having full discretion over what is apt to be promoted and legitimized as national literature⁸. Pollock essentially affirms that, in such a way, the concept of nation acts in the same way as that of literary history, linking a space to one literature and one narration, without querying whether it is literature that determines the space or whether it is the space that creates the conditions under which literature is produced⁹.

The aforementioned national structure of literary history was not only criticized in the field of the Postcolonial Studies, but it also reveals different problems related to the linear and teleological development of literary evolution, mainly in European and American literary histories. Consequently, this has led to a broader problematization of various concepts such as time, period and progress in literature, particularly based on evolutionary conceptions of history¹⁰. In the course of the 20th century, literary history became a real epistemological problem to be solved. For instance, in the 1960s, although they belonged to different theoretical schools – the first to New Criticism and the second to Reception Theory –, René

⁸ Sheldon Pollock, "Introduction", p. 10.

⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 10-11.

¹⁰ See René Wellek, *Conceitos de crítica*. Translated by Óscar Mendes, São Paulo, Cultrix, 1963; Hans Robert Jauss, *A História da Literatura como Provocação à Teoria Literária*. Translated by Sérgio Tellaroli, São Paulo, Ática, 1st edition, 1970; David Perkins, *Is Literary History Possible?*, Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.

Wellek in the USA and Hans Robert Jauss in Germany agreed on the fact that the age of the narrative model of literary history was definitely over. They argued that this model was a reflection of the triumph of the national spirit based on a teleological evolution of literature, followed by the rise of the nation. In that way, they asked for new methodological and theoretical approaches to literary history, closer to literary criticism and to the reader reception issues. Other critics followed in the 1990s. Among them was David Perkins' essay *Is Literary History Possible?* (1992), which essentially transformed this epistemological problem into an ontological one, not only by questioning the impossibility of discussing about literary history from inside a national and dominant narrative frame, but also by challenging literary history's own possibility of existence. In Perkins' essay, the teleological form of literary history is not put solely in historical terms, but also in imaginative and emotional ones. For Perkins, various literary forms in narrative literary history are like heroes following a linear path – the chronological periodisation of the literary evolution – towards their own destiny, symbolized by their victory or loss, by the rise and fall of a literary genre, current or author. Therefore, it can be argued that the relation between literary history and its reader is, above all, an empathetic relation. This can be the case of a national literary history, in which the reader is invited to recognise him/ herself in the collective narration of a national history.

Despite all these critics, some scholars still argue that there is still a certain attraction for the narrative and national model, even in the 21st century, which leads me to think about the aforementioned problem of teleology as a congenital defect of literary history and, accordingly, of the national model as an irreplaceable contingency. The work of researchers such as Linda Hutcheon (2002) has shown that the signifier of the *national* does not refer only to national identities or to a particular space understood as existing inside some geographical borders, but that it denotes, above all, a way of conceiving literature and a way of writing its history. According to Linda Hutcheon

Interestingly, the new literary histories often adopt the exact developmental, teleological narrative model used by nation-states: that is, they too assume an implicitly natural process at work which is shaped by purpose and design, wherein literature is directly related to the specific “end” or *telos* of cultural legitimation¹¹.

In other words, the literatures that were excluded by this national model unexpectedly opt for the same structure and parameters. Feminist literatures, gay and queer literatures, diasporic literatures, postcolonial literatures are just a few of the many examples provided by Hutcheon, who justifies the choice of the national model in accordance with the needs and the collective agendas of those communities and subcultural groups, thus associating such a choice with a certain type of political interventionism. In fact, what Hutcheon advocates is that the

¹¹ Linda Hutcheon, “Rethinking the National Model”, p. 5.

continuous attraction to the national model can be explained by the need to look at the foundational moment of specific literatures and afterwards, starting from that point, to trace a utopian, linear and interventionist path that would be able to contribute to the legitimation of those literatures and/or the ideologies that might be hidden behind them.

Speaking about Indo-Portuguese literature, the purpose of this paper is to show how the national model worked and still works in the case of the writing – and rewriting – of Indo-Portuguese literary history. However, before getting to the heart of my argument, it is necessary to provide some historical and contextual information to those readers that could be unfamiliar with this literature:

- Goa, together with Daman and Diu, have formed the *Estado da Índia Portuguesa* (State of Portuguese India) since 1556. Those lands were liberated by the Indian Union army in 1961, after a war initiated by the Goan *freedom fighters*;

- to this day there is no Portuguese-language literary system in Goa. This is because the Portuguese language was eradicated in a long institutional process which began in 1962, just after the end of colonialism. As a response to that, the local authorities prioritised the promotion of the local language, Konkani. The latter was repressed during the Portuguese rule;

- this literature can be called Indo-Portuguese literature or Goan literature in Portuguese. The two terms are sometimes used as synonyms and can be found with two distinct meanings. Usually, the usage of those different terms changes in accordance with the theoretical approach employed. Currently, many scholars applying a Postcolonial Studies perspective argue that the name “Goan literature in Portuguese” can avoid the image of subordination to the colonisers’ culture. Contrariwise, other scholars state that the connotation Indo-Portuguese literature can be considered more accurate, since this literature was essentially produced by authors who were part of the Catholic community. In addition, most of the authors representing this literature defined themselves as Indo-Portuguese writers. For the purposes of this article, the two terms will be used as synonyms, explaining, case by case, why Goan literary historians used one terminology or another in their literary histories.

3. Goan and Indo-Portuguese literary history between the 19th and the 20th century

The first text under scrutiny is entitled “Duas Palavras sobre o Progresso Literário em Goa” [“Two Words on Literary Progress in Goa”]¹², by the Brahmin intellectual Jacinto Caetano Barreto Miranda. The text was published in Lisbon in the *Revista Contemporânea de Portugal e Brasil* [*Contemporary Review of Portugal and Brazil*], but was written in Margão (Salcete, South Goa) on 20th December 1864. The author of this essay intends to explore the idea of literary

¹² All the translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

progress in the Goan landscape, founding his analysis on the assessment of different moments in the colonial history of Goa. As Sandra Lobo¹³ points out, the publication of this essay in a Portuguese magazine needs to be contextualized within the transnational framework in which Goan modernity has emerged. In this context, we have not only to consider the fruitful contribution of many Goan intellectuals living abroad, but also the fact that the Portuguese Liberal Revolution and the constitutional laws (1820-1821) had a considerable influence on the political and cultural life of the colony and, above all, on the struggle of the local elites, the Catholic Brahmin and Chardó, in their quest for power. It is important to underline that those elites took advantage of the periodical press for propagandistic aims. The press was established in Goa in 1822, after 67 years of censorship (1754-1821). It was first under the colonial administration of the *Imprensa Nacional* and later run by locals of both Catholic elite groups.

Barreto Miranda traced the evolutionary path of this press that essentially marks the beginning of the history of literature in Goa. The structure of the article follows a linear path and the author uses a narrative style of writing. The foundational moment is the creation of seminaries and colleges at the time of the first Jesuit evangelisation campaigns in the 16th century; the peak moment is signaled by the end of press censorship in 1821, which is followed by a remarkable boom in periodical publications. For Miranda, literary progress plays an important part in a broader process, reminding us that literary progress can be initiated by just one group of engaged men in a position to influence the political and cultural emancipation of their land. Specifically, Miranda was referring to the Brahmin elite itself and to the action of Bernardo Francisco da Costa, the founder of the first private printing press in Goa, and to the publication of *O Ultramar* [*The Overseas*], the first newspaper ever printed there in 1859. For Barreto Miranda, the foundation of *O Ultramar* represents the apogee of literary progress in Goa, and Bernardo Francisco da Costa embodies a kind of messianic figure, equipped with the right skills to lead his land to successful emancipation. He emphasises the fact that the Brahmin newspaper can be seen as “the touchstone”, “the patriarch of the newspapers of Goa”, “the temple”, “the forum”¹⁴. Its founder is the one who “figured out that some of the groundwork of progress in the country lay in the introduction of the press, and once he returned to his country, he did not rest until he saw his printing press set up”¹⁵.

Before evoking the figure of Bernardo Francisco da Costa, who was the representative of Goa, Daman and Diu in the *Cortes* (Portuguese Congress), Barreto Miranda writes about the “difficulties aimed at stifling the yell of our

¹³ Sandra Lobo, “Línguas, Culturas Literárias e Culturas Políticas”.

¹⁴ Jacinto Caetano Barreto Miranda, “Duas Palavras sobre Progresso Literário em Goa” [“Two Words on Literary Progress in Goa”], *Revista Contemporanea de Portugal e Brasil*, 1864, 11, p. 590.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 589.

aspirations”¹⁶, thus referring to the ban of the Imprensa Nacional on literary production, despite the end of the censorship era. The *telos* of this historiographical text can be linked to the assertion that the Catholic Brahmin community can be seen as a bearer of liberal ideals suitable for bringing Goa to a state of political and cultural autonomy. So, in Barreto Miranda’s essay, the values supported by the national narrative are substituted by the ones of the Brahmin elite, maintaining the narrative structure of a national literary history and the idea of literary evolution conveyed by the image of literary progress.

The second text presented here is a book published in Bombay in 1926, entitled *Literatura Indo-Portuguesa: Figuras e Factos* [*Indo-Portuguese Literature: Figures and Facts*]. It was written by Vicente de Bragança Cunha, a Goan intellectual and journalist interested in politics, member of the Chardó elite and brother of Tristão de Bragança Cunha, a committed nationalist and one of the most active personalities of the Goan anticolonialist movement of Marxist orientation. In spite of his family links, Vicente de Bragança Cunha had a very different political position from his brother’s. This can be traced in his writings, which exhibit great sympathy for the Portuguese presence in Goa and, at the same time, great esteem for the Portuguese monarchy, abolished in 1910. During the Republican struggle in Portugal, Bragança Cunha published various articles in different English magazines and newspapers, reporting to the English audience on the political situation in the metropole. In those articles, one can see some of his political positions later reaffirmed in his literary history, such as the belief in the existence of a large Indo-Portuguese nation, in which the Indian enclave would be only an extension of Portugal.

Vicente’s literary history was first published in the newspaper *A Índia Portuguesa* [*The Portuguese India*], a journal affiliated with the Chardó elite, whose director he was between 1919 and 1922. The chapters that make this literary history were taken from articles published between April and June 1919, in a column entitled “Literatura Indo-Portuguesa” [“Indo-Portuguese Literature”]. On comparing the various editions of the column with the unified edition of 1926, one can note that the author managed a direct “cut and paste” operation: he did not reproduce the articles in the order of publication in the newspaper, but devised a new narrative plot in which they followed a linear order. Along with this makeover, the choice of collecting and publishing the unified book in 1926 is probably due to Vicente’s awareness of the need to edit a Goan literary history. He probably knew that the format of a literary history book could lend more legitimacy to the ideas contained in his articles, allowing the use of his book even in schools or at university. Therefore, in this case, the narrative structure of a literary history seems to support the idea of an Indo-Portuguese national literature.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 589.

However, it can be noted that when Vicente is using the term “Indo-Portuguese”, he refers to a sort of identity-pound space, where the culture of the metropole meets the culture of the colony. In his opinion, poets, novelists, journalists and historians have a civil obligation and a moral duty to nourish the Portuguese culture and preserve it as common heritage. For instance, the first chapter of the book is dedicated to the figure of Moniz Barreto, an intellectual born in Goa, in a family of *descendentes*¹⁷. He emigrated to Portugal as an adolescent and is considered to be the originator of Portuguese literary criticism. The chapter opens with the following sentence: “Portuguese traditions were never lost in India”¹⁸. This statement leads the narrative plot of the literary history book. In each chapter of this particular book Vicente stresses the importance of keeping the Portuguese legacy of Goa alive. For Bragança Cunha, Moniz Barreto embodies the right attitude allowing the culture of the metropole to be embraced by Goans.

The second chapter of Vicente’s book is dedicated to Indianist poetry. In this chapter, the reader can understand how the Indian component that broadly characterizes the work of that generation of poets influenced by Vedic culture is subordinated to the Portuguese element. Bragança Cunha writes about the legacy of pre-Lusitanian civilizations and their influence on the development of those poets and, at the same time, he tries to explain their attraction to it. The latter is being characterized as “hereditary forces of which they are not fully aware”¹⁹, therefore implying the existence of some irrational meanings justified by ethnic arguments. On the contrary, the heritage of the metropole is constructed on real values addressed by Portuguese historiography, as mentioned in the fifth chapter of the book.

In the light of the above, the national model is evident not only in the narrative structure, but primarily in the very idea of Indo-Portuguese national literature and its politicisation, used as a broader apparatus that affirms a specific cultural identity. The Chardó elite, to which Bragança Cunha belonged, was always closer to the colonial power, this closeness being a strategy to face the strength of the Brahmin elite (Lobo 2013). In fact, although there is no fully justified acclamation for the Chardó caste in the book, there are many attacks against members and historical figures of the Brahmin, whose work Vicente criticises. For example, the Brahmin Bernardo Francisco da Costa, overpraised in Jacinto Caetano Barreto Miranda’s essay, is disapproved of by Vicente de Bragança Cunha in his book.

¹⁷ The social group of *descendentes* was a Goan elite comprising families of direct descendants from the Portuguese settlers.

¹⁸ Vicente de Bragança Cunha, *Literatura Indo-portuguesa: Figuras e Factos* [*Indo-Portuguese Literature: Figures and Facts*], Bombay, author’s edition, 1926, p. 1.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

4. *Literary history in the 20th century and after colonialism*

The third text analysed is *Esboço da História da Literatura Indo-Portuguesa* [*An Outline of the History of Indo-Portuguese Literature*], a book written by Father Filinto Cristo Dias in 1963. Filinto Cristo Dias was a professor of Portuguese language and literature at the Seminary of Our Lady of Saligão in North Goa. He wrote his literary history both for pedagogical purposes and out of his own intellectual interest. Dias is one of the most vehement promoters of a local, autonomous and Portuguese-written literature, and can be considered among the defenders of this language at one of its most critical moments, i.e. after 1961. This literary history can be considered the first to work with a clearer subdivision into periods and literary genres and the first to provide a definition of the concept of Indo-Portuguese literary history. As such, it aims to establish and comply with criteria of inclusion and exclusion. This book presents a linear narrative and storyline, in which language and literature are exclusively associated with the expression of the unique cultural identity that characterises the Indo-Portuguese community. Thus, the idea of literary history present in this book can be seen as an heir to the 19th century romantic tradition, in which the teleological meaning points to the statement of one fact: the indispensability of the Portuguese legacy for the survival of an intellectual class among the Catholic Goans. In this case, the nation is represented by the whole Catholic Indo-Portuguese community.

According to Filinto Cristo Dias

the recording and study of all these creations belong to the History of the Indo-Portuguese Literature that can be defined as a review and critique of all the works in verse and prose written by the Goans who used Portuguese to express their ideas and feelings²⁰.

The definition of the concept of Indo-Portuguese literary history probably comes from the author's need to contextualize his book within a specific scientific field. Dias knew that Goan literature written in Portuguese was something on the verge of extinction and writing a canonical literary history could therefore be a way to avoid or delay that process of eradication.

Esboço da História da Literatura Indo-Portuguesa wasn't fully edited before 1963, but it was published in different articles in the *Boletim Eclesiástico da Arquidiocese de Goa* [*Ecclesiastical Bulletin of the Archdiocese of Goa*] from 1957 to 1963. Apparently, the structure of the book shows that it was originally conceived as a volume from the beginning. For instance, by comparing the first "Nota Preambular" ["Preliminary Note"], published in the *Boletim* n° 6 in 1957, and the "Advertência Preambular" ["Preliminary Warning"] published in the

²⁰ Filinto Cristo Dias, *Esboço da História da Literatura Indo-portuguesa* [*An Outline of the History of Indo-Portuguese Literature*], Bastorá, Tipografia Rangel, 1963, p. 3.

unified edition of 1963, we notice that the two texts present important differences, due to the political changes that took place in Goa after 1961. Accordingly, by comparing the two introductions, a potential reader might conceive of two different meanings of the story of this literary history: one more closely related to its process of writing and the other more closely related to the author's attempt to publish his work as a single volume. Nevertheless, Filinto Cristo Dias' literary history is marked by a romantic orientation. He describes the Portuguese language as the language chosen by Goans to express their feelings. Thus, he often uses the verb *pertencer* (belong) and the noun *pertença* (belonging) to refer to the relation between authors, language and literature. That is undoubtedly a request for Goans to reflect on the future of the Portuguese language in Goa, remembering their ties with Portuguese culture before it is too late.

The fourth text presented is entitled *A Literatura Indo-portuguesa* [*The Indo-Portuguese Literature*]. It was written by the Goan writer Vimala Devi and her husband, the Portuguese writer Manuel de Seabra. This literary history was published in Lisbon in 1971 and was financed by the Junta das Investigações do Ultramar (Overseas Investigations Board), an institution conducting scientific research in the colonies. Although 1971 marks the 10th anniversary of the annexation of Goa by the Indian Union, the book reproduces the rhetoric of assimilationist politics propagated by the Portuguese Empire during its last twenty years. In particular, the argument on which this literary history has been written reminds the Luso-tropicalism theory developed by the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre (1953). The latter advocates for a *soft* interpretation of Portuguese colonialism based on racial miscegenation. In this sense, Vimala Devi and Manuel de Seabra basically rely on the rhetoric of Luso-tropicalism in order to justify the very idea of a hybrid literature testifying for four centuries of Portuguese philanthropic actions and initiatives in the East. Despite the closeness of this position to colonial ideology, it determines the teleological mark of this work, published during the Colonial War in Africa (1961-1974). Still, the book is considered a complete repository of bibliographical information on the Goan literature, and it is also the first book to have problematised this literature using the methodological approach of literary criticism. It is very likely that the adherence to Luso-tropicalism was due to the fact that the research had been funded by a colonial institution.

Furthermore, the book is divided according to literary genres and the periodisation is internal to the chapters. This means that each chapter narrates the history of one genre in the literature of Goa. However, there are a few chapters at the beginning of the book that propose a general introduction to the history of this literature, showing how the Portuguese started to write about Goa and how the Goans started to write in Portuguese. According to the two authors, Indo-Portuguese literature starts with the Discoveries and the beginning of Catholic evangelisation. At the end of the book, Vimala Devi and Manuel de Seabra dedicate the last chapter to Indo-Portuguese poetry, which is considered the highest

expression of Goan genius and the best example of cultural and literary hybridity. In canonical and teleological literary histories, the genre that is most representative of the literature, or of the community or identity behind it is usually discussed at the end of the book, as it generally means the end of the evolution of that literature and the most perfect manifestation that particular literature could showcase. Taking into account the institutional support for the book, the sophisticated Goan poetry written in Portuguese can be considered an ideal case that reminds the readers how Indo-Portuguese literature can be interpreted as the result of the fusion between the metropole and its colony. Consequently, this stance presents and enhances a sort of humanitarian attitude displayed by the Portuguese. Therefore, if a reader of this literary history acknowledges the political discourse it carries, he/she might be able to understand that the idea of nation here is very similar to that of Vicente de Bragança Cunha's Indo-Portuguese national literature. However, bearing in mind the tragic conditions to which Portuguese culture and language were subjected in Goa after 1961, Vimala Devi and Manuel de Seabra declare in the afterword of the book that their hopes for this literature not disappearing completely lie with the diasporic writers in Portugal. Regardless of the future of Portuguese language in Goa, Indo-Portuguese literature represents, for the two authors, something concrete that continues to exist through the work of Goan authors who have emigrated to Portugal, no matter what their political positions may be. At the end of the book, it seems that Goan literature is already a nation, a literary community of which Devi and Seabra, as writers and critics, are part.

Finally, as David Perkins²¹ stated in his essay, the path travelled by literature in a national and narrative literary history is very similar to the path of the hero passing through different stages, experiencing victories and losses. Similarly, Indo-Portuguese literature in Devi and Seabra's book goes on a path of glory and falls, experiencing total rejection at the end of its history.

As final examples, I would like to mention two more recent contributions to Goan literary history, both written outside Goa. The first book is entitled *Literatura Goesa em Português nos Séculos XIX e XX: Perspetivas Pós-coloniais e Revisão Crítica* [*Goan Literature in Portuguese in the 19th and 20th Century: Post-colonial Perspectives and a Critical Review*] written in 2012 by the Portuguese researcher Joana Passos. The second one is a book chapter entitled "A História da Literatura Goesa de Língua Portuguesa. Uma Questão de Designação" ["The History of Goan Literature in Portuguese. A Question of Naming"], written in 2014 by Hélder Garmes and Paul Melo e Castro, two researchers working on the *Pensando Goa* (Thinking Goa) project at the University of São Paulo (Brazil). The first is a literary history and the second one is a critical essay about rewriting Goan literary history. Both texts share the theoretical approach of Postcolonial Studies and agree with the idea that Goan literary history essentially covers only the 19th

²¹ David Perkins, *Is Literary History Possible?*

and 20th century. That period determines the departure point that marks the separation from Portuguese culture and initiates the original evolution of Goan literature. Their proposals follow different criteria of inclusion, according to which all previous literary production must be excluded, since it belongs to the coloniser's representation sphere. Significantly, the two texts also call for a radical change of the name "Indo-Portuguese literature" into "Goan literature in Portuguese" or "Goan literature of Portuguese expression", since the latter would be less dependent on Portuguese culture.

It also makes this literature similar to other literatures written in the same language, such as the African literatures of Portuguese expression, for example. This group of literatures is often approached using the theory of "the macrosystem of national literatures in Portuguese"²², that is mostly applied to the Brazilian and Lusophone African Literatures. Hélder Garmes and Paul Melo e Castro²³ urge that Goan literary history should be studied from within the same comparative theoretical frame, since it shares those literatures' past of colonialism and subordination to the coloniser's culture. The main problematic issue of the "macrosystem of national literatures in Portuguese" is that those literatures are considered to be national ones. Therefore, they are expression of national feelings and national literary communities. This doesn't apply in the case of Indo-Portuguese literature, since it only represents a Catholic minority, no matter how powerful. In other words, here the idea of *nation* is replaced by that of *community of literatures* and the historiographic criteria proposed are not so different from those that have caused the epistemological crisis of literary history: origin, inclusion and exclusion criteria, evolution, direction and purpose – the last one better expressed by *telos*. Thus, the aim of this historiographical revision is an application of the national model of literary history, where nation is replaced by the idea of community of Lusophone literatures.

Conclusions

Despite the national turn to new proposals of rewriting Indo-Portuguese literary history, the work of these scholars brings to light a literature that has fallen into oblivion after the 1970s. Therefore, we can link their approach to the issue of

²² Benjamin Abdala Junior, *De Vão e Ilhas: Literatura e Comunitarismos [Flights and Islands: Literature and Communitarianism]*, São Paulo, Ateliê Editorial, 2003; Benjamin Abdala Junior, *Literatura, História e Política: Literaturas de Língua Portuguesa no Século XX [Literature, History, and Politics. The Literatures in Portuguese Language in the 20th Century]*, São Paulo, Ateliê Editorial, 2007.

²³ Helder Garmes and Paul Melo e Castro, "A História da Literatura Goesa de Língua Portuguesa. Uma Questão de Designação" ["The History of Goan Literature in Portuguese. A Question of Naming"], in Benjamin Abdala Junior (ed.), *Estudos Comparados. Teoria, Crítica e Metodologia [Comparative Studies. Theory, Literary Critique, and Methodology]*, São Paulo, Ateliê Editorial, 2014, pp. 211-242.

literary emergence. Arguably, Linda Hutcheon's thought about the preference for the narrative and national model is also applicable to the case of the literary history of Goa and by extension to the comparative studies of literary histories of Portuguese expression. As Hutcheon says,

Again, despite the dangers, the adoption of this model may signal neither historical-theoretical naiveté nor conservative nostalgia on the part of postcolonial literary historians. Instead, it may be a canny borrowing of the structural power of that earlier national(ist) narrative of a history of progress, but now used to new but equally political interventionist ends. At the risk of generalizing, perhaps it is worth noting that the conditions that determine national identity may have not changed quite as much over the centuries as we would like to think. It may also be a question of using the most effective model to compete with the dominant one²⁴.

In this way, a reasonable question is raised about legitimisation and *literary emergence* that prompts literary historians to still opt for the national model. At a deeper level, if scholars try to rewrite Indo-Portuguese literary history by choosing the national model, they could underestimate most of the problems that characterize this specific type of literature, such as the absence of continuity and the abrupt interruption it suffered after 1961. In this light, the historian Sandra Lobo²⁵ proposes substituting the term Goan literature with *Goan literary cultures*. Consequently, she emphasizes the plurality of different voices and languages that make up Goan history, paying more attention to the relations and interconnections between cultural expressions that were eclipsed by the colonial regime. Similarly, the growing theoretical field of Comparative Literary History replaces the concept of history of literature with that of *history of literary cultures*, a concept that refers to a spatial understanding of literary history, not to one solely based on the notions of time, period and evolution. This new turn in scientific inquiry could allow a deeper and more critical reflection on the possibility of rewriting a new version of literary history that takes more organically into account all the languages in which Goans wrote and still write, such as Konkani, Maratha, English and, of course, Portuguese. This might assist literary history in overcoming and moving beyond a colonial past without erasing the marks of its brutality.

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²⁴ Linda Hutcheon, "Rethinking the National Model", p. 15.

²⁵ Sandra Lobo, "Línguas, Culturas Literárias e Culturas Políticas".

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**WRITING NATIONAL HISTORY WITHOUT A NATION: THE CASE OF INDO-
PORTUGUESE LITERARY HISTORY**
(Abstract)

This article aims to make a retrospective enquiry into the Indo-Portuguese literary history by looking at the particular part of the literature that was written by the Catholic community of Goa during the Portuguese rule in India. Although Indo-Portuguese literature does not represent national identity or national history, this article shows the way in which a national and narrative model has been followed by most of the authors writing about the literary history of Goa. It can be seen that concepts such as

elite, caste and *community* substitute the concept of nation, but without, in fact, replacing the ideological and theoretical basis on which the national model of literary history was conceived in the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe. According to Linda Hutcheon (2002), the national and narrative type of literary history is also preferred even by Postcolonial literatures and by all those literatures that were excluded from the narratives of the Nation-State, referring to this choice as a political one. This theoretical frame will be the basis on which I built my argument.

Keywords: Indo-Portuguese literary history, Goa, national and narrative model, Postcolonial literatures, elite, caste, community, Portuguese colonialism.

**SCRIIND ISTORIA NAȚIONALĂ ÎN ABSENȚA NAȚIUNII: CAZUL ISTORIEI
LITERARE INDO-PORTUGHEZE
(Rezumat)**

Lucrarea propune o revizitare a istoriei literare indo-portugheze prin focalizarea pe literatura scrisă de comunitatea catolică din Goa în timpul colonizării portugheze a Indiei. Cu toate că literatura indo-portugheză nu reflectă o identitate sau o istorie națională, acest articol dezvăluie că tocmai modelul național și narativ-teleologic a fost cel urmat de autorii care au scris despre istoria literară a Goa. Concepte precum *elită*, *castă* ori *comunitate* au înlocuit ideea de națiune, însă baza ideologică și teoretică a rămas tot scenariul istoriografic național instituit în Europa secolelor XVIII și XIX. Potrivit Lindei Hutcheon (2002), modelul național și narativ-teleologic al istoriei literare a fost preferat chiar și de literaturile postcoloniale ori de acelea care nu au putut avea acces la narațiunile identitare ale statului-național. Respectiva opțiune – căreia Hutcheon îi denunță motivațiile politice – constituie cadrul teoretic în care sunt dezvoltate argumentele acestui articol.

Cuvinte-cheie: istorie literară indo-portugheză, Goa, modelul național și narativ, literaturi postcoloniale, elită, castă, comunitate, colonialism portughez.

ISIDORE DE SEVILLE : LES PREMISSES D'UNE HISTOIRE DE LA LITTÉRATURE AVANT LA LETTRE ?

Lector non nostra leget, sed veterum releget, « le lecteur ne lira pas nos écrits, il relira les écrits de vieux auteurs »¹. C'est une affirmation d'Isidore de Séville qui exprime parfaitement son statut de transmetteur de la culture antique – chrétienne et païenne –, périclitée pendant la période trouble de la décadence de l'empire romain. Située à une époque charnière entre l'Antiquité finissante et la naissance du Moyen Âge, la vaste œuvre théologique, encyclopédique, historique et grammaticale de l'inlassable évêque sévillan constitue, pour la majorité des disciplines de la pensée, un point incontournable dans l'analyse de la continuité entre les deux époques. Est-ce que la réflexion sur la littérature et sur son histoire représente une préoccupation pour cet érudit qui, éduqué par l'étude de la *grammatica* – la discipline pilote de son temps – possédait au plus haut degré la conscience de l'importance des *auctores* comme source de toute autorité intellectuelle ? Les textes qui permettent la formulation d'une réponse à cette question sont le traité d'Isidore *De viris illustribus* et certains chapitres de son encyclopédie *Etymologiae sive Origines*.

La date d'élaboration du petit traité isidorien sur les hommes illustres a été longuement débattue. Elle a été située par Carmen Codoñer² entre 615-618 environ. José Carlos Martín propose une date plus reculée – approximativement, entre 604-608³ – en considérant qu'il s'agit d'une des œuvres les plus anciennes d'Isidore. De toute façon, la rédaction de ce livre est antérieure au *magnum opus* encyclopédique commencé avant 621 et laissé inachevé à la mort de l'auteur, en 636⁴.

Le *De viris illustribus* présente, sous la forme d'un catalogue en trente-trois chapitres, autant d'auteurs chrétiens dont le premier, Osius évêque de Cordoue, a vécu dans la première moitié du IV^e siècle et le dernier, Maxime évêque de Saragosse, est mort en 619, étant donc un contemporain d'Isidore de Séville.

¹ Isidorus Hispalensis, « Praefatio », *Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum. Patrologia Latina*, Tome 83, col. 209.

² Les débats sur la datation sont résumés par Carmen Codoñer dans l'étude qui précède son édition, *El « De viris illustribus » de Isidoro de Sevilla*, Salamanca, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto « Antonio de Nebrija », 1964, pp. 18-20.

³ José Carlos Martín, « El catálogo de los varones ilustres de Isidoro de Sevilla (CPL 1206): contenidos y datación », *Studia histórica. Historia antiqua*, 2013, 31, p. 150.

⁴ Díaz y Díaz, Manuel C, « Introducción general », in Isidoro de Sevilla, San. *Etimologías*. Texto latino, versión española y notas por José Oroz Reta, Manuel-A. Marcos Casquero, Madrid, Editorial Católica, 1982–1983, pp. 164-174.

L'œuvre s'inscrit dans une longue tradition qui remonte au traité de Suétone, intitulé, probablement, *De viris illustribus* (ca. 106–113) et consacré aux lettrés romains, poètes, orateurs, historiens, philosophes, grammairiens et rhéteurs. À son tour, cet ouvrage a été élaboré selon le modèle des biographies alexandrines qui examinaient les personnalités *per species*, « par catégories » ou « par rubriques », en laissant au second plan la chronologie pour privilégier certains aspects biographiques révélateurs du point de vue de l'auteur. Ainsi, pour présenter les poètes, Suétone a généralement en vue l'origine, l'éducation, les amitiés, les œuvres, la mort, la postérité. Mais il omet souvent certaines « rubriques » et il préfère, en échange, introduire des anecdotes parfois piquantes, parfois anodines, qui réalisent l'ébauche d'un caractère sans construire, toutefois, un ensemble exhaustif. Les considérations du biographe sur les œuvres littéraires, d'une forte empreinte livresque, visent plutôt des aspects extérieurs : circonstances de la rédaction ou de la publication, dédicataires, succès de certains écrits, etc. Par exemple, apprend-on, pour Horace, les dates de sa naissance et de sa mort, le statut social humble de son père, le fait que le poète était de petite taille et, paraît-il, porté aux plaisirs de l'amour. Suétone souligne que Mécène et Auguste tenaient le poète en très haute estime. Il mentionne quelques-unes des œuvres horatiennes, sans insérer aucune remarque sur leur contenu ou sur leur style. Le biographe agit de la même manière pour les autres poètes : la production littéraire n'est jamais examinée pour elle-même.

Quels sont les critères de sélection des *vires illustri* ? L'état fragmentaire de la transmission du texte ne permet pas de savoir si l'auteur les avait indiqués. De toute façon, les « protagonistes » sont des célébrités de la vie intellectuelle romaine et leurs œuvres jouissent de la faveur du public cultivé au moment où Suétone, par passion d'antiquaire ou par curiosité érudite, rédige ses croquis dont les traits sont, certes, intéressants, mais pas toujours essentiels pour la définition de la personnalité d'un lettré en tant que tel.

Néanmoins, cette manière d'aborder les vies des hommes célèbres a fondé le genre *De viris illustribus*. Ce qui, d'un certain point de vue, pourrait représenter une carence du traité de Suétone – le caractère volatil des critères de sélection – paraît avoir constitué la raison de la longévité du genre qui en est né. En effet, la perspective sur ce qui signifie un *vir illustris* peut être adaptée à des contextes historiques différents et à des intentionnalités diverses.

