

COMPTE RENDU / BOOK REVIEW

ADRIANA BABEȚI (ed.), *Dicționarul romanului central-european din secolul XX* [*The Dictionary of the Central-European Novel of the 20th Century*]. Edition supervised by Oana Fotache, Iași, Polirom, 2022, 755 p.

Intended both for the specialists and the readers interested in the problematic of the Central Europe and in its literature, *Dicționarul romanului central-european din secolul XX* [*The Dictionary of the Central-European Novel of the 20th Century*], coordinated by Adriana Babeți and published in 2022 by the Polirom Publishing House in Jassy as an edition supervised by Oana Fotache, is not only an excellent lexicographical work, a useful information provider for any researcher or specialized reader, but also a very good theoretical introduction to the literary geography and the cultural identity complexes existing within the peoples of Central Europe. Conceived in the 1990s as a personal project issued in the multicultural academic environment of Timișoara by Adriana Babeți, as a continuation of her studies dedicated to Central Europe, the final form of the dictionary cumulates the effort of 70 contributors specialized in comparative literature or in the various national literatures of the Central-European area: literary critics and essayists, translators and writers. Adriana Babeți is also the author of the extensive scientific studies structured into distinct chapters in the introductory section of the work, whose first part is entitled "A Brief History" and is dedicated to the way the book has taken shape. By delineating the general conceptual framework of the project, it reconstructs the genesis of the entire enterprise, and explains why Timișoara is indeed a privileged place to start such an intellectual undertaking, due to the city's "marginal-centric" socio-cultural specificity and because of its location at the heart of the crossroads that links Western Europe to the south-eastern part of the continent. Defined by the author as a zone of Central-European ambivalence and paradox, Timișoara, with its natural extension of the whole region called Banat, fully justifies the selection as an ideal space to complete the project because at least four sociocultural motivations: the magnitude of its spontaneous cultural transfers, the coexistence of a multilingual academic and literary local ethos (provided by the Romanian, German, Hungarian, Serbian, Slovak, Italian, Croatian, Czech living in the area), the tradition of the true group solidarity trained in completing collective scholarly projects, and the exquisite taste for all sorts of experiments.

A sketchy but vivid reconstruction of the multicultural history of the region fully consolidates the image of an "Eldorado inside-the-borders" (it is Babeți's definition), of a paradisiacal interethnic milieu, still existing inside the collective imagination, which curbs any conflictual outcome down to minimum. Moreover, the history of Timișoara's academic and cultural life and especially the local tradition of engaging in Central-European comparative studies and geo-criticism provide the most solid background for any lexicographic project of this type. It's no accident that the present one has been in preparation for almost three decades. The first phase of the project had been completed between 1997 and 2004 by a core group of literary researchers living in Timișoara and it had led to the creation of the institutional framework capable to strategically support it, the foundation A Treia Europă [The Third Europe], whose name does not only incorporate the idea of the whole project and of its intellectual target, but also provides the geographical outline and the delineates the, let's say, limitless limit of the cultural network open to the intellectual research and border-crossing dialogue. After a less productive second period of uncertainties and hesitations, the project of *Dicționarul romanului central-european din secolul XX* gained new momentum in 2014 by attracting professors, researchers, doctoral students and master's students belonging to the major domestic universities of Cluj-Napoca, Bucharest, Jassy, Oradea and Brașov, as well contributors from abroad, from Paris, Dresden, Kraków, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Bratislava, Novi Sad, Szeged, Jerusalem, Ontario, etc.

Beginning with the general aspects of the theory and practice, later extended towards their particular embodiments, the studies in the first part of the volume isolate the distinct cultural patterns

meant to differentiate the core of the Central-European novel from the novelistic production of “the other Europe” and proclaim the existence of a basic unity of texture, atmosphere and world approach specific to the Central-European novel production, without ignoring, of course, the national, specific differences. The imprints of the so-called Central-European cultural pattern will be later detected in all the novels included in the dictionary, treated as themes with multiple stylistic expressions, but subordinated to the underlying unity of prose ethos shared by the writers living in this part of the world. The methodological aim of the program tends to demonstrate, on the one hand, that the Central-European novel has been constantly connected to the broader European literary phenomenon, and, on the other, that it proves to be creatively specific, as a block that reflects the region’s structural socio-cultural and spiritual propensity towards ambivalence, that is its – so to say – “intermediarity”. In order to achieve the demonstration, the theoretical approaches of the authors revolve around the diffuse conceptual variants of the term “Central Europe”, from the multiple nuances of the German terms *Mittleuropa*, *Zentraleuropa*, and *Zwischeneuropa*, already the subject of an impressive number of analysts, including Friedrich Naumann, Jacques Le Rider, Timothy Garton Ash, or Jacques Droz, to the historical and socio-cultural determinations of the supranational federalist projects elaborated in the region and its destiny seen from the perspective of the post WWII geopolitical moves. The program also takes into consideration the various conceptual shifts and nuances the term Central Europe has suffered after 1989, together with their corresponding interpretations, no matter how the area was labelled (*Median Europe*, *Middle Europe*, *The Other Europe*, *East-Central Europe*, *Central and Eastern Europe*, or *Central and Southeastern Europe*). Also relevant and spiritually incentivising are the bynames given to Central Europe by its men of letters, which usually prove to be more expressive than the scientific terminology because they carry a sophisticated, sometimes ironical, metaphorical resonance. A potential list starts with Robert Musil’s *Kakania*, then we have the “New Babylon”, “Habsburgia”, the “paradise of the heretics”, or simply the “K world” (from k.u.k.), where the initial K could easily stand for Kafka, Konrád, Kiš, Kertész, Krleža, Kraus, Koestler, Konwicki, Karinthy, Krasznahorkai: the dictionary enumerates no less than 22 Central-European authors whose surname starts with K.

Being aware of the fluctuations and blurs of the concept, the authors opt for really flexible criteria when they decide who will have an entry and who will not, as their selection is guided by two convergent and complementary approaches: to perceive the phenomenon from a strictly literary angle, which presupposes the reading of the novels and of the literary history research associated to them from a comparative perspective, or to have in mind the second, problem-centred angle, which starts with “Central Europe” as a defining icon, extended later towards its various, sometimes marginal illustrations. The second approach requires, of course, a deep radiography of the region’s tumultuous, sometimes tricky or deceiving history. In order to respect the intrinsic ambiguity of the Central European reality, usually defined as a “neither-nor” universe or, even more often, as the world in which “this is sometimes that”, the authors reject the maximization of the cultural map proposed, among others, by Czesław Miłosz, but integrate the kin literature written in Germany. On the other hand, they keep a distance from the politically charged concepts of *Mittleuropa* and *Zentraleuropa*, as the Habsburgs used to define the region, and prefer instead to keep themselves inside a hybrid, median zone, devoid not only of excesses but also of radical ostracism.

Due to its fundamental interdisciplinarity, the organizing mindset of the dictionary also incorporates a series of adjacent and equally variable concepts and theories, such as literary geography or the merge between identity and identities. Each theoretical layer contributes to the polymorphic, palimpsestic shaping of a dynamic cultural and spiritual pattern, understood as the mental “software” of a behaviour ethos which is proclaimed as being specific to the Central European peoples, both concerning their lifestyle and the peculiar way to feel and understand it. Immersed into the textures of the novels, the umbrella pattern reveals a set of invariants which, in their turn, guarantee the thematic homogeneity of the selected works. The configuration of these invariants is rooted in the “polygonal” investigation of not only the history or itchy cartography of the region, but also of the traumas of the Central-European countries and peoples. Its aim is to trace a certain specificity regarding the way these peoples have experienced their time and, generally, temporality, to

show their strive to synchronize and get up to date with the surrounding, European and global cultural trends, to identify the traumas and crises permeating the region's literatures and to assert the catalytic and cathartic role of novel writing during the Communist regime. By not claiming any infallibility or exhaustiveness, on the contrary, by inviting to debate and dialogue, *Dicționarul* is primarily a working tool capable to generate rhizomatic meanings and to entertain a dynamic thematic cluster, several of the topics meant for further elaboration being listed in the subchapters entitled "Crepusculand" and "Memory with Scarves. Posthistory or Forgetfulness."

