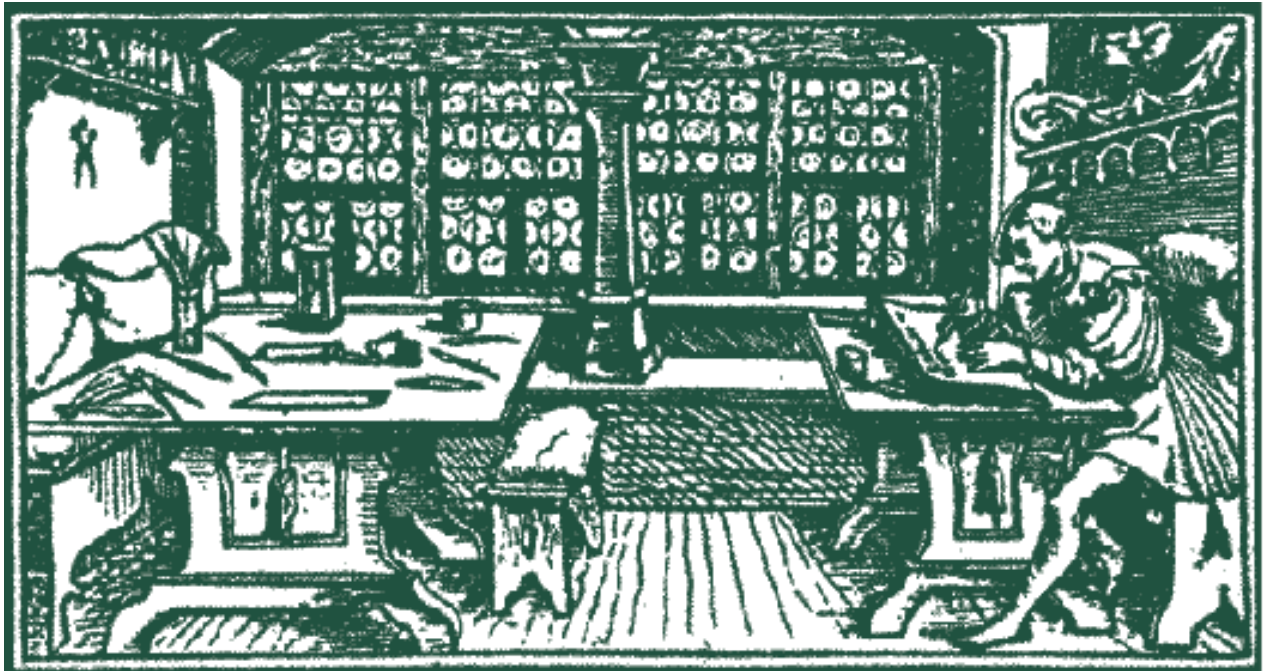




STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS  
BABEȘ-BOLYAI



# PHILOLOGIA

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# STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS BABEȘ-BOLYAI

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## Foreword

During the first semester of the academic year 2015-2016, the Faculty of Letters “ of the Babeş-Bolyai” University organized, together with the “O. Goga” District Library, Cluj, a series of events commemorating twenty five years from the demise of Ioana Em. Petrescu, a professor with Cluj University and one of the foremost Romanian literary critics of recent times. The events comprised displays of books and archive documents (the Ioana and Liviu Petrescu archives have been in the care of the “O. Goga” District Library for over ten years), conferences, book launches (a posthumous edition of Ioana Em. Petrescu’s writings has started being published since 2005 by Editura Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca), etc. The events climaxed with a national colloquium organized by the Faculty of Letters in December 2015, under the title “The Portrait of the Literary Theorist under Communism”. The wide participation the colloquium attracted prompted the organizers to publish two collections of the papers submitted. The former, a volume dedicated to the memory of Ioana Em. Petrescu, was published (in Romanian) by Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, as part of a series dedicated to the great personalities of the Alma Mater Napocensis.