Ainsi Jérôme, dans son *De viris illustribus*. Tout en assumant comme modèles Suétone et le *Brutus sive de claris oratoribus* de Cicéron – peut-être le premier document concernant l'histoire d'un genre « littéraire » – ce véhément Père de l'Église élabore en 392, dans une époque où le débat entre la culture païenne et le christianisme est encore intense, cet ouvrage dont le but est polémique et, en même temps, apologétique. Au temps de Jérôme, les adversaires du christianisme méprisaient la nouvelle religion en l'accusant de n'avoir ni philosophes, ni orateurs, ni savants. Jérôme se propose de prouver, contre ceux qui, pareils à « des chiens enragés », essayaient de montrer l'« inculte simplicité » (*rustica*

simplicitas) de la foi chrétienne, que celle-ci avait été adoptée par des personnalités d'un remarquable prestige⁵.

Pour réaliser son dessein, Jérôme rédige un catalogue de cent trente-cinq écrivains, depuis l'apôtre Pierre jusqu'à lui-même, où la biographie s'efface en faveur d'une approche bibliographique. En effet, il lui semble important de souligner l'abondance des œuvres des *scriptores ecclesiastici* et pour cela, il offre des listes de titres sans qu'il présente à fond la doctrine de ces écrits. Afin de mettre en relief l'éclat de la jeune culture chrétienne, il insère dans son traité des auteurs non chrétiens, juifs ou latins (Philon d'Alexandrie, Flavius Josèphe, Sénèque), en justifiant leur présence par leur relation avec le christianisme. Ainsi, affirme Jérôme en faisant sienne une assertion de l'historien ecclésiastique Eusèbe⁶, Philon a loué les chrétiens (*in nostrorum laude versatus est*, 11⁷). Dans le cas de Flavius Josèphe, le *De viris illustribus* cite les passages sur le Christ connus sous le nom de *Testimonium Flaviani* dont l'authenticité a été longuement débattue, mais qui, à la fin du IV^e siècle, ne suscitaient pas de doutes⁸. Dans le cas de Sénèque, il est évident que Jérôme croyait à l'authenticité d'une correspondance entre le philosophe et l'apôtre Paul⁹. Parmi les hommes illustres de la chrétienté, Jérôme énumère quelques écrivains controversés, dénoncés par lui-même comme hérétiques (Novatien, Astérius, Lucien, Photin, Eunome, Priscillien, Latronien, Tibérien), tout en laissant de côté un auteur de la taille d'Augustin, probablement en raison des divergences théologiques qui le séparaient de lui¹⁰. Si l'on peut considérer que la sélection des écrivains est subjective et que leurs doctrines ne sont pas assez mises en lumière, l'insistance sur la qualité littéraire de leurs œuvres attire l'attention du lecteur¹¹.

⁵ Hieronymus und Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, Freiburg im Breisgau und Leipzig, Akademische Verlagsbuchhandlung von J. C. B. Mohr, 1895, p. 2: *Discant ergo Celsus, Porphyrius, Julianus, rabidi adversus Christum canes, discant eorum sectatores (qui putant Ecclesiam nullos philosophos et eloquentes, nullos habuisse doctores) quanti et quales viri eam fundaverint, exstruxerint et adornaverint; et desinant fidem nostram rusticae tantum simplicitatis arguere, suamque potius imperitiam agnoscant.*

⁶ Joanna Weinberg, « La quête de Philon dans l'historiographie juive du XVI^e siècle », in Sabrina Inowlocki and Baudouin Decharneux (eds.), *Philon d'Alexandrie. Un penseur à l'intersection des cultures gréco-romaine, orientale, juive et chrétienne*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2011, pp. 402-403.

⁷ Nous indiquons pour les œuvres de Jérôme, Gennade et Isidore les numéros des chapitres respectifs.

⁸ Louis Préchac, « Réflexions sur le *Testimonium Flavianum* », *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*, mars 1969, 1, pp. 104-110.

⁹ Jan Nicolaas Sevenster, *Paul and Seneca*, Leiden, Brill, 1961, pp. 11-14.

¹⁰ Rebenich Stefan et al., « *Amicus incertus in re certa*. La correspondance entre saint Jérôme et saint Augustin », in Roland Delmaire, Janine Desmulliez, Pierre-Louis Gatier (eds.), *Correspondances. Documents pour l'histoire de l'Antiquité tardive. Actes du colloque international, université Charles-deGaulle-Lille 3, 20-22 novembre 2003*, Lyon, Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée Jean Pouilloux, 2009, pp. 422-427.

¹¹ Eustaquio Sánchez Salor, « El género de los *de viris illustribus* de Jerónimo a Ildefonso de Toledo: su finalidad », *Talia dixit: revista interdisciplinar de retórica e historiografía*, 2006, 1, p. 34.

Le trait distinctif le plus mis en relief chez les auteurs répertoriés dans ce traité est l'élégance de l'écriture : *elegantem librum* (Gregorius, 105), *elegans in versibus componendis ingenium habuit, elegans libellum* (Damasus, 103), *elegantissimum librum de Martyrum laude composuit* (Phileas, 78), *valde elegantem epistulam* (Pinitus, 28), etc. L'éloge de l'éloquence occupe une position significative : *philosophus eloquentissimus* (Aristides, 20), *tantae eloquentiae et industriae fuit* (Dionysius, 27), *insignia volumina, plenaque eruditionis et eloquentiae* (Clemens, 38). Jérôme souligne que les écrivains chrétiens suivent le modèle de l'éloquence antique (*in morem dialogorum et veteris eloquentiae breves commaticosque tractatus edidit*, Theotimus, 131) et qu'ils peuvent être comparés aux anciens (*valde eruditus, et in metrico opere veteribus comparandus*, Latronianus, 122). Il remarque aussi le discernement dans les questions d'histoire (*elegantis apertique sermonis et magis historicae intelligentiae*, Theodorus, 90), l'érudition concernant l'Écriture (*in Scripturis eruditissimus fuit*, Tryphon, 57), le savoir philosophique (*valde eruditus in philosophia*, Ammonius, 55), la connaissance concomitante de la Bible et des lettres profanes (*tantae prudentiae et eruditionis tam in Scripturis divinis, quam in saeculari litteratura fuit*, Pantaenus, 36). Comme traducteur qui se pose les problèmes spécifiques de ce métier dont il est un des fondateurs, Jérôme se demande – même s'il s'agit d'élogier ainsi un hérésiarque – ce qu'on pourrait penser de la beauté de l'original s'il existe tant de force et d'éclat dans la traduction (*Si autem tanta vis est et fulgor in interpretatione, quantam putamus in sermone proprio ?* Bardesanes, 33). Finalement, pour Jérôme, celui qui ignore les lettres profanes n'est pas capable d'éloquence (*eloquentiam imitari non potuit, propter ignorantiam saecularium litterarum*, Diodorus, 119).

Nous trouvons-nous devant le jugement sincère d'un lettré versé dans la lecture des auteurs classiques, ou bien s'agit-il du seul désir de mener à bien son dessein d'apologiste ? Difficile à dire. En tout cas, si Suétone a présenté ses portraits sur le ton d'un badinage érudit, Jérôme a composé son traité pour élogier l'excellence littéraire de ses devanciers chrétiens tout en misant sur son autorité d'expert de la Bible imbu de culture classique.

Presque cent ans après, vers 480, le théologien Gennade de Marseille continue l'œuvre de Jérôme en écrivant, à son tour, un traité intitulé *De viris illustribus*. Du temps d'Isidore, les manuscrits transmettent ces deux livres en un seul volume et, plus tard, l'ouvrage isidorien homonyme accompagne dans certains codex les deux textes¹². Le *De viris illustribus* de Gennade a eu sa notoriété : vers 560, Cassiodore le recommande dans le chapitre sur les historiens chrétiens de ses *Institutiones* (XVII, 2) et Isidore aussi, dans son encyclopédie (*Etymologiae*, VI, 6, 2).

Pourtant, ce traité n'a en commun avec celui de Jérôme que le titre et la structure d'un catalogue d'auteurs. Tandis que Jérôme essayait de faire de ses *vires*

¹² Heinz Koeppler, « *De viris illustribus* and Isidore of Seville », *The journal of theological studies*, XXXVII, 1936, 145, p. 16.

illustri des égaux des anciens, Gennade montre un intérêt soutenu pour le thème monastique et pastoral et surtout pour l'hérésiologie. La dispute sur la double nature divine et humaine du Christ et celle suscitée par les thèses du pélagianisme paraissent avoir contribué à la sélection et au traitement des auteurs¹³. Pour attribuer à un écrivain chrétien la qualité de *vir illustris* le théologien fait intervenir, donc, des critères qui ne concernent pas la littérature.

Toutefois, son livre offre des informations sur certains aspects littéraires. Quelques genres cultivés par la littérature chrétienne y sont mentionnés (*epistula, tractatus, hymnus, psalmus*). Quelques écrivains sont remarqués pour leurs vers (*composuit [...] librum [...] hymnorum*, Prudentius, 13 ; *composuit versu brevia sed multa*, Paulinus, 49 ; *ruinam etiam Antiochiae elegiaco carmine planxit*, Isaac, 67 ; *scripsit et [...] hymnum de passione Domini*, Claudianus, 83 ; *in more sancti Ephrem diaconi psalmos composuit*, Petrus, 75).

L'attention accordée au style, sans être absente, est très réduite. Gennade signale deux fois une qualité de l'écriture qu'il appelle *sal divinus* (finesse d'esprit) : *Oresiesis monachus [...] confecit librum divino conditum sale* (9) ; celle-ci semble cohabiter avec le style moyen ou tempéré : *Paulus presbyter [...] scripsit [...] mediocri sermone sed divino conditos sale duos libros* (76). Parfois, il critique certains auteurs pour leurs défauts de style : *obscurissimae disputationis et involuti sermonis* (Isaac, 26) ; *neque sermone neque ratione nitidum* (Helvidius, 33). Occasionnellement, il met en évidence l'élégance, la clarté, l'érudition : *eleganti et aperto sermone* (Eutropius, 50) ; *breviato et aperto sermone* (Vigilius Diaconus, 52) ; *sermone scholasticus et assertionibus nervosus* (Prosper, 85). En échange, dans la majorité des cas, il renonce à caractériser le style pour parler de la formation culturelle des écrivains : *homo acris valde ingenii et in divinis doctus scripturis* (Iulius, 3) ; *vir scientia cautus et lingua disertus* (Theodorus, 12) ; *vir saeculari litteratura eruditus* ; *vir eloquentissimus et historiarum cognitor* (Orosius, 40), etc. Si l'on compare l'attention de Gennade envers les contenus théologiques ou moraux avec son faible intérêt pour les aspects littéraires des *œuvres* répertoriées, on comprend que l'enjeu de son traité est bien différent de celui de Jérôme.

Cette longue parenthèse permet de placer le traité *De viris illustribus* d'Isidore dans une tradition déjà vénérable. Quelle est la finalité de cet écrit ? Sánchez Salor souligne que tout comme Gennade, l'évêque de Séville accorde une importance prépondérante à l'hérésiologie et qu'il met en évidence les auteurs qui se sont distingués dans l'affirmation de la doctrine catholique. D'autre part, le chercheur observe que, parmi les trente-trois écrivains qui figurent dans le catalogue, douze proviennent de l'Hispanie ; il considère, en conséquence, qu'un objectif important de l'ouvrage est celui d'affirmer l'appartenance de l'Espagne wisigothique à la culture chrétienne catholique. Aussi estime-t-il qu'à l'instar de Gennade et au

¹³ Eustaquio Sánchez Salor, « El género de los *de viris illustribus* », pp. 37-44.

contraire de Jérôme, le Sévillan montre peu d'intérêt pour la défense de la littérature chrétienne¹⁴.

En effet, Isidore ne ressent pas la responsabilité de rédiger une apologie de la littérature chrétienne selon le modèle offert par Jérôme. L'époque des écrits de ce type est passée. Cependant, l'attention pour le statut littéraire des *œuvres* répertoriées dans le catalogue isidorien nous semble remarquable: l'auteur présente soigneusement les genres auxquels celles-ci appartiennent (*epistola*, 1 ; *liber sub apologetici specie*, 2 ; *decretale opusculum*, 3 ; *uita*, 4 ; *cento*, 5 ; *in dialogi more regula monachorum*, 13 ; *libri responsionum*, 15 ; *libellus expositionis in Canticis Cantorum*, 21 ; *historia*, 25, etc.). Pour les compositions en vers, Isidore mentionne, avec une seule exception (*uersu prosaque*, 23), le mètre utilisé : *dactilico heroico metro* (7) ; *libellos heroico metro compositos* (23) ; *heroicis uersibus* (24) ; il fait l'éloge de l'ingéniosité démontrée par la poétesse Proba dans son centon formé de vers de Virgile, non sans exprimer une réserve : *Cuius quidem non miramur studium sed laudamus ingenium* (5).

Son intérêt pour le style des auteurs présentés est manifeste : ceux-ci figurent dans son catalogue parce qu'ils sont des écrivains chrétiens, sans doute, mais aussi parce qu'ils sont remarquables par les vertus littéraires de leurs textes : *pulchro ac diserto eloquio* (Osius, 1) ; *brevi stilo* (Eugippius, 13) ; *elegans sententiis, ornatus in uerbis* ; *opusculum [...] luculentissime et dulci sermone dictatum* (Eucherius, 15) ; *largo eloquentiae fonte* (Gregorius papa, 27) ; *vehementi stilo* (Leander, 28) ; *composito sermone* (Iohannes Gerundensis, 31). Ce second critère devient plus évident quand Isidore compare certains écrits en envisageant, à côté de leur valeur doctrinale, leur style ; ainsi, affirme-t-il, au chapitre 17 : « Apringius [...] a interprété l'Apocalypse de Jean avec subtilité et en utilisant une langue limpide, mieux que les vieux auteurs ecclésiastiques ne semblent l'avoir fait »¹⁵. En analysant la conception sur le style exprimée dans le traité *De uiris illustribus*, Jacques Fontaine observe que le Sévillan admire et loue surtout la douceur, l'abondance et le vocabulaire orné. Il formule les mêmes conclusions après avoir examiné des œuvres isidoriennes qui ne visent pas directement la littérature : les préférences de l'évêque vont toujours vers le style marqué par le charme (*oblectamentum*) et vers l'éclat d'un style orné (*verba splendentia, ornamenta uerborum*)¹⁶.

La lecture du petit ouvrage isidorien sur les hommes illustres ne laisse pas de doute : après Gennade, un moine instruit, assurément, mais pas trop attentif aux charmes de la littérature, Isidore se montre, comme Jérôme, sensible à la qualité du style des écrits répertoriés. On pourrait objecter que les *œuvres* isidoriens reposent

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 44-52.

¹⁵ ...interpretatus est Apocalipsi Iohannis apostoli subtili sensu atque illustri sermone, melius pene quam ueteres ecclesiastici exposuisse uidentur.

¹⁶ Jacques Fontaine, « Théorie et pratique du style chez Isidore de Séville », *Vigiliae Christianae. A review of Early Christian life and language*, 1960, 2, p. 80, 85.

sur la consultation et la compilation de sources érudites qui auraient pu fournir ces jugements littéraires et que, par conséquent, il ne s'agit pas d'impressions de lecture proprement dites. Même dans ce cas, Isidore ne néglige pas de conserver ce type d'observations offertes par ses sources : formé, comme il l'était, par l'exercice grammatical de l'*enarratio poetarum*, il est en permanence conscient de la nécessité de mettre en relief les vertus du style.

Le *De viris illustribus* d'Isidore constitue donc, au début du VII^e siècle, un anneau de la tradition du genre qui continuera son existence pendant tout le Moyen Âge¹⁷ pour se renouveler complètement dans les écrits homonymes de Pétrarque et de Boccace, un genre qui sera pratiqué par les humanistes au XV^e et au XVI^e siècles. L'influence de ce traité n'est pas si importante en soi-même, vu que sa transmission manuscrite n'est pas vraiment imposante (la dernière édition critique mentionne l'existence de 36 manuscrits conservés¹⁸) et qu'il n'est pas utilisé par tous les auteurs qui ont cultivé ce genre pendant le Moyen Âge. Pourtant, certains d'entre ceux qui ne l'ont pas utilisé comme source avouent connaître l'existence de ce livre, comme c'est le cas de l'Anonyme de Melk¹⁹. Le petit traité remplit donc la fonction de transmettre un type de savoir littéraire et une forme d'organisation – en micro-monographies qui visent surtout la production littéraire des écrivains – qui n'est pas sans avenir.

Cependant, la contribution d'Isidore à la transmission du savoir littéraire ne se limite pas à ce petit traité. Dans ses *Étymologies*, la grande encyclopédie qui eut un énorme succès au Moyen Âge (ca. 1000 manuscrits), un chapitre du VIII^e livre intitulé *De ecclesia et sectis* est destiné aux poètes (VIII, 7, 1-11, *De poetis*). Après avoir traité de l'église et de la synagogue, de la religion et de la foi, de l'hérésie et du schisme, des hérésies judaïques et chrétiennes, l'évêque examine quatre groupes de « professionnels » dont l'activité est liée au sacré païen : les philosophes, les poètes, les sibylles et les mages. Ces derniers sont rejetés parce que, pour Isidore, leur art est d'inspiration démoniaque. Les autres sont considérés comme récupérables pour le christianisme précisément en vertu de leur rapport avec le sacré²⁰ et c'est seulement grâce à cette relation qu'on peut expliquer l'insertion des poètes entre les philosophes et les sibylles. Isidore pense que « le philosophe possède la connaissance des choses divines et humaines et observe intégralement

¹⁷ Il sera cultivé par Braulion de Saragosse, disciple d'Isidore de Séville, Ildefonse de Tolède (avant 636), Sigebert de Gembloux (avant 1112), Honoré d'Autun (1122), l'Anonyme de Melk (1135), pseudo-Henri de Gand (1270–1273), Trithem de Spanheim (1494). Cf. Joseph de Ghellinck, « Transmission et utilisation posthume », I, in *Patristique et Moyen Âge. Études d'histoire littéraire et doctrinale*. Tome II, *Introduction et compléments à l'étude de la patristique*, Gembloux, J. Duculot ; Bruxelles, Éd. Universelle ; Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1947, p. 248.

¹⁸ Carmen Codoñer, *El « De viris illustribus » de Isidoro de Sevilla*, pp. 87-103.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

²⁰ Cf. Jacques Fontaine, « Le 'sacré' antique vu par un homme du VII^e siècle : le livre des *Étymologies* d'Isidore de Séville », *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé. Lettres d'humanité*, décembre 1989, 48, pp. 395-396.

les préceptes de bien vivre » (*Est enim Philosophus qui divinarum et humanarum [rerum] scientiam habet, et omnem bene vivendi tramitem tenet*, VIII, 6, 1) ; les sibylles sont assimilées aux prophètes, *vates*, qui « interprétaient pour les hommes la volonté des dieux » (VIII, 8, 1).

La définition du poète tirée du *De poetis* de Suétone s'adapte à ce contexte et l'évêque se met d'accord avec le lettré païen pour chercher l'origine de l'activité poétique dans le culte des dieux. En effet, il affirme que, pour honorer leurs dieux, les hommes ont élaboré « un langage plus auguste » (*eloquium augustius*) et qu'ils les ont célébrés « par des mots plus resplendissants et par des rythmes plus gracieux » (*verbis inlustrioribus et iucundioribus numeris*, VIII, 7, 2). Isidore ne met pas en relation les étymologies des termes *poema* et *poeta* avec le verbe grec *poiein*, mais avec *poiotes* (« qualité »), mot qu'il traduit par *forma* qui, en latin, signifie aussi « beauté » : « Comme ce genre d'expression se réalisait grâce à une certaine forme/beauté appelée *poiotes*, elle a été nommée *poema*, et ceux qui la composaient, *poetae* » (VIII, 7, 2)²¹. Poésie, forme et beauté s'associent dans la réflexion isidorienne sur la littérature.

Pour le terme latin *vates*, Isidore présente plusieurs étymologies. Il le met en relation soit avec la « force de l'esprit » (*a vi mentis*) qui peut faire du poète un prophète, mais qui n'exclut pas le délire (*vesania*), soit avec la capacité de « tresser des vers » (*a viendis carminibus*), tout en les modulant (VIII, 7, 3).

Afin de faire connaître à ses lecteurs la fonction du poète, il adopte *ad litteram* des considérations de Lactance²² : « la fonction du poète consiste dans le transfert des faits réels en leur donnant d'autres représentations au moyen de figures obliques, avec une certaine beauté » (*Officium autem poetae in eo est ut ea, quae vere gesta sunt, in alias species obliquis figurationibus cum decore aliquo conversa transducant*, VIII, 7, 10). Comme fruit de ses lectures grammaticales, il classe les poètes en lyriques, tragiques, comiques (Plaute, Accius, Térence) et satiriques (Horace, Perse, Juvénal), tout en signalant l'existence des poètes dits théologiens « parce qu'ils faisaient des poèmes sur les dieux » (*quoniam de diis carmina faciebant*, VIII, 7, 9).

Finalement, Isidore propose une classification des « modes du discours » (*characteres dicendi*) dont la dernière origine se trouve dans la *République* de Platon (394 c). Le passage platonicien avait été adapté à l'œuvre de Virgile par le grammairien Servius, vers la fin du IV^e siècle. Isidore reprend ses observations : « Chez les poètes, il y a trois modes de discours : le poète, seulement, parle, comme dans les *Géorgiques* de Virgile ; le deuxième, dramatique, où le poète ne parle nulle part, comme dans les comédies et tragédies ; le troisième, mixte, comme

²¹ Cf. *Igitur [...] eloquio etiam quasi augustiore honorandos putaverunt, laudesque eorum et verbis inlustrioribus et iucundioribus numeris extulerunt. Id genus quia forma quadam efficitur, quae poiotes dicitur, poema vocitatum est, eiusque fictores poetae* (VIII, 7, 2).

²² Jacques Fontaine, « Le 'sacré' antique », p. 402.

dans l'*Énéide*, où parlent à la fois le poète et les personnages introduits. » (VIII, 7, 11)²³.

Le chapitre *De poetis* se termine sur ces considérations. Mais, en outre, ce qui attire l'attention lorsque l'on consulte les *Etymologies* c'est le fait que la littérature constitue la source par excellence pour tous les domaines du savoir abordés dans ce traité, qu'il s'agisse de la cosmologie, de la géographie, de l'« anthropologie », de la zoologie, de l'art de la guerre ou des techniques domestiques. Cette culture littéraire, qui imprègne toutes les données encyclopédiques, parle du statut de la littérature, non seulement en tant que source privilégiée du discours érudit, mais aussi en tant que « mine d'arguments ».

Il faut pourtant remarquer que le canon des auteurs du *De viris illustribus* est, en quelque sorte, renversé par les *Etymologies*, où les écrivains de l'Antiquité païenne sont abondamment cités, en faisant concurrence à la Bible et aux auteurs ecclésiastiques. Il ne s'agit pas seulement d'une « statistique » des citations, mais surtout de la manière dont celles-ci sont utilisées ; dans bien des cas, une source chrétienne est accompagnée par une source païenne dans la rédaction des articles encyclopédiques et Isidore les accorde, souvent, un poids égal²⁴.

Pour conclure on observera que, résultant de l'adaptation d'un modèle antique, le *De viris illustribus* – tel qu'il est « mis en page » par Jérôme, Gennade et Isidore – propose une chronologie qui débute avec les premiers écrits chrétiens pour se relayer jusqu'aux premières décennies du VII^e siècle. Un canon des auteurs s'y affirme : le principal critère de sélection est représenté par le contenu chrétien des écrits, mais la préoccupation pour le style littéraire est constante et, chez Jérôme et Isidore, elle est délibérément mise en évidence. Pourtant, il est remarquable que, chez Isidore de Séville, s'il faut être en premier lieu chrétien pour être présent dans le *De viris illustribus*, il faut être auteur canonique, païen ou chrétien, pour constituer une source des *Etymologies*.

Aussi, assiste-t-on au déploiement d'une perspective sur les genres abordés par la littérature latine chrétienne, ce qui permet l'étude de certaines lignes de continuité par rapport à la littérature de l'Antiquité et, aussi, de certaines « fractures ». D'autre part, la lecture de ce type de catalogue offre la possibilité d'identifier des éléments spécifiques du goût littéraire de la fin de l'Antiquité et du début du Moyen Âge. Si l'on restreint la perspective au *De viris illustribus* isidorien, on remarquera qu'il s'agit de la première tentative de situer la littérature d'un royaume barbare dans le contexte de la culture universelle de la latinité.

²³ Fulgence, *Virgile dévoilé*. Traduit, présenté et annoté par Étienne Wolf. Postface de Françoise Graziani, Villeneuve d'Ascq, Presses du Septentrion, 2009, pp. 91-92. Le texte isidorien: *Apud poetas autem tres characteres esse dicendi: unum, in quo tantum poeta loquitur, ut est in libris Vergilii Georgicorum ; alim dramaticum, in quo nusquam poeta loquitur, ut est in comediis et tragoediis ; tertium mixtum, ut est in Aeneide. Nam poeta illic et introductae personae loquuntur.* (VIII, 7, 11).

²⁴ Un seul exemple : pour la définition de l'homme, Isidore évoque comme autorités textuelles le livre de la Genèse et un passage des *Métamorphoses* d'Ovide (*Etymologiae*, XI, 1, 4-5).

Même si le corpus qu'on a analysé ne fait jamais le pas décisif qui lui permettrait de dépasser le catalogue en faveur de son interprétation, il faut remarquer que ce type de démarche, fondateur pour l'histoire de la littérature chrétienne au Moyen Âge, reste un des vénérables ancêtres de l'histoire de la littérature, telle qu'elle va se configurer aux temps modernes.

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ISIDORE OF SEVILLE: THE PREMISSES OF A LITERARY HISTORY AVANT LA LETTRE?

(Abstract)

How was the history of literature written long before its birth? This article aims to analyse, on the one hand, the treatise *De viris illustribus* by Isidore of Seville in relation with the Suetonian model and with its Christian versions conceived by St. Jerome and Gennadius of Massilia; on the other hand, it approaches some significant chapters of the isidorian *Etymologiae*. The examination of these erudite works, which are situated at a turning point of the transition between ancient and medieval cultures, could allow the contemporary historian of literature to recover the remote premisses of his discipline.

Keywords: Suetonius, St. Jerome, Gennadius of Massilia, St. Isidore of Seville, *De viris illustribus*, *Etymologies*, literary canon, history of Christian literature.

ISIDOR DIN SEVILLA: PREMISELE UNEI ISTORII LITERARE AVANT LA LETTRE?

(Rezumat)

Cum se scria istoria literară cu mult înainte de nașterea sa? Acest articol intenționează să analizeze, pe de o parte, tratatul *De viris illustribus* al lui Isidor din Sevilla în relație cu modelul suetonian și cu versiunile sale creștine concepute de Sf. Ieronim și de Genadius din Massilia; pe de altă parte, articolul abordează câteva capitole semnificative ale studiului isidorian *Etymologiae*. Investigarea acestor lucrări erudite, situate la tranziția dintre culturile antice și cele medievale, ar putea facilita istoricilor literari contemporani recuperarea premiselor originare ale disciplinei.

Cuvinte-cheie: Suetoniu, Sf. Ieronim, Gennadius din Massilia, Isidor din Sevilla, *De viris illustribus*, *Etymologies*, canon literar, istoria literaturii creștine.

IOANA ALEXANDRA LIONTE

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF MIHAI EMINESCU'S POETRY

Part 1

1. *World literature: towards an axiological shift in literary studies*

The contemporary cultural scaffolding (manifesting itself under different sociological, political, anthropological, artistic dynamics) is the result of a paradigmatic shift that occurred within the identity-alterity dialectic, therefore allowing for (and even fervently encouraging) a programmatic intercultural flexibility and openness. Literary studies were no exception in this respect. Therefore, the crystallisation of the “world literature” concept into both discourse and method circumscribes the most recent epistemological framework of cultural and literary analysis, facilitating a transnational (post-national, even) analysis of literature viewed as a network structure rather than as a hierarchical construct or as a centre-periphery type of dynamic. Although the world literature concept has only recently transformed itself into a paramount framework of literary studies, the notion is far from being novel. We say this because in 1827, in a conversation with his disciple Johann Peter Eckermann, Goethe coins the term *Weltliteratur* by saying the following:

I am more and more convinced that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all times in hundreds and hundreds of men... I therefore like to take a look around at foreign nations, and I advise everyone to do the same. National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach¹.

In hindsight, Goethe's words anticipated not only the formation of a new cultural consciousness (that would translate into a literary perspective) but also the twilight of national literatures that dominated the 19th century. Goethe's *Weltliteratur* is defined as a cultural exchange network, a trade in ideas on the literary market, to which every nation contributes with its own products. Therefore, speaking to his disciple about the fall of national literatures and the rise of a world literature, Goethe anticipated the development of the *Weltliteratur* notion as both a conceptual space and a cartography method for the cultural and literary geography.

As we have previously stated, two centuries later we witness a new paradigm in the field of literary studies, whose stake is to detach itself from the nationalist rhetoric of the 19th century and from the centre-periphery type of literary axiology

¹ Johann Peter Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*, apud David Damrosch, *What is World Literature*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2003, p. 1.

and analysis that has polarized, until recently, the topography of the literary universe. World literature is no longer regarded as the sum of national literatures, each legitimized by its own literary canon, but rather as a network. A good number of theoretical contributions striving to address the issue of *what exactly world literature is* started laying the foundation of a solid theoretical framework and resulted in the creation of new research optics and analysis instruments in the literary field. Authors such as Pascale Casanova, David Damrosch, Emily Apter, Harold Bloom, Franco Moretti or Immanuel Wallerstein have not only relevantly addressed the issue (directly or indirectly) but also managed to assess, define, detail the theoretical framework based upon a valid, realistic definition of world literature. That does not entail, however, the prevalence of a unitary perspective, for world literature itself is a fluid concept. To that effect, debates have surged regarding the characteristics of this construct, theoretical antagonisms being identifiable even at a methodological level, since the research methods themselves are interdisciplinary and differ from one another (Casanova, for instance, uses economic metaphors, whereas other theorists draw their research angles from organicist theories or from cognitive sciences). Overall, the attempts to define or to quantify the universal have resulted in interesting premises and answers to the question: *What is world literature?* To that, Casanova's *World Republic of Letters*², for example, offers a detailed presentation of the institutionalised cultural exchange that takes place between nations, revealing an intricate mechanism of literary production, dissemination and recognition and exemplifying it through a centre-periphery type of dynamic (her theoretical system was qualified as Gallocentric). David Damrosch, on the other hand, allows for more than one definition of world literature: "as an *established body of classics*, as an *evolving canon of masterpieces*, as *multiple windows on the world*"³.

However, the purpose of this paper does not allow for more than a brief, introductory account of the aforementioned concept that will serve as premise for more specific research, for its aim is to investigate an illustrative case for the issue of Romanian literature theorized within the larger framework of world literature. We will begin by noticing that Romanian literary studies did not fail to align themselves to the recent epistemological framework that privileges the study of world literature as a transnational way of envisaging literary texts (observed dialogically, in circulation, as part of a network rather than of a hierarchy).

The recent debates striving to circumscribe world literature and to evaluate the national context as part of an international system rather than opposed to it are, by far, not only the result of a purely theoretical interest in the most recent literary developments but a programmatic reassessment of national literature that marks the end of the classical canonical paradigm in favour of an intersectional approach.

² Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*. Translated by M. B. DeBevoise, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2004.

³ David Damrosch, *What is World Literature*, p. 15.

One of the most recent endeavours that pointedly marked this paradigmatic shift in literary studies is a collective volume entitled *Romanian Literature as World Literature* that epitomises the Romanian literary critics and historians' attempts to rethink Romanian literature in terms of world literature in order to change the research angle, as "the Romanian case study goes to show that, when reframed intersectionally, as nodal subsystems of a vaster, ever-fluid continuum, so-called 'marginal', 'minor', or 'small' literatures acquire an unforeseen and unorthodox centrality"⁴.

2. *The greatest unknown universal poet: the Eminescu paradox*

Countless and countless debates, articles and volume chapters attempted to describe, explain and eventually solve the issue of Mihai Eminescu's exportability in terms of a cultural product relevant to the foreign public. The subjects addressed while tackling this seemingly unresolved problem vary from mythicising the national poet, which functioned as a trademark of the national legitimizing process, to the lack of cultural branding know-how, to the translatability issue regarding Eminescu's poetry (that is seldomly placed within the ranks of the "brilliant untranslatables") and the quality of existing translations. Literary researchers, historians and translators all approached the aforementioned issue (among the authors that dedicated studies to the subject we count Ioana Bot, Iulian Costache, Andrei Terian, Lucian Boia, etc.), some of them concluding that Eminescu is bound to remain a dictionary author and an insular national icon, others still believing that in light of well-thought, systematic cultural strategies and better translations, Eminescu has a chance of obtaining the recognition and place in international culture that are proportional to his value.