To sum up: the reader finally gets an inventory of 256 novels, written in 14 languages by 197 authors, which can be considered a viable starting point for rethinking and defining the contested, cautiously received, or directly ignored concept of Central Europe and for fostering a lively debate nourished by the limitless hermeneutic openings provided by the networked reading of the included texts. With a primarily chronotopic orientation, the dictionary lists 251 novel entries (in case of the works with two or more volumes it usually provides sequels), 197 author entries, a List of Novels, a Coda dedicated to W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*, a Chronology, a List of Contributors, a General Bibliography, and indexes. Aiming to stay descriptive and analytical, each entry provides a minimal biographical information about the author, fixes the place of the novel within the writer's whole work, extends its hierarchical position towards the national literature it belongs to, then towards the generic Central-European spiritual heritage, and concludes with notes referring to the original editions of the text and to its Romanian versions, if they exist. A transnational context is added as a background to each entry, able to open new interpretive trajectories. Out of the 197 authors, 41 share a Romanian origin. To expose several domestic novels on a wider, Central-European platform proves to be really challenging for the authors, because, among other merits, it helps to extract a few Romanian writers from an inertial, marginal kind of reception and discuss their works as an organic constituent of the World Literature network. Intended primarily for academic specialists, *Dicționarul* is capable of providing an excellent research platform for all those interested in the relationship between literature and history, for the analysts studying mentalities, for scholars engaged in quantitative studies, and for those who favour World Literature approaches. At the same time, it entirely fulfils the hopes and expectations of every editor, translator, book agent and fellow writer.

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ALEX GOLDIȘ, CHRISTIAN MORARU, ANDREI TERIAN (eds.), *Pentru o nouă cultură critică românească* [*Toward a New Romanian Critical Culture*], Cluj-Napoca, Tact, 2024, 535 p.

Since the 1960s, Romanian critical discourse has been largely shaped by the ideology of aesthetic autonomism. With the disappearance of its two longstanding authoritative figures – Eugen Simion and Nicolae Manolescu – in the third decade of the twenty-first century, the field faced a moment of reassessment. Recent debates reveal a clear division between two schools of thought: one who seeks to preserve the status quo, and one advocating for its reconfiguration. It is within this context that the Critical Theory Institute from Păltiniș (founded in 2014 by Christian Moraru and Andrei Terian) published *Pentru o nouă cultură critică românească* [*Toward a New Romanian Critical Culture*] in 2024. The volume represents the third major contribution of the Institute to a series of extensive studies on critical theory and Romanian literature, following *Romanian Literature as World Literature* (Bloomsbury, 2018) and *Theory in the "Post" Era: A Vocabulary for the 21st-Century*

Conceptual Commons (Bloomsbury, 2022). *Pentru o nouă cultură critică românească* is also the Institute's first book written in Romanian, signaling a move from an internationally oriented discourse to one more locally grounded – a shift justified by the authors through the perceived urgency of some profound change within the Romanian literary system. Such a development raises an important question: should the volume's contents and arguments be perceived as an exclusively "Romanian matter?" A convincing answer can emerge only after a comprehensive examination of the contents, concepts, and methodological proposals advanced by the fourteen contributing researchers.

Structurally, *Pentru o nouă cultură critică românească* opens with an introduction by the editors, in which the general outline is pinpointed. The volume then unfolds into sixteen chapters grouped in three sections: "Tradiție, instituții și critica la prezent" ["Tradition, Institutions, and Criticism in the Present Tense"]; "Disciplinaritate, metodologie, forme critice" ["Disciplinarity, Methodology, Critical Forms"], and "Politică, generație, comunitate" ["Politics, Generation, Community"]. Finally, a "Coda", collectively authored by the contributors, closes the volume with several proposals for the rebuilding of the Romanian critical system. Suggested by the title and emphasized in the introductory note, what distinguishes this book is its pronounced manifesto-like orientation. While contemporary literature has long embraced the manifesto as a legitimate genre, postwar Romanian criticism offers remarkably few examples – not only of manifestos per se but of polemical texts more broadly. Against this backdrop, the essays gathered in *Pentru o nouă cultură critică românească* aren't simple points of divergence but rather a sustained confrontation with a longstanding, homogeneous critical system whose methodological and institutional assumptions the authors regard as fundamentally inadequate for contemporaneity.

If we begin with the essays in the first section, "Tradiție, instituții și critica la prezent", the depth of the problem becomes immediately apparent. The generation of literary critics that emerged in the 1960s, in the aftermath of the Stalinist era, managed to impose a paradigm that lasted over fifty years. Therefore, this first section concentrates on examining the so-called literary-feuilleton paradigm in its conception and manifestation throughout the decades. A useful point of departure for this inquiry is Adriana Stan's chapter, "Consensul 'liberal': critică, sistem și politică după Al Doilea Război Mondial" ["'Liberal' Consensus: Criticism, System, and Politics after World War II"]. Examining the postwar and the post-Stalinist periods, Stan notes that in the sphere of literary criticism the romantic idea of literature as palliative for the disruptions of history has become dominant and even created a sort of "longue durée" in the Romanian critical discourse (p. 70). Moreover, Stan compares the way in which Western and Romanian criticism evolved in the same period, and signals a noteworthy paradox. In the West, where liberalism and neoliberalism prevailed and the state withdrew as a social and cultural mediator, left-wing thinking gained intellectual traction and exerted a discernible influence on literary criticism. In Romania, by contrast, a non-liberal regime created economic and political conditions that enabled the emergence of a literature-oriented cultural liberalism. This dynamic ultimately produced a pronounced separation between literary critics and the broader society. Following the collapse of communism in 1989, critics assumed the role of "aesthetic missionaries" (p. 79), prioritizing the cultivation of aesthetic values over active participation in the public and social life of the newborn state. Adriana Stan asserts that the generations of literary critics who made their debut and their careers under communism were mesmerized by two instances of the same phantasm: capitalism. The generation of the 1960s idealized the capitalist order of interwar Romania, whereas the 1980s generation (Mircea Cărtărescu, Ion Bogdan Lefter among others) were bewitched by the American capitalism of the 1950s.

The second section, "Disciplinaritate, metodologie, forme critice" is centred around the more practical nature of literary criticism and proposes a set of methods in contrast to the hegemonic feuilletonistic and aesthetic-autonomist paradigm. Alex Goldiș's "'Cancerul semnificațiilor': fobia metodei în critica românească postbelică" ["'Cancer of Meanings': Method Phobia in Post-World War II Romanian Criticism"] provides a rigorous background of the style of analysis proposed by the aforementioned generations. The contributions that follow – by Daiana Gărdan, Bogdan Popa and Maria Chiorean – bring into discussion three different methodological frameworks: world literature, gender and queer studies, and disability studies. Daiana Gărdan's "De ce o critică literară

comparată?” [“The Case for Comparative Literary Criticism”] argues for the necessity of abandoning several entrenched clichés within Romanian literary criticism: the national-patrimonial logic of critical reception of literature, the interwar tradition of impressionism, the thematic-centred interpretations of the 1960s generation and the speculative, essayistic mode that dominated criticism between 1980 and 2010. It is interesting to observe that several critical figures of the Romanian literary field recognized in part (G. Ibrăileanu) or at the start of their careers (G. Călinescu) the necessity of comparatist praxis into Romanian literary studies. During the Cold War period and again in the late 1990s and early 2000, comparative literature in Romania gradually separated itself from the increasingly obsolete and monolithic field of national literary studies, directing its focus to Western theoretical frameworks applied to literary works originating outside Romania. According to Gârdan, this separation should now be overcome: Romanian criticism should move towards a transnational logic in national studies, using the methodologies of world literature understood as the integration of national literature into broader regional or global systems.

The third section, “Politică, generație, comunitate” turns to the particularities of the Romanian criticism in the post-2000 period. In this regard, Mihai Iovănel’s “Literatură, critică și ideologie în România postdouămiistă” [“Literature, Criticism, and Ideology in Postmillennial Romania”] is quite relevant. As a notable figure of the 2000s critical generation, Iovănel advances the thesis that, no matter how rebellious, his generation remains far from effecting a profound transformation of the Romanian literary system. Thus, he identifies a series of blockages that impede such a structural change. He argues that the limited symbolic prestige of Romanian culture and literature stems from a persistent resistance to deep systemic reform, which leads to some sad realities: the predigital stage of the databases, the weak performance of the academic journals published in Romanian, and issues related to scholarly durability, as the majority of the corpus of works of the 2000s generation consists mostly of PhD or post PhD theses. Also, Iovănel identifies a lack of complexity justified by the narrow disciplinary focus of the said works, which engage almost exclusively with literature while seldom drawing on sociology, anthropology, economics, or related fields. The scarcity of coherent methodologies, he contends, is linked to the absence of a tradition regarding *critique*. Furthermore, a persistent suspicion toward ideological approaches to literature continues to shape the field, thereby bringing to the fore a more fundamental and unresolved issue: which critical framework is most appropriate for the Romanian context? The tradition of criticism developed in the 1960s–1990s or the various forms of *post-critique*? Iovănel suggests that only once the new generation articulates a suitable answer to this dilemma will a shared agenda begin to emerge. Pursuing this line and inquiry, he and Christian Moraru engage in two dialogues titled “Corectitudinea politică între realitate și fetiș: un dialog (I)” [“Political Correctness between Reality and Fetish: A Dialogue (I)”] and “Două culturi critice: un dialog (II)” [“Two Critical Cultures: A Dialogue (II)”]. These conversations are centred around the concepts and misconceptions that prevent the transformations required to address the shortcomings identified in Iovănel’s essay. The first dialogue focuses on political correctness and its instrumentalization to justify the so called “apolitical” approach to literature, while the second revolves around the “autonomy of the aesthetic”.