This is the latter collection. The studies it contains are not only addressing the topic of Ioana Em. Petrescu’s work, but also focusing on two further issues. They follow the developments of Romanian literary theory, and of literature in general, in the times of communist dictatorship and, respectively, review the methods for converting this recent literary past into a complex “place of memory”, simultaneously corporeal and incorporeal, meant to preserve the documents and ideas of a bygone historical age. We were fortunate enough to enlist the participation of reputed specialists. Furthermore, the colloquium topics elicited an enthusiastic response from young researchers and PhD students. Consequently, we have also chosen to publish a selection of their own contributions.

The December 2015 colloquium had challenged the participants to reflect – starting from Ioana Em. Petrescu’s (exemplary) case – on the possible approaches to proposing an ethos of the literary theorist in Romanian post-war culture.

As apparent from the journal’s first section, Ioana Em. Petrescu’s work convincingly substantiates the conceptual construction and scientific innovation carried out in spite of, and more often than not, in opposition to, the impositions of the communist power. From the “paradigms of poetic comprehension” (studied in relation to major Romanian poets of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries) to



the “ethics of critical discourse”, the contributors dwelt upon aspects of the commemorated author’s writings that demonstrate the capacity of spiritual values to emerge in adverse historical contexts.

Specialized bibliography frequently states that in the Romanian culture of the communist period, literary theory was the easy way out, an escape from the propaganda and conditionings inherent in the literary milieu of the time. Be that as it may, it was mostly the theorists that went into exile, from Sorin Alexandrescu to Virgil Nemoianu, Matei Călinescu or Thomas Pavel... The communications presented developed and detailed a whole interrogative range of such related problems lurking in the history of ideas. What, exactly, were the possibilities and limitations of such a career throughout the four decades of communism? How could one take a public stance in regard to a general reflection of literature? How could political allegiances, withdrawals, alliances and conflicts be balanced from the fragile positions of literary theory? And, finally, how could anyone be a theorist in a society subject to a constant “state of exception”? In this context, we were interested in the continuities and discontinuities in relation to the canon of the history of Romanian literary ideas, as well as in the points of compatibility with the (east) European horizon of literary theory. Though Ioana Em. Petrescu’s work can function as a pretext and a privileged example shifting the general discussions to the concreteness of recent history, it is by no means the only example that can be brought into discussion – a great deal of the studies gathered in the section “The Literary Theorist during the Communist Period” give ample proof to this effect. The diversity of examples in the collected studies come to consolidate and elaborate upon a debate which is, in our opinion, necessary.

Furthermore, particular emphasis in the colloquium debates was laid on opening to the public the private archives of Romanian cultural personalities which have, in past decades, become part of the national heritage. Their value for literary history and the history of ideas, the methods for their storage and research were the topic of special sections of the colloquium. Part of these contributions have been collected in the third section – “Places of memory” – of the current issue.

On behalf of the colloquium organizers, we take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all participants, as well as to those who made possible the series of commemorative events dedicated to Ioana Em. Petrescu at the Faculty of Letters.

Ioana BOT, Corina CROITORU

Cluj-Napoca, April, 8, 2016

## IOANA EM. PETRESCU – PARADIGMES DE LA COMPREHENSION POETIQUE

### LĂCRĂMIOARA PETRESCU<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *Ioana Em. Petrescu – Paradigms of understanding poetry.* The process of signifying poetically is the focus of Ioana Em. Petrescu's writings. The author's critical thought is concerned with the phenomenon of the comprehension of poetry, and its manner of being at once immanent and open to the action of the factors that shape philosophical constructs; it defines, in turn, models of reading poetry. We acknowledge their value as cosmos-like structures, sharing the particularity of being complete theories, perfectly articulated and wholly demonstrated, of unbeatable logical all-roundness. Poetic creation, in the author's perspective, is the outward reflection of a « script » of imagery formed inside abyssal imagination, of a « cosmological vision », it is funded on a transforming relationship to a model, on a poetic « mutation ».