When it comes to the issue of Mihai Eminescu as a national myth, we tend to agree with the rhetorical observation that Andrei Terian makes in his study *Mihai Eminescu: From National Mythology to the World Pantheon*: what indeed "could be more remote from world literature" than national poets? The myth-making process that transformed Eminescu into a polished,edulcorated, typically messianic image that no longer has to do with his actual work but with the national aspirations and cultural complexes with which he was branded is extremely relevant to the question of his exportability, as it goes to show that coining the argument of a culture and an author's originality in "an ethnic essence" results in the creation of an indigenous monolith "whose authentic authority is hardly available to the "allogeneic"⁵. In other words, the image *Eminescu—the national poet* may have served its purposes in a national context (in different time periods

⁴ Mircea Martin, Christian Moraru, and Andrei Terian (eds.), *Romanian Literature as World Literature*, New York, Bloomsbury Academic, 2018, p. 5.

⁵ Andrei Terian, "Mihai Eminescu: from National Mythology to the World Pantheon", in Mircea Martin, Christian Moraru, and Andrei Terian (eds.), *Romanian Literature as World Literature*, p. 35.

and with different cultural-political ideologies), but it certainly did not serve Eminescu's cause abroad. In addressing the issue of Eminescu's place within the world literature framework, the extremes are, on the one hand, the poet's utter encapsulation of the Romanian ethos that renders him "too Romanian" and therefore untranslatable and, on the other hand, the unmitigated belief in the poet's universality (that Lucian Boia identifies as symptomatic of the Eminescu myth). In a very interesting study entitled "A Romanian Product Refused Export: Mihai Eminescu, the National Poet", Ioana Bot summarizes the issue of the poet's exportability and identifies the main problems that occurred in the process of cultural branding. The author begs the question of

why, in spite of Romanian culture's (concrete and long-lasting) efforts to transform Eminescu into an identity key image that is exportable and highly symbolic, "Eminescu, the Romanian national poet" does not pass the test, and, moreover, does not succeed in breaking the frontiers of a Romanian Studies specialists' circle into the Western academic environments⁶.

She then goes to show that the argument of untranslatability and the obsolescence allegations are put forward to make amends for the shortcomings of a faulty cultural promotion strategy.

3. Transnational as translational

A key-issue in addressing Eminescu's exportability problem as well as in discussing his place among the key-authors of world literature is translation, as universality does require translatability (and by that we refer not only to the possibility of being translated but also to the ability of translating). This prerequisite is, in our opinion, of paramount importance to the dissemination and reception of Mihai Eminescu's works abroad. In spite of the general anonymity that surrounds the poet's name beyond the borders of his emergence, there are numerous translations of his work that we can account for. However, even though this favourably answers the question of his translatability in terms of the possibility of rendering his texts in other languages, it does not vouch for the actual quality of translation, nor does it guarantee the efficiency of the texts' publication and dissemination abroad. In analysing the poet's exportability, Ioana Bot takes into account the translations and editions destined for publication abroad (which are, indeed, more relevant to the author's visibility than those published in his native land), the paratexts that accompany the translations (usually entailing presentations by the "media's opinion makers" and by the Romanian cultural institutions⁷), the

⁶ Ioana Bot, "A Romanian Product Refused Export: Mihai Eminescu, the National Poet", in Liviu Papadima, David Damrosch, Theo D'Haen (eds.), *The Canonical Debate Today, Crossing Disciplinary and Cultural Boundaries*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2011, pp. 292-293.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 293.

efficiency of the prefaces signed by foreign translators that have taken an interest in Eminescu's works as well as the problems that the author's poetry poses to translators. We can therefore observe that we are dealing with several problematic parameters.

When it comes to the issues related to the translation process itself, several factors weigh in the problem of translatability: the cultural and linguistic differences, the presupposed impossibility of translating poetry and the unique difficulties which Eminescu's texts pose to the translators (the specifics of Eminescu's poetry, generally perceived in terms of the rhyme/meter/content triad, make it appear as an insurmountable task for the English translator who often qualifies the poet's texts as untranslatable).

Another interesting argument, this time related to the visibility that the translation volumes might have with the help of foreign translators that attempted to promote the poet in their home countries, is that the effect of such endeavours is minor, for the translators dedicated to such an undertaking are, in Ioana Bot's opinion,

mediocre poets (perhaps with the exception of Iannis Ristos or Rafael Alberti), who give the impression of using this tribute to a foreign writer in order to include themselves "in the consecrating picture", without being prestigious authors in their native cultures. They practice (without exception) the encomiastic comparison, the analogy between absolute and incomparable values in themselves⁸.

Whereas these authors enjoy recognition in the Romanian cultural context, their activity and visibility abroad are confined to the circle of Romanian Studies, a monad of sorts as far as the foreign general public is concerned.

In an article dedicated to the issue of translating Eminescu (having as premise a somehow unrealistic and biased comparison between the Romanian poet and Shakespeare), Adrian George Săhlean, whom we can include in the category of Romanian translators of Eminescu who are living abroad (in his case the U.S), makes an interesting comment: "Eminescu, widely celebrated in Romania and by Romanians the world over, may well be the least known great national poet in the English speaking world"⁹. The issues he identifies as being responsible for this great unknown figure partly match those we presented earlier, with the difference that his commentary focuses more on the similarities between the two languages and on the expectations of the English-speaking public.

When it comes to the reception medium of the translations, he argues not only that the understanding that an English native has of Romanian folklore and the literary expression of this traditional field is superficial at best, but that this

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 295.

⁹ Adrian George Săhlean, "Shakespeare & Eminescu – Measure for measure", *The Market for Ideas*, September-October 2018, 13: <http://www.themarketforideas.com/shakespeare-amp-eminescu-measure-for-measure-a163/>. Accessed December 20, 2019.

problem is coupled with the dwindling interest in the English-speaking world for poets of yesteryear, and with the extremely low interest by the book readership in translations and in poetry in the US.

4. *Translator typologies*

A natural follow-up of this discussion brings into focus the direct factors involved in Eminescu's translation: *by whom* and *how*.

Speaking of who translated Mihai Eminescu's work, we can easily identify three categories based on language: non-native speakers living in Romania (usually academics, University professors of Romanian Studies), non-native speakers living abroad (some of them affiliated to Universities of the English-speaking world) and native translators (who have travelled to Romania for political purposes, who have never been to Romania but who came across the poet's work or who taught in Romanian Universities as associate professors). Another distinction we can make is between professional and non-professional translators (for instance one of Eminescu's translators into English was Dimitrie Cuclin, a music conductor and a professor at the Royal Academy of Music and Dramatic Art in Bucharest).

When it comes to non-native translators (Andrei Bantaş, Leon Leviţchi, Ana Cartianu, Corneliu M. Popescu, Irina Andone, I.O. Stefanovici, etc.), we must bear in mind the fact that they were mostly academics translating from their native language into a foreign one. That brings into question a level of competence that surpasses that of philological language. In that respect, we notice among the Romanian translators that are providing poetry renditions into a language other than their native tongue an unrelenting tendency to preserve the metrical parameters as well as the rhyme structures of the original (which leads Săhlean to the conclusion that "*rhyming* is by far the most responsible for the inaccurate approximation of Eminescu's content into English by Romanian translators. This is often not only awkward but, at times, hilarious to a native speaker"¹⁰), even at the risk of sacrificing meaning or of breaking grammar rules. As for the context that determined the publication of such translation volumes, we can say that Eminescu was translated a great deal during the communist regime (especially between 1960–1975), but we must take into consideration the thematic restrictions that the political climate imposed upon the translators. However, these internal translations occasioned by ideological volition are not relevant for the poet's reception abroad.

The foreign translators of Eminescu's poetry fit another picture. Their category is more diverse, since it is made up of several interesting typologies. There are, for instance, foreign translators that came into contact with Eminescu's works in an academic context, such as Roy MacGregor-Hastie or Brenda Walker (both translators of Blaga as well). The American MacGregor-Hastie (1972)

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

“discovered” Eminescu in a period of increased political interest in Eastern Europe, translating him with a passionate mind. His variants, Săhlean believes, are reduced, however, to *content translation* of an informative nature, with no artistic claims, renouncing prosody from the start as an un-accomplishable task that didn’t fit the purpose. A couple of decades later, Brenda Walker (1990) would take the same approach.

Interestingly enough, other foreign translators did not know Romanian, and used intermediaries for the content: James Moulder based his creative transpositions upon Google Translate results and upon the translations provided by Corneliu M. Popescu, Sylvia Pankhurst (1928) worked on literal translations by I. O. Stefanovici, and Brenda Walker (1990) teamed with Horia Florian Popescu.

Part II.

In the first part of our paper we have tackled theoretical issues, the general aspects of the problematics in question, in order to provide a better understanding of the premises as well as of the main framework within which our study places itself. In this second part of the paper, we attempt a more detailed incursion into the issue of Eminescu’s translation into English by analysing the contexts in which his first translations appeared, who his translators were and what they had to say.

A chronological incursion into Eminescu’s recognition abroad (diplomats, wanderers and suffragettes)

By far the most interesting details that do not fail to further emphasize the paradoxical discrepancy between, on the one hand, the number of translations and the interest towards the poet’s work and, on the other hand, his poor visibility abroad as well as his difficult exportability, are those related to the first attempts of translating Eminescu into English. The circumstances in which these translations were coined, are, in our opinion, of a historical and cultural interest, not only circumscribed to the poet’s visibility abroad but also to the way his culture is presented to a foreign readership at key-moments of its international development (The Independence War, the immediate post-war situation). Not only the early signs of the poet’s recognition are of interest here, but also the particular profile of those who have taken an interest in his works.

William Beatty-Kingston – 1877(1888). British memoirist, journalist for the “Daily Telegraph” and translator, William Beatty-Kingston is, according to our research, the first translator of Eminescu’s poetry into English. As war correspondent for the British press, Kingston visits Romania on several occasions, once in 1865, when he meets Alexandru Ioan Cuza, a second time in 1874 and again during the Independence War (1877–1878). From the little we could find out about him, we gather that his travels to Romania were documented in several

volumes (*Monarchs I Have Met* (1886), *A Journalist's Jottings* (1990), *A Wanderer's Notes*), his knowledge of Romanian allowing him to translate poems by Eminescu and Alecsandri. We also found out that he had close ties with I.C Brătianu and Mihail Kogălniceanu and that he wrote about the Romanian political class in a book entitled *Men, Cities and Events*.

Among the volumes enumerated, the one that interests us most is *Monarchs I Have Met* for it is there he describes the exact circumstances that lead to the translation, in 1877, of one of Eminescu's poems (who was 27 years old at the time of the translation): *Crăiasa din povești*. In this book, dedicated to Queen Elisabeth of Romania, there is a chapter entitled "The Legend Queen" dedicated to the encounter he has with the Queen and to the impressions they have exchanged regarding the translation of Eminescu. After describing the role that the Queen plays in her country, he proceeds to describe the circumstances that led to their first encounter.

It would appear that after the Vienna Exhibition in 1873 he was in the midst of a sparring match in a cottage meant for the use of British Commissioners, when the Queen of Romania made an appearance and requested to make their acquaintance. Four years later, in 1877, not long before the commencement of the Russian-Turkish hostilities, he visits the Queen in Bucharest. It is then that she expresses her wish (after hearing of his interest in Romanian literature and music) of making the Romanian ballads and folklore known to the Anglo-Saxon world with the help of native translators, using English translations and imitations. The monarch tells him that:

Though I speak and read English with ease, and can even manage to write English prose with tolerable correctness, I find the composition of verse in your language beyond my powers. But as perhaps you know, I have paraphrased a considerable number of Romanian popular poems in German, observing the original meter and rhythmical patterns as closely as I could. There is a little romantic poem of extraordinary beauty, by Eminescu, which I have just translated. I wish you would try to make an English version of it. If you will, I will copy it out for you myself, and send it to you; and your version should have a place in my own personal album¹¹.

William Beatty-Kingston accepts this task handed to him by the Queen of Romania, not failing to warn her of the shortcomings that would surely appear as an inevitable result of the attempt to preserve the metrical parameters of the poem. He then proceeds to drawing a concise summary of the differences between the two languages, supported by examples. After making a brief demonstration of how Romanian works, he concludes that this type of archaic forms retained in the Romanian language facilitates versification and the economy of syllables, differentiating itself from English, which cannot limit itself to the same number of

¹¹ William Beatty-Kingston, *Monarchs I Have Met*, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1888, p. 97: <https://archive.org/details/monarchsihaveme00kingoog/page/n3>. Accessed December 20, 2019.

feet. Queen Elisabeth herself confesses to Kingston the difficulties encountered during her translation attempts, the debate revolving around the sacrifices one has to make in choosing between form and content – sacrificing spontaneity and ease in favour of meter and rhythm.

William Beatty-Kingston then received Eminescu's poem along with the German translation signed by Carmen Sylva and proceeded to its translation, but found the rendition of rhyme and meter that the Queen had managed in her "admirable imitation" quite "impracticable": „I therefore thought it best, as the ballad was a singable one and its musical setting, therefore, was a consideration of primary importance in the construction of a version in a foreign idiom, to sacrifice rhyme to metre"¹².

Charles Upton Clark – 1922. In 1922, Charles Upton Clark, an American historian and professor at Columbia University, writes a book entitled *Greater Roumania*¹³. The writing of this book, as motivated in the preface, was occasioned both by the author's interest in the campaign of misinterpretation directed against interwar Romania (that he considered to be similar with the anti-Italian propaganda) and by an invitation he received in 1919 from the Romanian Government "to come out and observe the post-war situation on the spot"¹⁴. He speaks of the great ignorance of Americans towards Romania as well as of the country's role during the war, a role that was diminished in historical contemporary accounts: "Since she offers remarkable opportunities to the farsighted American capitalist and manufacturer, I have tried to make the book a trustworthy work of reference for the business man, as well as for the traveler and the student of history and literature"¹⁵. The aim of this undertaking is also expressed in the preface, the author confessing to his readership the desire to provide the necessary elements for a sympathetic understanding of all aspects upon which the country is based – policy, ambitions, future:

I have tried to embody my deep impression of a national education, through centuries of storm and oppression, to the present marvelous development of this attractive and gifted people – how misunderstood and misinterpreted, I hope to have made clear. May the reader end sharing my conviction that Roumania has the future of Southeastern Europe in her hands, and that any Western nation will honour itself, as well as profit, by helpful association in Roumanian development¹⁶.

The table of contents suggests that the author signs a complete presentation of the country's socio-political, historical, anthropological realities, accompanied by

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 97.

¹³ Charles Upton Clark, *Greater Roumania*, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1922, <https://archive.org/details/greaterroumania00clargoog/page/n10>. Accessed December 20, 2019.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. v.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. vii.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. vii.

pictures and titles such as: "The Plains"; "Roumanian Agriculture"; "Roumania Under the Germans"; "Roumanian Art and Architecture"; "The Roumanian Peasant Arts"; "The Roumanian Language"; "Roumanian Literature", etc.

In the chapter dedicated to the "Roumanian language", the author makes a detailed presentation of the morpho-syntactical, phonetical and etymological particularities of the lexis, taking into consideration the way in which the two languages (English and Romanian) have evolved, the way in which they were influenced by other languages (from the language families they belong to):

This survival of Latin out here in the East is most remarkable, for the Romans held Dacia only five or six generations; then all connection with the western Romance world was cut; the country was flooded with Slavs, who for centuries dominated in church and government, and with Huns and Turks; and the language was never written for over a thousand years. In consequence of all of these factors, a page of Roumanian seems very strange, even to one familiar with Italian or Portuguese, the languages that cultivated Roumanians find easiest to understand¹⁷.

Interestingly enough, in order to illustrate the phonetical and phonological considerations he makes about the Romanian language, he chooses Eminescu's poem *Somnoroase pășărele*, seen as representative for the "surface peculiarities" of Romanian: "I have found Eminescu's *Somnoroase pășărele* well adapted for that purpose in my lectures, and it furthermore illustrates to perfection the melody of the language and the rhythmic mastery of the great poet"¹⁸.

The translation is accompanied by a line-by-line phonetic analysis and etymological explanation that anticipates Clark's conclusion: "This must suffice to show some of the peculiarities of the language, and its genuinely Latin character, however overlaid with Slav and other embroidery. It is a fresh and virile tongue, and smacks of the open Macedonian mountains and the glens of the Carpathians"¹⁹.

In the 25th chapter of the volume, dedicated to "Roumanian Literature", the author does not renounce his exhaustive approach, presenting the cultural-literary panorama in all its aspects. He speaks of Alecsandri, Eminescu and Coșbuc as of the "best Roumanian poets", inspired by Romanian folklore as well as by universal poetry. He then attempts to translate Pillat's *Romanța*. He appears determined to be as thorough as possible in his documentation, which makes it possible for the English reader to be presented with a full account of Romania's literary life from its beginnings. Clark speaks of translation, foreign influences, religious texts (Coresi, Dosoftei), he speaks of Costin, Neculce and Ureche's chronicles, he mentions Gheorghe Asachi, Ion Heliade Rădulescu (and the publications they have founded – *Curierul Românesc* and *Albina Românească*) and speaks of the

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 343-344.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 346.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 359-360.

“pioneers” of Romanian poetry (Costache Negruzzi, Dimitrie Bolintineanu, Vasile Alecsandri) and of historians such as Nicolae Bălcescu, Mihail Kolgălniceanu, etc.

Here is the illustrative paragraph with which Clark concludes his chapter on Romanian literature:

It is true that a cruel and devastating war, followed by huge economic and political difficulties, has checked Roumanian literary expression. But this check will surely be only temporary. A people with the innate literary taste of the Roumanian peasant – witness his ballads and his folk-tales – and the literary ambition of the educated Roumanian, will not long remain mute. In all the discouragement of to-day, it is nevertheless clear that Roumania stands on the threshold of a vast expansion; and this stimulus will doubtless have its effects in literature also²⁰.

Sylvia Pankhurst – 1930. The *Oxford Guide for Literature in English Translation*²¹ mentions the translation made, in 1930, by the suffragette E. Sylvia Pankhurst with the help of the Romanian translator I.O. Ștefanovici, published in London in 1930²². This is often thought to be the first translation of Mihai Eminescu’s poetry into English. The Guide specifies that “Pankhurst discovered in Eminescu (1850–89) a kindred spirit in dislike of contemporary decadence and social injustice, and she sent her translations to her friend George Bernard Shaw”. His comment in his preface to the volume, ‘the translation is astonishing and outrageous: it carried me away’, was suitably ambiguous²³. Even more interestingly so, Sylvia Pankhurst was a socialist feminist who was involved in the campaign for women’s suffrage at the turn of the 20th century, and who is known, amongst others, for having founded a women’s organisation entitled the East London Federation of Suffragettes whose members were working class women campaigning for the right to vote and for social change in the period 1912-1920. Sylvia Pankhurst is also the daughter of Emmeline Pankhurst, co-founder of the Women’s Social and Political Union, whose members were known as suffragettes.

According to the catalogue *world.cat.org*, this translation was edited 9 times and can be found in 79 libraries across the globe, including places such as Cambridge and Oxford University libraries, King’s College, Trinity College, Royal Danish Library, Yale University Library, Library of Congress in Washington DC, etc.

In our research, we have stumbled upon some photocopies containing E. S. Pankhurst’s introduction to the Eminescu translation and some documentation

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 374.

²¹ Peter France, (ed.), *The Oxford Guide for Literature in English Translation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 215.

²² Mihai Eminescu, *Poems*. Translated by Sylvia Pankhurst, I.O Ștefanovici, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1930.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 215.

about M. Eminescu that date back to 1934, as well as upon several translation versions of *Poor Dionis*.

From what we were able to decipher from her handwriting, we present here some very interesting fragments regarding the poet's high esteem for Eminescu, coupled with a brief commentary on *Emperor and Proletarian*. The manuscript, numbered 308²⁴, is actually the handwritten version of a text which appears in a 1934 volume published in Bucharest and edited by Valerian Petrescu²⁵.

We render here the introductory part to Pankhurst's commentary on several poems by Eminescu:

Hail To Thee, Bright Spirit!

Eminescu's works are for all time. Every line of his verse and prose is a polished jewel. His themes, clothed with masterly art in the picturesque (unidentified word) of this or that time or story, are the fundamental problems of human existence which never grow old, illumined by a powerful and original intellect with arresting thoughts. The haunted melody of his enchanted strains, the magic images which teem from his prolific mind dwell long in memory. Profound emotions surge at his command. In the eternal cadences of his receding lullaby, under the limpid moonlight, in the silent woods he makes his own, always some poignant note, some plaintive murmur stirs the heart's core.

She then proceeds to a brief commentary of *Călin*, "the fairy legend" and continues with a more detailed description of the plot in texts such as *Poor Dionis*. As for *Împărat și proletar*, of which Pankhurst passionately writes, we found the following remark:

Where in all literature shall we find a parallel to that magnificent epic, Emperor and Proletarian? With more than Blue-Book accuracy, yet with the true timbre of high poetry, it reveals a group of homeless lads in a tavern, inveighing against their lot, venting the sore complaint belched forth on many a thousand platforms the world over, yet sublimated by the poet's genius to a quintessence of all the resentful griefs and fervent aspirations of unhappy toilers since first the strife of class and class began.

The poet's conclusion is written in the same tone as the rest of her observations, in the form of a panegyric fragment:

Ranked among the Pessimists in his day, Eminescu is of the great Optimists, whose hope, keyed high, yearning with impatient fervor for the ascent of man, seems near despair. His is the mind of scientific habit which fronts the [...] of the universe untrammelled by prejudice or class, or race, or creed, illumined by a great awareness of the human heart, its grief and joy, its fear and hope broadened by that great solidarity and interest in the collective work and destiny of mankind which blots out pettiness.

²⁴ Unpublished manuscript. <https://search.socialhistory.org/Record/ARCH01029/ArchiveContentList#120>. Accessed December 20, 2019.

²⁵ Valerian Petrescu, (ed.), *Omagiu lui Mihai Eminescu [Homage to Mihai Eminescu]*, Bucharest, Editura Univers, 1934.

We hail him as a thinker of his time and yet a modern among the moderns still, a lover and the preeminent interpreter of his own people, a citizen of the world.

The manuscript also contains a copy of a commemorative issue of the publication *Cuvântul nostru*, occasioned by commemorating 40 years from the poet's death and published in Botoșani in June 1929.

Conclusion

Our research places itself within these two concentric frameworks, the general issue of world literature and the applied case of the national literary context, and constitutes an analysis of the translation of Mihai Eminescu's poetry into English. Far from solely proposing a comparative, side-by-side study of his texts' renditions into a foreign language, the subject addresses the more complex issue of exportability (and, therefore, translatability), relevance and place (occupied within the world literature) of the most debated Romanian identity figure and myth: *Mihai Eminescu-the national poet*.

The study of the presence of Mihai Eminescu's works in the anglophone reception area, necessarily preceded by an analysis of idea content, seen as the point of confluence of several cultural sources, reveals that the thesis of Mihai Eminescu's texts belonging to world literature is demonstrable through at least two research angles: the first one from *inside* the literary text and the second one emerging *outside* the literary text. Once established, the operating principles of the world literature concept circumscribe two fields of analysis, multipliable at the level of their constituent elements: the literary macrocosm and microcosm.

Eminescu's texts can therefore be read as world literature through their heterogeneous nature at the level of lyrical and thematic composition (an argument demonstrable by classical Eminescology, starting with the observations made by theoreticians such as Dumitru Caracostea, Garabet Ibrăileanu, Nicolae Iorga, Titu Maiorescu, Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea, as well as the by the pragmatic approaches of Ioana Bot, Iulian Costache, Andrei Terian) and as a part of the network of world literature (as imagined by theorists like Damrosch, Apter, Casanova, etc).

Indeed, the translation study, although distinguishing itself by its distance from classical approaches, can thereby be considered an independent analysis, revealing, through the novelty of the approach, both the virtues of the original creation (since the comparative analysis must necessarily be preceded by plenary understanding of the original text) and the tensions inherent in the translation process. The analysis of Eminescu's work from the angle of world literature clearly benefits not only from the study of its reception in the cultural-linguistic "target" environments, but also from the careful observation of the factors involved in this translocation.

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THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF MIHAI EMINESCU'S POETRY

(Abstract)

Our research aims at reinterpreting Mihai Eminescu's work from the perspective of the *world literature* concept (as defined by David Damrosch, Emily Apter, Pascale Casanova), thus proposing a

transcultural investigation of the poet's texts seen beyond the inevitably narrow horizon of local studies and within the dynamic of intertextual interaction, as well as at determining its chances of positioning with regard to the axiology of world literature by analyzing in detail the translations of Eminescu's work into English. This approach aims to highlight the way in which the poet's texts occur in a language other than the one in which they were written in order to see whether they still preserve the prestige of the "national poet" myth and the formidable propensity of suggestion that placed Eminescu's work at the centre of the aesthetic canon of Romanian literature.

Keywords: Mihai Eminescu, world literature, poetry, translation, English.

TRADUCERILE ÎN ENGLEZĂ ALE POEZIEI LUI MIHAI EMINESCU (*Rezumat*)

Lucrarea își propune să reinterpreteze opera lui Mihai Eminescu din perspectiva *world literature* (paradigmă definită de David Damrosch, Emily Apter, Pascale Casanova). Prin urmare, acest studiu propune o cercetare transculturală a textelor poetului român, care să depășească orizontul inevitabil restrâns al studiilor locale pentru a le integra în dinamica interacțiunilor intertextuale transnaționale. Totodată, prin analiza atentă a traducerilor în engleză din opera lui Eminescu, studiul evaluează și șansele poetului român de a conta într-o dezbateră consacrată axiologiei *world literature*. Scopul unei astfel de abordări este și de a releva dacă textele traduse pot încă păstra prestigiul garantat de mitul „poetului național”, precum și extraordinara sugestivitate care a determinat plasarea lui Eminescu în centrul canonului estetic al literaturii române.

Cuvinte-cheie: Mihai Eminescu, *world literature*, poezie, traducere, engleză.

DIANA BLAGA

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF TASTE. FROM CULINARY TO LITERARY ART

By the end of 1935, a society with a rather unusual profile had been created in Bucharest – *Divanul meșterilor și cărturarilor de la Hanul Ancuței* [*The Masters and Scholars' Divan of Ancuța's Inn*]. The originality of this group lies in its specific literary-gastronomic character. Also, its relationship with the official bodies of the country is a particular one. The Divan had declared its absolute independence from any form of government. The administration of a restaurant called *Ancuța's Inn* ensures the finances means for this unconventional society. The restaurant had the additional purpose of accommodating the group's meetings. Furthermore, the profits from the restaurant are also needed to serve as prizes for the young artists of the country. The society is led by Mihail Sadoveanu (as Marele Vornic/ The High Steward) and by Al. O. Teodoreanu (as Marele Logofăt/ The Great Chancellor). Teodoreanu is also the mastermind behind the idea of founding an independent academic society. Of course, the name of this society and of its restaurant has its origins in Sadoveanu's well-known collection of stories.

Both *Statutul Divanului* [*The Divan's Statute*] and the adjacent documents that provide information regarding the group (interviews, correspondence) insist on the idea of bringing together in harmony the scholars and artists of the country. The initiators of the society believe that the collaboration and mutual support among Romanian artists are a fundamental component of their relations. This is a reflection of what Giorgio Agamben, following Aristotle, calls “togetherness of thoughts and ideas”, a phrase which can be identified as fundamental to humans beings' *life as unity*¹. A glimpse of the same atmosphere can also be caught in the literary social soirées that took place here between the world wars. These gatherings counted on the showmanship of the participants and their purpose was not only to put literature on the map, but also to animate the potential public. Usually, these literary social soirées were attended by the most popular writers of those times. They ended up with a banquet, where the cultivated values were friendship and conviviality. The post-performance meal becomes an extension of the stage on which the authors read their writings; it becomes a show in itself².

The gatherings that took place under the aegis of *The Masters and Scholars' Divan of Ancuța's Inn* were, however, more than an act of communicating with each other. They were first and foremost a way of bringing together the intellectual

¹ Giorgio Agamben, “Prietenul” [“The Friend”], in *Prietenul și alte eseuri* [*The Friend and Other Essays*]. Translated by Vlad Russo, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2012, p. 20.

² Michel Onfray, *Rațiunea gurmandă. Filozofia gustului* [*The Gourmet Mind. The Philosophy of Taste*]. Translated by Claudia Dumitriu and Lidia Simion, Bucharest, Nemira, 2000, p. 29.

and artistic elite, with the purpose of forwarding its ideas and values and of ensuring the progress of the country's culture by encouraging and promoting its cultural resources. Al. O. Teodoreanu exposes the intentions of the newly founded society in a letter addressed to N. M. Condiescu, the secretary general of the Royal Foundation Union and the president of The Society of Romanian Writers between 1936 and 1937:

I have high hopes for this society, as it was born out of a joke. [...] the fact that the most representative writers and artists of the country are going to get together around a table twice a year, getting to know each other better and the fact that they are going to offer prizes to the younger ones without any contribution from the government is not a circumstance to neglect. [...] I wish that this society, guided by the love for the Throne and Country, for our language and our traditions, should become a lively and active institution, an impulse and an example to the young, a buffer against the anarchy we see expanding like mange³.

Such a perspective is not new to Al. O. Teodoreanu. In line with his mentors from *Viața Românească* and having exercised his critical judgement with *Junimea*, he constantly endorsed the values of his native culture, at the same time as he criticised the nationalistic outbursts typical of the supporters of *Sămănătorul*.

As the society was one of a literary-gastronomic profile, the Divan's steering committee also comprised positions such as Marele Pivnicer (The High Butler) or Marele Paharnic (The High Cupbearer). These titled yeomen were required by the court in former centuries. The rules that highlight the major importance of the gastronomic side of the activities of this academic society can be found in *Pravila Hanului* [*The Inn's Statute Book*] and in *Hrisovul vel-logofătului* [*The Chancellor's Charter*]. These two documents are both written by the author of *Hronicul măscăriciului Vălătuc* [*The Chronicle of Vălătuc the Jester*] in the same style as this collection of stories, which imitates the old chronicles' turn of phrase. Teodoreanu is the one who has also written the menu of the restaurant (*Izvodul de mâncări și beuturi cu prețuluiiala lor aflatoare la Hanul Ancuței* [*The Inventory of Meals and Drinks and their Prices at Ancuța's Inn*]). A number of the aphoristic, pedagogic annotations in this original menu or in *Hrisovul vel-logofătului* are also to be found in the gastronomic reviews that Păstorel used to publish in the journals of the day. The meetings of the Divan's members were not supposed to be dull gatherings at all. On the contrary, they were supposed to be well-handled

³ Rodica Pandele (ed.), *Păstorel și corespondenții săi* [*Păstorel and His Correspondents*], Bucharest, Eminescu, 1998, p. 80: „Îmi pun mari speranțe în această asociație, pentru că s-a născut din glumă. [...] faptul că cei mai reprezentativi scriitori și artiști ai țării se vor aduna de două ori pe an în jurul unei mese având prilej să se cunoască mai bine și că vor distribui premiile celor mai nevrăstnici, fără să ceară ajutorul statului, nu e un amănunt neglijabil. [...] Aș dori ca această societate, în care iubirea de Tron și Țară, de limba ce-o vorbim și scriem, de tradițiile acestui neam să fie puncte de reper permanente, să devină o instituție vie și activă, un stimulent și o pildă pentru tineret, o frână pentru anarhia care se întinde ca o lepră”. All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

celebrations, where the key ingredients were the banqueters' vivaciousness, their enthusiasm and the Bacchic and gastronomic scenario. Therefore, Marele Paharnic (The High Cupbearer) was in charge of the progression of these celebrations, as he was "responsible for setting the agenda of the Divan's Repasts (banquets)"⁴. These events took place when the Divan's prizes were awarded⁵ or when a member of the society was celebrated. Such a banquet took place in 1937, when Al. O. Teodoreanu was celebrated for receiving the National Prize for Fiction.

The pivotal role of a meal in the proper proceedings of an artists' society bears a double interpretation. First of all, the explicit intention is noticeable of raising culinary activity to the rank of an art. Secondly, there is a possibility of a more mundane approach: the artist is claiming his humaneness by disclosing and celebrating his mundane inclinations. The differences between artists and the ordinary public are emphasized by the topics of the conversations and the adjacent purposes of these celebratory meals, something that reflects the artists' social status. This reminds us of the writer on vacation as described by Barthes. This writer maintains his status even when he exhibits his humaneness and this only augments the mystification surrounding his remarkableness⁶.