It must be noted that numerous essays – both within and beyond this section – remain to be addressed. Ștefan Baghiu’s “*Clout, reach & echo chambers*: capitalismul de platformă și radicalismul criticii literare” [“*Clout, Reach & Echo Chambers*: Platform Capitalism and the Radicalism of Literary Criticism”], Andreea Mironescu and Doris Mironescu’s “Către un materialism cultural: estetism și masculinism în cultura critică românească” [“Toward Cultural Materialism: Aestheticism and Masculinism in Romanian Critical Culture”], Christian Moraru’s “După ‘autoritate’: critica în democrație și democrația în critică” [“After ‘Authority’: Criticism in Democracy and Democracy in Criticism”] and Mihnea Bălici’s “Șaizecismul călător și comunitatea critică internațională: despre ‘exportul’ culturii critice din România” [“Traveling ‘Sixtism’ and the International Critical Community: On ‘Exporting’ Romania’s Critical Culture”] bring to the table a wide array of questions and answers extended beyond engagements with the legacy of traditional Romanian literary criticism.

This volume sums up the stance of the contemporary literary avant-garde as it seeks to dismantle an ossified critical establishment resistant to any form of change. Foremost, there is a real need for a

new understanding and a new set of relationships between the “literary” and the “academic” press. These changes must happen in order to align the Romanian criticism to the new ways of analysing the human beyond the classical paradigm (white male, with a middle-class background, European, heterosexual), and beyond the confines of the Anthropocene. Accordingly, “Coda: Încotro? Reconstrucția sistemului critic românesc” [“Coda: Whither? The Rebuilding of the Romanian Critical System”] puts forward several answers to the question of what needs to be done. Foremost among these is the decentralization of the critical field, identified as the essential first step in the long process of bringing Romanian criticism into alignment with contemporary methodological and theoretical approaches. Equally important is a radical revision of the professional narration of Romanian criticism. The educational system requires reform, greater openness to multiculturalism and more progressive perspectives, while universities, in particular, must undertake a process of critical and theoretical re-alphabetization. Of course, the contributors acknowledge that the methodological frameworks they proposed are neither universal nor infallible, nor do they claim to represent a culminating stage in the development of literary criticism. Nonetheless, despite their imperfections, these approaches are markedly preferable to the current state of the field. Returning to the question of whether this volume should be perceived as an “exclusively Romanian matter”, at this point an answer could be formulated. The Critical Theory Institute’s shift from an internationally oriented discourse to an intervention situated within the Romanian context responds to an internal urgency within the national literary system, all while maintaining its global repertoire of concepts and critical instruments.

The methodologies advanced throughout the book – from world literature and cultural materialism to queer studies, disability studies, or ideological analyses of academic infrastructures – place it within a larger transnational conversation concerning broader issues such as the persistence of autonomist models, institutional resistance to methodological renewal, the challenges of academic synchronization, and the redefinition of criticism’s role within democratic culture.

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MIHAELA URSA, ALEX GOLDIȘ (eds.), *Romanian Literary Networks outside National Framings: A Case Study for Peripheralized Cosmopolitanisms*, Berlin, Peter Lang, 2024, 254 p.

As by-products of globalising processes, global asymmetries and cultural homogeneity epitomise the reign of the prevailing neoliberal order. Confronted with capitalist globalisation, the historical phenomenon of cosmopolitan relationality calls for rehabilitation, not necessarily as a counter-current but as a generative facet of contemporaneity. Rethinking cosmopolitanism today from the margins of the global system, in the footsteps of world-systems analysis and world literature studies, entails both reclaiming a cultural mode of existence long withheld from peripheral subjects, and decentralising the idealistic universalism of cosmopolitan thought as historically construed within core intellectual traditions.

In this context, the volume co-edited by Mihaela Ursa and Alex Goldiș, *Romanian Literary Networks outside National Framings: A Case Study for Peripheralized Cosmopolitanisms*, challenges the uneven positioning of cultural peripheries in world literary studies by unveiling, with each chapter, distinctive Romanian cosmopolitising strategies and contributing to the intricacies of a newly reshaped academic field whose parameters are yet to be fully demarked. Since each of the twelve

chapters, aside from the introduction, advances a distinct definitional delineation of cosmopolitanism, the volume ultimately argues for a conceptually expansive multiplicity, one sufficiently broad to capture the national and transnational conundrums of the periphery and, indeed, to account for peripherally inflected forms of cosmopolitanism that have previously gone unnamed. However, its most salient contribution lies in situating the nation-building project within a post-national framework, whilst preserving the multi-layered trajectories of local culture, as the editors of the volume highlight its aim “to voice insufficiently acknowledged cosmopolitan networks, frames, authors, and cultural and literary practices, whose links to the nation-building process of Romanian literature are interwoven with their involvement in creating transnational routes and bridges” (p. 9).

It should be noted from the outset that each chapter addresses the gaps in what might be termed a “literary (micro)history of Romanian cosmopolitanism” in a self-fashioned manner. Some contributions focus on literary agents of cosmopolitisation, including literary historians and critics such as Adrian Marino, E. Lovinescu, and M. Dragomirescu, as well as well-established cosmopolitan literary figures like Marthe Bibesco and Herta Müller. Others examine the geocultural regions wherein transnational literary trajectories gain prominence as part of particular historical and material configurations, as exemplified by the city of Arad or the Banat. Certain chapters explore specific translocalising strategies, including “interperipherality”, “triple peripherality”, and “posthumanisation”, while others engage directly with the ideological workings of cosmopolitanism, addressing, for example, anarchist groups, populist modernisation projects, or representations of economic migration in Romanian fiction. Even though the volume follows a rough chronological timeline from the late nineteenth century to the present, its primary aim appears to be highlighting agents of literary prestige, literary hubs and networks of cosmopolitan sociability, cultural regionality, peripheralised popular genres, and local practices and attitudes toward world culture.

With the opening chapter, Imre József Balázs investigates the inter-ethnic cultural configuration of interwar Arad, described as “a place of in-betweenness”, where Hungarian avant-garde journals such *Genius*, *Új Genius* and *Periszkop*, edited by Zoltán Franyó and György Szántó, disseminated an ethos of artistic worldliness within the broader context of everyday-life modernisation and helped establish up-to-date nodes of translocal literary interaction. Notably, both editors of the journals cultivated connections with East-Central European cultural figures with whom they discussed their editorial projects, and the journals themselves approached literature and art from a “programmatically universalist view” (p. 37) particular to their editors’ cosmopolitan outlook. If Balázs is concerned with a multi-ethnic minor city that functioned as a genuine “transistor” for cosmopolitan networking between 1924 and 1926, Snejana Ung turns to a region extensively examined in both literary and academic approaches, namely, the Banat, interrogating the prestige-producing and legitimising narratives of multiculturalism attributed to it and demonstrating how literary production instead offers a more critical representation (as exemplified by Mircea Nedelciu, Adriana Babeți, and Mircea Mihăieș’s 1990 novel *Femeia în roșu* [*The Woman in Red*] and Radu Pavel Gheo’s 2016 novel *Disco Titanic*). Ung notes that most discourses conceive of the Banat as a “multiethnic paradise” (p. 79), grounded in what she terms a “historicised multiculturalism”, one concerned primarily with accounting for long-established ethnic communities. Such an approach bypasses the “othering” of populations who settled in the region through intra- and extra-territorial migration and overlooks the “inter-imperial” lens that Ung mobilises, following Anca Parvulescu and Manuela Boatcă’s work on Transylvania, by disregarding the broader consequences of the Banat’s positioning within the world-system.

With regards to agents of cosmopolitisation, Adriana Stan’s chapter offers an examination of Adrian Marino, an unaffiliated, freelance Romanian comparatist and literary theorist who was active during both the communist (despite maintaining a consistently anti-communist stance) and post-communist periods. Marino is portrayed as a liberal thinker, an advocate of Europeanisation, an exile in his own country, and a cosmopolitan intellectual who wrote in French, was translated into French, English, and Italian, and cultivated intellectual relationships with prominent Western literary theorists. With respect to the field of comparatism, his proposed solution was a universalist-cosmopolitan one: the taxonomic identification of a literary “essence” in the form of “invariants”

(topoi, themes, ideas, modes) through which local literature might attain to a universal afterlife. Stan's central observation concerns Marino's "anti-colonial feelings" (p. 106) toward cultural Westernisation and Francophile "auto-colonisation".