**Key-words:** *poetic vision, cosmological vision, poetic mutation*

**REZUMAT.** *Ioana Em. Petrescu - paradigme ale înțelegerii poeziei.* Procesul semnificării poetice este obiectul predilect al scrierilor Ioanei Em. Petrescu. Implicată în înțelegerea poeziei, deopotrivă imanentă și deschisă acțiunii factorilor modelatori ai unui construct filosofic, gândirea critică a autoarei definește, la rândul ei, modele ale lecturii poeziei. Le recunoaștem valoarea de « cosmoid », prin particularitatea de a fi teorii încheiate, perfect articulate în întregul demonstrației, de o rotunjime logică imbatabilă. Creația poetică este, în perspectiva Ioanei Em. Petrescu, reflectarea unui « scenariu » imaginal și abisal imaginativ, a unei « viziuni cosmologice », a unei relații transformatoare a modelului, ca « mutație » poetică.

**Cuvinte-cheie :** *viziune poetică, viziune cosmologică, mutație poetică*

Avec la métaphore barbienne de la longue-vue, la vision poétique se voit décrite comme une saisie cognitive et/ou révélatrice du monde, sous la forme non naturelle, « secondaire », d'un regard artificiel, qui part du monde « de glace » de la

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<sup>1</sup> Universitățile « Alexandru Ioan Cuza » de Iași. Profesoare, specialiste en littérature roumaine. Docteur ès Lettres, avec une thèse sur la *Poétique du personnage de roman chez Camil Petrescu*, (éd. Junimea, Iași, 2000). Elle enseigne l'histoire de la littérature roumaine, la poétique et l'herméneutique littéraire. Publications : *Naturi lirice*, éd. de l'Université Alexandru Ioan Cuza, Iași, 2004, *Scena romanului*, éd. Junimea, Iași, 2005, *Praful minunii sau despre revelație: V. Voiculescu*, éd. Junimea, Iași, 2006. E-mail : lacramioara.petrescu@gmail.com

pensée, et avance vers le pôle éthéré de la révélation et de l'essentialisation, à travers la transfiguration du réel, regardé *in aenigmate*, miroir de la Poésie. Ioana Em. Petrescu considère, en effet, que l'œuvre de Ion Barbu présente une « frappante unité »<sup>2</sup>, au-delà des catégories selon lesquelles elle a été classée et divisée, pour des raisons de stylistique facile, de surface de l'expression, par ses contemporains. L'unité est conférée par une forme originaire, et non pas gagnée au cours de l'expérimentation avec le mode ou le langage poétique ; elle est due, selon Petrescu, à une « intuition unique, qu'il réalise en l'approximant en différentes formes poétiques successivement modifiées, toutes subsumées, toutefois, dans une poétique du nonfiguratif, bien proche des formulations théoriques de Brâncuși. »<sup>3</sup> Comme l'indique la première note du chapitre en question (*Longue-vue*), Ioana Em. Petrescu maintient sa propre intuition critique, et continue l'argumentation développée dans des articles antérieurs (*Le déni du labyrinthe*, dans la revue « Steaua », 1981, no. 8, *Modernism as Radical Traditionalism* dans *Ion Barbu's and Constantin Brancusi's Artistic Views*, in *Rumanian Studies*, volume V, Leiden, 1986). La comparaison, l'homologie traversant la différence entre les modes, les langages spécifiques de l'art plastique nonfiguratif de Constantin Brâncuși et la poésie transindividuelle dans la catégorie de laquelle se situe la création de Ion Barbu, proviennent de l'axe idéatique d'une rencontre médiatrice: comme d'autres études l'ont montré, il s'agit de la conscience qui aspire vers le modèle hiératique de la forme brancusienne, selon la vision de Lucian Blaga. Au sein du discours explicite de Blaga, du paratexte poétique qui affirme la ligne d'horizon esthétique qui gouverne une vision de l'essentialisation transdiscursive, imagée, de la simplicité obtenue à travers la réduction à l'essentiel des formes, s'expriment des points par où convergent ces trois consciences d'un art « dévêtu du corps ». Étant question de « mutations » poétiques, celle réalisée par Ion Barbu présente une cohérence constante, étant l'expression d'une « configuration » en profondeur dans laquelle se reflètent, sans dévoiement, une philosophie poétique et une modalité créative reconnaissables dans toutes les articulations de l'œuvre. L'auteur cerne, dans les assertions de Ion Barbu, cinq « propositions théoriques fondamentales », que l'on peut retrouver dans les actes explicites et implicites de la poétique de Barbu. En les hiérarchisant, en traçant elle-même la « carte » conceptuelle de ces directions de la pensée de Barbu, Ioana Em. Petrescu propose, en réalité, les éléments d'un modèle poétique *complet*, au travers des différentes figurations, que le poète aurait disséminées, dans l'esprit, mais non dans la forme cohérente d'une vision totalisante de son propre mode poétique, et cela par quelques déclarations essentielles, bien connues.