Furthermore, two complementary aspects of a meal can be emphasized: the celebratory one, obvious in the banquet-like events, and the meal as a bonding agent. The latter aspect occurs at the same time as civilisation progresses and is unanimously recorded in studies such as Brillat-Savarin's *The Physiology of Taste*, in the memoirs of the members of the old manorial families (see Radu Rosetti or Rudolf Suțu; likewise, nowadays, Al. Paleologu), but also in literature, not only as a component of literary history (mostly in the guise of anecdotes), but also as fiction, as illustrated by the stories of Mihail Sadoveanu. The meal as entertainment transcends the primary purpose of satisfying one's hunger and becomes a means of establishing both interpersonal and intrapersonal connections. Here lies the difference between eating for survival and eating as a complex process in which the celebratory aspect prevails. It is the difference between nourishment and gastronomy. It is the path from nature to culture. This ascendancy unveils a civilizing process and circumscribes "human history understood as continuous ascent above nature"⁷. Nietzsche and Foucault emphasized the customised nature of nourishment in the case of every individual. The former thinks that man is predestined to adjust to a certain diet and that, if he keeps to it, he can ensure a

⁴ Nicolae Gheran, "Divanul meșterilor și cărturarilor de la Hanul Ancuței" ["The Masters and Scholars' Divan at Ancuța's Inn"], *Adevărul literar și artistic*, 2003, 665, p. 13: "are însărcinarea rânduiri la Praznicele (banchetele) Divanului".

⁵ Among those who were awarded this prize may be mentioned George Lesnea, Cicerone Theodorescu and the sculptor Ion Irimescu.

⁶ Roland Barthes, *Mitologii [Mythologies]*. Translated by Maria Carpov, Bucharest, Nemira, 2015, pp. 38-39.

⁷ Michel Onfray, *Rațiunea gurmandă*, p. 30.

harmonious way of life and thinking⁸. Foucault, on the other hand, has a different view on the dietary habit: he considers it a personal alternative, but with the same purpose: that of conditioning the human behaviour and man's access to knowledge – not only about the universe, but also his self-knowledge⁹. In both cases one has in mind a process based on knowledge through senses. Popularisation of such ideas ensured that gastronomy would no longer be perceived as an inferior topic, but as a form of art.

It is no wonder that Mihail Sadoveanu and Al. O. Teodoreanu are the ones to preside over a literary-gastronomic society¹⁰, as both their literary work and their everyday life incline towards gastronomy in its superior form. However, these two are not pioneers in Romanian literature when it comes to the relation between literature and gastronomy, either fictional or biographical in form. Mihail Kogălniceanu and C. Negruzzi are the first authors of a foreign-inspired cookery book published on Romanian soil: *Carte de bucate boierești. 200 de rețete cercate de bucate, prăjituri și alte trebi gospodărești* [*Manorial Cookery Book. 200 Tested Recipes of Dishes, Sweet Bakes and Other Household Duties*] (1841).

Researchers show that in the times of Richard II (the 14th century) arts and culture were at the apogee of prosperity, as this king was the first who showed any interest in these fields. Not incidentally, the first cookery book in England was written at his request. Therefore, cookery books are representative for the evolution of society and by extension for the civilizing process. They also certify the connection between gastronomy and artists (or, generally speaking, intellectuals), who are fundamental mediators in this process. On Romanian soil, Kogălniceanu and Negruzzi are followed by other writers. The most popular example is Păstorel Teodoreanu. His interest in gastronomy is a major one. Although his gastronomic reviews were not published in a book in his lifetime, they are a warranty for his popularity and his legitimacy as a gastronomic reviewer between the two world wars. It is also important to mention both Mihail Sevastos' *Carte de bucate* [*Cookery Book*]¹¹ and Constantin Bacalbașa's *Dictatura gastronomică. 1501 feluri*

⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce homo*. Translated by Mircea Ivănescu, Bucharest, Humanitas, 1996, pp. 28-29.

⁹ Michel Foucault, "Practicarea plăcerilor" ["The Exercise of Pleasure"], in *Istoria sexualității* [*The History of Sexuality*]. Translated by Beatrice Stanciu, Timișoara, Editura de Vest, 1995, p. 193.

¹⁰ Liviu Rebreanu and Panait Istrati are the other two writers who are members of the society's steering committee.

¹¹ A comparison between the first two editions of this book (1939 and 1956) pours light on the changes that occurred in Romanian society after 1948. The second edition dwells more on the practical side of gastronomy. The fact is obvious mainly in the removal of chapters such as "Aranjarea menu-urilor" ["Designing the Menus"], "Arta serviciului" ["The Art of Table Waiting"] or "Politeța la masa" ["Table Manners"]. In addition, the first edition included menu suggestions, which were also removed in 1956. The reason for these alterations is that they were seen by the new régime as a threat, a symbol of a world that the communists wanted forgotten. These practices were characteristic of the bourgeoisie, considered effete and, most importantly, obsolete, unconnected to

de mâncare [*The Gastronomic Dictatorship. 1501 Dishes*]. Both these books were reissued after the Second World War and even after 1989. The most popular author of cookery books in Romania is Sanda Marin. The only purpose of mentioning her here is that of contrasting her with the authors that have been named so far. Her huge success was due to her book's practicality. The housewives were able to relate to her recipes, something that is not so easy as far as the recipes of Păstorel Teodoreanu go, for instance. The latter author embodies a certain noblesse, as his recipes hail from an old Romanian manorial heritage of French influence. This is also the case for *Cartea de bucate boierești* [*Manorial Cookery Book*] by Kogălniceanu and Negruzzi. The pedagogical purpose of this publication is obvious, the book being targeted at a rather aristocratic kind of reader.

Out of the inventory of factors that have influenced these intellectuals' affinity with gastronomy, the following can be listed: their upbringing, which presupposed the precocious cultivation of refined eating habits and the importance of the ceremonial aspect of a meal, and their personal predisposition to being gourmands, that is, to a certain type of *dietetics*¹². These affinities transpire from the biographies of the authors mentioned so far. The cultivation of conviviality and togetherness was a natural attitude in the Teodoreanu household. The ceremonial atmosphere and good-humour were the main ingredients for such gatherings, according to both family members and guests. Demostene Botez, Pamfil Șeicaru, Al. A. Philippide were among the latter. Ștefana Velisar-Teodoreanu was deeply impressed by her future family at her first visit, as Moldavian hospitality was very intense. The same atmosphere appears to have impressed all those who had any contact with the Teodoreanu household. Even Al. O. Teodoreanu, who was rather reserved about giving personal testimonies, praised this idyllic climate. His words were aimed at criticising what he perceived as the degradation of the idea of home¹³. To him, home represents on a small scale what *Divanul meșterilor și cărturarilor de la Hanul Ancuței* represents on a larger scale: "fraternity is that which defines the community: after the fashion of family and love"¹⁴. So are most relationships between writers: based on the idea of fraternity.

Mihail Kogălniceanu is seen as a true gourmet not only due to the fact that he wrote a cookery book and that he was the first to translate into Romanian the 20 aphorisms that open Brillat-Savarin's book, but also due to his letters and his travel notes. As a student in France, he tries French comfiture which is something new in

the progress required of the new society. Unfortunately, the editions of 1995 and 1998 reproduce the 1956 edition.

¹² Michel Foucault, *Practicarea plăcerilor*, p. 186.

¹³ Al. O. Teodoreanu, *Tămâie și otravă* [*Incense and Poison*], Timișoara, Editura de Vest, 1994, p. 189.

¹⁴ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Comunitatea absentă* [*The Absent Community*]. Translated by Emilian Cioc, Cluj-Napoca, Idea Design&Print, 2005, p. 33: "fraternitatea este cea care desemnează comunitatea: modelul familiei și al dragostei".

comparison with what he is used to back in Moldavia. As a result, he gets homesick and the only fact that cures his nostalgia is the remembrance of these tastes. Furthermore, his travel notes from Spain testify about his foreigner's interest in the country's variety of fruits and their origins¹⁵. The autobiographical element specific to Kogălniceanu's literary writings also comprises his gastronomic tastes. In *Iluzii pierdute* [*Lost Illusions*] the author declares himself aware of the novelty inherent in the publication of his and Negruzzi's foreign-inspired cookery book¹⁶. At the same time, the author of *Scrisori la un prieten* [*Letters to a Friend*] manifests his appetency for international cuisine and more diverse alimentation¹⁷. It does not mean that he excludes or ignores the Romanian – or, more specifically, Moldavian – tastes. On the contrary: for instance, he defends the authentic Moldavian pie, the kind unaltered by criticism about the assimilation of foreign trends¹⁸. The impact of Kogălniceanu and Negruzzi's book is similar to the revolutionary impact that Felix Barla and his confectioner's shop have on old Iași in Kogălniceanu's unfinished novel *Tainele inimii* [*Secrets of the Heart*].

Even if almost an entire century has passed since their creation, a pedagogical intent is still transparent in Al. O. Teodoreanu's gastronomic reviews. Păstorel is intransigent when it comes to following table manners. This unyielding position surfaces in the form of acid ironies and graphic verdicts that enthrall the reader. (Food) hygiene, table manners, manners in general (in public spaces or at home), the relations between the consumer and the service provider or those between the customer and the waiter/ bartender are pivotal aspects in the gastronomic Decalogue devised by Păstorel. Instead, a certain laxness is specific to the style and format of the recipes. Their authorship is constantly diverted to a third person as the reviewer prefers to set himself up as a simple mediator. Furthermore, the recipes are almost always scattered through with anecdotes. Thus, the recipes are either presented by a series of characters in the reviews (Costache, Yvonne and others) or displayed as part of a lost and found manuscript or as part of a dialogue that the reviewer has heard by chance, claiming that he does nothing but write them down. This strategy is specific to Al. O. Teodoreanu. He exploits it both in *Hronicul măscăriciului Vălătuc* [*The Chronicle of Vălătuc the Jester*] and in some texts from *Tămâie și otravă* [*Incense and Poison*].

The anecdotal pattern of Păstorel's reviews is another confirmation of the connection between culinary art and the art of storytelling. It is also a confirmation of the conviviality that is so characteristic for the meals of those who find

¹⁵ Mihail Kogălniceanu, *Scrisori. Note de călătorie* [*Letters. Travel Notes*]. Edition by Augustin Z.N. Pop and Dan Simionescu, Bucharest, Editura pentru Literatură, 1967, pp. 225-226.

¹⁶ Mihail Kogălniceanu, *Tainele inimii. Scrieri literare și istorice* [*Secrets of the Heart. Literary and Historical Writings*]. Edition by Dan Simionescu, Bucharest, Albatros, 1987, p. 43.

¹⁷ Costache Negruzzi, *Opere* [*Works*]. Edition by Liviu Leonte, Bucharest, Academia Română, Fundația Națională pentru Știință și Artă, 2009, p. 259.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 319.

themselves in a state of “togetherness of thoughts and ideas”. The fact is most obvious in Mihail Sadoveanu’s fictional literature, in which two recurring motifs are frequently combined: that of literature (of storytelling) and that of gastronomy. Together they make up a scenario in which the ceremonial emerges even from the midst of simplicity (as in *Crâșma lui moș Precu* [*Uncle Precu’s Barrelhouse*]). The importance of the ceremonial aspect is also obvious in another motif from the same series, namely hunting. As a result, the act of storytelling has mesmerizing effects on the world and on the listener, as one can see in Al. Odobescu’s writings. The culinary scenario anticipates or succeeds hunting as a compulsory stage. For instance, in Sadoveanu’s *Cântecul de dragoste* [*The Love Song*] the hunting preparations imply that plans for the hunters’ meals are also to be made. This phase is recorded in the stories about the hunting expeditions organized by the members of *Viața Românească*. The most enthusiastic writers taking part in these expeditions were Mihail Sadoveanu and G. Topîrceanu, and the one so keen about the moment of the meal was M. Sevastos, who, not incidentally, was also the author of a cookery book¹⁹ himself. As ceremonial practices, both eating and hunting also have in common the idea of social gathering, of bringing people together, stipulating the distinctiveness of the hunter, as seen in *Țara de dincolo de negură* [*The Land beyond Haze*]. What dominates the pages of this kind of writing is the state of mind that Nicolae Steinhardt called in an essay “bunăvoință” (“geniality”). He found that writers like Odobescu, Sadoveanu, Brătescu-Voinești or the Teodoreanu brothers have this in common.

The recipes of the national cuisine were also translated as a form of keeping in touch with folk heritage and nationality. This is a process in which not every Western influence is rejected. The exploitation of the Romanian gastronomic art is a constant concern of the Divan. The group is founded on the idea of interrelation of the arts, intended to highlight the Romanian artists’ potential and their creations against a European background. This is the kind of concern that Al. O. Teodoreanu, for instance, had in 1934 as pointed out in a letter to Al. Rosetti, the manager of Fundația pentru Literatură și Artă Carol II (The Carol II Foundation for Literature and Arts). The letter regards an exhibit organised by the European countries, which took place in Brussels. Păstorel views gastronomy as one of the arts that, if sensibly exploited, has all the advantages necessary for bringing about a most favourable view of Romania. Furthermore, he thinks that gastronomy can ensure a greater success than literature here, especially if combined with the proper *mise en scène* and with the proper traditional music²⁰.

Both Al. O. Teodoreanu’s gastronomic reviews and part of his fictional literature are written in praise of the Romanian cuisine and wines. The reviews

¹⁹ Mihail Sevastos, *Amintiri de la „Viața Românească”* [*Memories from “Viața Românească”*], Bucharest, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă, 1956, p. 248.

²⁰ Rodica Pandeale (ed.), *Păstorel și corespondenții săi*, p. 153.

emphasize the fact that the specific qualities of the folk cuisine are a testimony to the degree of refinement of the national gastronomy. It is important to mention that folk cuisine in its highest form is most often instanced in the writings of Mihail Sadoveanu or in those of Calistrat Hogaș. Al. O. Teodoreanu illustrates instead a high-class sort of gastronomy, as his attitude is a rather aristocratic one. This fact does not rule out a certain recognition of the excellent attributes of folk cuisine and Păstorel exemplifies this in his story *Pursângele Căpitanului* [*The Captain's Thoroughbred*]. The text is part of *Hronicul măscăriciului Vălătuc*, in which *History* is left behind so that *history* can showcase an alternative past. Thus, the reader finds out more from this story than it is obvious at first sight. Al. O. Teodoreanu succeeds in framing “a personal version of national identity and, at the same time, a discourse about the best way this identity could be refreshed and celebrated”²¹ by means of a story in which national cuisine, Western culinary adaptations, the Zippas' wines and their twisted love life are featured. Doris Mironescu points out that the events that Teodoreanu has chosen to write about are representative of what Maurice Halbwachs referred to as “collective memory”, which has been preferred by Teodoreanu to that provided by *history*. All this in order to outline “an image of the past from a community's perspective”²². The pedagogical intentions of Păstorel's gastronomic reviews are defended in the story by the boyar Toader Zippa.

On the other hand, for Mihail Sadoveanu folk gastronomy as part of a national cuisine is an iterative aspect. What matters in his writings is not the content or the abundance of a meal, but the ceremonial implied by it. It must be noted in this respect that the repasts in Sadoveanu's stories are not heavy on sophisticated courses. The main interest lies in the same idea of bringing together the people of a community and in the atmosphere that these people are able to create by means of their stories. For instance, the new Ancuța charms the customers at her inn both with the dishes she serves and with the ambience created around the tables. The same holds true for Calistrat Hogaș. In his writings, simplicity culminates, reaching a degree *à la* Rousseau, considered equal to perfection. The importance of the meal is augmented by the journey through the wild and by the presence of a companion. The recurrent reluctance and complaints of this companion are counterpoised by the *geniality* of the protagonist. As a matter of fact, Hogaș was described by his coevals as a gourmet for whom a morsel and a glass of red wine were of great importance. Those two key ingredients are indicative of a kind of sanguine

²¹ Doris Mironescu, “Păstorel. Sentimentul apartenenței la vinuri și popoare” [“Păstorel. The Feeling of Affiliation to Wines and Nationalities”], in *Un secol al memoriei. Literatură și conștiință comunitară în epoca romantică* [*A Century of Memory. Literature and Community Consciousness in the Romantic Era*], Iași, Editura Universității „Al. I. Cuza”, 2016, p. 180: “o versiune personală a identității naționale și totodată un discurs despre modul în care această identitate poate fi cel mai bine rememorată și celebrată”.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 179: “reprezentare a trecutului mediată de comunitate”.

mythology²³, representing an alternative return to nature. Hogaș's daughter considered such descriptions of her father false. By having his affinities qualified as savage, her perspective shows a bias indicating some degree of priggishness. Moreover, her desire is to separate such practices from her father's image. Instead, she makes a hagiographic portrait of him as she criticises his presumed detractors²⁴.

Fascinating facts can also emerge from analyzing the relation between gastronomy and time, as the former operates and depends on the latter. This relation is based on the ephemeral quality of the objects in question. Under these conditions, the cook is an artist whose creation is not destined to last. Thus, he is as "a Sisyphus, sentenced to perform again and again something forever doomed to evanescence."²⁵ Even though it is a phenomenon of the present moment, culinary creation embodies in its peculiarity and short existence the entire essence of the universe, beginning with the genesis and ending with death. It is its ephemeral nature that has made gastronomy an interesting art for modernity. In times such as ours, while praising speed and the present moment, it is natural that gastronomy should gain our attention. As meals are reiterative moments of the day-to-day life, the perception of a dish also stimulates the remembrance of a similar previous experience. Savour and its perception are able to induce more or less unusual associations and lasting sensations which will become a reference standard for all subsequent gastronomic experiences. Moreover, the taste of a meal can also be a reference point for other experiences, as exemplified by Proust's madeleine. The entire configuration of such a moment can be re-visualized or symbolically re-enacted in the subject's mind whenever he is exposed to stimuli that allow such a complex form of remembrance. The present duplicated as perception is simultaneously accompanied by memory. Thus, the culinary scenario itself becomes dual, as "two different selves are created, one becoming a spectator and the other a performance with a plot known in advance"²⁶. The process described is an unusual *mise en abyme* which augments the ceremonial aspect of the gastronomic scenario. The impermanence of gastronomic art is, however, another reason for a punster such as Al. O. Teodoreanu to be drawn to it. Both his literature and his life betray his instinctive fondness of temporariness and immanence. Hence his appetency for the *secondary*, for small forms both in art and life, is discernible both in his epigrams and in his bohemian lifestyle.

²³ Roland Barthes, *Mitologii*, p. 94.

²⁴ Sidonia C. Hogaș, *Tataia. Amintiri din viața lui Calistrat Hogaș [Tataia. Memories from Calistrat Hogaș's Life]*, Piatra-Neamț, Crigarux, 2000, pp. 44-45.

²⁵ Michel Onfray, *Rațiunea gurmândă*, p. 113: "[este asemeni] unui Sisif condamnat să facă și să refacă ceea ce este neîncetat sortit dispariției".

²⁶ Remo Bodei, *Senzația de déjà vu [The Déjà Vu Sensation]*. Translated by Alex. Cistelecan, Bucharest, Art, 2009, p. 95: "iau naștere două euri diferite, dintre care unul se transformă în spectator, iar celălalt, în spectacol cu o intrigă dinainte cunoscută".

A meal and its cultural implications activate an entire semiotic system. Moreover, a meal itself becomes a symbol – of a person, of a community, of a cultural space, of a certain civilization, of a certain time; a symbol that bears testimony of the process of civilization, whose main agents and witnesses are artists. As a *secondary* phenomenon, meals illustrate on a small scale the social progress of the *mainstream*. They can also be a way of knowledge and self-knowledge. Gastronomy exploits all the senses through a form of aesthetics of life initiated by the individual in order to gain access to the universal. Meals are based on a scenario where two of the main assets are conviviality and the feeling of affiliation to a community. Based on these criteria, writers and artists are committed to gastronomy regarded as an art asserting a certain type of sensibility and reverberating in their creations. Furthermore, through the celebration of the senses, this form of art cultivates the communion of all arts and of those who practise them.

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THE PHYSIOLOGY OF TASTE.
FROM CULINARY TO LITERARY ART
(Abstract)

The purpose of this paper is to look at gastronomy as a form of art. In this respect, gastronomy developed as part of the civilizing process and as the refinement of the mores progressed. Just as literature, gastronomy implies the ideas of pleasure and experiment. As writers displayed a great interest in gastronomy, this form of art also became a subject of their literature and, at a more subtle level it became an exercise in a certain sensibility. The present study proposes an insight into literary history in its gastronomic implications in the writings of Romanian authors such as M. Kogălniceanu, C. Negruzzi, M. Sadoveanu or Al. O. Teodoreanu. They displayed a conspicuous interest in culinary art, in *the physiology of taste* as well as in modernity's innovations.

Keywords: modernity, savour, gastronomy, refinement, experiment, cookery books, literature, biography.

FIZIOLOGIA GUSTULUI.
DE LA ARTA CULINARĂ LA ARTA LITERARĂ
(*Rezumat*)

Scopul acestei lucrări este să abordeze gastronomia ca o formă de artă. Rezultat al evoluției civilizației și al rafinării moravurilor, gastronomia implică – la fel ca literatura – plăcerea și experimentul. Fiindcă scriitorii au manifestat un interes major față de gastronomie, această formă de artă a devenit nu doar un subiect al literaturii, ci și un mod de exercitare a unei sensibilități aparte. Acest articol propune o cercetare de istorie literară dedicată implicațiilor gastronomiei în scrierile unor autori precum M. Kogălniceanu, C. Negruzzi, M. Sadoveanu sau Al. O. Teodoreanu, de vreme ce toți au dovedit un interes vădit pentru arta culinară, pentru *fiziologia gustului*, precum și pentru inovațiile modernității.

Cuvinte-cheie: modernitate, savoare, gastronomie, rafinament, experiment, cărți de bucate, literatură, biografie.

TISSUS ET ACCESSOIRES OUBLIÉS. DE LA PANOPLIE VESTIMENTAIRE D'UN ÉCRIVAIN « SENTIMENTAL »

« La tenue absolument sans prétention : où il y de gêne, il n'y pas de plaisir »¹. Rien ne pourrait mieux caractériser l'opinion sur la mode et l'habillement de l'auteur de *Momente* [*Moments*] que « le dicton favori » de la « gracieuse madame Guvidi », le personnage féminin de sa nouvelle *Om cu noroc!* [*Homme fortuné !*]. D'une trajectoire rectiligne, celle-ci favorise, en exclusivité, le confort, à partir duquel Caragiale ne s'écarte ni même dans la jeunesse, pendant son mandat d'inspecteur, étant surpris, un jour de grand froid, avec l'habit emprunté ni vers la fin de sa vie, quand, à Berlin, « pour ses vêtements il n'a aucune préoccupation, et il aimait ses habits vieilliss »². Il est possible que ce soit ici la raison pour laquelle la garde-robe du père n'a jamais correspondu aux exigences vestimentaires du fils, Mateiu Caragiale. Pour sa flanelle « déchirée aux coudes » et pour ses « pantalons longs et serrés qu'il appelait "de cavalier" »³, Caragiale ressent le même attachement que celui de Diderot pour sa vieille robe de chambre⁴.

L'auteur ne ressemble pourtant pas à son personnage réformateur du récit *Reformă...* [*Réforme*], Mihalache Cogălniceanu, qui, en privé, « il faut le savoir, n'a pas coutume de porter ni robe de chambre, ni pantoufles »⁵. Au-delà de son caractère anecdotique, l'emprunt des deux attributs de l'intimité, la robe de chambre et les pantoufles, par le célibataire Caragiale, pendant la visite qu'il fait à l'actrice Amelie Welner en absence de son mari, l'acteur Constantin Nottara, ne peut que soutenir l'hypothèse.

Sur les implications qu'a cette pièce vestimentaire d'intérieur, d'origine française, dans les textes du dramaturge, c'est la correspondance de Caragiale qui

¹ I.L. Caragiale, *Opere, I. Proză literară* [*Oeuvres, I. Prose littéraire*]. Édition et chronologie de Stanciu Ilin, Nicolae Bârna, Constantin Hârlav. Préface de Eugen Simion, Bucarest, Univers Enciclopedic, 2000, p. 54.

² Alexandrina I.L. Caragiale, Ecaterina Logardi-Caragiale, *Amintiri despre I.L. Caragiale. Evocări, interviuri, scrisori* [*Souvenirs de I.L. Caragiale. Évocations, interviews, lettres*]. Anthologie et notes de Constantin Hârlav, Ploiești, Karta-Graphic, 2012, p. 73.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 73.

⁴ *Regrets sur ma vieille robe de chambre ou Avis à ceux qui ont plus de goûts que de la fortune*, essais rédigés par Denis Diderot en 1768. Le texte a été traduit en roumain avec le titre « Păneri de râu după vechiul meu halat sau Povață pentru cei ce au mai mult bun gust decât avere », in Denis Diderot, *Opere alese* [*Oeuvres choisies*]. Traduit en roumain par Gellu Naum. Étude introductive de Valentin Lipatti, Bucarest, Les Éditions d'État pour littérature et art, 1956.

⁵ I.L. Caragiale, *Opere I. Proză literară*, p. 113.

offre plus d'informations. Orthographié d'après son original, le terme apparaît dans la missive envoyée de l'exil, le 7 mars 1909, à l'un de ses correspondants les plus intimes, Paul Zarifopol ; on s'en rend compte de son utilité banale, celle d'avoir offert au sexagénaire Caragiale un confort thermique minimal : « Mon cher D[octeu]r. Il fait quel temps chez vous et comment va-t-il votre rhume ? Chez nous, grâce à Dieu, l'hiver a débuté en force, c'est pourquoi je reste dans la maison comme une pomme de terre gelée en robe de chambre, et les poêles n'ont pas de pouvoir... »⁶ ; ou « Ici, chez nous, il est impossible d'imaginer un temps plus mou, mais plus moche : de tous les côtés me brûle l'humidité et le froid. Je couve dans la robe de chambre » (13 mars 1909). Excepté le motif de l'inconfort, qui est ici d'ordre technique (on l'invoque aussi deux mois plus tard, quand l'auteur se plaint de l'absence de la poêle et se voit obligé de refuser « l'honneur d'héberger le plus jeune membre de la famille de son ami, parce qu'il tremble et meurt de froid »), la robe de chambre annonce chez Caragiale la perte de la vitalité suite d'une usure (« Depuis que je suis arrivé de Lipsca, je n'ai pas quitté ma robe de chambre, j'ai complètement moisi, il me faut prendre l'air comme un vieux tapis mité, sinon je sens m'effondre » (8 juin 1906) ; ou suite d'une fatigue prolongée (« j'ai perdu la vigueur et je dois me rétablir au moins une semaine [...], mais sérieusement, je n'ai pas le courage de sortir de la robe de chambre » (7 janvier 1909)) ; ou bien, suite d'un effort trop matinal : « Hier matin, à sept heure et demie j'ai embarqué ma belle-sœur et j'ai détruit mon repos pour une semaine entière. Je suis obligé de ne plus sortir quelques jours de ma robe de chambre » (19 novembre 1909).

Une seule fois, la robe de chambre du maître est associée à son atelier de création, pour que tout de suite l'invocation de la muse, d'inspiration ancillaire (comme remarquera plus tard le critique Șerban Cioculescu), corrompe la notion même de la création artistique : « Je tourne dans mon atelier, à ma robe de chambre : là, bien sûr, m'attend ma muse inspirante – Emma avec ses merveilleuses *zoupes* qui m'ont manqués un mois »⁷. Un substitut roumain de la « robe » pourrait l'être « ce gilet d'intérieur » (comme le nomme Caragiale dans un dialogue avec les journalistes transylvains). À cet égard, ce que distingue Caragiale de Diderot, sans exclure le confort, c'est sa propension vers le logement « étouffé de tapis turcs », avec piano ou épinette et avec « des paysages originaux de Grigorescu »⁸, « de très bons goûts » selon certaines opinions⁹, selon certaines autres, d'un goût bourgeois. Dans ce dernier cas, « l'intérieur spacieux avec des

⁶ I.L. Caragiale, *Opere, IV. Corespondență [Oeuvres, IV. Correspondance]*. Édition de Stancu Ilin et Constantin Harlav, Bucarest, Univers Enciclopedic, 2002, p. 747.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 766.

⁸ Ilie Marin [Horia Petra-Petrescu], « Ion Luca Caragiale intim » [« I.L. Caragiale intim »], *Tribuna*, Arad, XI, 7/20 juillet 1907, 150, p. 1.

⁹ Dimitrie Gusti, « Câteva amintiri despre Caragiale » [« Quelques souvenirs concernant Caragiale »], *Revista Fundațiilor Regale*, 1945, 4, p. 16.

chambres larges et nombreuses, sans laisser sentir la pauvreté » que rêve Caragiale serait lié à son aspiration vers la stabilité.

En faveur d'une garde-robe variée de manière satisfaisante pour une personne apparemment aussi peu préoccupée par sa tenue comme le prétend être Caragiale, les témoignages des contemporains en font foi également. Les accents critiques ne manquent pourtant pas. Reconnaisables même sous l'anonymat, des malintentionnés comme Macedonski, Șerban Cioculescu les démantèle, en utilisant l'argument incontestable de la photographie. Aux méchancetés du poète symboliste visant l'indigence et le malheur du jeune Caragiale, perceptibles à travers le cliché des « bottes éculées ou cassées »¹⁰, Cioculescu oppose « l'apparence exotique du prince arabe ou indien en costume européen » du jeune homme âgé de 20 ans, évoquant la photo la plus connue de Caragiale, souvent comparée, en tant que photo de jeunesse, avec celle de Mihai Eminescu¹¹.

Par contre, Duiliu Zamfirescu surprend Caragiale en malheureux, pendant l'hiver de 1892–1893, quand il était déjà un dramaturge consacré. Lorsqu'il parle du désespoir trivial du pauvre Caragiale, l'auteur du roman *Viața la țară* [*La vie à la campagne*] ne peut être soupçonné, comme Macedonski, de mauvaise foi. Il choisit de retenir les vêtements du dramaturge, au détriment de la description physique, et insiste sur la douleur profonde du parent qui a perdu ses petites filles âgées d'un an et demi et de deux mois, douleur qu'il n'arrive pas à cacher : « et je ne l'oublierai jamais à cause de la façon dont le col du manteau d'hiver était rabattu, à cause du chapeau d'imitation d'astrakan d'où sortait la colle, à cause des yeux myopes que le froid contrariait... »¹². Ceci, dans le contexte des tentatives infructueuses de l'écrivain de s'installer avec sa famille à Sibiu (1891), puis à Brașov (1892), dans un exil volontaire, qu'il croyait salvateur, sauveur, et dans le contexte, aussi, du vote de rejet de ses volumes (*Teatru* [*Théâtre*] et *Năpasta* [*Fausse accusation*]¹³) présentés à l'Académie Roumaine pour le Prix Heliade Rădulescu.

Un autre instantané, celui de G. Millian, informe également sur l'aspect vestimentaire du dramaturge, lors de son dernier voyage dans le pays. L'apparition de Caragiale dans la rédaction du journal de Constantin Mille, *Dimineața* [*Le Matin*] a dû être bien impressionnante pour « le photographe », car en la remémorant dans les pages de la même publication, immédiatement après la

¹⁰ Salustiu [Al. Macedonski], « I.L. Caragiale și opera lui » [« I.L. Caragiale et son œuvre »], *Liga ortodoxă*, supplément littéraire, 3 novembre 1896, pp. 1-2.

¹¹ Ș. Cioculescu, *Caragialiana*. Édition de Barbu Cioculescu, Bucarest, Albatros, 2003, p. 65.

¹² Duiliu Zamfirescu, *Duiliu Zamfirescu și Titu Maiorescu în scrisori (1884–1913)* [*Duiliu Zamfirescu et Titu Maiorescu en correspondance*]. Introduction et notes d'Emanoïl Bucuța, Bucarest, La Fondation pour littérature et art « Le Roi Charles II », 1937, pp. 124-125.

¹³ Traduit en français par Oswald Neuschotz en 1897.

disparition du maître, celui-ci arrive à fonctionner comme « [sa] vraie masque mortuaire » :

Silhouette noire et sèche, avec une longue moustache, nez aquilin, sans dents, avec le regard légèrement fermé. Non, non, rien de ce que mon imagination avait créé tant et plus. Et quels vêtements ! Une redingote noire, longue, longue, vieillie, sur la tête un demi-chapeau haut de forme à l'ancienne. Et la bouche sans dents, la voix sans douceur. Un instant, j'ai eu une palpitation¹⁴.

L'auteur des notations ignorait à ce moment-là le fait que le dramaturge allait bientôt devenir prisonnier de cette implacable, comme il l'avait nommé dans une lettre à D. Gusti, « sonnette d'alarme », produite par une légère hémorragie et un vertige puissant¹⁵.

Nombreuses sont, d'autre part, les remémorations qui récupèrent de I.L. Caragiale les qualités les plus différentes : d'ami et de conférencier, d'inspecteur des écoles élémentaires ou de directeur du Théâtre National etc., mais dans tous ces cas le personnage affiche une tenue correcte.