In line with Stan's contribution, Daiana Gărdan's chapter likewise examines two forms of peripheral cosmopolitan outlooks that sought to emancipate Romanian literature from the "localist" rigidity of nation-building discourses: "ambassadorial criticism" and "institutionalised cosmopolitanism". The latter manifests itself both in the literary circle *Sburătorul*, led by Eugen Lovinescu, and in the literary research institution known as the Institute of Literature, whose central figure was Mihail Dragomirescu. Gărdan notes that while *Sburătorul* functioned in the interwar period as "a group study, a creative writing workshop" (p. 144), with Lovinescu aiming to teach his followers "the secrets of internationally successful literature" (p. 145), the Institute constituted a more formal academic enterprise, offering courses that university students could attend in order to be trained as "future teachers, literary historians, editors, and librarians" (p. 146). In the second part of her chapter, Gărdan introduces the notion of "ambassadorial criticism" by examining Dragomirescu's position as a local literary historian who maintained intellectual exchanges with notable theorists such as Benedetto Croce and Paul Van Tieghem. Through these connections, and through the international circulation of his reflections on the theory of the masterpiece, his work acquired a degree of transnational visibility.

Both Marius Popa and Ovio Olaru focus on Romanian literary writers whose cultural careers were shaped by cosmopolitan networks. Where Gărdan attributes the concept of "ambassadorial criticism" to Dragomirescu, Popa interprets Marthe Bibesco's intellectual trajectory as exemplifying the role of a cultural "ambassador" bridging East and West (p. 174). Rooted in Romanian culture but being fully integrated into French literary life, Bibesco used her dual belonging to challenge Western clichés, explore Eastern otherness, and articulate a non-Eurocentric vision of universality, as Popa argues. Her literary work during the twentieth century appears to present literature as a strategy for transcending national boundaries, articulating a literature-driven, classic cosmopolitan vision of global belonging. Herta Müller, by contrast, as analysed by Ovio Olaru, is a German-ethnic writer from Romania who succeeded in transcending her so-called "minority status" by strategically leveraging her peripheral identity after her relocation to Germany, ultimately culminating in her 2009 Nobel Prize (p. 210). Olaru's chapter opens a broader discussion of "minor", "ultramajor", and "micro" literatures in relation to Romanian literature written by German-speaking communities, arguing for the inherently cosmopolitan character of Romanian German-language literature. Olaru's most compelling contribution is his formulation of an "anti-communist cosmopolitanism" that Müller activated in conjunction with her international reception. This mode, he argues, frames communist repression as primarily affecting a culturally privileged minority (thereby sidelining other social classes), positions a culturally oppressed German-language voice as the mediator of Romanian communism for foreign audiences, privileges a highly metaphorical aesthetic, and promotes an ultimately unnuanced anti-communist stance (pp. 218-219).

Emanuel Modoc, Marius Conkan, and Alex Ciorogar each examine forms of cosmopolitising praxis. Modoc focuses on the interperipheral worlding strategies of East-Central European avant-gardes, as well as on the cosmopolitan dynamics generated by the Dada movement's mobility, which linked the avant-garde scenes of Romania, Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. He argues that Ulrich Beck's notion of "methodological cosmopolitanism" is central to understanding how East-Central European avant-garde artists forged peripheral communities that proved culturally productive. As such, the Dadaist moment facilitated new forms of cross-border mobility through figures like Tristan Tzara and Lajos Kassák, whose distinct trajectories of cultural export and import were nonetheless central to the formation of a cosmopolitan, transnational avant-garde network. Kassák's journal *Ma* fostered inter-peripheral collaboration and established connections between Western and regional movements. Both the Romanian and Czech avant-gardes developed through this intercultural exchange, benefiting significantly from its cosmopolitan momentum (p. 72). Conkan's contribution shifts the volume's focus toward a world-genre perspective on science fiction. He argues that Romanian popular fiction aligns closely with Franco Moretti's triadic model consisting of foreign

forms, local materials, and local forms, given its interaction with Western speculative literature, its reliance on translations from Russian literature, and its engagement with regional versions of Marxism. The feature that renders science fiction particularly relevant to cosmopolitan discourse is its condition of “triple peripherality” (p. 124). As a Western genre, it has historically stood in tension with dominant realist and canonical literary modes; as a peripheralized Romanian genre, it occupies a marginal position not only in relation to Western science fiction, but also to Western mimetic and canonical traditions, as well as to mainstream national literature. Accordingly, Romanian popular literature emerges as a site of “multiple peripheralisations” (p. 124) that gives rise to a “cosmopolitan spatiality” (p. 125). In the volume’s concluding chapter, Alex Ciorogar reconceptualises cosmopolitanism by extending it into a post-anthropocentric framework that incorporates nonhuman beings, advocating for a “posthumanised” understanding of cosmopolitanism. He proposes that contemporary Romanian poetry exemplifies this shift, designating it as “posthuman cosmopolitan poetry” (PoCoPo) (p. 237). His contribution is primarily theoretical in nature, arguing for the necessity of rethinking cosmopolitanism through “posthumanising” strategies, ones that, he maintains, are already embedded in the systemic transformations shaping even a semi-peripheral culture such as Romania within the broader context of neoliberal world culture, as reflected in recent poetic discourse.

With respect to the volume’s pronounced engagement with ideological dimensions, Adrian Tătăran, Cosmin Borza, and Mihnea Bâlici examine politically inflected forms of cosmopolitanism. Tătăran’s chapter on Romanian anarchism highlights the little-studied literary dimensions of anarchist activity at the turn of the twentieth century. It shows how anarchists created alternative cultural spheres through journals, libraries, and study circles, forming transnational networks. Rejecting national and state hegemonies, including those of the “world republic of letters” (p. 44), anarchists developed spaces of collective self-education that connected a peripheral milieu to broader cosmopolitan and revolutionary circuits. Borza focuses his attention on Constantin Stere and examines the intricate interplay between a peripheral, “rooted” cosmopolitanism and global modernity through an analysis of Stere’s *poporanist* ideas, asserting the national identity as an anti-imperial/colonial approach (p. 159), and his autobiographical novel *În preajma revoluției* [On the Eve of the Revolution]. As an anti-Marxist socialist, a critic of Western capitalist modernity and advocate of a “third way” of development suited to agrarian peripheries, Stere theorised a form of cosmopolitanism grounded in local social realities rather than in Westernising models. His novel dramatizes the tensions between the protagonist’s (Stere’s alter ego) youthful belief in a cosmopolitan, humanitarian revolution and the imperative, revealed during his Siberian exile, to engage with the humanity immediately surrounding him (p. 157). Lastly, Bâlici’s contribution foregrounds a form of “forced” or reactionary cosmopolitanism through an examination of Romanian fiction on economic (labour) migration in works by Adrian Schiop, Ioana Baetica Morpurgo, Dan Lungu, and Liliana Nechita. He argues that the cosmopolitan ideal of transnational interconnectedness is intrinsically contradictory since the increasing ubiquity and “banal” enactment of cosmopolitisation today can engender reactionary tendencies, even reinforcing right-wing nationalism. This ambivalence underpins what Bâlici terms the “Janus-faced” nature of cosmopolitanism (p. 192).

In conclusion, the volume under review makes a significant contribution by challenging both national and international approaches to the literary, stressing the semi-peripheral positioning of Romanian culture and the cosmopolitan trajectories that emerge from it. Methodologically, the volume embraces a multiplicity of conceptual narratives, yet maintains coherence by consistently relating individual case studies to the overarching project of “peripheralizing” cosmopolitanism. A critique that may be directed at the volume concerns its limited engagement with the cosmopolitan character of gender-related thought and women’s emancipatory practices, ranging from their emergence in nineteenth-century Romanian with figures such as Sofia Nădejde, to the post-Cold War introduction of feminism and gender studies into East-Central European cultural spheres through neoliberal networks originating in the West. These two examples, situated at the chronological boundaries that frame the volume, may illustrate broader cosmopolitan dynamics that remain insufficiently addressed, alongside other similar directions that could likewise be explored. Overall,

the volume establishes itself as an innovative entry point for the study of East-Central European cosmopolitanism, providing a compelling model for integrating peripheral literary (micro)histories into current discussions of world literature and cosmopolitanism, undermining “methodological nationalism” while nonetheless preserving space for national frameworks.

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ALEX CIOROGAR, *Ascensiunea autorului în epoca globalizării digitale* [*The Ascension of the Author in the Age of Digital Globalisation*], Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2025, 398 p.

Ascensiunea autorului în epoca globalizării digitale [*The Ascension of the Author in the Age of Digital Globalisation*] constitutes an elaborate investigation into the concept of authorship, derived from Alex Ciorogar’s PhD thesis. The study rehashes the theoretical history of the concept in question, focusing on the last six decades, while advancing a (re)conceptualisation of the authorial figure in the digital era. In a context where virtually any person can occupy the position of an author by expressing themselves online without facing censorship, Ciorogar sheds light on the figure of the author and their historical, social, biographical, legal and aesthetic status through a theoretical metadiscourse.