Les cinq axiomes sur la poétique de Barbu, autour desquelles se concentre l'attention compréhensive de Ioana Em. Petrescu, et son herméneutique ouvrent

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<sup>2</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Eminescu și mutațiile poeziei românești*, éd. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1989, p.123. Les traductions en français nous appartiennent.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p.123.

des trajets herméneutiques. Que leur abondance citationnelle ne nous trompe pas. Postulats de la poétique de Barbu et thèmes de l'organisation de l'acte herméneutique, ils sont les coordonnées d'une pensée critique « participative », celle que montre Ioana Em. Petrescu sur la scène ouverte de l'interprétation substantielle de la poésie de Barbu :

1. La poésie, vue par Barbu comme « une certaine symbolique pour la représentation de formes possibles d'existence » exprime, par analogie avec la géométrie, un « modèle du monde ». En se détachant de l'aspect empirique, référentiel, la perspective de l'abstraction implique, par opposition, le rapport entre la poésie « comme modèle du monde » et la poésie « mimétique ». Ce rapport essentiel dérive de l'homologie avec l'opposition fondamentale formulée par Barbu, entre la géométrie et la physique : « L'opposition géométrie vs. physique signifie pour Barbu l'opposition entre la construction intellectuelle et les contraintes du fait empirique. »<sup>4</sup>
2. La création de Barbu postule la modalité transpersonnelle, archétypale, de la figuration poétique, et le « lyrisme absolu » ainsi défini s'oppose aux manifestations de la poésie de l'aveu subjectif, du pittoresque psychologique, qui exprime des affects/des effets de « confessionnal et d'atmosphère ». Ni l'individuel, ni le typique, présents tous deux dans les visions anthropomorphiques de l'objet, ne figurent dans la projection poétique de Barbu. Cette caractéristique est donnée par une vision qui outrepassa « la concurrence, encore darwinienne, des formes individuelles » (Barbu). Par conséquent, une nouvelle ontologie s'oppose à celle romantique et postromantique : « le héros de l'univers barbien n'est pas l'individu, ce n'est même pas l'homme, mais l'Être. »<sup>5</sup> L'objet de la poésie se trouve, donc, dans l'horizon transindividuel de « l'instruction sur les choses essentielles », selon l'expression que le poète emploie dans sa conférence sur Jean Moréas.
3. Correspondant à l'objet défini en tant qu'il est transindividuel, le langage même dépasse le niveau (individuel) notionnel du mot, en élevant l'unité minimale au niveau du vers (« groupe cristallographique »), comme homogénéité sonore et/ou phonétique, c'est-à-dire, écrit Ioana Em. Petrescu, « à travers le sacrifice du sémantisme individuel ». Pour Ioana Em. Petrescu, mettre en doute la « valeur d'unité sémantique du mot » mène, implicitement, à une poétique du non-figuratif<sup>6</sup>, manière d'argumenter brillamment, moyennant une spéculation d'une grande

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 124.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p.124.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 125.

intelligence, le choix esthétique inscrit dans la « taille » opérée par Brâncuși, dans la forme magistrale qui exprime l'essence du monde, selon une métaphore filée (intrinsèquement, chez Blaga, dans l'éloge d'une « géométrie haute et sainte »).