En tant qu'accessoire obligatoire de l'époque, le chapeau apparaît également dans les instantanés avec le maître, représentant parfois la seule pièce récurrente de la description. Le seigneur avec un « bonnet français », rencontré par Barbu Delavrancea sur le quai de la gare, parti à Iassy, pour le banquet des *junimiști* [les membres de l'association *Junimea*], n'est autre que Caragiale, « le dramaturge qui nous a forcé à rire aux larmes »¹⁶. Cella Delavrancea retient, à son tour, son « large chapeau dans les marges », assorti, pour les visites chez des amis, avec le « veston et le gilet de velours ou le beau t-shirt souvent brun »¹⁷. À la grande fille de Delavrancea on doit également la récupération d'un accessoire vraiment indispensable de Caragiale, le fume-cigarette en ambre, « éternellement entre les doigts », qui, nous assure la célèbre pianiste, avait été choisie parmi de nombreuses autres en ivoire, en ébène ou en perles, qui étaient à la mode à l'époque¹⁸. « Le chapeau marron avec des bords doux et petits », I.L. Caragiale le préférait en lisant en plein air François Fénelon. « À l'aube bien éclairé d'une journée d'automne », Cincinat Pavelescu le surprend sur un banc du jardin de Cișmigiu, en « mettant le livre dans sa poche et d'un geste habituel, il mettait sur sa nuque, en déployant son large front sillonné par des rides », le chapeau déjà mentionné¹⁹. Un autre : « gris,

¹⁴ G. Millian, « Dragul nostru Caragiale ! » [« Notre cher Caragiale ! »], *Dimineața*, 1912, 2972, p. 1.

¹⁵ Dimitrie Gusti, « Câteva amintiri despre Caragiale », p. 17.

¹⁶ d.l.v. [Barbu Delavrancea], « Iașii și banchetul junimiștilor » [« Yassy et le banquet des membres de Junimea »], *România liberă*, 1884, 2191, pp. [2-3].

¹⁷ Cella Delavrancea, « Caragiale », in *Scrieri [Écrits]*. Édition, préface, notes, commentaires et bibliographie de Valeriu Râpeanu, Bucarest, Eminescu, 1982, pp. 352-353.

¹⁸ George Costesu, *Bucureștii vechiului regat [Le Bucarest du Vieux Royaume]*, Bucarest, Capitel, 2004, p. 302.

¹⁹ Cincinat Pavelescu, « Amintiri literare (Ion Luca Caragiale) » [« Souvenirs littéraires (Ion Luca Caragiale) »], *Brașovul literar și artistic*, II, 1933, 14, p. 28.

avec des bords devant retroussant sur le front », il l'avait assorti à sa fonction d'inspecteur des écoles élémentaires, quand il fut surpris par N.V. Piperescu, « vêtu d'une veste blanche [...] et portant des lunettes sur le nez »²⁰.

Moins inspirée semble avoir été son option pour le demi-chapeau haut-de-forme porté dans la rédaction du journal *Dimineața* [*Le Matin*], apprécié par G. Milian comme étant « de mode archaïque ». Introduit comme accessoire *must have* dans le Bucarest de l'année 1868, le chapeau haut de forme disparaissait du paysage de la mode quelques années après la Première Guerre mondiale, mais il était devenu, bien avant la visite du dramaturge, accessible aux catégories sociales les plus modestes, parmi lesquelles Milian n'aurait certainement pas inclus Caragiale. Dans son *Istoria literaturii...* [*Histoire de la littérature...*], G. Călinescu a choisi d'illustrer la descendance orientale de l'écrivain en le décrivant d'après une photo prise dans son bureau à Berlin, dans laquelle le dramaturge avait complété son « costume d'Albanais », composé d'une « jaquette fourrée de bure, ceinture, chausses paysannes, souliers à la mode turque », avec un distinctif « petit fez blanc »²¹. Les textes qui surprennent Caragiale correspondre aux « exigences du protocole » abondent dans les détails les plus pittoresques. « Les bottes de lac de conférence » font partie de la tenue habituelle du conférencier, mais elles deviennent également partie intégrante de la conférence sur l'art qu'il présente à son public²².

En tant que directeur du Théâtre National, depuis juin 1888 jusqu'au mai 1889, nommé à la place de C.I. Stănescu qui avait démissionné, Șerban Cioculescu lui devine, au-delà des intentions exprimées dans le programme du 28 août, des projets civilisateurs, pour lesquels il n'hésite pas de donner son propre exemple : « Pour éduquer le public et créer une tradition, Caragiale s'est également imposé aux membres du comité, le frac et les pantalons cendrés »²³.

La pédanterie, qui n'était pas dans le goût de tous, lui attire dans les chroniques du journal *Românul* [*Le Roumain*] le surnom de Jean August Caragiale, l'auteur anonyme se faisant un devoir d'enregistrer toutes les apparitions du directeur avec ou sans gants blancs.

Après une impression terrible qu'on s'est fait de lui, n'ayant pas résisté à la tentation de fouiller avec ardeur de collectionneur dans le grenier d'un proche parent de son épouse, à qui il rend, un matin de juin, une visite de courtoisie, Caragiale sait comment intervenir pour restaurer son prestige diminué, alliant avec

²⁰ Ș. Cioculescu, *Caragialiana*, p. 396.

²¹ G. Călinescu, *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent* [*L'Histoire de la littérature roumaine depuis ses origines jusqu'à présent*]. Édition et préface d'Al. Piru, Bucarest, Minerva, 1982, p. 496.

²² I.L. Caragiale, *Opere, I. Proză literară*, pp. 619-625.

²³ Ș. Cioculescu, *Viața lui I.L. Caragiale* [*La vie de I.L. Caragiale*], III^{ème} édition, Bucarest, Humanitas, 2012, p. 135.

charme et dextérité les éléments qui composent une impression parfaite : tenue impeccable, courtoisie épistolaire. Le prouve pleinement l'épître envoyée à l'aristocrate Alexandrine Burelly, sa femme, « pleine d'esprit dans le genre de Voiture », dont Caragiale emprunte « la courtoisie exagérée du style », en la combinant avec une orthographe personnelle impeccable ; non moins mémorable reste sa tenue en smoking et en bottes de lac, qui le fait passer pour un « homme impossible et sans aucune manière »²⁴.

Dans une atmosphère moins détendue – bien qu'avec le même effet – se déroule, au fil des années, les prérogatives de l'accueil de la « dame allemande », qui n'est autre que Mite Kremnitz, sa concitadine, après la mort du mari de celle-ci. Relatée par Ecaterina Logardi, la scène mérite d'être rappelée pour l'exigence avec laquelle le dramaturge choisissait sa tenue pour des rencontres prétentieuses :

Se préparer pour la réception était compliqué et à grande-peine. Des dizaines de colliers essayaient mon père et aucun ne lui convenait. Ils s'envolaient tous en l'air de la chambre comme des pigeons, accompagnés par des paroles dures à l'adresse de la « gracieuse hôtesse ». Ma mère, avec obéissance et patience, les rassembla, cherchant à apaiser la colère de mon père qui s'écriait : « On ne m'attrapera plus ! ». Quand il était prêt, je ne pouvais ne le pas regarder avec admiration. La veste lui allait bien, tout comme le col étroit, plié dans les coins polis et l'air soigné. Ma mère, un peu fatiguée de la bagarre avec les vêtements de mon père, avait des yeux encore plus grands et semblait encore plus belle²⁵.

Dans l'évocation qu'il fait à Caragiale dans *Meditație în septembrie* [*Méditation en septembre*], Ion Agârbiceanu surprend, amusé, les effets contradictoires des tenues de celui-ci sur les provinciaux. Pour les habitants de la ville de Blaj, qui connaissaient à peine l'auteur de la drame *Năpasta* [*Fausse accusations*], « nenea Iancu », « habillé comme tout le monde » passait incognito au Congrès à l'occasion du jubilé d'Astra en 1911, mais il devenait visible dès qu'il adoptait une « tenue inhabituelle » et « pendant les chaleurs de fin d'août », il sortait en chemise, sans tunique²⁶. Dans un registre nocturne, Victor Eftimiu surprend le dramaturge dans la même tenue bohème ; quand il reste près de lui « toute une nuit à Blaj ; dans le jardin de l'aimable A. Ciurea », en l'écoutant parler « sans se soucier de la fraîcheur qui nous donnait le frisson »²⁷.

« Habillé seulement d'une chemise, pieds nus, couché de son long dans un porte du midi et retenant les passants par des histoires... ». On y identifie, en effet, le credo artistique du maître, dans sa coïncidence avec son goût vestimentaire. Paul

²⁴ Cincinat Pavelescu, « Amintiri literare », p. 30.

²⁵ Alexandrina I.L. Caragiale, Ecaterina Logardi-Caragiale, *Amintiri despre I.L. Caragiale*, p. 74.

²⁶ Ion Agârbiceanu, *Meditație în septembrie* [*Méditation en septembre*], Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 1971, pp. 232-233.

²⁷ Victor Eftimiu, *Portrete și amintiri* [*Portraits et souvenirs*], Bucarest, Editura pentru Literatură, 1965, p. 182.

Zarifopol l'avait retenu rien que pour regretter au méridional Caragiale « sa fantastique prodigalité d'esprit et d'images »²⁸.

Même fragmentée, cette perspective sur les habitudes vestimentaires de Caragiale nous autorise à croire que pour ses personnages également, il avait été tenté d'appliquer les mêmes principes de goûts. Et bien que sa descendance maternelle semble lui encourager une sensibilité, moins pour la mode que pour les tissus, le grand-père étant commerçant et membre de la Société de négoce oriental de Braşov, les importations turques de « coton, laine, soie, coton teint et épicerie » représentant sa spécialité, le petit-fils ne semble avoir le moindre enthousiasme pour l'industrie textile, du moins, sa correspondance n'enregistre-t-elle aucune préoccupation à cet égard²⁹.

Ainsi, à un inconvénient comme celui formulé par sa femme, de ne pas trouver le tissu recherché, Caragiale répond par un *post-scriptum* lapidaire envoyé à la famille Zarifopol. Outre une remarque concernant les deux dames, Alexandrina Caragiale et Ştefania Zarifopol, qui parlent « des modes », Caragiale ne trouve pas nourrissant ce thème de discussion, comme le fera son fils, Mateiu Caragiale, l'arrière petit-neveu du commerçant des toiles de toutes sortes, qui, lors d'un voyage à San Remo, aime se lancer dans sa correspondance dans l'imagination de subtiles toilettes en soies lombardes, pour Marica Sion, sa femme. En fait, la soie, avec tous ses dérivés, parmi lesquelles le cordonnet, représente le textile préféré pour les accessoires du dramaturge I.L. Caragiale (un de ses croquis dans *Lumea ilustrată* [*Le Monde illustré*] discute du commerce clandestin de la marchandise de luxe à la frontière franco-belge), tandis que les brocarts et les velours illustrent encore mieux l'attraction pour la luxure chez les personnages de Mateiu Caragiale, son fils. Le mot « velours », synonyme, en roumain, de « crapule » apparaît chez Caragiale-père dans l'un de ses *moments*, Art. 214 [*L'Art. 214*], publié dans *Moftul român* [*La Bagatelle Roumaine*] de 8 et 15 avril 1901, et fait le charme du vocabulaire de banlieue de Tarsiţa Popescu, la protagoniste. Commentant la pièce, Şerban Cioculescu croit qu'il s'y agissait d'un de ces rares cas chez Caragiale dans lesquels les personnages sont décrits au niveau de leur physique et de leurs vêtements, et non pas exclusivement à travers leurs répliques. On les entend et on les visualise en même temps³⁰. L'impression que s'est faite Cioculescu se soutient, en partie, par la description étendue de la protagoniste :

La dame est habillée comme l'étaient auparavant les faubouriennes, avec un barège bleu attaché à la tête, jupe et corsage en laine de la même couleur, et un petit châle bordeaux, fait au crochet ; pour les mains, des mitaines en imitation de dentelle. C'est une femme d'environ 50 ans, assez bien maintenue ; un peu trop maquillée ; les

²⁸ Paul Zarifopol, *Artişti şi idei literare române* [Artistes et idées littéraires roumaines], Bucarest, Adevărul, 1930, p. 13.

²⁹ Ş. Cioculescu, *Viaţa lui I.L. Caragiale*, p. 37.

³⁰ Ş. Cioculescu, *Caragialiana*, p. 339.

sourcils comme des sangsues ; les dents un peu noircies à cause des noix de galée et du tabac ; très gaie et vive, elle parle et gesticule dégagée, avec beaucoup de volubilité même, ayant une figure pleine d'expression³¹.

Quant à l'autre personnage féminin de la même pièce, Acrivița Popescu, on lui réduit la présentation, en compensant par le soulignement de son élégance et de sa distinction :

une jeune personne, environ dix-huit ans : une très belle fille ; de grands yeux verts sous des cils et des sourcils noirs, comme les cheveux bouclés de la tête, de haute taille et souple, en marchant, elle semble flotter – *Sa grâce est plus belle encore que sa beauté*³². Elle est très chic : un tricorne en feutre, couleur gris fer, bordé d'un fil de ficelle, tout comme la mantille, très chic toujours³³.

Il y a deux choses dans ces tenues qui retiennent l'attention, et toutes les deux tiennent du choix des textiles : le barège et le feutre. Le premier matériel a, le plus probablement, une origine française, descendant jusqu'à la petite ville thermale des Pyrénées, dont le nom de Barèges, les Français les lient à Madame de Maintenon. Lors de son séjour balnéaire de 1675, cette dame aurait signé ses lettres avec le nom géographique de la vallée de Barèges, rebaptisant le petit bourg qui se nommait tout simplement Les Bains. Barèges dénommera, plus tard, le sel sulfureux d'extraction locale, mais aussi l'étoffe de laine légère et fine, produite ici. Quant au feutre, il a une carrière de presque un siècle. L'ampleur qu'elle prend dans le monde de la mode de la première moitié du XIX^{ème} siècle se lie à l'image d'une dame « en costume parisien », datant de 1823, qui, à l'exception du chapeau en satin, est vêtue seulement en barège : « robe de barège garnie de ruches de barège – écharpe de barège ». D'autres personnages féminins, non moins connus, tel que Emma Bovary de *Madame Bovary*, Madame Arnoux de *L'Éducation sentimentale* de Flaubert, ou Fantine de *Misérables* sont également habillés en robes de barège, en couler safran pâle, noir ou violet. En hommage apporté à son passé, Marcel Proust immortalisera ce matériel dans *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* (1918), dans l'image de la « jeune femme en robe de barège ou de linon, sur un yacht arborant le drapeau américain » ; mais le tissu était déjà démodé à cette

³¹ « Cocoana este îmbrăcată, cum purtau înainte mahalagioaicele, cu barej havai legată la cap, rochie și peptar de lână de aceeași culoare, și un tărănaș conabiu, făcut cu iglița; în mâini, mănuși de imitație de mătase fără dește. E o femeie de vreo cinzeci de ani destul de bine ținută; cam prea dreasă la obraz; sprâncenele ca niște lipitori; dinții cam negriți de ristic și de tutun; foarte veselă și vioaie, vorbește și gesticulează degajat, chiar cu multă volubilitate și cu o figură plină de expresie. » (I.L. Caragiale, *Art. 214*, in *Opere, I. Proză literară*, p. 459).

³² En original, le texte est en français.

³³ « o tânără persoană, ca de vreo optsprezece ani: o frumusețe de fată; ochi verzi mari, sub gene și sprâncene negre ca și părul buclat al capului, naltă și mlădioasă, mergând, pare că plutește – *La grâce plus belle encore que la beauté*. E foarte cochet îmbrăcată: o pălărie de păslă în tricorne, de culoare gris-fer, tivită pe margini cu șiret de fir, ca și manteluța de aceeași culoare – șic de tot » (I.L. Caragiale, *Art. 214*, in *Opere, I. Proză literară*, p. 468).

époque-là, donc déjà oublié. La description d'une robe « de barège bleu (Caragiale dirait : « havai »³⁴), crêpée, avec ses petits volants, ses valenciennes, ses nœuds de ruban », qui, d'après les affirmations de G. Poboran, avait fait époque en Roumanie dans les décennies cinq et six du XIX^{ème} siècle, est mentionnée dans une monographie de la ville de Slatina, dont la première édition coïncide avec l'année de la publication du récit de Caragiale : 1901. Réduite à une seule proposition, la présentation de la robe y est compensée par celle du châle qui l'accompagne : « Le corsage bien serré à la taille est orné en haut par une berthe qui tombe sur les épaules d'une passementerie en soie bleue et avec des fanfreluches de pierres joliment coupée, qui encadre des deux parties une bande de soie avec une broderie originale, faite en paille »³⁵. Pièce de toilette avec tradition en Valachie, les châles de Ienăchiță Văcărescu, qui avaient suscité autrefois l'admiration de l'aristocratie viennoise, ne représentent pas, selon P. Poboran, seulement une mode momentanée, mais arrive à parfaire n'importe quelle tenue. Une série des châles de l'époque : « en drap, en soie, en batiste, en mousseline, en dentelle », à laquelle s'ajoute celui de cachemire, ignore justement celui de barège, qui est porté par Caragiale. Il aurait pu se métamorphoser dans un « bariș » (fichu pour la tête), naturalisé dans le vocabulaire de l'époque, mentionné déjà par V. Alecsandri en 1855 (*Chirița în provincie*), qui circulait également dans la variante « bariz », tel qu'il apparaîtra chez Sadoveanu (*Nada Florilor*) presque un siècle plus tard, en 1951. Avec le barège, I.L. Caragiale embellit ses personnages féminins qui ont dépassé un certain âge et, d'habitude des veuves. Avant Tarsița Popescu, c'était madame Anica, dans *Tren de plăcere* [*Train de plaisir*], qui assortissait à ses habits noirs un fichu bordeaux pour la tête, pour marquer, probablement, la fin de son demi-deuil.

Au moment de la rédaction de la pièce (1900–1901), le barège était, comme le dit le dramaturge, un accessoire périmé : « comme portaient autrefois les faubouriennes » ; il n'y envoie catégoriquement pas à la période de gloire de l'étoffe (la première moitié du XIX^{ème} siècle), mais à celle de son déclin, vers la fin du siècle, de sorte qu'une catégorie sociale périphérique, comme celle de la faubourienne, puisse se permettre une telle dépense, auparavant coûteuse. Il est possible que la remarque de l'auteur ne vise que l'adhérence inadéquate de son personnage à l'urbanité dans laquelle il vit. La tenue de Tarsița Popescu, avec jupe et corsage en laine bleue, se superpose, jusqu'à un certain point, aux images découvertes dans la monographie de la ville de Craiova, d'une femme en robe de barège de la même couleur. Le dramaturge ne conserve pourtant pas la tendance monochrome de la tenue luxueuse, ni la qualité des tissus, remplaçant la berthe

³⁴ Du turc : *havayi*.

³⁵ G. Poboran, *Istoria orașului Slatina* [*L'Histoire de la ville de Slatina*], II^{ème} édition. Avec de nombreux actes, documents et 82 illustrations, Slatina, Tipographia de lux Costică Constantinescu & Fiu, 1909, p. 190.

originale d'une passementerie en soie bleue, donc en couleur de la robe, et l'associant avec un petit châle en laine rouge, *hand-made*. De cette manière, il essaie probablement de sauver « l'honorabilité » de la tenue par la résonance française du barège³⁶ et par les mitaines en imitation de dentelle.

Un paragraphe de la monographie citée, appelée de manière suggestive « Maquillage », qui glose, en 1901, sur « se farder » comme « mode éminemment oriental et profondément enraciné dans tous les couches de la société roumaine », nous aide à préciser le statut social du protagoniste de Caragiale :

Une dame ne se croit pas assez gracieuse jusqu'à ce qu'elle ne s'ait pas soumis le visage à une véritable opération chimique, parce qu'elle se maquillait en blanc et en rouge, elle enjolissait son visage avec des sparadraps noirs, colorait en noir ses cils et ses sourcils avec des noix de galle [...] La femme ainsi parée ressemblait beaucoup avec les actrices de notre temps. Chez nous, le maquillage peut encore être retrouvé dans toutes les classes sociales et il persiste surtout chez les faubouriennes³⁷.

La tenue d'Acrivița Popescu, la belle-fille, comparée à celle de sa belle-mère, gagne plus par sa simplicité que par des éléments chics et coquets que le dramaturge avance strictement au niveau lexical. L'auteur estime que la beauté physique et la jeunesse du personnage lui assure une tenue convenable, pourtant l'enthousiasme que la deuxième femme suscite à la première se joue sur de simples résonances francophones : *Sa grâce est plus belle encore que sa beauté* qui, dans ce cas, en roumain, représente plus qu'un barège naturalisé. C'est, d'après Caragiale, « tout à fait chic » !

Dans le texte original, l'élément qui détruit l'édifice de la coquette juvénile est justement le tissu choisi : le feutre [*pâsla*]. L'auteur utilise la variante lexicale venue du slave [*pâsla*] et non pas celle venue de la française [*fetru*]. *Le Dictionnaire explicatif roumain* fait lui aussi une différence de qualité entre les deux emprunts, et enclin toujours en faveur du dernier³⁸. L'auteur n'utilise donc pas la variante lexicale qui aurait conféré à la tenue de la jeune fille la note chic, mais celle qui correspond plus à son statut social. Il est possible qu'il s'y laisse influencer par Manufacture de feutre de Timișoara, « Hungaria » Hashitz & Deixner, créée en 1894, mais où on ne produit pas des chapeaux. Par contre, cinq années plus tard était inaugurée une fabrique de chapeaux, avec une diversité impressionnante de produits : chapeau en feutre, bonnets en cuir de lapin, en velours, en coton. Cela offre une idée sur le marché et ses demandes ; on ne sait pourtant pas si on utilisait *pâsla* exclusivement pour la production « de série », pendant que *fetru* aurait représenté la variante idéale pour la création des « éditions limitées ». Ce qui peut surtout dérouter dans la monographie *Bucureștii*

³⁶ En roumain : *bariș* ou *barej*, *bariz*, comme variantes.

³⁷ G. Poboran, *Istoria orașului Slatina*, p. 201.

³⁸ Feutre, étoffe fine de qualité supérieure, utilisée en chapellerie.

vechiului regat [*Le Bucarest du Vieux Royaume*], publiée en 1944, mais rédigée en 1906, c'est l'affirmation de George Costescu que « Les chapeaux de feutre (*feutre*) ne les portaient ni les dames, ni les messieurs »³⁹. Sauf si l'auteur ne vise pas ici d'autres catégories sociales, cas dans lequel le personnage féminin de la jeune femme, serait, lui aussi, une faubourienne, dans le sens strict d'habitant d'une périphérie urbaine.

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³⁹ George Costescu, *Bucureștii vechiului regat* [*Le Bucarest du Vieux Royaume*], Bucarest, Capitel, 2004, p. 302.

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FORGOTTEN FABRICS AND ACCESSORIES. CLOTHING OUTFITS OF A “SENTIMENTAL” WRITER

(Abstract)

“A categorically unpretentious outfit: *où il y a de gêne, il n'y a pas de plaisir*”–, there are no better words to describe the fashion-related beliefs of the author of *Momente [Moments]* than the “favourite saying” of the “graceful madame Guvidi”, in *Om cu noroc! [Lucky Man!]*. They promote straightforwardly and exclusively the comfort from which Caragiale would not move away – neither in the years when he was an inspector and when, during particularly cold weather, he was found wearing borrowed clothes, nor toward the end of his life when, during his time in Berlin, he chose of personality of worn out clothes. Testimonies to a satisfactorily varied range of clothing for someone who, apparently, paid so little concern to his clothes, as Caragiale claimed to be, are the memories of his contemporaries: Macedonski, Duiliu Zamfirescu, G. Millian, D. Gusti, Barbu Delavrancea, Cella Delavrancea, Cincinat Pavelescu, N.V. Poperescu, Ecaterina Caragiale-Logardi and so on and so forth. Of these, there are very few suggestive of a truly depreciative nature. The numerous recollections retrieve some of the most contradictory qualities for I.L. Caragiale: friend or lecturer, school inspector or manager of the National Theatre, etc., but, no matter how improbable, the character seems to present, with rare exception, adequate outfits. As must-have accessory of the age, the hat is also present in the snapshots with the writer, at times being the only redeeming mark of the description.

Keywords: I.L. Caragiale, clothing items, outfits, hat, fashion, fabric.

STOFE ȘI ACCESORII UITATE. DIN PANOPLIA VESTIMENTARĂ A UNUI SCRIITOR „SENTIMENTAL”

(Rezumat)

„Ținuta absolut fără pretenție: *où il y a de gêne, il n'y a pas de plaisir*”–, nimic nu ar putea caracteriza mai bine crezul despre modă și vestimentație al autorului *Momentelor* decât „dictonul favorit” al „grațioasei doamne Guvidi”, din *Om cu noroc!*. De o traiectorie rectilinie, acesta promovează, în exclusivitate, confortul, de la care Caragiale nu se abate nici în tinerețea revizoratului, surprins fiind, pe o vreme geroasă, cu vestimentație de împrumut, nici spre finele vieții, când, în epoca berlineză, preferă personalitatea hainelor uzate. În favoarea unei garderobe satisfăcător de variate pentru cineva

aparent atât de puțin preocupat de ținuta sa, precum se pretinde a fi Caragiale, stau mărturie amintirile contemporanilor: Macedonski, Duiliu Zamfirescu, G. Millian, D. Gusti, Barbu Delavrancea, Cella Delavrancea, Cincinat Pavelescu, N.V. Poporescu, Ecaterina Caragiale-Logardi ș.a. Printre acestea, puține, doar, trădează o notă cu adevărat depreciativă. Numeroasele memororii îi pun în valoare lui I.L. Caragiale calități dintre cele mai diferite: de amic sau de conferențiar, de revizor școlar sau de director al Teatrului Național etc, dar, oricât ar părea de improbabil, personajul propune, cu rare excepții, ținute adecvate. Ca accesoriu obligatoriu al epocii, pălăria apare și în instantaneele cu maestrul, uneori reprezentând singura marcă recuperată a descrierii.

Cuvinte-cheie: I.L. Caragiale, ținută vestimentară, pălărie, modă, stofe.

MAGDA WÄCHTER

“HOW DO WE HAPPEN TO BE INSPIRED?” LITERATURE SURVEYS FROM THE 1930s

Besides classical conceptions of artistic inspiration prevalent in the realms of aesthetics, poetics or the philosophy of culture, a series of lesser theories that regard creation as part of the banal, quotidian existence were advanced in and around the turn of the twentieth century. In parallel with the type of speculative discourse found in systematic constructs, there appeared, thus, approaches that pursued a spirit of authenticity, such as dialogic reflection, spontaneous, relaxed replies, and light, unconventional confession, unfettered by the rigours of formality or by gender distinctions. The lack of literariness, typically associated with professions of faith, represents the first guarantee of the veracity of this type of text, which offers itself as a simple record of one’s spiritual or emotional experience, without any claims to artistic value. That explains the abundance of surveys on the topic of creation conducted especially in the interwar period, when a broad array of literary trends could often engage in fecund disagreement. “The most formidable and the most revolting period in the history of this country”, as Gherasim Luca defines it¹, was one of contrasts, reflected at the level of the literary works, of literary creeds, but also of the myriad theories of inspiration, nurtured by a variety of factors and endowed with extremely rich cognitive potential.

Under the title “Why Do You Write?” the literary review *Facla* launched a survey in 1935, after the example of French publications like *Littérature* or *Commune*. The result was a genuine novel about writing, anticipating the “Corinthian” novel, comprising over two hundred characters and including pages of “high spiritual tension”, but also of “true human comedy”, as Victor Durnea notices in the preface of his book². How is literature, literary criticism or the writer’s craft seen by those authors turned characters? How do they see inspiration? Is it a spontaneous act, a simple or a complex emotion, or the fruit of ceaseless reflection? Is writing meant to compensate for personal shortcomings or to serve a general purpose? Does it derive from excess or from scarcity? Is the writer aware of his mission or, rather, subjected to a fatality whose most intimate mechanisms cannot be conveyed? Finally, how does an author see himself in the mirror? How does the one who meditates on creation see the one who creates?

All these questions are addressed in the writers’ responses, which seem to be following, from the outset, two main strategies: interrogation and negation. The

¹ Gheorghe Hrimiuc-Toporaş, Victor Durnea (eds.), „De ce scrieți?” *Anchete literare din anii '30* [“Why Do You Write?” *Literary Surveys from the 1930s*]. Foreword, notes and name index by Victor Durnea, Iași, Polirom, 1998, p. 39.

² *Ibidem*, p. 7.

former concerns the very legitimacy of literary surveys, as a possible frontier species related to literature. Radu Boureanu, for instance, believes that a simple newspaper column is inadequate for a profession of faith that involves the disclosure of a highly complex universe, reflected in “endless parallel mirrors”³. Similarly, Sașa Pană tentatively expresses himself in favour of this type of investigation, in a concessive manner: “surveys are good (with all the harshness of a name that is reminiscent of councils of war and inquisitorial magistrates), when the answers avoid being literary...”⁴. In fact, delimitations from literature represent a constant concern of the so-called “new generation” whose members are fully asserting themselves at this time as a gesture of protest against the values of their predecessors. “You know very well that we are a generation that doesn’t really like literature”, Pericle Martinescu declares sententiously. “It would be safe to assume that we don’t like it at all. We prefer spiritual, ideological battles; we like bitter controversies, with an impact on reality; we like things that require fanaticism, passion, struggle and risk. Literature seems too insignificant, it bores us, it’s too devoid of life”⁵. An intense debate on a topical theme, albeit with literary implications, is more favourably seen than obsolete works of fiction that “intoxicated” the minds of earlier scholars. However, very many writers remain silent when it comes to questions concerning the intimate springs of creation. To some, such questions appear to be both trite and crucial (Dan Petrașincu); to others – too brutal (Tudor Arghezi), or too serious and bold (Virgil Carianopol), if not downright senseless (Mircea Damian). Șerban Cioculescu believes that the survey should not be addressed to literary critics, objective and impersonal researchers, who are not authors of documents that record spiritual or emotional experiences. For critics, the question would have “an epigrammatic character”, and their answer would be devoid of any kind of importance⁶. In another context, Perpessicius states that he is simply overwhelmed, while several other writers confess that they are at a loss. Those who accept the challenge often speak from a position of uncertainty, vagueness or even contradict themselves, stepping across the boundaries of literature, of criticism, of pure judgement, and even of morals. Besides circumventing the question by claiming that it is impossible to provide an answer, the problem is transferred to many different other areas, ranging from trivial facts to social or metaphysical issues.

Some respondents speak, for instance, about heredity, atavism, the spirit of imitation, about a fatality of writing that is impossible to explain (Tudor Vianu), about a physiological need or a possible cure for insomnia. According to Mihail Sebastian, the issue demands “a sum of short, ridiculous, simple and varied

³ *Ibidem*, p. 42.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 31.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 106.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 95.

answers”⁷. George Mihail Zamfirescu writes so as to stop feeling alone, Emil Gulian – for the satisfaction that he can always talk about himself, Gib Mihăescu – because he likes it and it amuses him, Victor Ion Popa – to spend some extra energy, Horia Oprescu – to rest and in the hope that he will be admired... Some of the shorter confessions are of real historical and literary interest. Ion Barbu, for instance, recounts that he began to write for a single reader, Tudor Vianu, whom he admired with some envy while he was a student. Others reveal their sheer pleasure of mocking replies: Al. Robot writes so that he can pay for his coffee, Ion Sân-Giorgiu – because he is obsessed, Neagu Rădulescu – so that everyone will recognize him in the street, to conquer women and to be included in future textbooks, Ion-Aurel Manolescu, a nineteen-year old writer, – because he cannot stand school. Even great writers are not always spared the temptation of providing terribly trite replies. Eugen Lovinescu believes that it is all he is good at; Mircea Eliade regrets that he cannot split firewood; Camil Petrescu has nothing else to do; Eugen Ionescu deals with literature out of habit, a bad habit or a vice, for that matter, and because of his inability to become a politician or a philosopher. In his turn, Felix Aderca writes by mistake and with “bleak despair”, hoping to be able to abandon one day the “infernal” tools, that is, the book and the pen”⁸, so as to become a tinsmith, a painter or a ploughman. Such assertions remind one of young Eliade’s views (he was convinced of the “inadequacy of literature”⁹), or of Cioran’s nihilism (he believed that he was a “scribe” lost in the world of Letters because of his inability to kill someone else or himself¹⁰).

Prose writers of the caliber of Victor Eftimiu harbour the belief that they lack any literary vocation; others, on the contrary, are fully aware of their own talent. Devotees of the idea of socially responsible art, just like the supporters of art for art’s sake, they solemnly formulate their beliefs, talking either about the social role of creation, or about its mystical significance. Philosophising, Mihail Dan sees the poet as an initiate, the “slave” of a Kantian principle, concerned about “the affirmative will of metaphor”¹¹. Poetically, Radu Gyr answers that he writes because “the Apollonian divinity shook a paradisiacal branch” over his shoulder. Camil Petrescu leaves himself at the mercy of inspiration for metaphysical reasons; he is disgusted every time he sees his works published, while Șerban Cioculescu compares the eternal values literature can reach with those of sacredness.

Many authors regard the act of creation, rather emphatically, as a harrowing, arduous occupation, or as self-flagellation. Ironically, others, like Mihail Sebastian,

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 47.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 116.

⁹ Mircea Eliade, “Insuficiența literaturii” [“The Insufficiency of Literature”], in *Profetism românesc* [*Romanian Profetism*], I, București, Roza vânturilor, 1990, pp. 43-47.