Rather than dismantling previous theories in order to advance his concept of “the ascension of the author”, the critic seeks to reconstruct its theoretical network, grounding his study both in pivotal references (such as Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault), as well as in the creative magma behind these forms of thinking. As Corin Braga notes in the preface of the book, Ciorogar implements the term of “ecology of knowledge” – the central concept of his study – as an alternative, “heterarhic” depiction of certain theories that can no longer be limited to systems theory alone. It is through this approach that the volume sets itself apart from other studies in the same field. The author reconstructs the history of ideas that had a bearing on the notion of authorship, paying close attention to influences on humanities studies from the 1960s onwards. As a result of this interdisciplinary background, Ciorogar justifies the changes that occurred at the authorial level in each theoretical moment examined. Nevertheless, the “death of the author” is probably the most influential theory of the field in the last decades, therefore Ciorogar founds his new terminology, that of the “ascension of the author”, on it, considering that if the first could be regarded as a symptom of theoreticians’ superiority, the latter can be termed an “expression of this culpability”, as Braga states.

The structure of *Ascensiunea autorului* is shaped by the thematic approach that the author opts for. Each part sheds light on the methodology employed by reconstructing the historiography of the concept in question and following the chronological development of the term. Starting with challenging the concept of authorship, Ciorogar aims to define controversial terminological boundaries and the methodology employed. In light of the resurgence of biographism in contemporary literary history and the dynamics of digital globalisation, the central lines of the argument are delineated. Subsequently, the text surveys the theoretical positions that have questioned the “death of the author”, all encompassed within the framework of the “return of the author”. Ultimately, the final chapter entitled “The Ascension of the Author” aims to question the characteristics of the authorial function in the immediate, contemporary context, specifically that of the last two decades, when individual integrity and the centrality of the personal subject can be called into question.

Following the introduction, the focus falls on the instability and the inconstancy of *authorship* as a concept. As the author notes, this notion can be more accurately apprehended as a “phenomenon” that transcends the strictly cultural sphere, as it encompasses practices, ideas, individuals, and stances. The aim of the study is, as Ciorogar mentions, to evaluate the positions adopted by different theoretical fields in relation to authorship, viewed as “one of the main literary thought category” (p. 2). Accordingly, the topic warrants renewed scholarly engagement, especially because of its marginalisation within the *post*-era discourse. Moreover, the author reclaims a place in literary debates, as feminism, postcolonialism, disability or gender studies, and other theoretical approaches shed light on the individual as a minority subject.

The first chapter argues for the tensions between the author as an individual subject and its ideological function. Inquiring into the concept of “subject” through the lens of psychoanalysis (Jacques Lacan), political theory (Louis Althusser) and poststructuralism (Jacques Derrida, Foucault, Barthes), Ciorogar also underlines the position of Paul Smith, who perceives the decentering of the author as part of a network of political or ideological forms of counteraction. Smith uses different disciplines in order to identify the different positionings of *subjectivity* within the aforementioned network. Considering that *the author* is encompassed within the broader notion of subjectivity, Smith reworks this concept into a socio-political agent, rather than seeing it as a result of the operations of ideological institutions. The value of this chapter lies in offering alternative frames for deconstruction, in order to reveal the nuances of these theoretical perspectives. In this vein, the human agent is placed beyond the boundaries set by poststructuralism. Ciorogar retraces, historiographically, the overlaps and interactions among theories challenging authorship. Founding his demonstration upon the theories of Amy E. Robillard and Ron Fortune, he underscores the specificity of the contemporary digital era, which generates new forms of authorship, thereby resulting in “new forms of resistance”.

Through a highly complex theoretical network, the following chapter addresses a series of conceptual delimitations pertaining to the topic. Even if the purpose of literary theory is not to generate definitions, but to interrogate the internal logic of its concepts, the author of the study engages with both issues. From his perspective, there are two ways of perceiving authorship: building on poststructuralist thought, some contend that it lacks hermeneutic value, and, on the other hand, others maintain the idea of the authorial return. Perceived as a “travelling concept”, *the author* is re-examined and redefined beginning with readily available resources, such as dictionaries and encyclopaedias, which argue that textual meaning emerges not from the author’s intention, but from the interplay of social, cultural, and linguistic structures. Within the French critical landscape, the notion under consideration is regarded as a creator of novelty, a rationale that has marked the emergence of the writing profession. Concerning the theoretical boundaries between *author* and *authorship*, the first is subsequently viewed as constructed by the text itself, whereas the second belongs to textual discourse. Furthermore, following Alexandre Gefen’s taxonomy, Ciorogar highlights the three authorial registers – the real, the textual and the imaginary – by which he indicates the range of disciplines (humanities and social sciences) needed to tackle this issue.

Subsequent to this “networked” theoretical survey, the next section focuses on methodologies and instruments employed in this study. The primary interest of this chapter concerns approaches to the issue which reevaluate the position of the authorial figure in the post-theoretical era, given its ubiquity, or the “impossibility of the non-presence of the author” (p. 91). Contesting the hypothesis that the death of the author caused the institutionalisation of literary theory, Ciorogar sheds light on some theorists overshadowed by Barthes, Derrida or Foucault, who have monopolised the field, a phenomenon seen as “a symptom of the academic system’s self-reproduction mechanism” (p. 91).

The discussion around the resurgence of biographism provides the necessary articulation between aesthetic theories and literary studies, focusing on the barrier that obstructs the dialogue between the aesthetic experience of contemporary arts and the theorists’ satisfactory analysis of this (recent) phenomena. Considered “a phenomenological process pertaining to the individual subjects”, the aesthetic experience provides a framework which explores the dynamic of the encounter between the reader and the author. For instance, one of the critical perspectives explored in this section is

Marielle Macé's, according to whom the reader delves into the textual form through the syntax employed by the author (p. 117). In addition, the author's writing style is regarded as a stance on reality, which grants the reading political nuances. Contemporary biographism is viewed as a form of deconstruction and re-semantisation of *authorship*, a solution for the current crisis of the humanities in the context of the posthuman era, when notions such as *the individual*, *the human*, and *life* need to be redefined.

The next chapter centres on the theories elaborated by Roland Barthes on authorship. Starting from Barthes' concept of "paroptic" or "paracoustic" reading, Ciorogar highlights the mythology created around *The Death of the Author*, resulting from the tendency to cite rather than critically examine the essay in question. Moreover, the French theorist's claims are repositioned within the intellectual network of his contemporaries, precisely in order to dismantle the clichés that have accumulated around his work.

Moving forward, the discussion follows the process of "the return of the author" (theorised from the second half of the 1990s) which seeks to reconstruct the authorial subject through new methodologies. Ciorogar questions the effervescence of these theories at the dawn of the 21st century, remarking, paradoxically, that certain thinkers ground their arguments precisely in poststructuralist thought. He emphasises the importance of *intentionality* and *interpretative meaning* during the reading process, both being negotiated through the interplay between the author and the reader.

The last chapter, "The Ascension of the Author", aims to establish the features of the authorial function in recent contemporary context, either by refining poststructuralist theories – drawing on Spivak's idea that the death of the liberal author did not imply the complete erasure of the authorial figure – or by establishing a theoretical framework that examines the concept in question within the broader context of digital expansion. Ciorogar notices that the ascension of the author encapsulates the ambiguity imposed upon the creative subject by the age of globalisation (p. 302). In essence, the study calls for the development of a new critical methodology to approach *authorship*, perceived as a post-capitalist construct, in the digital age, in which different authorial positionings are explained through the contradictions and contrasts they entail. Alex Ciorogar terms this "non-violent co-existence" of theoretical perspectives an "ecological" approach. This methodology proposed by studying the ascension of the author is not restrictive; on the contrary, it is a forward-looking metaphor that opens up the field of *authorship* studies.

Certainly, the merit of this book lies in the new methodology proposed by its author, a practice that can be applied to any historical era or research subject. Moreover, Ciorogar mentions that *authorship* is a concept that can explain social and economic tensions, which may also be of interest beyond academic boundaries (p. 345). However, the theoretical consistency and density of this study may put off a non-academic readership. Despite the clearly organised topics outlined in the table of contents, the rhizomatic structure of the arguments may obfuscate the points outlined. While the author acknowledges the possible limitations of his study, he also argues that these ideas may serve as a guiding framework for future investigations on this topic.

To conclude, the text of Alex Ciorogar advocates for the need of a newly articulated methodological framework, underpinned by a specific terminology, in order to rethink the idea of *authorship* beyond a poststructuralist, postcolonial or postmodern vocabulary. The book proposes a non-hierarchical overview on its field and, drawing from this, promotes a new stage wherein interdisciplinary diversity and "ecological" approaches are deemed essential to the theoretical moment of "the ascension of the author".

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GISÈLE VANHESE, *Penser l'Europe. Du côté de la littérature*. Préface de Maya Simionescu, București, Fundația Națională pentru Știință și Artă, 2023, 299 p.