¹⁰ Emil Cioran, *Caiete I (1957–1965)* [*Notebooks I (1957–1965)*]. Foreword by Simone Boué. Translated from the French by Emanoil Marcu and Vlad Russo, București, Humanitas, 1999–2000, p. 10.

¹¹ Gheorghe Hrimiuc-Toporaș, Victor Durnea (eds.), „*De ce scrieți*”?, p. 50.

are wondering whether there is any contemporary writer who is “so tragic, so tormented, so demoniacally enthralled that writing becomes for him an act of rescue without which he might die”¹². Claiming to be driven by a charitable impulse, Ion Pas addresses an exhortation to these young artists: “Stop writing, stop bothering, gentlemen!”¹³.

Pertaining to the most varied registers, from a mere physiological act to psychology, philosophy, mysticism, sociology or political economy, the answers hesitate, inevitably, between the dramatic and the ridiculous, between a moral-philosophical stance and artistic playfulness. But what clearly emerges at a glance is the prevalence of denial over assertion. Not only do writers not appear to believe in their creative mission, but they harbour the conviction that writing reflects feelings of deep sadness and hopelessness, tentatively striving to compensate for a precarious existence. For example, Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu resorts to this solution out of desperation, fear and obsession; Anișoara Odeanu – to repress the need to cry; Mircea Vulcănescu – in times of inner crisis and, sometimes, of schizophrenia. Emil Botta does it without passion, without love, without grace, in exasperation and disgust, with the feeling that writing is tantamount to suicide. The authors-characters confess that they are incapable of living life, that they believe a writer is an assassinated man of action, and that they cannot embrace a different occupation, get along with their peers, that they experience shyness, loneliness, and anguish. Few are those who declare their faith in their own forces or in the value of the printed word. To them literature seems to be some sort of weakness, bad fortune or punishment. Sceptically, Petru Comarnescu regrets that people cannot understand one another through writing and that trying to communicate with others leads to almost nothing; Haig Acterian believes that writing is doomed to become a cliché, to deform thought, and he concludes, echoing Cioran, that “the illiterate person is the only one who inherits the truth”¹⁴. Petru Manoliu considers himself to be a man with a single desire, that of not becoming a writer.

The survey examining the springs of writers’ inspiration turns out to be, ultimately, an occasion for criticism against creation, against Romanian writers in general, against the entire landscape of Romanian culture and, especially, against the other respondents. Noting that the question turned out to be useless for at least ninety-nine percent of authors, Al. O. Teodoreanu seizes the opportunity to call his fellows “morons”, “assholes” and “mountebanks”¹⁵. In a calmer tone, other writers deplore the Romanian writers’ lack of ideals, “the eternal plague of our literature”¹⁶. Criticism, self-criticism, the devaluation of writing, and the anti-

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 47.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 61.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 132.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 103.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 74.

literary profession of faith are the main coordinates of this brief novel about writing conveyed in the form of a chronicle of the times.

Sometimes literary works can partly be found in the authors' replies, as it happens in the case of the supporters of socially committed art, of religious aesthetics or of the surrealist poets. The defying attitude and the shocking rhetoric of the latter are fully recognizable. Thus, Gherasim Luca writes from a sensibility "riddled with serious and inadmissible questions" in a century "of revolt and utter volatility"¹⁷. The young Eugen Ionescu's views on literature are already well known; so is the pose adopted sumptuously by Ion Minulescu, who writes to get his enemies bored and out of a need to possess his readers and critics. At other times, however, the statements reveal a surprising degree of inconsistency with the works and prestige of the authors. It is not clear how honest or how ironical the confessions of Eugen Lovinescu, Felix Aderca, Paul Zarifopol and Mircea Eliade are when they claim that they write because they are not good at anything else. The overall tone, the structure and length of the responses, rendered in a seemingly arbitrary succession, are, in their turn, disconcerting. A simple "I don't know" alternates with ample, fastidious or lyrical declarations, not devoid of self-pastiche, as in the case of Virgil Carianopol: "I write, gentlemen, because I love my anxiety, I write to vanquish myself, for my memories, for my life, for my factory brethren [...], for plants, for humanity, for the 30 years that I've wasted, for my blood, which springs from the extinct volcanoes of my parents"¹⁸. Other texts abound in theoretical considerations on creation, systematised from a historical, sociological, aesthetic or psychoanalytical perspective. In the end, however, the same question marks are raised.

To sum it all up, the mechanisms of artistic inspiration are far from being unravelled. Is creation an organic necessity, a pastime, a fatality, or an expression of divine grace? Does it come from a "Kantian principle", from an "Apollonian" calling, or from the humble desire of an individual to pay for a cup of coffee? Is writing a hellish occupation, an error, a curse, or the reflection of an aspiration towards the absolute? Are Romanian writers driven by an awareness of their own vocation or do they harbour hidden feelings of hopelessness, despair and disgust? Finally, do Romanian writers believe in the value of literature or, on the contrary, do they find it obsolete and utterly futile? Behind the artistic creeds consisting largely of interrogations, negations, paradoxes and contradictions, there is still a definite affirmative poetics. One of the suggestions, for instance, refers to the impossibility of dissociating the response from the creative act itself, viewed as the only adequate expression of the problem discussed. Without being an *a priori* given, inspiration represents therefore the intimate dynamics of writing and is impossible to dissociate from it. "Never, if we ask that question, will we discover

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 39.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 85.

the essence”, says Petre Boldur, because “true reality lies in the fact”¹⁹. Motivation resides, therefore, in the essence, and it is simultaneously revealed and concealed in the very temporality of writing. Any book is, ultimately, a reiteration of this question and a new search for an answer, as Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu also believes. If a writer knew why he writes, he would probably not do it at all, as Coca Farago and Emil Gulian believe, among others. At the end of the survey, Henriette Yvonne Stahl notes that none of those interviewed answered the question because there can be no definitive response. If we could answer as we should, says the prose writer, “it would mean that we have arrived at the primordial essence, and drew near to God”²⁰. Few are indeed those who at least try to provide a plausible and carefully structured explanation. Mocking playfulness, irony, and self-pastiche are the faces of the absence of a unique and final recipe for creative imagination.

Some respondents theorise the idea of writing as a miracle, as a manifestation of the lack of the absolute or as a “special meaning” which cannot be explained by the writers themselves. The necessity of creation, Dan Petraşincu says, comes from an array of powers that are generally unfathomable. “The unplumbed elements are always the ones that create the ‘destiny’ of the writer, whether one of talent, of genius or a failure”. Others see the intimate fabric of inspiration as a state that is incomprehensible rationally, one that is connected with what is known as the “inner self”. Camil Baltazar invokes a state of grace meant to convey what is essential and durable in the privacy of the self through the practice of a new sense, associated with self-expansion and generosity. For Mircea Vulcănescu, the same mysterious special sense aspires to definitively give shape to some states of mind and, thus, to maintain the continuity of the self in spite of relativity. There are also voices that see the act of literary invention as a form of transcendence of outer reality, as full interiorisation or as “an antidote against the vulgar reality” and the only possible way to exist in a world of appearances, of “absolutely nothingness”²¹. In this case, the affirmative value of creation rests on the denial of reality in general. Again, it is far from clear if writing is a subconscious journey to a world of perfect forms or the awareness of the absence of absolute values, if it involves an expansion of the self or, on the contrary, an endeavour to transcend it through fixity, if it represents a creation within the creation, an attempt to improve reality or to counter its alleged unreality.

“Too ordinary and too essential”, as Dan Petraşincu claims, the question “why do you write?” finds a possible answer in an article by Marin Sorescu published in 1989 under the title “How Do We Happen to Be Inspired?”. Sheer haphazard, ordinary fact and nothing more arouse inspiration, through an unpredictable and fatally inexplicable “ricochet”. “You write better when you don’t want to write”, the poet explains. “You don’t write when you really want to write, when you sit

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 125.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 133.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 62.

down at the desk planning to be brilliant. You are caught unawares by slivers of inspiration, always on the wrong foot, always when you're running to catch a tram, when you're at the market. Fatigue is a good conduit for inspiration"²². Talent, as a renewed search for complete self-expression, inevitably involves an absence and a negation, visible both in the text and in all the subtexts of the literary work.

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"HOW DO WE HAPPEN TO BE INSPIRED?" LITERATURE SURVEYS FROM THE 1930s (Abstract)

The question of creative inspiration, pertaining to aesthetics, poetics and the philosophy of culture, became the subject of literary review debates in the interwar period, in the context of a growing concern for authenticity. Under the title "Why Do You Write?" the literary review *Facla* launched a survey on this issue in 1935, to which over two hundred literati responded. The result was a genuine novel about writing, conveyed in the form of a cultural chronicle of those times. Extremely diverse, the answers oscillated among a multitude of perspectives ranging from empirical to social, political, psychological, metaphysical or mystical, raising, in fact, as many question marks. The discourse coordinates were framed by the register of interrogation and negation, through the cultivation of irony, paradox and the anti-literary profession of faith.

Keywords: inspiration, creation, survey, negation, authenticity.

²² Marin Sorescu, "Cum se întâmplă că suntem inspirați?" ["How Do We Happen to Be Inspired?"], *Ramuri*, 1989, 8 (302), p. 7.

„CUM SE ÎNTÂMPLĂ CĂ SUNTEM INSPIRAȚI?”
ANCHETE LITERARE DIN ANII 1930

(Rezumat)

Problema inspirației creatoare, apanaj al esteticii, poeziei și filosofiei culturii, devine obiectul unor dezbateri revuistice în perioada interbelică, în contextul preocupării pentru autenticitate. Sub titlul *De ce scrieți?* revista *Facla* inițiază în anul 1935 o anchetă pe această temă, la care participă peste două sute de literați. Ceea ce rezultă este un mic roman al scriiturii, sub forma unei cronici culturale de epocă. Extrem de diverse, răspunsurile oscilează între o multitudine de perspective, de la domeniul empiric la cel social, politic, psihologic, metafizic sau mistic, lăsând în urma lor tot atâtea semne de întrebare. Coordonatele discursului se păstrează constant în registrele interogației și negației, prin cultivarea ironiei, paradoxului și a profesiunii de credință antiliterară.

Cuvinte-cheie: inspirație, creație, anchetă, negație, autenticitate.

COSMIN BORZA

THE NATIONAL NO MAN'S LAND. IMAGINING RURALITY IN THE ROMANIAN LITERARY HISTORIES

In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, in the only fragment problematizing the rural world, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels express an idea leading to endless controversies mainly among the successive generations of Marxists:

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West¹.

Of course, the polemics relate mostly to phrases such as “the idiocy of rural life” or the synonymy set between the “barbarian and semi-barbarian countries” and the “nations of peasants”. The term “idiotismus” in the original text in German, translated in the English versions by “idiocy”, and in the French ones by “l’abrutissement”², gathers the most heated debates; for example, Eric S. Hobsbawm maintains that “idiotismus” does not refer to intellectual or spiritual primitivism, but to the isolation from society (since the Greek term “idiotes” means the person concerned only with his own private affairs and not those of the wider community)³. Regardless of the more or less cynical significance attached to them, and even beyond their truth value (because the interposition of the bourgeois/capitalistic relations in the country generates an erosion of the rural at least as unsettling as the one of the feudal order⁴), the sentences by Marx and

¹ Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1970 (Reproduction of the translation made by Samuel Moore in 1888), p. 36.

² Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Le manifeste du parti communiste*. Édité par Malaeska Classique, 2017 (Traduction par Laura Lafargue, réalisée en 1895).

³ For a substantial presentation of the topic, see Anne Fay Hirsch Moffitt, *Reviving the Rural: The Modernist Poetics of the 20th Century Rural Novel*. A dissertation presented to the faculty of Princeton University in candidacy for the degree of doctor of philosophy, April 2012 (<https://dataspace.princeton.edu/jspui/handle/88435/dsp01s4655g61g> – Accessed April 25, 2018).

⁴ See Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1973, pp. 302-303. A confirmation of this idea is offered also by C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea, in *Neoioabăgia. Studiu economico-sociologic al problemei noastre agrare* [*Neo-serfdom. Economic-sociological Study of Our Agrarian Problem*] (Bucharest, Editura Librăriei Socec & Comp., 1910). Despite the Romanian Marxist ideologue’s statements of intent regarding the “profound discord” between “our civilized institutions and the mostly Oriental and half-feudal reality of life” (p. 9), “neo-serfdom” is not so much the outcome of the application of the capitalist relations in the country (“peasants sought and claimed the abolition of serfdom and not the introduction of the liberal-bourgeois institutions; they would have been satisfied sooner with the absolute monarchy of a Voivode who would have freed

Engels point to a major shift of perspective on rurality, developed midway through the 19th century in the West, respectively at the beginning of the 20th in East Europe and South and North America. Against the backdrop of the extension of socialist movements, the peasants started to be seen as a distinct social class, i.e., borrowing a critical metaphor of Raymond Williams in *The Country and the City*, the rural space detached from its condition of mere landscape (which would literally translate as “land” + „shape” – “the shape of land”) and it acquired an increasingly more prominent identity-related substance. In other words, while in Jane Austen’s novels – observes Raymond Williams – rurality was represented by an absent community, because the novelistic spaces were occupied exclusively by the landowners’ manors (the remaining territory was mentioned solely for weather-related insights or as a promenade) starting with George Eliot and especially with Thomas Hardy, the villages were populated with faces and voices whose individualization and social and psychological outlines grew better and better⁵. Although she starts from completely different premises (identity between the people and nation under the influence of Herderianism), Pascale Casanova identified a similar mutation at the end of the 19th century – the transition from the nation-people to the class-people:

Hence the ambiguity: from now on the “people” was not only another name for a national community taken as a whole, whose classic incarnation was the mythical peasantry, a sort of quintessence of the nation; it also designated – and these notions were in no way contradictory, but rather cumulative – a part of this national whole, consisting of the so-called *classes populaires*, or working classes⁶.

And even in the only two Romanian studies about the evolution of homegrown rural literature, by the use of wide temporal cut-outs (Sultana Craia, *Universul rustic în literatura română* [*The Rustic Space in the Romanian Literature*], respectively Nicolae Bârna, *Ipostaze ale modernizării prozei rurale* [*Aspects of Rural Prose Modernization*]), I may extricate the same awareness of the dissociation between the two approaches of rurality: the decorative-naturalistic approach and the social-problematizing one. The former, by promoting almost exclusively a visual screening of existence, would create the “rustic”, mainly lyrical literature, while the latter – by targeting a grasp on “the sphere of the social and, later, political behavior, mindset, structure and tensions”⁷ – could be the basis

them” – p. 29, respectively “not at all able to sit on the new stand on which it was placed, our country opted for the old, feudal-serfdom one” – p. 60) as it is the very “natural” effect of the said brutal insertion.

⁵ Passim Raymond Williams, *The Country*, pp. 167-208.

⁶ Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*. Translated by M. B. DeBevoise, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2004, p. 224.

⁷ Sultana Craia, *Universul rustic în literatura română* [*The Rustic Space in the Romanian Literature*], Bucharest, Eminescu, 1985, p. 6.

of “rural” literature itself, an epic and analytical literature of the individual or collective “voices” rather than of “the sight”⁸.

Therefore, despite the major differences and even the significant development lags among the previously mentioned literary systems (Williams refers to the English one, Casanova focuses on the dominated, peripheral ones – Irish, South American, African), we may find that rural literature is a creation of the modern age, that the cliché-free envisioning of rurality sets up a profound re-semanticizing action for the classicized ideas on national history and identity. Once again by paraphrasing Casanova, especially since many of the case studies in *The World Republic of Letters* reflect quite faithfully also the case of the Romanian literature, the metamorphoses of the perception of rurality operate like indicator paper for the understanding of the artistic and social mutations of the 19th and 20th centuries: for example, while the 1890–1930 “invention” of Ireland engaged a mystical (neo)Romanticism that spread the idealization and aestheticization of the peasantry that had been proclaimed the essence and the keeper of the “national soul”, Ireland’s “modernization” is rooted in the establishment of a realism that was “at first a peasant realism”, then an urban one⁹. Instead of remaining a spatially and temporally fixed point of reference in relation to the “transient, fugitive and contingent” city, the country emphasizes more noticeably the tensions stemming from the social, ideological, cultural shifts, i.e. precisely the aspects offering historicity to the community and national identities, as well as to the literary forms representing them. From Algeria to Ireland, to England, to Canada, to the United States of America, and to Egypt¹⁰, this situation is completely verified.

Romania alone seems to be an exception, when we read the Romanian literary histories of the first half of the 20th century and we follow the influential bearing of the rurality they had established.

Although they appear at least two decades later than the series of peasant revolts culminating with the one of 1907 – and, moreover, in the years when the agrarian reforms would be replaced with each new government, the “peasant matter” becoming the core not only of the marginal socialists’ political program, but also of a larger number of parties in office, and when rural literature would know a never-before-seen variation of the literary forms/formulae – the histories drawn up by E. Lovinescu (*Istoria literaturii române contemporane* [*History of Contemporary Romanian Literature*] – 1926–1929), N. Iorga (*Istoria literaturii*

⁸ Nicolae Bârna, *Ipostaze ale modernizării prozei rurale. Pavel Dan, Marin Preda, Sorin Titel* [*Aspects of Rural Prose Modernization. Pavel Dan, Marin Preda, Sorin Titel*], Bucharest, Ideea Europeană, 2009, p. 10.

⁹ Pascale Casanova, *The World*, p. 225.

¹⁰ See Anne Fay Hirsch Moffitt, *Reviving*; Glen Cavallero, *The Rural Tradition in the English Novel 1900-1939*, London and Basingstoke, The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1977; Florian Freitag, *The Farm Novel in North America: Genre and Nation in the United States, English Canada, and French Canada, 1845–1945*, Rochester, Camden House, 2013; Samah Selim, *The Novel and the Rural Imaginary in Egypt. 1880–1985*, New York–London, Routledge, 2004.

românești contemporane [*History of Contemporary Romanian Literature*] – 1934) and G. Călinescu (*Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent* [*History of the Romanian Literature from the Beginning to the Present Day*] – 1941) approached rurality from a perspective strongly bound by the ideas of the beginning of the 19th century. They all share a generalizing and a-temporal view, stiffening up to their suppression the rural space and time. In the three literary histories, the differences relate to the phenomenalization rather than to the substance of rurality.

Contrary to the historiographic principles with which he opens his *History...* – “Since it paints relative rather than absolute values, a people’s literature should not be studied in the fixity of a Platonic idea, but in its mobility”¹¹ –, Lovinescu enforces a very restrictive viewpoint on rurality, as well as a sterile and repetitive analytical language.

The critical and sometimes satirical glosses about “Sămănătorism”¹² extend to the whole literature with a rural or popular base both before and after the movement led by Nicolae Iorga. In fact, despite some punctual dissociations, the so-called “Sămănătorist” literature is synonym, in Lovinescu’s opinion, with what he describes as the agrarian “Poporanism”¹³ developed at the end of the 19th century, respectively the “peasant” traditionalism after World War I. Subsequently, a phenomenon relatively limited from a temporal viewpoint, with a sociological-ideological platform considerably more prominent than the cultural-literary one¹⁴, sees the postulation of forecasts and extension, and even spatial expansions so significant that they create the impression of a full monopoly of the domestic literary field/system: the “peasant mysticism” defined by the “exaltation of the rural stratum as the sole reality of our people” generating “a literature saturated with national and rural spirit”, “with the over-use of folk poetry and, generally, with peasant rhetoric”¹⁵ are Lovinescu’s preferred minimalizing formulae when he writes about Constantin Stere, Ilarie Chendi, Simion Mehedinți or Ion Trivale, on whom he pins a narrowness enforced by the “rural origin”. Elsewhere, the generalization becomes hyperbolic:

¹¹ E. Lovinescu, *Scrieri 4. Istoria literaturii române contemporane* [*Writings 4. History of Contemporary Romanian Literature*]. Edition by Eugen Simion, Bucharest, Minerva, 1973, p. 11.

¹² Taking its name from the cultural magazine *Sămănătorul* (*The Sower*), “Sămănătorism” was a conservative, Romanticism-inspired ideology, whose nationalist discourse was rooted in the identification of the so-called authentic national spirit with the idealized archetypal village. The main supporter of “Sămănătorism” was Nicolae Iorga, the most prolific and most frequently translated Romanian historian of all times.

¹³ In fact, “Poporanism” (from “popor”, meaning “people”), which draws on the Russian norodnicism in its sympathy and gratitude towards the peasantry, often promotes an anti-“Sămănătorist” doctrine, refuting the idealized, archetypal peasant/ country.

¹⁴ Passim. Z. Ornea, *Sămănătorismul*, 3rd edition revised, Bucharest, Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 1998.

¹⁵ Passim E. Lovinescu, *Scrieri 4*, p. 13, 18, 62.

While our society has developed in the sense of differentiation and, thus, of evolution, by the creation of an urban stratum and of a national bourgeoisie with traits of ethnical homogeneity, our ideology and, naturally, literature took the reverse approach by negating the obvious, hence the peasant mysticism of all the cultural movement of the last half of century: the peasant has been seen as the only economic, social reality of the Romanian people. [...] therefrom the theory of peasantry as the sole keeper of the virtues of the race or even of any virtues, therefrom the hatred toward the townsfolk who are but a flawed and featureless conglomerate of different races and, subsequently, the hatred toward urban literature¹⁶.

As to the axiological considerations, the deprecatory connotations of the term “primitive” (with the variations “primitivism”, “primitivity”) are abundant in Lovinescu’s *History*: the rural would support the “most primitive” artistic expressions and manifestations of the race, the rural prose of Muntenia, although devoid of contemplative traits and attachment to the past (*passéisme*), is labelled “as primitive” as Moldavian prose, the refinement and intellectualization of Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu’s prose opposes the literature that “lives on senses”, “purportedly confined in the world of instincts”, namely to “the common predisposition for primitivity”; “the scarcity of the amorphous, brutal and vulgar life material” is ascribed to Mihail Sadoveanu also, while Ion Agârbiceanu is reprimanded for the lack of complexity in the epic constructions, his “too true to nature” characters being rudimentary, since “psychology” is possible solely “in some forms of civilization”¹⁷.

Thus, in Lovinescu’s opinion, rurality means mysticism, primitivism, instinctiveness, psychological precarity, monopoly over the national identity and culture, regress in relation to the society’s contemporary and natural evolution. Many of Lovinescu’s conceptions and preconceptions have been constantly questioned over time, and even invalidated factually by recent studies. I will give two examples: in *Modernitatea politică și literară în gândirea lui E. Lovinescu* [*Political and Literary Modernity at E. Lovinescu*], Teodora Dumitru fittingly proves that while “disconnected from the ethical and the ethnical, the art and its study were not disconnected, at E. Lovinescu, from ideology and science”¹⁸, literary modernism reflecting, like a loyal “travel companion”, the class interests of the liberal bourgeoisie that was undergoing a consolidation or was triumphant in spite of the socioeconomic situation of most of Romania’s population in the first decades of the 20th century; in another study, this time a quantitative analysis of the Romanian novel between 1909 and 1939 (including almost similar data also for the

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 152-153.

¹⁷ Passim E. Lovinescu, *Scieri 5. Istoria literaturii române contemporane* [*Writings 5. History of Contemporary Romanian Literature*]. Edition by Eugen Simion, Bucharest, Minerva, 1973, p. 17, 33, 145, 152-153, 175.

¹⁸ Teodora Dumitru, *Modernitatea politică și literară în gândirea lui E. Lovinescu* [*Political and Literary Modernity at E. Lovinescu*], Bucharest, Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române, 2016, p. 132.

period 1909–1926–1929 – when Lovinescu's *History* was published), Daiana Gârdan finds that the rural novel barely amounts to 8% of the total large-sized prose writings of the age, while the erotic one has 25%, the social one with urban themes 28%, the historical and sensationalistic one 9%¹⁹.

However, pointing out the cases in which Lovinescu reevaluates the rural literature continues to be the purpose of this paper and more important than the undermining of Lovinescu's definition of literary rurality as a "negation" of the evolutive "proof" of the Romanian society, respectively as literary or identity-related inflation or monopoly. I refer here especially to the sections on Octavian Goga, Gheorghe Brăescu and Liviu Rebreanu. All three of them would confirm that "the rural material is as likely to become aesthetic as any other material"²⁰, so that the imprecation of the Romanian literature's rurality would have been based on an exclusively aesthetic criterion. Nevertheless, the rurality cherished by Lovinescu is void of any particular, identity-related or social symbols; it is a barren land governed by spirits who are no longer of the place, but of a transcendent energy:

When literature descended from poetry to observation and naturalism, country mysticism lost some of its grace, but gained combative violence and fanaticism. Infallibly, the procedures changed: the water color and idyllic blue in the background of the whole work by Grigorescu or Coșbuc were changed for the somber colors of Sadoveanu's naturalism (in fact, also a lyrical one). Country life is no longer painted as an idyll, but as a tragedy of "muffled pain"; the peasant is an elementary force gifted with immense compressed virtuality. Even in the vastest epic creation of Romanian literature, Rebreanu's *Ion*, where the multiple life of the Transylvanian village is painted [with] such elaborate gestures, with heroes who are so different and so real, *Ion's* central character exceeds, as said before, reality: he is a larger-than-life peasant, a typical expression of what Nietzsche called the "will to power", of the instinct of domination; thus, a symbolic creation²¹.

Goga's situation is similar; although the extremely influential social component of his poetry is recognized, it (the poetry) also stands out owing to the ability to project symbolically the individual and collective destinies²². The only one who could truly generate the shift is Brăescu; his social satire could not only be superior to the one canonized by I. L. Caragiale, but, following in the steps of Balzac, Zola and, especially, Maupassant, it would relieve the peasant "of all the attributes of the poetry and of national mysticism"²³: "With such poignant and realistic vision, country (peasant) psychology entered the phase of the reaction

¹⁹ Daiana Gârdan, "Evoluția romanului erotic românesc din prima jumătate a secolului al XX-lea. Între exercițiu și canonizare" ["Evolution of the Romanian Erotic Novel in the First Half of the 20th Century. Between Exercise and Canonization"], *Transilvania*, 2018, 7, pp. 23-28.

²⁰ E. Lovinescu, *Scrieri 4*, p. 416.

²¹ E. Lovinescu, *Scrieri 5*, p. 230.

²² E. Lovinescu, *Scrieri 4*, p. 371.

²³ E. Lovinescu, *Scrieri 5*, p. 230.

required against the idealization falsifying the facts for almost three quarters of century”²⁴. As we can see, Lovinescu does not praise a new aspect of rural reality/literature, but the satirical approach of the old one, mystifying by aestheticization, i.e. the only one that *History of Contemporary Romanian Literature* is in fact able to conceive.

From this point of view, Lovinescu is not at all more imaginative than Iorga. A cynical modernist’s “reality” substitutes an exalted romantic’s “reality”. By the ideological and methodological refute of Iorga, Lovinescu merely consecrates his artificial projections about rurality. Lovinescu’s criticism of the mysticism of primitivism, instinct, simplicity is synonymous with Iorga’s mystic rurality of freshness, spontaneity, ingenuity.

In the writers’ rural origins or in the direct contact with the peasants, where Lovinescu shapes a nearly unavoidable source of primitivism (as pointed out previously), Iorga envisions the foundation of the freshness and ease of the purely Romanian literary perspective or style: Mihai Eminescu’s trip to Transylvania gifted him with “the knowledge of the real life of peasants who did not emerge from Alecsandri’s Christmas doll house”, “authentic peasants meant to stay like that”, unlike the humanity of Cernăuți, “where Austria knew to sterilize souls”²⁵; Ion Creangă’s creative strength stems from “the strong representation of the country man at the feet of the Neamț mountain, a representation that went unspoiled and unadulterated by the years of school, of seminar apprenticeship, of church missions”²⁶, while Ioan Slavici, “the aged student interested in philosophical speculations”, turns out to be – in all of his most valuable writings – “a peasant who did not forget anything, who has, in fact, the whole encyclopedia of life from the circle of this development”²⁷. Predictably, and a very known aspect, Liviu Rebreanu is rejected because, in *Ion*,

Slavici’s and Agârbiceanu’s reasonable, respectively highly moral Transylvania is ripped open to see the alleged misery at its heart, with all the fatalities of its decline. It’s like the stench emanating from Zola’s *La Terre*, the story of the same elementary passions, therein described with another art, but with the same moral indifference²⁸.

Although the rurality conceived by Lovinescu could be made plastic, even with caricatural touches, by thoughtless peasants in the door of a pub, by “the likes of old man Gheorghe and master Andrieș, pulling at a pipe on the veranda of boyars”

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 233.

²⁵ N. Iorga, *Istoria literaturii românești contemporane, I: Crearea formei (1867-1890)* [*History of Contemporary Romanian Literature, I: Creation of the Form (1867-1890)*]. Edition coordinated, notes and index by Rodica Rotaru. Preface by Ion Rotaru, Bucharest, Minerva, 1985, p. 143.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 239.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 242.

²⁸ N. Iorga, *Istoria literaturii românești, II: În căutarea fondului (1890-1934)* [*The History of Romanian Literature, II: In Search of the Substance*]. Edition coordinated, notes and index by Rodica Rotaru. Preface by Ion Rotaru, Bucharest, Minerva, 1986, p. 346.

houses” or by “the likes of Ms. Elencu, who spend their time in the coops of the yard”²⁹, Iorga’s rurality does not even tolerate a face, but – as put by Zigu Ornea – solely the outlines of “the archetypal village, gifted with a primary soul, its authenticity and originality preserved owing to its isolation, as imagined by the sociologists and philosophers who advocated the antinomic understanding between culture and civilization”³⁰.

In his 1941 *History*, G. Călinescu turns out to be even more original (meaning an excessively creative and expressive imagination). This is proven by two excellent studies which at least leave room for punctual emphases, while they do not exhaust the topic of rurality: Mircea Martin, *G. Călinescu și „complexele” literaturii române* [*G. Călinescu and the “Complexes” of the Romanian Literature*], respectively Andrei Terian, *G. Călinescu. A cincea esență* [*G. Călinescu. The Fifth Essence*]. By dismissing the dichotomies between culture and civilization, between country and city, between the minor culture and the major one, Călinescu challenges both the “primitivism” and the “romanticizing” of the rural, turning his *Istoria* in a “testimony for” rurality, “a defense” of the same, “a demonstration” of its creative powers, “the rehabilitation of peasant spirituality” occurring not “for freshness, spontaneity, ingenuity, but for ‘complexity’ and ‘erudition’”³¹. The creative interest is not captured by the idyllic “soundness” or by the picturesque “ease, naturalness” or the archaizing “freshness” of the Romanian peasant; instead, it is caught by “nobility”³².

The conversion of rurality to nobility, also a “junction point” “for Călinescu’s ethnocentric project” and for the avatars of his critical, theoretical, historiographic system, as shown in detail by Andrei Terian³³, generates an interpretive fiction which is equally fascinating, from a rhetorical-stylistic point of view, and identity destructive for the rural and even national spirituality. At George Coșbuc, whose “specific trait” is retrieved in the “poems with peasant subjects”, “the unfolding of the sentiment is ritual, as in barbarian dances, now like a litany, now symmetrically”³⁴; Octavian Goga “was, undoubtedly, a peasant, but a peasant of so ancient and unmingled race that he had aristocrat’s traits”³⁵, therefore his poetry returns the image of a “transcendentalized” Transylvania, because

²⁹ E. Lovinescu, *Scrieri* 5, p. 107.

³⁰ Z. Ornea, *Sămănătorismul*, p. 217.

³¹ Mircea Martin, *G. Călinescu și „complexele” literaturii române* [*G. Călinescu and the “Complexes” of the Romanian Literature*], 2nd edition, with the author’s *Argument*. Postface by Nicolae Manolescu, Pitești, Paralela 45, 2002, p. 94.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 113.

³³ Andrei Terian, *G. Călinescu. A cincea esență* [*G. Călinescu. The Fifth Essence*], Bucharest, Cartea Românească, 2009, p. 142.

³⁴ G. Călinescu, *History of Romanian Literature*. Translated by Leon Levițchi, Milan, UNESCO–Nagard Publishers, 1988, p. 501.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 518.

the country described in his poetry has an obvious hermetical character. It is a Purgatory where processional events happen, where the people lament mysteriously, driven by a secret power, with the presentiment of a universal catastrophe. Why do only butterflies grow here and the fields of useless silk? Why does the entire people sing chorally? Why do the waters speak? Why does everybody wail as in an apocalypse? Why this moving ceremonial? The poem's movement is Dantesque and the woe has remained pure, detached from the political content³⁶.

No wonder, then, that even Rebreanu's world becomes de-territorialized, socially and politically aseptic; Terian demonstrates that the typicality of his characters is removed from any Balzacianism, bestowed with "universal and non-contingent"³⁷ meanings, since, by applying Călinescu's reading grid,

Ion is not even a novel [...] *Ion* is the epic work of a poet who describes solemnly the general conditions of life, birth, wedding, death. The novel is made up of cantos, obviously cadenced in the style of the great epopees [...] *Ion* is an epic poem, solemn like an American river, a masterpiece of quiet magnificence³⁸.

And the examples could go on virtually forever, because rurality demonstrates *par excellence* precisely "the fifth essence" – the ineffable, the indemonstrable, the unanalyzable – by which Andrei Terian defines the core of Călinescu's critical system. Not by chance, Călinescu "transylvanizes" and "ruralizes"³⁹, and thus "specifies", for "universalization", all the great Romanian writers. An additional proof is the "ethnic character" valued in Mihail Sadoveanu's writings, configured also in a universalist terminology: "archive of an unreal primitive people", "Sadoveanu has not created men, he has created a people of absolute barbarity, placed in a sublime and rough setting, majestically legendary, endowed with Geto-Scythian institutions formulated with the help of imagination"⁴⁰.

This is how, downgraded to a primitive condition by Lovinescu, naturalized through the evacuation of all the temporal, ideological and social contingencies by Iorga, upgraded through universalization by Călinescu, the rurality reflected by the Romanian literature avoids any formal, historical, aesthetic or even identity-related assessments. If a reader unacquainted with the homegrown cultural horizon approached the literary histories drawn up by Lovinescu, Iorga and Călinescu, he/she would find in the Romanian village only preconceptions and mystifications belittling, respectively idealizing the peasant of any time any place. For this reason, the national or downright nationalistic character reproached to Iorga's and Călinescu's histories by the use of the new transnational critical methodologies cannot find a valid argument in the envisioning of rurality. From this point of view,

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 520.

³⁷ Andrei Terian, *G. Călinescu*, p. 176.

³⁸ G. Călinescu, *History*, p. 621.

³⁹ Andrei Terian, *G. Călinescu*, p. 330.

⁴⁰ G. Călinescu, *History*, p. 541.

Iorga and Călinescu are as “un-national” as Lovinescu. Not only does their country lack a population of “true” Romanians; it also misses a proper social community. Their rural motherland is safeguarded only by infinite symbols, myths and phantasms.

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THE NATIONAL NO MAN'S LAND. IMAGINING RURALITY IN THE ROMANIAN LITERARY HISTORIES

(Abstract)

This paper analyzes the concurrent perspectives of the three Romanian literary histories (E. Lovinescu, *History of Contemporary Romanian Literature – 1926–1929*, N. Iorga, *History of Contemporary Romanian Literature – 1934*, G. Călinescu, *History of Romanian Literature from Its Origins to the Present – 1941*), in which rurality acquires the status of central constitutive factor of the theoretical and analytical system. Despite their programmatically divergent historiographical conceptions, Lovinescu, Iorga and Călinescu share – not at all paradoxically – almost similar (abstract, atemporal, aesthetic) projections of the rural universe. Consequently, the imagined rurality in the three histories of Romanian literature puts into crisis precisely what it should have underlined: their historical and/or national character.

Keywords: rural literature, imagined rurality, national myth, literary history, E. Lovinescu, N. Iorga, G. Călinescu.

ȚARA NIMĂNUI. IMAGINAREA RURALITĂȚII ÎN ISTORIILE LITERARE ROMÂNEȘTI

(Rezumat)

Lucrarea analizează perspectivele concordante din cele trei istorii literare românești (E. Lovinescu, *Istoria literaturii române contemporane – 1926-1929*, N. Iorga, *Istoria literaturii românești contemporane – 1934*, G. Călinescu, *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent – 1941*) în care ruralitatea dobândește statutul de factor constitutiv central al sistemului teoretic și analitic. În ciuda concepțiilor istoriografice programatic divergente, Lovinescu, Iorga și Călinescu împărtășesc – deloc paradoxal – proiecții cvasi-similare ale universului rural: abstractizante, atemporale, estetizante. În consecință, ruralitatea imaginată în cele trei istorii ale literaturii române pune în criză tocmai ceea ce ar fi trebuit să fundamenteze: istoricitatea și/sau caracterul lor național.

Cuvinte-cheie: literatură rurală, ruralitate imaginată, mit național, istorie literară, E. Lovinescu, N. Iorga, G. Călinescu.

COMPTE RENDUS / BOOK REVIEWS

MIRCEA MARTIN, CHRISTIAN MORARU, and
ANDREI TERIAN (eds.), *Romanian Literature as World
Literature*, New York and London, Bloomsbury Academic,
2017, 374 p.

Le travail collectif dirigé par Christian Moraru, Andrei Terian et Mircea Martin sous le titre *Romanian Literature as World Literature* formule, d'une manière militante, l'importance que prennent les cultures nationales à l'ère de la mondialisation, tout en esquissant les voies d'un devenir-universel. Ce n'est que le premier volet d'un programme plus ambitieux de *Literatures as World Literature*, soutenu comme série par les éditions Bloomsbury. Selon les éditeurs, il s'agit d'un point de vue qui rend flexibles les relations de pouvoir décrites par Pascale Casanova, permettant, à chacune des littératures du monde, la prise de la position centrale (qui, dans ce contexte, se présente comme une centralité relative, *soft*) et les transformant ainsi dans des par littératures-monde.

C'est pourquoi le but central de cet ouvrage le constitue le soulignement de l'interconnexion permanente qui se réalise entre les cultures, car c'est cette circulation même qui rend possibles les déplacements vers le centre de l'espace littéraire. Divisés en trois grandes parties, les articles décrivent l'aube, la progression et l'avenir de la modernité roumaine, pendant que la dernière contribution, celle de Mihaela Ursa, discute la formation d'un champ littéraire à partir des traductions, en faisant encore une fois référence à l'époque de naissance de la littérature roumaine.

Le tom a été perçu dans l'espace culturel roumain comme un tournant en ce qui concerne les études littéraires, car il élargit la sphère de ce qu'on comprend généralement comme objet tenant de la littérature nationale. Ne se limitant pas aux frontières du pays, les réflexions proposées ne s'arrêtent pas non plus aux influences culturelles qui s'opèrent entre deux cultures tenues par leur définition historique et géographique. On s'intéresse, par contre, aux situations plus complexes, dans lesquelles les frontières ne peuvent pas être esquissées facilement ; c'est le cas de presque tous les auteurs qui traitent le problème de l'influence perçue à travers des déterritorialisations successives ou progressives, quoi qu'elles soient liées aux écrivains de langue hongroise qui vivent en Roumanie ou à l'« exil » des écrivains tels que Herta Müller ou Andrei Codrescu. On se situe dans un *gray area* où l'on parle à la fois des limitations culturelles (comme le fait Ovidiu Morar discutant le cas de Gherasim Luca, qui se dit « étranger »), des dissimulations et des capitalisations à partir des données d'une autre culture (le positionnement de Emil Cioran, discuté par Mihai Iovănel).

L'ouvrage a été également saisi comme la pierre angulaire d'une nouvelle méthode de la critique, qui envisage une intégration mondiale des œuvres analysées. Selon Christian Moraru, on parle pour la première fois de la fin de la centralité hégémonique définie par Pascale Casanova et de son remplacement par un modèle plutôt fluide, qui favorise l'échange des positions entre les littératures et qui peut constater, dans ce sens relatif dont nous avons déjà parlé, une centralité assumée également par la littérature roumaine. Un tel changement méthodologique et même épistémologique était, paraît-il, bien nécessaire et beaucoup attendu dans les études littéraires, car la réception du volume est enthousiaste non seulement de la part des chercheurs consacrés (Alexandru Matei, Cezar Gheorghe), mais aussi de la part des jeunes doctorants (Anamaria Mihăilă, Mihnea Bălici), qui y trouve un nouveau souffle pour leurs propres recherches.

Comme le formule de manière explicite Christian Moraru, les éditeurs ont voulu offrir par ce volume une manière de se rapporter *autrement* à la littérature roumaine. Ils se sont proposés une ré-invention de la littérature nationale. Bien que dans la préface on affirme qu'il ne s'agisse pas d'une histoire littéraire proprement-dite, mais plutôt d'une collection d'études, de diaporamas transversales (perspective qui est reprise par Alexandru Matei dans son commentaire au volume), l'impression qu'on a affaire avec beaucoup plus, et que les analyses proposées arrivent à proposer également une autre histoire de notre littérature est forte. Ce qui est contenu dans le *graphein*, à savoir

l'historiographie, la cartographie et la contre-géographie, plusieurs fois mentionnées dans l'ouvrage, se compose avec une visée plurale sur l'histoire littéraire ; la *territorialisation* des études littéraires ne relève qu'un autre moyen de penser la temporalité, comme le *deep time* de Wai Chee Dimock.

La cartographie d'une littérature implique toujours des risques, c'est pourquoi les auteurs du volume ne se proposent pas *une histoire*, mais *une autre histoire*, qui implique une réévaluation des clichés véhiculés sur le modernisme littéraire roumain, sur l'époque et l'œuvre de Mihai Eminescu ou sur les correspondances entre les Beatniks et la génération '80. Dans la préface de *Où est la littérature mondiale?*, Christophe Pradeau formulait l'idée que la difficulté principale des études de la littérature mondiale est celle de réussir à fixer un vertige qui s'installe aux intersections et dans les points de correspondances. Or, à mon avis, la prise de position exprimée dans *Romanian Literature as World Literature* est de refuser de fixer ce vertige. Il est rassurant que la dislocation évidente proposée par les études World Literature ne se traduise pas dans ce cas par une abolition de l'histoire, mais par sa pluralisation, en rendant le vertige de plus en plus présent. Les visions de G. Călinescu ou de Nicolae Manolescu sont souvent blâmées, mais on souligne en même temps que ce n'est pas dans un conflit avec l'histoire littéraire traditionnelle qu'on s'installe de cette manière, mais tout simplement dans un rapport distancé, qui est le résultat d'un positionnement dans l'extrême contemporain.

Un tel travail comporte aussi des risques, surtout parce qu'il existe des différences et même des tensions entre les perspectives assumées par les auteurs. Les éditeurs ne cachent pas le fait que leur volume soit le produit d'une crise, liée à la fois au modèle de l'état-national qui de nos jours s'ouvre vers la mondialisation – et aux conditions de la circulation et de la réception des œuvres qui changent, elles aussi, une fois avec la globalisation. En favorisant une centralité culturelle relative, à travers les *soft nodes*, la perspective critique proposée par *Romanian Literature as World Literature* devient souvent « mineure », selon Xavier Garnier, c'est à dire qu'elle « s'intéresse aux transformations que la littérature fait subir aux faits culturels ».

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MARIA SASS, ŞTEFAN BAGHIU, and VLAD
POJOGA (eds.), *The Culture of Translation in Romania /
Übersetzungskultur und Literaturübersetzen in Rumänien*,
Berlin, Peter Lang, 2018, 326 p.

In the Romanian cultural and academic context, permeated by a slow but steadily growing tendency to employ the latest research methods in the study of contemporary relevant subjects, *The Culture of Translation...* is a volume that has two essential merits: it is the result of a collective research effort, as well as a welcome attempt to highlight the importance of a topic such as translation studies by using a variety of perspectives and research methods. The volume consists of twenty-one contributions, written in English and German, the majority of them belonging to scholars grouped around two of the most important academic centres in the country, while the remaining few belong to people involved in the book dissemination circuit (translators, reviewers etc.). The three sections of the book converge to offer a panoramic account of translations in the Romanian cultural context.

The first section of the book, "General Analysis and Quantitative Studies", comprises a series of articles that share a large degree of generality, covering extensive areas concerning the theory and practice of translation on a national scale. The six articles in this section aim to convey a nuanced image of the translation phenomenon starting with the second half of the nineteenth century and continuing up to the present decade. The authors address various subjects including the task of

sketching a timeline of translation theory, the interdependence of the emergence of literary renditions on the development of local literature, changes in the status of translation as a direct result of a series of variables (cultural ideology, economy, socio-politic climate), the dynamics of translation and its position in the equation connecting peripheral literatures to central ones, or literary renditions as an index of artistic outlook. Concerning the content, it is notable for its use of numerous up-to-date concepts. Whether focusing on traductology and its “satellite” concepts – ideological translation, untranslatables, “travelling concepts” – while pointing towards authors such as Edward Said, Emily Apter, or David Bellos, or centred on the field of study outlined by World Literature (a subject largely theorized by authors such as Pascale Casanova, David Damrosch, Immanuel Wallerstein or Franco Moretti, among others, who bring to the foreground concepts such as peripheral and central literatures / cultures, emergent literatures, literary colonialism, world-systems analysis, cultural capital, the stock exchange of literary values etc.), these contributions seek to be not only complex, but also relevant. Considering the broadness and diversity of these subjects, it is only natural to expect a large array of research methods. Thus, from close reading to distant reading and from quantitative analysis to literary geography, these studies wish to provide a comprehensive account of the main topic, displaying at the same time the rigour of present-day research practices. Two important ideas regarding the opening section are worth highlighting: first, the selected topics have a high degree of relevance in the Romanian cultural context, considering that some of the articles efficiently synthesize large amounts of data or undertake working hypotheses other works barely touch upon; secondly, this is a significant step towards rethinking the study of autochthonous literature, i.e. allowing the national production to be defined in / by itself, as well as in connection with World Literature.

After the introductory section, the second part of the book, “Close-ups of Literary Translation”, gathers nine articles, eight of them dedicated to different specific cases of translation into Romanian, the last one providing an overview on translation practice in the digital era of globalization. This part starts with three enquiries related to the activity carried out by three Romanian-based authors. Following the lives and work of Wolf von Aichelburg, George Coşbuc and Lucian Blaga, these papers wish to analyse not only the renditions of the aforementioned authors in terms of ideology, methods and techniques, but also the influence exerted by their translation activity on the dynamics of national literature. The next two chapters share an interest in the effective and immediate result of literary renditions, distinguishable in the language choices. The first article looks into the distinctions discernible in the communist and the post-communist renditions of Shakespeare’s works. The focal point is the translation of the English author’s ribald multilingual puns and the questions it raises with regard to a foreignising approach. Following a similar direction, the other article investigates several instances of sexual language renditions and the relationship between the gender of the author or translator and the linguistic depiction of the sexual act. Other articles in this section undertake topics such as the attempt of national literatures to acquire exportable value by means of creating “editorial fiction”, as well as the genre’s impact in the French and Romanian context; the debate revolving around the status of translations and film adaptations of novels, bearing in mind the ideas of “fidelity” and “artistic coherence”; Scandinavian Noir as a successful representative of popular culture and the trajectory of symbolic capital accumulation by means of entry in a dominant book market. The last paper acts as a summary and theoretical reflexion, bringing forward various subject-related aspects: the pragmatic and the poststructuralist theories of translation, the position of the critical discourse in connection with the relationship established between the author and the translator, or the legitimacy of associating translatorship to invisibility and creative imprints. As was the case with the previous part, this section covers a vast area of research featuring, as a result, numerous investigation methods and techniques. Some of the most notable points examined in this part are the articulation of translation in relation to censorship and cultural rehabilitation, genetic, typological, and free literary relationships, overt and covert translations, the foreignising approach to translation, the link between language and gender, strategies for internationalizing autochthonous literature, the truth and fidelity of literary renditions and film adaptations, the methods of communication between cultural peripheries and the shifting equilibrium in the author-translator association. Overall, these papers are

more inclined towards an applied approach, trying to examine several translation phenomena identifiable in the Romanian culture.

The last section, suggestively titled “A Translator’s Perspective: Language, Discourse and Meaning”, reunites six first-hand accounts of a translator’s experience in terms of status, success, remuneration, obstacles and management of problematic situations. The first article deals with the position of the translator as a cultural mediator in a globalised world. The paper explores multiple problems, including the poor remuneration and reputation of the translator, along with his/her chances of achieving large-scale success. The following paper is a critical confession that dwells upon the intricacies of rendering Paul Celan’s poetry into Romanian, especially on those of using the correct deciphering (reading) and translation strategies. In a similar manner, the next article recounts the experience of translating Ezra Pound’s poetry, the difficulties that may arise and the ways of overcoming them. Stemming from the motivation to understand marginal literature and its journey to transnational visibility, the fourth article is dedicated to the Romanian Roma-poetess Luminița Mihai Cioabă, whose works have a twofold significance: they are a means of preserving the oral Romanian language and a direct way for the European readership to get acquainted with an obscure culture. The second to last paper analyses Radu Paraschivescu’s prose and, implicitly, contemporary Romanian literature and the manner in which it makes use of language. This section ends with an overview of Doina Ioanid’s poetic activity and the German readership’s response to the author’s original prose poems. The last part of the volume stands largely under the sign of confession, collecting the experience of professional translators and presenting a selective image of the European reception of autochthonous literary productions. In a similar manner to that of the previous sections, these articles problematise the nature of the network of relations established between national literatures, peripheral literatures’ chances of becoming active participants in the international cultural capital exchange, the connection between literature / translation and social criticism or lobbying, encapsulating present-day life experience and sensibility and preserving cultural heritage.

Given the book’s acknowledged aim to mediate a change in the general perspective on translation studies and to advocate the fact that Romanian research in translation studies should be granted more importance, *The Culture of Translation...* has achieved its goals. Due to the authors’ ambition to approach the topic from a multitude of perspectives, as well as to employ a variety of research methods, the end result is a volume with two essential roles: that of filling a void in the Romanian cultural discourse, and, at the same time, that of providing the international book market with “a window on” the Romanian cultural context. In short, although the volume does not treat its main topic exhaustively, it cannot be overlooked by future researches in this area of investigation.

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ION POP, *Poezia românească neomodernistă* [*Romanian Neomodernist Poetry*], Cluj-Napoca, Editura Școala Ardeleană, 2018, 853 p.

A major challenge for recent literary studies in the Romanian space has been to overcome the traditional historiographic perspective embraced by the studies of Eugen Lovinescu, G. Călinescu or Nicolae Manolescu. Since last year’s volume, *Romanian Literature as World Literature* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018), these views have been openly questioned. The central idea of the new studies is that last century’s major projects on local literary history have common subsidiary structures and ideologies. Firstly, they include a chronological inventory of authors from a given period and the

criteria for selection are mostly axiological. It is obvious that one of the aims of local historiography was the creation and imposition of a canon. Secondly, the periphery complex caused the consolidation of the national myth of Romanian literature. Recent studies of world literature demonstrate the fragility of the concept of “national literature” and the existence of important transnational openings in the genesis and evolution of a regional literary act. These are ignored in the respective projects for political reasons specific to peripheral countries tributary to the important cultural centres. Thirdly, these local historiographies had ideologies that go beyond aesthetic or scientific purposes. They were either answering a need for synchronization with European culture (as in Eugen Lovinescu’s case), or were, on the contrary, conservative and nationalistic, proposing a unitary and organicist image of Romanian culture (G. Călinescu). In the context of the unsettling of the old methodologies, Ion Pop’s study on the Romanian Neomodernist poetry continues the meta-literary tradition of the twentieth century by applying its methods to a still controversial period in local literary history.

The aim of this volume is neither to build a broad narrative about national identity nor to accentuate an exaggerated synchronization with Euro-Atlantic culture. The study responds to recent local discussions about Romanian neo-modernism, trying to clarify how it appeared in an unfavourable political and historical context and to systematise its main aesthetic categories. The poetic neo-modernism of the 1960s and 1970s was discredited in the theorizations of the critics of the 1980s generation, especially by Ion Bogdan Lefter and Mircea Cărtărescu. This new generation has adopted Western postmodernism and criticises neo-modernism on the grounds of its “anachronism”. *Romanian Neo-modernist Poetry* proposes a counterargument to the reductionist idea that the promotion of poets from the previous decades simply copied the models of interwar “high” modernism (Lucian Blaga, Ion Barbu, Tudor Arghezi and George Bacovia), which would diminish their aesthetic value both locally and at European level. By adopting the axiological criterion in his textual analysis of the authors, Ion Pop does not attempt to impose a canon, but to re-legitimise a literary movement that has become “outdated” in the opinion of the more recent “neo-avant-garde” movements (9).

Another aspect that Ion Pop adopts from previous local historiographies is the organicist perspective on Romanian literature. Yet he does so from an anti-communist rather than nationalist point of view. Culturally, the onset of communism led to a “dramatic ‘proletkultist’ and ‘realist-socialist’ syncope” (19) which brutally interrupted the “natural” progress of liberal Romania to (post)modernity. This argument is also used by the detractors of neo-modernism and is the basis of a ceaseless narrative of Romanian (or generally East-European) culture: the “delay” complex. However, many recent international studies have begun to problematise the importance of censorship (whether in a totalitarian regime or not) to the realisation of the literary act. Moreover, the literary is always built in relation to the rules of state control, the latter drawing the limits and possibilities of subversion, avoidance or expression for the first. In a similar vein, but without a proper theoretical and institutional approach, what Ion Pop underscores is the complex dialectic between neo-modernist poetry and censorship as it is reflected in the actual poetry works, especially in the context of the “loosening” of the Soviet cultural program after the 1960s. The explanation for the start of the neo-modernist program is related to the forced imposition of the “artistic” decrees of socialist realism. It is known that the demands of socialist realism forced the adoption of a classical formal structure which had to be accessible to the general public, the usage of institutionally accepted topics, the total straightforwardness of the discourse and the image of the “exponential subject”, that is, of the visionary poet, the “spokesman for the Party” (20). When state-imposed control became less coercive, the “natural” tendency was to avoid the poetic repertoire of socialist realism and the only viable method was the return to interwar modernism. The avoidance of censorship led to the emergence of strictly aesthetic programs. Even the appropriation of the avant-garde surrealist program by the “Oneirist” generation is depoliticised by “camouflaging the subversive aspects of this project” (23). Thus, neo-modernism is determined by these major modernist vectors: the importance given to the signifier over the signified, meta-poetry, intertextuality, hermeticism, bovarism, reflexive lyricism and the desocialisation of discourse. Hence, Ion Pop also detects numerous revivals of the major

directions of inter-war modernism: “‘Updated’ Traditionalism”, “Classical Variations”, “Variants of (H)ermeticism” or “Expressionist Reshapes” are some of the chapters in this study.

However, these theories are not entirely new. Critics such as Nicolae Manolescu, Eugen Simion or Eugen Negrici also discussed similar issues in the past. The main objective of *Romanian Neomodernist Poetry* is not to explain the internal dynamics of neo-modernist promotion within the post-Stalinist literary system. Its major methodology is what international studies call “close reading”. Starting with the *Argument*, the critic asserts that “the next glosses belong to the category of ‘slow readings’, following as a rule the approximation of an imaginary universe” that is “structured by its own internal logic” (10). Thus, Ion Pop proposes a thorough analysis of the oeuvres of all the actors correlated to the Romanian neo-modernist movement. He is mainly interested in issues related to style, the personal imaginary, ethos and autochthonous or international influences. This is problematic because it does not properly conceptualise the main characteristics of this literary period. It seems that every author writing outside the socialist realist norms and active between the late 1950s (with the emergence of the “*Steaua* group”) and the late 1970s (the movement around the *Echinox* magazine) is portrayed as a neo-modernist. However, the attention given to the artistic individualism of each poet deconstructs the thesis of the so-called “neo-modernist provincialism”, demonstrating that these authors did not simply rely on a sterile emulation of inter-war modernism, but that they also hugely influenced the local literary system.

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LIGIA TUDURACHI, *Grup sburător. Trăitul și scrisul împreună în cenaclul lui E. Lovinescu* [“*Grup sburător*”. *Living and Writing Together in E. Lovinescu’s Literary Circle*], Timișoara, Editura Universității de Vest, 2019, 451 p.

Although much has been written on the literature produced by E. Lovinescu’s literary circle, allowing some of its members to become canonical authors and milestones of autochthonous cultural history, the circumstances of this phenomenon of concerted creativity have usually been regarded as anecdotal. Literature itself came into focus, rendering the adjacent social relationships, the group’s routine or the genesis of every text insignificant in the eyes of many historians or critics and perpetuating the idea that the mundane background of literary production is to be studied separately from the actual body of texts. However, as contextualisation gains increasing importance in literary studies both globally and locally, the socio-historical factors of a major movement like Romanian modernism need to be addressed, and Ligia Tudurachi’s recent investigation, *Grup sburător*, thus appears instrumental in understanding Eugen Lovinescu’s legacy by drawing the first lines between seemingly accidental biographical details and aesthetic choices or imaginary structures.

Symptomatically, Tudurachi begins her exposition by presenting not Lovinescu’s project (a specific moment in time and space), but rather the psychology and sociology of artistic groups in the 19th and 20th centuries. Basing her hypothesis on their noticeably neutral names (related to days of the week or to street names), she discusses the tension between belonging to a movement and defining one’s creative self in opposition with the existing crowd, using these dynamics of collectivity and individuality to prove the double role played by cultural societies in literary history – as forces of coagulation at times, but also as self-made institutions that prompted dissent and diversity. The same pattern applies to *Sburătorul*, whose name is initially linked to Lovinescu’s preferred myths (the young artist, tormented by his ideals; the scientific progress of modern times, used simultaneously for

emancipation and destruction) and to his detractors' ironic metaphors (Călinescu's Pegasus, for instance, an embodiment of Romanian contemporary literature collapsing under its own weight). Its symbolism grows more intricate, however, when considering that a remarkable number of writers have attempted to further interpret it, adding supplementary layers of significance to their circle's name – not because this was in any way necessary for establishing its identity in the existent historical context, but more likely in order to personally comprehend the complicated relationship between living and creating within Lovinescu's group, between an intellectual community and an emotionally bound one and, ultimately, between interaction and self-design.

Since these are the main problematic areas that *Grup sburător* tackles, it follows naturally that Ligia Tudurachi would counter such relational ambiguities through minute analysis and critical rigour. This is most visible in her description of *life* within the literary circle, as she surveys and comments on a considerable volume of both fictional and diaristic texts belonging to group members. From showing that the density of negative emotions associated with one's first public readings derives from a certain cult of vulnerability and sensitivity developed amongst interwar writers, to highlighting the isolated nature of their gatherings and their paradoxically anti-modernist disinterest in the street's daily spectacle, the author manages to look behind any age-old clichés about Lovinescu's dominance and draws instead a map of influences, of authority acquisition and collective psychology.

The circle's setting, for example, namely Lovinescu's bourgeois apartments, is considered eloquent in terms of the texts' reception in the literary world: on the one hand, Tudurachi extracts several accounts of the almost mystical, mysterious atmosphere that engulfed the public, created through lighting as much as through a romanticised perspective on the creator's function; it was this theatricality of the writer's reading performance that engendered, in Lovinescu's view, the arbitrary evaluations that the correspondent texts often received; on the other hand, inhabiting the same space became an element of power, as the intentionally neutral geography of the critic's study allowed any newcomer to appropriate the territory (a tendency prevalent in the same novices' novels and short stories, where many intimate, individualised places are symbolically transferred from owner to visitor). Indeed, Tudurachi's research shows that the power dynamics between the leader and the followers, as well as that within actor-public interactions were well understood by *Sburătorul* writers. Thus, in the later prose of Cella Delavrancea, Octav Șuluțiu or Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, the critic identifies many social situations in which an artist or an ordinary speaker in an ordinary conversation assumes a vulnerable, tragic posture, similar to that of Greek theatre victim characters. Moreover, Tudurachi argues that *this* perception of societal exposure – obvious to Lovinescu himself during the circle's gatherings – also prompted a change in the meetings' tone, from critical to empathetic and enthusiastic, finally resulting in an unlikely type of solidarity.

In fact, the everyday life of *Sburătorul* participants is likened to the *idiorhythmic* lives of Athos monks (using one of Roland Barthes's analyses and his terminology), more exactly to the constant negotiation between a collective and rigid routine and, at the same time, one of unquestionable personal freedom and taste. The circle is deemed to have functioned, by and large, as a stable cultural mechanism, whose unwritten rules and hierarchies were subject to very few changes over the years, but the writers' closeness to or distance from this institution remained the product of individual choice, ranging from dependence to mere curiosity. Were Ligia Tudurachi's reconstruction to be summarised, it is this paradox of radical individuality inside a literary family that would represent her main focus: the absence of a single artistic creed, Lovinescu's habit of verbalising a writer's specificity instead of their flaws, as well as the emphasis placed on diversity by master and members alike all served as incentives for originality rather than conformity and can retrospectively explain the unlikely social structure of the group.

Even Lovinescu's legendary role on the epoch's cultural stage is deconstructed by shedding light on the open circuit of opinion functioning amongst the critic, the artists and the wider public (that would often phone Lovinescu, expressing their doubts and discontent), especially as this type of interactivity could echo, albeit involuntarily, the avant-garde's desire to bring authors and critics off their pedestals and into the challenging agora of non-institutional reception. However, a comparative

inspection of *Sburătorul* and *Junimea*, the equally influential cultural society of the 19th century, proves both the latter's democratic and carnivalesque setting (with texts being read by certain appointed members and thus deprived of any dramatic aura of intimate representation) and the former's insistence on individualism, doubled by the tragic centrality of the author-actor. The *modern* or *innovative* direction of Lovinescu's circle therefore comes into question, as modernism is revealed to have been spearheaded by a group of writers engrossed in their personal mythologies or at least in a solemn and somewhat anachronistic collective narrative.

Ligia Tudurachi's inquiries revolve programmatically around unexplored aspects of creation inside the literary circle, in an effort to comprehend even the apparently arbitrary decisions of the artists involved. Why did Lovinescu impose – for instance – so many pseudonyms on his novices: to answer the preexistent need for being re-baptised into literature or to secure, as Althusser's and Judith Butler's theories suggest, authority and power? How did the critic link anonymity (be it that of the Jews, defined collectively by their fanatical devotion to art, or that of women, perceived solely through their so-called femininity or lack thereof) to the emergence of genius and, more importantly, is this distribution of talent to minorities the stamp of a democratic sort of conscience? Finally, Tudurachi also discusses unconventional forms of collective writing, from the fiction inspired by the circle's setting or characters and secondary texts (prefaces, interviews etc. – all implying an emotional investment), to the more subtle process of mutual influence (a shared vocabulary, common aesthetic tendencies).

All along, Tudurachi's analysis is not only as engrossing as a historically informed narrative, but also as dense in evidence as the most stoic scientific report, providing a much-needed overview of one of the most intricate periods of Romanian literary culture and building this landscape on different fronts synchronically – collective psychology and issues of personal and group identity, a sociological understanding of literary communities, a comparison between Lovinescu's project for an empathetic and constructive kind of criticism and his cold, isolated persona, as well as political and ideological insights. Clarifying the circle's evolution and employing various techniques in the process (close-reading, the study of influences, cross-disciplinary excursions, a succinct quantitative demonstration regarding the openness of the literary network towards new additions), Tudurachi retraces transfers from the writers' experiences at *Sburătorul* to their subsequent subjective perception of the world (of space, objects, history, affect) as seen in their writings – the geography of the characters' homes, the theatricality of their dialogues, the intellectual's status and emotional struggles. Thus, the gap between context and artistic product is finally bridged.

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PAUL CERNAT, *Vase comunicante: (Inter)fețe ale avangardei românești interbelice* [*Communicating Vessels. (Inter)Faces of the Romanian Inter-War Avant-Garde*], Iași, Polirom, 2018, 312 p.

In his latest book, Paul Cernat proposes a few re-readings of several Romanian avant-garde writers stressing the similarities between the different radical literary and cultural movements of the interwar period. As opposed to his previous volume on the subject (*Avangarda românească și complexul periferiei. Primul „val”* [*The Romanian Avant-garde and the Periphery Complex. The First “Wave”*], 2007) the present book is not a synthesis study, but rather an investigation into the

variety of the 20th century's avant-gardes, meant to expose the movement's heterogeneous character and complex network of interferences.

The book is conceived as a collection of essays centred on the concept of "communicating vessels" which is used as a metaphor to describe the links between literary and political directions, usually perceived as opposites. Seven distinct studies divide the structure of the volume into chapters. In the first one, Paul Cernat goes beyond the borders of the historical avant-gardes trying to identify a certain proto-avant-garde atmosphere within the emerging modernism of the late 19th century literature. The author stumbles upon this period initially because the first occurrence of the term *avant-garde* (with a cultural meaning) is to be found in the Romanian literary press at this time. In a polemic essay published in 1870, the national poet Mihai Eminescu uses the term to attack Titu Maiorescu's group Junimea, which he qualifies as nihilist avant-garde. Even though the occurrence of the term at that time can be interesting, it does not represent the main point of the argument. Trying to avoid certain anachronistic readings, but acknowledging the poet's intuition, Paul Cernat asserts that the fusion between the founding and polemical spirit of Titu Maiorescu and his group "warrants the assimilation of Junimea with a *sui-generis cultural avant-garde*" (25). As it is well known, Junimea will soon become the cultural establishment, assimilating Mihai Eminescu as well, on the basis of the conservative and Germanophile affinities between the poet and the group. Hence, the new anti-establishment "avant-gardes" will oppose the ideology of Junimea. The two main anti-Junimea directions are the aesthetic-Francophile one (represented by the symbolist poet Alexandru Macedonski, Eminescu's rival) and the socialist one (represented by the Romanian-Jewish literary critic Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea). Paul Cernat reasons that the fusion between these two directions will constitute, in Romania, the foundation of the actual literary and artistic avant-garde of the 20th century, firstly represented by Ion Vinea and Tristan Tzara.