A passionate researcher of Romanian literature, Gisèle Vanhese is Professor Emerita at the University of Calabria, where she has been teaching Romanian and Comparative Literature for almost two decades. She is director and founder of the LARIR Research Centre ("Laboratoire de Recherche sur l'Imaginaire et la Rhétorique") and a member of numerous national and international scientific committees. She is a recipient of the "Titu Maiorescu" Prize awarded by the Romanian Academy in 2013 and of the 2024 "Eugen Lovinescu" Prize conferred by the National Museum of Romanian Literature for promoting the Romanian language and literature abroad. She is the author of several volumes of literary criticism, appreciated at home and abroad, such as *Le Méridien balcanique*, Arcavacata di Rende, Università della Calabria, 2010, translated into Romanian by the European Institute Press, Iași, in 2017; « *Luceafărul* » de Mihai Eminescu. *Portrait d'un dieu obscur*, Dijon, Presses de l'Université de Bourgogne, 2011, published in translation in 2014 at Timpul Press, Iași; *Fondane. Dialogues au bord du gouffre*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbertino, 2018, etc. Her outstanding scholarly efforts to bring Romanian literature to a global audience are part of the broad horizon of contemporary multiculturalism, which promotes the movement of ideas across diverse geographical spaces and cultural paradigms.

The volume under discussion, *Penser l'Europe. Du côté de la littérature*, belongs to this very context. It includes the conferences delivered by the author at the "Penser l'Europe" International Seminar, which, thanks to the initiative of Eugen Simion and Thierry de Montbrial, has been organised annually in Bucharest since 2002 by the National Foundation for Science and Art, in collaboration with the Romanian Academy and other prestigious international institutions. Bringing together Romanian and foreign scholars from various fields, the seminars address topics of general interest regarding European identity, fostering intercultural, interdisciplinary and multilingual exchanges. Some of these topics include envisioning Europe fifty years into the future, the ways of writing and teaching history, the issue of human rights, the "two Europes", or the role of science, religion and academic institutions in the new European framework.

From the position of an informed researcher, Gisèle Vanhese meditates on the proposed themes through the lens of the literary imaginary, deemed to be a key element of Western culture and civilisation and a significant force behind the emergence of its current transnational profile. Within the framework of the new culture, literature remains, as Eugen Simion believes following Mircea Eliade, a "therapy of being" and an "instrument of knowledge" (p. 33), a depository of the entire cultural treasure "camouflaged" in legends, myths, symbols and archetypal images. The circulation of values and the fertile dialogue between them represent one of the functions of migrant literature, which transgresses, by its very nature, traditional spaces, both in a real and in a symbolic way. Romanian migrant literature, which is the author's main topic of interest and the focus of most of the conferences gathered in this volume, plays a significant role in this regard. The overall approach is integrative, combining the historical-literary perspective with a comparative, hermeneutic, anthropological and myth-critical approach, echoing the thinking of Mircea Eliade, Gilbert Durand, Jean-Jacques Wunenburger, Gaston Bachelard, Paul Ricoeur, Pierre Brunel, etc. In fact, together with Eugen Simion, to whom she dedicates the volume and two of the conferences, Gisèle Vanhese guest-edited issue 3–4 (2011) of the journal *Caiete critice*, dedicated to migrant literature.

According to the analyst, the problem of transnational literature, which straddles the border between cultures, is crucial both for understanding Romanian literature and for creating a Western literary canon based on multiculturalism and plurilingualism. Its representatives, such as Mircea Eliade, Panait Istrati, Benjamin Fondane, Paul Celan, Anna de Noailles and Lorand Gaspar, constitute "an essential category to understand the influence of globalisation on contemporary culture and its repercussions on the identity-building process" (p. 133). Through their numerous contributions, these genuine messengers, comparable to the old "wandering clergy" of the eleventh century, symptomatically illustrate the movement of today's culture from the centre to the periphery, operating a new synthesis,

with often remarkable results, between the two symbolic topoi. Emblematically, many Romanian writers who lived in exile – Mircea Eliade, Cioran, Tristan Tzara and Eugène Ionesco, to give just a few examples – were at the centre of the modern and postmodern reflection on Europe by revolutionising thinking, each in his different way. The researcher prefers the term “migration” to “exile”, commonly used in specialised studies. In doing that, she endorses Eugen Simion’s assumption from the study published in the journal *Caiete critice*, that the twentieth century was a century of exile, while the twenty-first century appears to be one of migration (“La littérature migrante”, *Caiete critice*, 2011, 3–4, p. 7).

In a seminar dedicated to the future of Europe in fifty years (“Quelle Europe dans 50 ans?”), Gisèle Vanhese expresses her conviction that the imaginary of tomorrow will be marked by the symbolic paradigm of Ulysses as the prototype of the wandering individual, nowadays represented by the figure of the migrant or the exile, who embodies what Max Biden calls the “diasporic condition”. Following centuries dominated by the spirit of Prometheus, Dionysus or Hermes, today we are witnessing a resurgence of the Ulysses myth, an inter-relational myth of the nocturnal imaginary, which reproduces a symbolic scheme of exemplary value in modernity and postmodernity through migrant literature (“Migration, littérature migrante et paradigme ulyssien”). Discussing the concept of border in another conference (“L’Europe. Dedans/ Dehors”), the author analyses the changes undergone by migrant literature, with particular reference to Romanian literature, namely the shift from a thematic to a symbolic representation of exile and migration. Borders were real, geographical for Panait Istrati, who approached migration from a thematic viewpoint. So are they in the poetry of Benjamin Fondane, where migration is one of the main themes, or in the work of Lorand Gaspar, who makes numerous explicit references to this concept. Contemporaneity, on the other hand, privileges the symbolic model of migration, as a foreshadowing of the new transitional identity. Through its content and symbols, migrant literature thus anticipates the shift of the new European generations towards increasingly hybrid, multicultural and multilingual identities. In opposition to the old meaning of borders as dividing barriers, this cross-border literature invents “a new space situated between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’” (p. 197), a permissive space that fosters dialogue and the exchange of ideas.

Gisèle Vanhese meditates in a literary key on the fundamental issues subjected to discussion. Her approach, with its broad philosophical and anthropological insights, combines conceptual rigor with analytical finesse, as well as a historical-literary scientific perspective with an essayistic and comparative inquiry. Reflection is accompanied by textual commentary, evincing both depth of detail and extensive contextualisation, in order to convincingly illustrate her ideas. She often puts forth interesting hypotheses regarding the status of literature and the imaginary in the grand scheme of knowledge. For example, in a lecture titled “How is history written?” (“Comment écrit-on l’histoire?”), she reflects on two artistic versions of “microhistory” encountered in the works of Benjamin Fondane and Paul Celan, with a view to uncovering the imprint of “macrohistory” within the fabric of literary language. Engaging in a dialogue with the conceptions of Paul Ricoeur, she discusses the relationship between historiographical and fictional representation. The minimal use of poetic images, the Hermeticism and concise expression of Paul Celan’s poetry or the prose-like quality of Benjamin Fondane’s lyrical works are deemed to be symptomatic of the testamentary value of the two poetic universes, as “microhistories” of the Holocaust (“La poésie à la rencontre de l’histoire. Benjamin Fondane et Paul Celan”). Regarding the topic of another debate, human rights and European values, the author makes a foray into Panait Istrati’s prose, in an attempt to prove that the outlaws, symbols of the marginalised and the defeated, perform a natural, archaic vigilante function. They embody, as mythical, legendary figures, social ideals specific to the romantic man (“Droits de l’homme et droits du coeur dans l’oeuvre de Panait Istrati”). In its turn, Anne de Noailles’ poetry, suggestive of the onset of the First World War, reflects a feminine perspective on historical evil and regeneration against an abysmal horizon (“Malheur et régénération de l’Europe dans la perspective féminine”). The philosophical systems of Lucian Blaga and Gaston Bachelard, whose numerous conceptual similarities are analysed in detail, serve as models for an exemplary intellectual journey that connects science and art and attests to the deep spiritual kinship between the “two Europes” (“Y a-t-il deux Europes? Au coeur du chantier des imaginaires européens: Lucian Blaga et Gaston Bachelard”).

A humanist-minded intellectual in the classical sense of the term, Gisèle Vanhese considers that the dialogue between science and art, between the “diurnal” and the “nocturnal” regimes of the spirit, or between concept and image is essential for the new configuration of Western culture (“Pensée nocturne et pensée diurne, science et poésie”). The hermeneutics of Mircea Eliade, the poetic and philosophical work of Lucian Blaga, the poetry of Lorand Gaspar, a writer born in Transylvania who emigrated to France, bring this synthesis into focus. In tune with the thinking of Mircea Eliade, Gilbert Durand, Jean-Jacques Wunenburger and other, numerous contemporary thinkers, Vanhese voices her belief that “hyperspecialisation” must always be accompanied by interdisciplinarity, because “this will be one of the keys to the creativity of our future” (p. 181). This kind of plural dialogue is rooted, moreover, in the origins of European culture, which has been, since its inception, a culture of diversity and openness.