Entitled "Dada export-import", the second chapter of the volume addresses the transnational implications of the Dada movement. The subject was previously approached by the author in his previous volume of 2007 from a slightly different perspective, that of stressing the point of the "inferiority complex" in Romanian culture. Here the reciprocal nature of cultural influences is emphasized: firstly, the involvement of Romanian writers and artists in the development of the movement at Cabaret Voltaire and secondly, the influences of the post-dada Dutch movement *De Stijl* on the articulation of the constructivist Romanian avant-garde of the 1920s. The Dada movement is analysed within the framework developed by Romanian writer Caius Dobrescu, according to which the main avant-garde movements can be associated with three cultural, anthropological-based patterns: *War*, *Revolution* and *Carnival*. In this taxonomy, Italian futurism corresponds to the model of *War*, surrealism, Russian futurism and German constructivism are associated with the concept of *Revolution*, while Zürichian Dadaism corresponds to the model of *Carnival*. Continuing this reading, Paul Cernat presents the Dadaist movement as defined by the *Carnival* atmosphere in a Bahtinian sense, but also in the sense of the absolute neutrality represented by the joker type *ethos* of individualism and relativity that ultimately led to the group's ephemeral existence. Therefore, a closer look is taken at the "subsequent metamorphoses" of Dada, i.e. at the mutual influences between the post-dada groups and the newly formed avant-garde movement in Romania.

Subordinate to the thesis of "communicating vessels", the thesis of "amphibious radicalism" articulated in the third chapter represents one of the main arguments in the book. In the opening of the chapter Paul Cernat asserts that "The «progressive» modernity of the avant-garde in interwar Romania and the «reactionary» modernity of the young existentialist generation are no longer seen merely as ideological *polar opposites* today, but as facets of the same phenomenon: the radical critique, in an authentic key, of the rationalist-bourgeois establishment under the circumstances of a major crisis of the liberal European modernity" (75). In order to emphasise the similarities between the avant-garde movement (represented by writers such as Ion Vinea, Ilarie Voronca etc.) and the young generation of existentialists or generation 1927 (represented by Emil Cioran, Mircea Eliade and others), a complex theoretical approach is used. In line with studies about modernism and the different forms of "anti-modernism" elaborated by writers such as Jeffrey Herf, Roger Griffin and Antoine Compagnon, and with studies by Romanian writers that approached the issue (Sorin

Alexandrescu, Sorin Antohi and Zigu Ornea), Paul Cernat re-discusses the ideological and literary directions in interwar Romania. Besides the anti-establishment and anti-bourgeois outlook common to the avant-garde and the 1927 generation, writers of both movements are animated, according to the author, by a „messianic consciousness of *renovatio mundi*” (88). This attitude is contextualized as a particularity of the Romanian case and the writers’ desire to overcome the marginal status of their culture and literature.

The theoretical framework of the book is outlined by the first three chapters. In the second half, various writers (members of the avant-garde movements or closely linked to them) are re-discussed in relation to the thesis of communicating vessels/ of “amphibious radicalism”. An entire chapter is dedicated to Ilarie Voronca and Geo Bogza. The two writers are considered to be the Romanian avant-garde poets that have preserved to the highest degree the spirit of Eminescu’s poetry, due to their relation with the literary tradition, their poetic formulas and their intertextuality. Also, various connections are drawn between the authors and contemporary literature, such as Voronca’s influence on the urban postmodern poetry (especially that of Mircea Cărtărescu) and Bogza’s influence on the 21st century Romanian poetry. The “modernist-traditionalist equation” plays a key role into the analysis of Voronca, whose poetry is described as “impossible to be reduced to one avant-garde movement”, as it cannot be perceived as just avant-garde (143). According to Paul Cernat, the three main directions of interwar Romanian poetry (neo-traditional, mainstream moderate modernism and avant-garde) evolved from the “post-romantic matrix of symbolism”. In his synthetic poetic formula, Ilarie Voronca seems to combine elements from all the different paradigms, while also remaining closer to the symbolist expression. As opposed to Tristan Tzara, whose poetry in Romanian is a polemical parody of symbolism, Ilarie Voronca is more indebted to the formula, with a dose of metaphysics similar to that found in Benjamin Fundoianu. The part about Geo Bogza, done by an expert on an ongoing monographic project and the most extended analysis of the volume, presents the entire evolution of the writer’s career, from the radical youth poetry centred on social critique to the reportage-prose (a genre he devised himself). Biographical aspects such as the writer’s charges of pornography, his forcible re-writings under the communist regime and the subsequent revisions of his texts are also brought into discussion.

An investigation of the local surrealism of the 1930s and 1940s that includes an analysis of Gherasim Luca, Paul Păun, Virgil Teodorescu, Aurel Baranga and Gellu Naum is also present in the volume. Paul Cernat follows the diminishing phase of the revolted dimension as surrealist poetry tends to switch to more aesthetic versions, including sometimes even forms of mannerism. Twenty minor avant-garde writers and two figures partially linked to the avant-garde movement (Max Blecher and Eugen Ionescu) are discussed in the last two chapters of the book in order to emphasize once again the network of interferences among different literary and political fields.

Due to their transnational character, the artistic and literary avant-gardes of the 20th century occupy an important place in the field of world literature studies. Being also one of the literary movements that consecrated and “exported” many Romanian authors (most of them later turned into French writers) the autochthonous avant-garde tends to be most often analysed in comparison with other national avant-gardes, rather than in relation to the local literature. Thus, Paul Cernat proposes a necessary perspective in the field of Romanian literary studies by investigating the interferences between the avant-garde and other interwar literary directions, as well as the influences of literary tradition upon the avant-garde, while also pointing out several connections to contemporary literature. However, the thesis of amphibious radicalism can easily fall into the trap of a post-communist cultural discourse that often neutralises important ideological distinctions pertaining to a specific historical context under anti-totalitarian clichés. Especially since the interwar period in Romania was marked by severe law-enforced anti-Semitism (that is still under-researched), considering the 1927 generation (with deep-rooted affinities with the anti-Semitic legionary movement) and the avant-garde (whose representative writers manifested strong social critique, antiwar attitudes and affinities to socialism and communism) as aspects of the same phenomenon as results of a crisis of modernity can be a risky thesis. As the author himself points out, the relations between the avant-garde and other cultural movements of the interwar period should be subject to further analysis. Nonetheless, Paul

Cernat seems to have found a balance, managing to point out the key ethical and ideological differences among these, while also arguing towards an interesting viewpoint on Romanian cultural modernity.

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OANA SOARE, *Ceilalți moderni, antimodernii. Cazul românesc* [*The Other Moderns, the Anti-Moderns. The Romanian Case*], București, Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române, 2017, 638 p.

The debates that modernity often brought to the foreground resulted from the complex structure of this phenomenon. The opposing relation between the modern man's creed and the traditionalist's one consists in an easily applicable method, when the purpose of this comparative approach leads to a reciprocal focus on the antithetical characteristics of the two concepts. However, the opposition between modernity and tradition does not seem to be enough to shape the profile of the former and one of the arguments that support this statement has already been mentioned and discussed extensively by Antoine Compagnon. In *Les Antimoderns. De Joseph de Maistre à Roland Barthes* [*The Anti-Moderns. From Joseph de Maistre to Roland Barthes*], he proposes an analysis of modernity and the moderns from a different point of view, as the French critic insists upon the fact that his anti-moderns are nothing but some "moderns on the loose". In other words, not only have they understood the entire operating mechanisms, but they have also had the ability to separate themselves from the doctrine of modernism and to generate new ideas without feeling the constraints that those who supported the great projects of modernity were subject to.

The key role of this innovative perspective is also captured by Mircea Martin who, in the preface to the Romanian translation of Compagnon's study, mentions the advantages of including a new point of view in the inflexible system of opposition between tradition and modernity. Indeed, it can be inferred that since the phenomenon of modernity arouses interest especially because of this complex structure, a potential fitting into strict rules (namely that anything that exceeds the sphere of influence of modernism is subordinated to a traditionalist kind of conduct) would be unsatisfactory. Moreover, the way the French critic analyses his anti-moderns' profiles represents, as indicated by Mircea Martin, a reference for Romanian literary and cultural studies. The equation certainly changes when Compagnon's theory is applied to a peripheral culture, such as the Romanian one, for at least two related reasons that can be rendered in the form of a cause-and-effect relation. Firstly, the phenomenon of modernity is associated, in a culture that falls into this category, to the concepts of "imitation" and "import". This also justifies the hostile attitude towards accepting borrowed trends. Secondly, one of the obvious reactions is assigning a leading role to tradition and "local colour". The project that Mircea Martin considers appropriate for Romanian studies has, therefore, a lot to offer, especially due to his attempt to identify the attitude regarding modernity of the anti-moderns in Romanian culture, on the one hand, and regarding tradition, on the other hand. After all, the aim of applying such a theory to an Eastern European culture is to point out the dynamics of the relations among the three parties (the moderns, the anti-moderns and the traditionalists) and the ways in which the anti-moderns managed to lucidly detach themselves from the modern dogma while simultaneously avoiding the trap of exalting Romanian local forms.

Oana Soare is the one who took it on herself to implement this project on Romanian soil and who, using Compagnon's theory, analysed in *Ceilalți moderni, antimodernii. Cazul românesc* (*The*

Other Moderns, the Anti-Moderns. The Romanian Case) the peculiarities of Eastern European anti-modern discourses. The most important of these peculiarities is, from my point of view, the one the author mentions, namely the fact that “on Romanian soil, the dichotomy modernity/anti-modernity cannot be understood without the so-called theory of ‘forms without substance’” (89). Basically, Soare places the origins of Romanian anti-modernity in the second half of the 19th century. More precisely, the critic takes into account the applicability of Antoine Compagnon’s theory starting with “Junimea”. Regarding the first phase, it is interesting to observe the influence of the German model that Soare justly considers to be responsible for the entry of the anti-modernity doctrine in the Romanian culture – at the expense of the French influences responsible, later on, for the entry of the ideas of modernity. After all, starting with “Junimea” and Titu Maiorescu, the theory of “forms without substance” would occur under various forms in the Romanian anti-moderns’ discourses. Their attitude and interpretations reveal essential moot points, outlining anti-modernity in peripheral cultures.

I will summarise these discourses, but not before pointing out a few issues concerning the structure of Oana Soare’s study. The introduction is dedicated, firstly, to conceptual clarifications and to restating some of the features brought up by the French critic when characterising anti-moderns. Thus, in analysing the concepts of “modernity and anti-modernity from Antoine Compagnon’s point of view”, Soare starts by discussing three well-known studies signed by the author – *La Troisième République des Lettres (The Third Republic of Letters)*, *Les cinq paradoxes de la modernité (The Five Paradoxes of Modernity)* and *Les Antimodernes. De Joseph de Maistre à Roland Barthes (The Anti-Moderns. From Joseph de Maistre to Roland Barthes)* – which she considers to be essential in revealing the French author’s perspective on modernity and anti-modernity. By stating and handling the “six figures” individually (*counter-revolution, anti-enlightenment, pessimism, original sin, the sublime and denigration*), the aesthetics and ambivalence of the anti-moderns, but also a few of the case studies developed in Compagnon’s volume, Soare finishes by clarifying the theoretical dimension, a task that she fulfils to perfection, adding, in this way, substance to her study.

The aspects that truly deserve special attention are the way the Romanian author clarifies the concept of “ambivalence” and the differences between moderns and anti-moderns, on the one hand, and between anti-moderns and counter-moderns, on the other hand. This ambivalence represents, actually, one of the reasons why the critics were reluctant to consider anti-moderns as moderns and, moreover, it is proof that despite their positioning themselves against the ideas “the other moderns” believe in, they are part of the same team. This is why it is more difficult to establish what makes anti-moderns different from moderns than to establish the differences between anti-moderns and counter-moderns, because, at a first sight, the reasoning behind the anti-modern doctrine could be summarised in the following statement: they do not oppose the moderns, a category they actually belong to, but still, they are against the modern creed. Despite the fact that the representatives of the two doctrines are still divided by those “six figures” and especially by the different way of addressing the problem of progress, Soare brings to the fore two of the misunderstandings rooted in Compagnon’s theory. I will discuss the first one, according to which the definition of anti-moderns actually deconstructs that of the moderns. The question the Romanian critic also considers is: “Who are then those who are simply moderns?”. This is one of the reasons why the author mentions from the very beginning that her interest was to emphasise the anti-modern’s profile as a “special class”, something that reveals a distancing from the French author’s point of view, who states that anti-modernity is just another perspective on modernity. Truly, I think that such a solution is necessary given that in an Eastern European culture even the idea of modernity is perceived with certain restraints.

The introductory chapter ends with the analysis of the general framework concerning the actual application of the theory on Romanian soil. Taking this opportunity, Soare attempts to disprove the voices that question the possibility of analysing the Romanian culture from this perspective. Of course, there are many other features (besides the one I have already mentioned) that Soare takes into account. One of them is the tendency to exaggerate both the modern profile and the counter-modern one found in Romanian discourses (in both situations the exclusive character is evoked). Moreover,

the way the import of modern Western forms is perceived justifies the existence of a large number of counter-moderns, which exceeds the number of anti-moderns. In other words, it is all about the same rigid division between modernity and tradition, to which Soare attributes two pseudo-paradoxes: that of “avant-garde in a cultural field that the moderns considered purely reactionary” and that of “mystical nationalism and even Legionarism in a culture that seemed to be nothing but modern” (78). However, despite this precise delimitation, Soare’s analysis reveals that there are cases in which the theory of anti-modernity, superimposed on a minor cultural area, reveals the tortuous evolution of a number of outstanding representatives of the Romanian cultural environment.

The second chapter of the study is dedicated to the controversy between modernity and anti-modernity. Its protagonists are Titu Maiorescu, G. Ibrăileanu and E. Lovinescu. In fact, the theory of the former was to be revisited and even completely questioned (if we consider Lovinescu’s point of view). When it comes to Maiorescu, things seem to be simple. By presenting him as an “anti-modern à la roumaine”, the leader of the first anti-modern group on Romanian territory, Soare brings up the dilemma between Maiorescu the anti-modern and Maiorescu the conservative and, to support the former, she points out the Germanophile attitude opposed to the Francophile trend of the time. Moreover, the author notices a tendency she would emphasize in Iorga’s case too, that of “self-censoring”. To put it another way, regarding Romanian anti-moderns, it is universally admitted that they are unlikely to fit into a culture oriented towards a modernity whose forms are dictated from the outside. In Ibrăileanu’s case, everything is equally uncertain. He represents, in Oana Soare’s study, a special case, impossible to be assigned to the anti-moderns, counter-moderns or moderns. Even if modern in relation to Maiorescu and reactionary in relation to Lovinescu, Ibrăileanu remains outside the anti-moderns’ group. Lovinescu’s case also attests to a peculiarity of the leaders of the main projects on Romanian territory. The Bovarism that Lovinescu is accused of and his revolutionary ideas are assigned another function when Soare states that Lovinescu’s doctrine was necessary to save literature from the rigidity of the doctrine of “sămănătorism” (Samanatorism). We return to the same attempt to balance these forces, the persisting image being that of an attempt at the adjustment of the degree of modernity, anti-modernity and counter-modernity, depending on the context.

The most suitable example that Soare mentions is Iorga, whose profile makes up – alongside seven other such portraits – the third chapter of the study. Actually, this is about two cases that Soare considered to be defining for applying Compagnon’s theory on Romanian territory: the already mentioned case of Iorga and Camil Petrescu’s, to which she adds six more profiles: those of Caragiale, Blaga, Fondane, Eliade, Cioran and Steinhardt.

Coming back to Iorga, the critic confesses that she was truly amazed when she found out that his discourse is complex enough to result into a 3D portrait too, meaning that we can talk about Iorga the modern, the anti-modern and, of course, Iorga the counter-modern. His tortuous evolution clearly corresponds to the pattern of Romanian anti-moderns. It is interesting to notice that, in this case, the shift from one side to another is the result of self-sacrifice. This is how the assumption that the anti-modern in a minor culture is permanently influenced by external factors can be tested. So, siding with the traditionalists was requested by the need for national identity. Camil Petrescu’s case – whom we can call the progressive anti-modern if we take into account that progressivism stood between Petrescu and anti-modernity – is also very challenging and the way he strenuously opposed Lovinescu’s theory as an anti-modern is worthy of the attention it has been given in this study.

The already mentioned six names, whose anti-modernity at ideological level contrasts with the modernity of their writings, deserve being part of Oana Soare’s study, because – just like she will state herself – their discourses can be analysed (“with almost no exception”) from the perspective of the “six figures” mentioned by Compagnon. Among the aspects discussed in the case of the first three are: the solutions Caragiale implements in order to fight against moderns by using their own weapons (“revolution and the universal suffrage”), Blaga’s profile, who ends up, as a result of the ambivalence inherent in his expressionism, as an “anti-modern modern”, and the similarities between Fondane and Compagnon himself. There are also the two different ways of being an anti-modern illustrated by Eliade, who rebels against an “anti-spiritual” Europe, and by Cioran (the anti-modern who pays tribute to the year 1848 while still remaining faithful to his doctrine). The analysis of Steinhardt’s

case offers the chance to discover one of the most unexpected interpretations of Maiorescu's theory. The "form without substance" seen as a chance of salvation from the harmful modern content proves the originality of this author's point of view.

Oana Soare's study – *Ceilați moderni, antimodernii. Căzul românesc* – ends by conclusions, followed by a presentation – in the annex – of three studies written by Matei Călinescu, Sorin Alexandrescu and Eugen Simion, who bring into focus the concept of the anti-modern explained through Cioran's case. The impression the volume leaves at the end is that of completeness, also owing to this sum of critical discourses with the profile of the anti-modern at the centre, but also due to the discussion about the existence of the anti-moderns in the second half of the 20th century. Even if there are exceptions – Steinhardt being one of them – the way the attitude towards tradition and especially towards modernity undergoes substantial changes during the Communist domination deserves to be treated separately. This discussion could take place from the same perspective of the differences between Western and Eastern cultural spaces, because Oana Soare's demonstration, mainly relying on re-readings of "forms without substance" theory and of special features this theory imposes on the concepts of modernity, anti-modernity and counter-modernity, can be easily read as a successful (re)trial to render the state of the relation between Western and Eastern Europe.

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TEODORA DUMITRU, *Modernitatea politică și literară în gândirea lui E. Lovinescu* [*Eugen Lovinescu's Literary and Political Modernity*], București, Editura Muzeului Literaturii Române, 2016, 277 p.

Favourably received and often invoked by recent discussions regarding Romanian literary research, the studies published by Teodora Dumitru in 2016 (*Rețeaua modernităților: Paul de Man – Matei Călinescu – Antoine Compagnon* [*The Web of Modernities: Paul de Man – Matei Călinescu – Antoine Compagnon*] and *Modernitatea politică și literară în gândirea lui E. Lovinescu* [*Eugen Lovinescu's Literary and Political Modernity*]) debunk two popular prejudices. The first one – and probably the most influential – is the idea that "import" theoretical landmarks, the influent "canonical" voices of both the present and the past are irrefutable/ unquestionable and therefore perfectly applicable to interferences of Romanian literary studies. The second one claims that a consecrated (or, again, canonical) writer or literary critic is "elucidated" once and for all and that no other contextual revisions are needed. Thus, the analysis of Lovinescu's political and literary modernity represents the proof not only of a professional and detail-oriented lecture, but also of one that is circumspect about reviewing clichés or rigid systematisation.

In the debut of her study, the author notices the distorted (and also partial) lectures of Lovinescu's ideas due to a privileged literary perspective and, moreover, to the multiple censorial corrections and cut-outs made before 1989, considering his liberal orientations. Situated at the crossroad between (literary) aesthetics, politics and science, the kind of Modernism claimed by the *Sburătorul* critic at the beginning of the twentieth century is subordinated to a view that exceeds the strictly literary analysis his works were subject to. Teodora Dumitru's already declared and assumed intention is that of rebuilding the main "causes" of Lovinescu's way of thinking (in his books *Istoria civilizației române moderne* [*History of Modern Romanian Civilization*] and *Istoria literaturii române contemporane* [*History of Contemporary Romanian Literature*]) in the context of his relations to the European current of thought of the time.

By investigating the scientific character of the discourse and of the sociological laws Lovinescu proposed (namely, the law of interdependence and that of imitation), the author exposes the clichés inherent in the different approaches to the ideas promoted in the two works she studies. One of these is, for example, “the spirit of the century” (*saeculum*) – an unstable concept and a polemic instrument in Lovinescu’s discourse: “This is the essential perspective on ‘the spirit of the century’, the belief that it is possible to list the properties – ‘the essential features’ – that compose it and their opposites (among the causes of the falsifiability illusion), which Lovinescu relied on every time he would assert that his thesis is formulated in ‘the spirit of the century’, while those of his opponents were contrary to it. Regarding the Romanian case, in Lovinescu’s view ‘the spirit of the century’ asked for industrialization and urbanization in the areas of economic and social order, and also for the adoption of liberal French revolutionary ideas in the ideological field” (25). Furthermore, what lies at the basis of synchronism is imitation (following the path of the scientific consecration of sociology by Gabriel Tarde) followed by the process of differentiation, an argumentative scheme of Hegelian origins. At this precise point, Dumitru places Lovinescu between Tarde’s and Hegel’s forms of idealism – this representing one of the central aspects of her demonstration.

By critically filtering the political consequences of imitation (reflected in concepts such as the theory of simulation-stimulation or in those of mutation and revolution), the author underlines indecisions and “blind” points in Lovinescu’s ideas, despite all the scientific demands in his arguments where he pleads for the creation of the national state on liberal positions.

The critic’s perspective on literature is subsumed to his political and sociological views. Even though he remained in the canon of Romanian literary criticism as the second exponent of aesthetic autonomy after Titu Maiorescu, his views on art, science, politics and economy are not autonomous, another cliché clearly deconstructed by Teodora Dumitru: “Already separated from the ethical and the ethnic, in E. Lovinescu’s work art and its study were not separated from ideology or science. [...] None of the Romanian historians or literary critics of the first half of the twentieth century did not demonstrate that more seriously than Lovinescu, i.e. his demand for scientific rigor and the degree of influence on the literary act and the status of a writer of the economic and socio-political pattern of a society and of a state” (132).

The double meaning of literature (as a form of civilization and as cultural background) also points out one of the few “conceptual dysfunctions” found in both the *History of Civilization...* and in the *History of Literature...*: “literature is variably placed at the avant-garde of culture – as an important *form* of civilization, together with the phone, the radio, the Constitution, the modern code of law etc., due to the stages in the evolution of young nations – or of those in the rearguard of civilization – as a *background* factor susceptible to slow, inertial, reactionary or conservatory evolution, more inclined to imitation of the past than the present” (145). Consequently, Lovinescu’s overview of literature is not a visionary one: either in the process or *post factum*, literature reveals the course of history, being able to become a critique of the present – which represents the opposite, but associative idea to Matei Călinescu’s theory of the two modernities. If for Lovinescu art needs to reveal the social, the political, the economic etc., in Matei Călinescu’s view the artist is a *frondeur* who places him/herself against social serialization.

In the series of comparative approaches, another association is to be found, that between E. Lovinescu and Antoine Compagnon. According to Teodora Dumitru’s evaluation grid, the Lovinescu’s work represents a statement for the invalidation of the concept of anti-modernity (Compagnon). According to the distinctions proposed by the French theoretician, applicable to the Romanian critic’s views, Lovinescu is classifiable as a member of both “parties”: he is modern through his progressivism, bovarism, anti-romanticism, intellectualized emotion, synchronism, and anti-modern through his settling inside a bourgeois stasis, his misogyny, his anti-intellectualist symbolism, his conviction that literature is a “reactionary force” etc.

The last part of the study revisits the sources of Romanian literary Modernism, relating it to the European tradition of the episteme. By invoking Michel Murrat’s “alarming” conclusion (namely, on the one hand, that France creates the premises for what we call Modernism today, although it does not attend the theoretical debates which have launched the concept, and on the other hand, that

Modernism is a retrospective label of the phenomenon, absent from the French meta-literary discourse in the first part of the twentieth century), the author is completely justified in interrogating the manner E. Lovinescu succeeds in using and defending Modernism before the French literary historians themselves do. The hypothesis she launches regarding this matter – thus opening debates based on it – are in direct relation to the usage of the term “modernism” in E. Lovinescu’s discourse: as a result of the attention given to the local publishing medium or as that of his “Romanian” approach, in Dumitru’s specific words the term “had already been felt by Lovinescu as Romanian (i.e. ‘differentiated’), something that freed him from the necessity of mirroring its legitimate external sources and problematising its composite genealogy” (271).

To conclude, the study remains a concrete example of an upgraded version of the views pertaining to a literary critic’s work and of the openness of cultural debates on the Romanian interwar period against the background of European thought. Lovinescu’s concern about literature – perceived in strong connection to political ideas –, the legitimization of art on scientific concepts, the sociological theories of synchrony, etc. are all integrated by Teodora Dumitru in the slipstream of political and literary modernity, which is at the same time (de)constructed through a carefully articulated approach to the “vulnerable” aspects of Lovinescu’s reception.

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DORIS MIRONESCU, *Un secol al memoriei. Literatură și conștiință comunitară în epoca romantică* [A Century of Memory. Literature and Collective Conscience in the Romantic Age], Iași, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2016, 316 p.

Aiming to reinterpret the perspective on the 19th century Romanian literature (which is usually perceived either from the positivist, document-centred perspective or in the aesthetic way that separates the object from context), Doris Mironescu’s book touches upon a searing issue of literary studies nowadays: the impact of literature on society. Therefore, literature is understood as a space of memory that constructs cultural identities and institutions, establishes past references for nationhood and engages in a complex relationship with the public by symbolising the community in images, emblematic spaces, narrative topics or figures of belonging. The author employs the concept of “cultural memory” developed by Aleida and Jan Assmann, properly pointing out that it is a “connective structure”. This means that cultural memory is not knowledge about the past, but an endless process that selects those aspects of the past (figures, emblems, myths, places, objects etc.) that are relevant to the present. Also, it is an artificial process operated by specialists, in which case the writers become important carriers of cultural memory, shaping identities and stimulating the public to participate in the collective representations they provide. The Romanian modern age is marked by a series of concepts such as those of national community, tradition, canon, national specificity, yet the purpose of the study is not to revive a set of themes, but to analyse their connection with literature, to understand the writers’ motivations, the problematisation of memory or how literature becomes a space of power in society. Even though literature is seen as an ideological device (with a specific ideology that is different from the official one), Mironescu is not hasty in disregarding the aesthetic dimension of the literary works, operating from the start with a distinction between “worthy” and mass production literature. The option for the close reading practice, tangentially debating Franco Moretti’s quantitative method, is explained as interdependency between

aesthetic value and the complexity of ideology: the writers' choice of a certain vocabulary, of particular figures of speech or figures of thought, of specific narrative techniques and intertextual allusions are all part of what the author calls a "seduction technique" that invites the readers to participate in a sagacious way to the memory of the nation, but also brings into discussion the increasing self-awareness of literature as it employs subtler aesthetic instruments leading to such questions as "its own nature, identity and public function". The book is structured in three parts or "directions" of research: *The Rhetoric of Belonging* debates the concepts of nationalism and national community in 19th century literature, *Canonical Constructions* analyses the problem of the literary canon, while *Nostalgia, Irony, and Post-canonical Rewriting* explains the occurrence of 19th century literature in the contemporary novel.

The first part is an examination of 19th century literature using the "cultural memory" concept as discussed above, according to which literature is seen as a medium (always problematising and challenging) of society's major topics and obsessions, a medium where the relation with the past is constantly being negotiated. Focussing on Alecu Russo's work entitled *Studie moldovană [Moldavian Study]*, the author portrays the 19th century writer ("the bonjourist" as the 1848 generation represents itself) as a "cultural mediator" who seeks to establish connections between different cultural spaces, between Occidentalism and autochthonism, the past and the present, intellectuals and peasants, in order to shape a feeling of continuity. This special position at the confluence of feudalism and modernity determines a critical attitude towards memory as the 19th century writer becomes aware of the gap between the past and the present, the process of remembering being an artificial form of continuity (illustrated by Mironescu with reference to Alecu Russo's metaphor of the past as a dead person only recalled positively). Another case study explores the writers' travels inside the country, metaphorically dubbed a "bonjourist anabasis", emphasizing the individual experience recorded as the bonjourist often represents himself as a stranger in his own country. The contact with the homeland is again described as a rupture, revealing the double statute of the modern Romanian writer, torn between his European education and the desire for integration in the national landscape, a rupture that is analysed at the stylistic level too, being traceable in the juxtaposition of archaisms and modern vocabulary, in the use of irony and literary forms borrowed from European tradition and not specific to the local one.

Further on, Mironescu focuses on the next generation of writers, the Junimea group, reflecting on the transposition of some major themes in the new context. The Junimea period comes with a new agenda stating that literature is an autonomous domain, but this aesthetic detour is not equivalent, as the researcher shows, with a divorce from the previous ideology. Such themes as national specificity, collective identity, memory, national community are still searing issues, but the old rhetoric proves to be ineffective, hence the need for a more complex and aesthetically sophisticated discourse. The author proposes to investigate a set of topics such as the public function of literature, the legitimation of poetry and the renegotiation of national identity. For example, he analyses Ion Creangă's strategies to redirect the reading reactions of an elitist audience such as the Junimea literary circle by seducing and at the same time breaking the pact with the readers in order to delineate the village as the national space *par excellence*, unintelligible to the urban audience. The romantic topos of the ruin is discussed in its evolution from Grigore Alexandrescu's poem *Umbra lui Mircea. La Cozia [Mircea's Shadow. At Cozia]*, where poetry is invested with a political dimension and finds its legitimacy in the national mission, continuing with Alexandru Macedonski's poem *Hinov* that claims the right of poetry to reinvent language due to its autonomy, to Eminescu's modern vision of literature as possessing internal legitimacy. Mihai Eminescu is portrayed as a modern writer who is sensitive to the rupture with the past (always assimilated to a mythical age), as analysed with respect to *Memento mori* where the ruin is interpreted in line with Walter Benjamin's definition, as "epistemological incertitude" and "temporal crisis", or *Călin (file din poveste) [Călin (Pages of a Fairy-Tale)]*, a poem concerned with the estrangement of fairy-tale from myth and the challenge of modern poetry to relocate this mythical kernel. Caragiale's late writings, phrased in modern techniques (self-reference, transposition, the "spatialising quality of the language", the chameleonic relation between text and reader), are analysed as an attempt to reshape the blueprint of national community by stressing the Balkanistic aspect of

Romanian cultural identity. Finally, the perspective moves to Al. O. Teodoreanu, an interwar writer, in order to inspect cultural memory at work: the theme of national identity, persistent in the 19th century, is reinterpreted by the novelist against the triumphalist image of nation, showing sensitivity to “domestic” histories and intimate gestures such as amorous scandals, sensational events, gastronomic and oenological pleasures.

The second part of the book examines the problem of the canon, redefined as a “form of stimulating the collective conscience”. Mironescu proposes an investigation of the rhetorical strategies employed by Titu Maiorescu in his public speech in order to construct his authority. The essay as adaptation of philosophical concepts, rationalism and the argument of “truth”, the pragmatic aspect and polemics as a technique of seduction all respond to the cultural needs of the time, circumscribing a successful and efficient canon that directs the paths of Romanian culture. Another chapter analyses G. Ibrăileanu’s use of the idea of “classic” in Romanian literature, polarised between the social and the aesthetic definitions, an indecision that reflects the difficulties of establishing a national tradition and literary canon that might become the foundation of future Romanian culture.

The third part is a post-canonical reading of the 19th century that examines a set of Romanian novels written after 2000 and the way they assimilate the images, emblems and gestures of the past in order to respond to present problems. I. L. Caragiale and Radu Cosașu are read by employing Jean-Luc Nancy’s concept of “inoperative community” and Kuisima Korhonen’s idea of “textual community”, as both Romanian writers use irony as a form of deconstructing the myths of national community and the communist utopia respectively, and of establishing connections with a community of readers. The paradoxical revival of the historical theme in the novel of the noughties, an age of post-canonical memory, is not a simple retrospective look, but, as the researcher posits, one implying a meta-literary dimension, reflecting the artificiality of national representations and the discontinuity between past and present. The last chapter of the book examines the avatars of the romantic topos of the ruin in the patriotic representations of the 1848 generation, from its integration into the familiar landscape in Creangă’s work, to the industrial ruin in the post-communist age.

Looking into 19th century’s literature, Doris Mironescu’s book debates some major literary topics nowadays: the public function of literature, its legitimacy in society and its efficiency in representing figures of community and identity are questions that structure the Romanian cultural space, a space that is still struggling to assimilate its communist past, to gain a place in the “republic of letters” or to define the function of literature in the digital age. As a result, the past century is no longer understood as a constant, stable place, fixed once and for all in the canon and the national heritage, but a challenging age for the contemporaries, one that reverberates in the present.

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