Gisèle Vanhese herself resorts to this dual research perspective – always loyal to the text, yet sensitive to historical and cultural contexts – in her reflections on contemporaneity through the lens of the literary imaginary. She blends the spirit of geometry with that of finesse, in Pascal’s terms, whom she invokes in her plea for the unification of science and literature. Her seminar interventions gathered in this volume represent, as Maya Simionescu notes in the preface, “the testimony of a Francophone writer in love with the Romanian language and literature”, a “talented and original”, “enlightened humanist”, and a “rigorously documented scientific researcher, who probes the analytical depths to reveal the essence of things and phenomena relating to modern society and to today’s Europe” (p. 10).

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GRAȚIELA BENGĂ-ȚUȚUIANU (ed.), *Memoria din cuvinte: reprezentări și moduri de tratare* [*La mémoire dans les mots : représentations et approches*], Timișoara, Editura Universității de Vest, 2025.

En 2024, la première édition de la conférence internationale « Memorie istorică, memorie literară: provocări și perspective » a eu lieu à Timișoara, à l’initiative de chercheurs de l’Institut de Studii Banatice « Titu Maiorescu » (institut devenu, à partir de 2025, Institutul de Cercetări Socio-Umane « Titu Maiorescu »), en partenariat avec l’Académie Roumaine – Branche Timișoara, l’Université de Ovest et l’Université Polytechnique. Les communications qui y avaient été présentées ont ensuite fait l’objet du volume collectif *Memoria din cuvinte: reprezentări și moduri de tratare* [*La mémoire dans les mots : représentations et approches*], coordonné par GrațIELA Bengă-Țuțuianu et publié en 2025.

Dans la « Prefață » [« Préface »], les prémisses formulées par l’éditrice partent de Maurice Halbwachs : l’identité individuelle se dessine sur le fond de l’identité collective, façonnée par la mémoire culturelle et par l’appartenance à un groupe. GrațIELA Bengă-Țuțuianu souligne la manière dont la mémoire, l’histoire et l’identité (nationale et européenne) se croisent dans les travaux savants contemporains. Elle rappelle les grands repères théoriques qui avaient dynamisé le champ des *memory studies* (de Maurice Halbwachs à Pierre Nora, de la phénoménologie de la mémoire de Paul Ricoeur à la distinction proposée par Jan Assmann entre mémoire fonctionnelle et mémoire de dépôt), tout en formulant la question si, dans un monde postmoderne et post-communiste, il est encore possible de penser la modernité comme un système unifié de référence (pp. 5-6). Le volume est présenté à la fois comme le fruit d’une « ouverture inter- et transdisciplinaire, transnationale et transrégionale », et comme un premier exercice de constitution d’« une communauté authentique de débat académique » (p. 7), où philologues, historiens, linguistes et doctorants abordent, selon des angles divers, la même problématique : la manière dont la mémoire « fonctionne » dans et à travers les textes.

Après la préface, « Mișcări de rezoluție » [« Mouvements de résolution »] introduit la première section, qui rassemble deux contributions, celle de Kazimierz Jurczak et celle d’Ioana Bot. Le texte de

Kazimierz Jurczak, « Memoria generațională și cea istorică/culturală : un conflict inevitabil ? Dezbateri poloneze contemporane cu privire la istoria secolului XX » [« La mémoire générationnelle et la mémoire historique/ culturelle : un conflit inévitable ? Débats polonais contemporains sur l'histoire du XX^{ème} siècle »], discute la relation qu'entretiennent le « caractère dynamique de la mémoire fonctionnelle » et les mécanismes de la politique historique, entendue comme usage du passé, de ses interprétations et des « connaissances historiques » en tant qu'outil politique de (dé)stabilisation d'un régime, de maintien ou de modification de certains codes culturels (p. 12). L'auteur montre comment, dans la Pologne post-communiste, les discussions portées sur la Seconde Guerre mondiale ont fait émerger des syntagmes tels que le « patriotisme critique » et la « politique de la dignité », opposés à la « politique de la honte », et comment l'instrumentalisation poussée à l'extrême de la mémoire a fini par se transformer en une véritable « guerre des mémoires » (p. 12). L'exemple polonais s'avère éclairant aussi pour le lecteur roumain, dans une Europe où les politiques de la mémoire deviennent un terrain de confrontation idéologique. En outre, cette contribution esquisse discrètement une grille de lecture pour l'ensemble de l'ouvrage : la mémoire n'y est pas seulement un objet d'analyse, mais aussi un outil heuristique, une « lentille » à travers laquelle se lisent simultanément la littérature, l'histoire, la pratique critique et le langage lui-même. En contrepoint, la contribution d'Ioana Bot, « Memoria cărților. Biblioteci private ale intelectualilor, în comunismul românesc » [« La mémoire des livres. Bibliothèques privées des intellectuels pendant le communisme roumain »], déplace le regard de l'histoire politique vers l'espace intime des bibliothèques privées. S'appuyant sur sa propre expérience d'archivage et sur ses études dans les fonds de livres donnés à la Bibliotecă Județeană « Octavian Goga » et à la Bibliotecă Centrală Universitară « Lucian Blaga » par les intellectuels clujois, parfois des bibliothèques entières, l'auteure formule cette question apparemment anodine : « où vont-ils les anciens livres quand ils s'en vont ? » (p. 23). Sa réponse, minutieuse, fait de la bibliothèque privée un véritable « lieu de mémoire », de la résistance par la culture : des volumes banals du point de vue éditorial, mais couverts de « cicatrices » (annotations, traces de circulation clandestine) documentent la « vie difficile des livres, des hommes et des idées » sous le communisme (pp. 25-26).

Le corps principal du volume est constitué par la section « (Con)texte : memoria literaturii » [« (Con)texte : la mémoire de la littérature »], elle-même subdivisée en trois volets. La première, « Memoria: teritorii și dincolo de ele » [« La Mémoire : les territoires et leur extérieur »], s'ouvre avec le texte d'Amalia Cotoi, « Ipostazele memoriei în studiile literare românești în secolul XXI » [« Hypostases de la mémoire dans les études littéraires roumaines du XXI^{ème} siècle »]. Prenant pour point de départ « le cluster interdisciplinaire Memory Studies, qui a remplacé la mémoire individuelle par la suprastructure de la mémoire collective » (p. 45), l'auteure discute la manière dont la critique roumaine a abordé la mémoire du communisme dans le roman post-communiste ; elle s'intéresse, également, à la problématisation de la mémoire dans le roman de l'entre-deux-guerres. La première partie de la réflexion examine de près les récits qui fictionnalisent le traumatisme du régime communiste, ainsi que la post-mémoire marquée de nostalgie à l'égard de la transition ; la seconde partie analyse la façon dont le roman roumain de l'entre-deux-guerres est lu à travers la grille de l'authenticité et des temporalités fragmentées. Dans la même section, Andra Gălan, dans « Literatura memorialistică feminină între valoare documentară, estetică și receptarea ca literatură minoră » [« La littérature mémorielle féminine entre valeur documentaire, valeur esthétique et sa réception comme littérature mineure »], met en lumière la double marginalisation dont souffrent les mémoires féminines : d'une part, en raison du décalage temporel (textes consacrés à l'entre-deux-guerres, mais publiés pendant le communisme ou après 1989), d'autre part, à cause des préjugés de genre et de leur classement fréquent comme « littérature de seconde zone ». Gălan montre comment les volumes signés par Cella Serghi, Henriette-Yvonne Stahl, Annie Benteoiu ou Lena Constante conjuguent une valeur testimoniale avec une « poétique des émotions », transformant les expériences érotiques et carcérales en figures littéraires de la crise et du traumatisme. Dans « Calitatea mărturiei lui Emil Dorian. Între subiectivism și document istoric » [« La valeur du témoignage d'Emil Dorian. Entre perspective subjective et document historique »], Arleen Ionescu propose une lecture audacieuse du journal du médecin juif Emil Dorian, en maintenant un équilibre subtil entre le relativisme inhérent au

témoignage personnel et la valeur documentaire des notations quotidiennes. Ce journal apparaît comme un texte de superpositions, où fragments de presse, échos radiophoniques, commentaires des discours officiels et notes sur les soucis quotidiens se fondent dans une chronique de la persécution. Les travaux de Delia Badea sur les « cartographies imaginaires » de Sorin Titel, celui d'Elena Crașovan sur la mémoire et l'oubli dans la prose de Gabriela Adameșteanu, celui de Mihaela-Oana Gogoșeanu sur le journal de prison de Petre Pandrea et celui de Mihai-Cătălin Popa sur *Supraviețuirile* [Les Survivances] de Radu Cosașu viennent compléter cette première partie, en illustrant chacun une autre manière d'envisager le rapport entre mémoire et fiction : comme rêverie géographique, comme reconstitution des dossiers de la Securitate, comme écriture « contre l'oubli » ou comme montage de fragments autobiographiques et intertextuels.

La deuxième section du volume, « Vederi de la distanță, priviri de aproape » [« Vues de loin, regards de près »], déplace l'intérêt vers des essais, des journaux, des confessions et des chroniques. Dans « Despre literatura făcută cu paraziți. Arghezi și radioul (1928–1947) » [« Sur la littérature faite avec des parasites. Arghezi et la radio (1928–1947) »], Ligia Tudurachi montre comment Tudor Arghezi transforme le nouveau médium radiophonique en espace poétique : les « parasites » qui brouillent les ondes deviennent chez le poète roumain métaphores du chaos du monde ; la voix radiophonique y inscrit une autre forme de mémoire, auditive, fragile mais insistante. Parmi les contributions marquantes du volume, il faut mentionner celle d'Emanuela Ilie, « „Vestigii ale celei dinainte ” » [« „Vestiges de celle qui a précédé” »]. À partir d'un corpus de récits confessionnels sur le cancer (Mioara Grigore, Florica Bațu Ichim, Sorana Gurian, Camelia Răileanu), l'auteure se demande si la remémoration peut devenir un « mécanisme de coping » à même de reconfigurer l'identité dans les conditions d'une souffrance radicale. Le passé du corps sain est à la fois refuge et source de douleur, et le pacte thanatographique fait voler en éclats toute illusion de « happy end ». Dans « Conectarea la memoria externă: actul critic în exil – Monica Lovinescu » [« Se connecter à la mémoire externe : l'acte critique dans l'exil – Monica Lovinescu »], Georgeta Orian caractérise la critique littéraire de Monica Lovinescu comme une « mémoire externe » de la littérature roumaine : un espace d'archivage, hors du pays, de hiérarchies et de jugements qui allaient exercer une influence décisive sur le canon post-décembriste. Florica Faur, dans son texte consacré au prince George Sebastian, recompose, à partir de mémoires diplomatiques, le portrait d'une figure essentielle de l'exil roumain, tandis que Simona Constantinovici, Costinel-Iulian Partenie et Dana Nicoleta Popescu discutent, chacun à partir d'un corpus différent, les rapports entre mémoire affective, traumatismes historiques et innovation stylistique dans la poésie d'Adrian Bodnar, la prose de Benjamin Fundoianu et les romans de Radu Pavel Gheo.

La troisième section du volume, « Oameni și locuri: identitate, istorie, traumă » [« Gens et lieux : identité, histoire, trauma »] développe l'axe mémoire–lieu–identité. Elena Jebelean, dans « Amintire, confesiune, identitate » [« Souvenir, confession, identité »], interprète le journal de voyage et la correspondance de Montaigne comme un véritable « laboratoire du soi » : un espace où l'observation anthropologique, la confession et la réflexion se rencontrent, prolongeant dans un registre différent le projet des *Essais*. L'éducation de Montaigne « à l'ombre du latin », sa fascination pour Ovide et pour la littérature classique sont recontextualisées dans l'économie d'une « mémoire du déplacement », où le voyage devient lui aussi un exercice d'auto-connaissance. Adriana Ieremciuc, dans son étude consacrée à Colette, met en évidence la manière dont l'écriture autobiographique se construit autour de la reconquête de l'enfance et de l'« univers perdu », tandis que Diana Câmpian, dans « Proiecții ale locului istoric în cadrele memoriei afective » [« Projections du lieu historique dans les cadres de la mémoire affective »], mobilise les concepts de Paul Ricoeur, Tzvetan Todorov et Maurice Halbwachs pour montrer comment le « faux journal de voyage » devient un texte sur la mémoire : les lieux visités par A.E. Baconsky sont filtrés par une conscience marquée par les catastrophes du XX^{ème} siècle, et l'écriture oscille entre la fascination esthétisante pour les ruines et une critique assumée, menée avec lucidité. Un autre sous-ensemble du volume est constitué par les études solidement documentées qui analysent la mémoire en relation avec le traumatisme politique : Viviana Milivojević, dans « Evadarea în memorie. Cazul Lena Constante » [« L'évasion dans la mémoire. Le cas de Lena Constante »], s'arrête sur les deux volumes de Lena Constante consacrés aux prisons communistes,

textes qui sont à la fois document et littérature, tandis que Ciprian Handru, dans son analyse du roman *Păturica roz* [*La petite couverture rose*], interroge la représentation de l'abus et de la violence à travers une mémoire fragmentaire qui refuse toute mise en ordre simplificatrice. Enfin, Veronica-Alina Constanțeanu, avec sa réflexion sur Timișoara comme espace de la mémoire textuelle, et Grațiela Benga-Țuțianu, avec « Memoria din scrisori : corespondența lui Sorin Titel » [« La mémoire dans les lettres : la correspondance de Sorin Titel »], ramènent la discussion dans le Banat roumain : L'expérience urbaine qu'offre Timișoara, dans le premier cas, et la correspondance de Titel, dans le deuxième, sont lues comme des archives alternatives de de l'histoire culturelle de cette région.

La dernière partie du volume, « (Sub)texte : memoria lingvistică » [« (Sous)textes : mémoires de la linguistique »], élargit encore plus la réflexion vers la mémoire de la langue. Gabriela Șerban, dans « Iosif Popovici, un remarcabil lingvist bănățean » [« Iosif Popovici, un remarquable linguiste de Banat »], réhabilite la figure d'Iosif Popovici, phonéticien et dialectologue de premier plan, et montre comment ses enquêtes sur les dialectes, la toponymie et l'anthroponymie du Banat peuvent se lire comme une « mémoire scientifique » des contacts linguistiques et identitaires régionaux. Florina-Maria Băcilă, dans « Timpurile verbale – ipostaze ale memoriei literare în poezia lui Traian Dorz » [« Temps verbaux – hypostases de la mémoire littéraire dans la poésie de Traian Dorz »], propose une analyse stylistique et sémantique des textes poétiques : l'alternance entre présent, imparfait et parfait composé y construit une mémoire communautaire projetée dans un temps liturgique, qui fixe les expériences clandestines de la foi. Cristiana Bujorean, dans « Ghesmi – un tetrakis legomenon în textele biblice românești » [« Ghesmi – un tetrakis legomenon dans les textes bibliques roumains »], suit l'histoire d'un terme rare, « ghesmi », à travers les manuscrits bibliques, montrant comment son évolution lexicale ouvre sur l'histoire des traductions et des controverses exégétiques. Enfin, Emina Căpălășan, dans « Memoria lingvistică a consumatorului de azi : de la DOOM2 la DOOM3 » [« La Mémoire linguistique du consommateur d'aujourd'hui : du DOOM2 au DOOM3 »], s'intéresse à ce qu'elle appelle la « mémoire linguistique » du locuteur contemporain : la manière dont celui-ci intériorise (ou non) les changements de norme, à une époque dominée par des plateformes numériques comme dextonline ou doom.lingv.ro.

En dépit de la diversité des approches, le volume coordonné par Grațiela Benga-Țuțianu présente une cohérence manifeste, soigneusement assurée par la manière dont les démonstrations se répondent et se complètent, parfois à leur insu. De Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, Aleida et Jan Assmann, Astrid Erll ou Paul Ricoeur jusqu'aux critiques roumains contemporains tels que Corin Braga, Alex Goldiș, Claudiu Turcuș, Andreea Mironescu et Doris Mironescu, on peut suivre l'inscription des auteurs dans les débats internationaux sur la mémoire. S'il fallait signaler une difficulté pour le lecteur, elle tiendrait justement à l'abondance de la matière savante : le volume requiert un lecteur patient, prêt à passer des débats sur la politique de la mémoire en Pologne à l'analyse d'un *tetrakis legomenon* biblique ou aux normes du DOOM3. Cette diversité maîtrisée fait toutefois partie du message implicite du volume : la mémoire « dans les mots » fonctionne simultanément comme une mémoire « dans » le roman, « dans » le journal, « dans » l'archive personnelle et « dans » le dictionnaire et l'usage quotidien de la langue.

Memoria din cuvinte: reprezentări și moduri de tratare n'est pas un simple recueil d'« actes de conférence », mais beaucoup plus : le document d'une communauté académique en plein travail de redéfinition de ses propres outils. En associant littérature, histoire, anthropologie culturelle et linguistique, en accordant la même attention aux archives privées (journaux, lettres, bibliothèques personnelles), aux récits du traumatisme (Holocauste, communisme, maladie incurable) et à la mémoire de la langue, ce volume offre un tableau ample de la manière dans laquelle la mémoire est pensée et étudiée aujourd'hui dans l'espace roumain.

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