4. Après avoir « délimité le domaine », comme dans la « leçon » de Barbu sur le processus d'abstraction, l'auteur choisit le terme essentiel, considéré sans aucun doute comme la clé du système, à savoir le nom que Barbu donne à cette « poétique transindividuelle », « nonanthropomorphique et nonfigurative »: *infraréalisme*. L'on observe aussi les étapes de la vision qui se déploie dans les postulats précédents des trois premières propositions esthétiques. « L'infraréalisme est, pour Barbu, une méthode poétique comparable aux méthodes scientifiques », selon la critique. La conférence du poète sur Rimbaud donne l'occasion de la naissance du concept d'*infraréalité*, fécond sur le plan herméneutique. En suivant cette terminologie, Ioana Em. Petrescu développe dans une forme « pleine » la théorie barbienne des « points critiques » de « l'incrédé cosmique: c'est-à-dire les existences embryonnaires, les germes, les paysages nubiles, les limbes... ». En s'approchant ainsi de la clef de voûte de sa propre démonstration à propos de l'architecture thématique-symbolique de la poésie de Barbu, Ioana Em. Petrescu expose les prédicats d'une argumentation à grande force, dans laquelle se retrouve une prédilection pour des comparaisons avec les théories scientifiques. Chez Barbu, les « points de crise », les seuils qui séparent les modes de l'existence ou l'incrédé et le créé ressemblent aux « points singuliers », définis par Maxwell. À partir de ce point, l'exégèse de Petrescu mène, avec beaucoup de potentiel révélateur, à l'image de certains scénarios/drames cosmiques, dont les « points d'inflexion » se manifestent comme des moments de rupture, de jaillissement, de métamorphose. L'esprit de la vision barbienne est marqué par ces jonctions en tension et par une universelle dynamique de la transfiguration, de la *métamorphose*. Selon une logique infaillible, Ioana Em. Petrescu propose et décrit *in nuce* le schéma universel du drame consommé dans le scénario poétique, quel que soit l'âge/le moment de sa poésie: « l'infraréalité que la nouvelle poésie institue rappelle, par ses 'points critiques', les 'points singuliers', définis, en science, par Maxwell comme des moments dans lesquels des additions impondérables modifient la nature d'un phénomène. Les 'points critiques' de l'infraréalisme de Barbu, tout comme les 'points singuliers' définis en science par Maxwell, nomment les *seuils* de passage entre des états existentiels différents (incrédé-crédation; vie-mort, mort-résurrection), ce sont donc des moments de dynamique intérieure dans la biographie de l'Être, les moments où l'individuel se

dissout pour que l'existence éternelle se réalise elle-même à travers sa forme passagère, constamment sacrifiée.»<sup>7</sup>

L'on entend surtout, dans cette solution herméneutique, l'écho palpable d'une des premières visions de l'Être chez Barbu et l'idée du sacrifice de l'« unité » (l'individuel): « Fragile, mon unité est périssable, mais/ Un essaim d'existences jaillissent de ma mort » (*Élan*). À leur tour, illustrant des antinomies fondamentales, les doublets existentiels qui incluent dans la tension de leur opposition le *seuil*, le *liminaire* tranchant recréent la série barbienne des symboles profondément « réfléchis » d'une poésie qui doit « instruire des/selon les choses essentielles » : la naissance, la mort, la résurrection, la succession vie-mort. Le caractère initiatique de ces moments-clé, de rupture et de métamorphose, de sacrifice total et de renaissance devient l'axe thématique du scénario herméneutique: « c'est pourquoi le monde de Barbu est un espace des métamorphoses, dans lequel les manifestations transitoires de l'Être vivent, douloureusement ou extatiquement, leur trans-figuration. Elles 'fondent' (*Dans la brume, Dionysiaque, Le dernier centaure, Selim*), 'se noient' (*Fin, L'arbre noyé, Le noyé*), 'vacillent' en célébrant la danse de la mort (*Le paon*), 'se dissipent' (*Quand le déclin viendra*), renaissent (*La dryade*), naissent pour la mort (*Aux escargots*), ou fusionnent dans un rituel nuptial assimilé à un rite funèbre dans l'emblème éleusine des 'noces souterraines'. Mais le sacrifice de l'individuel pour la réalisation de soi de l'Être compose le scénario des rites initiatiques – et la poésie de Barbu aspire, de façon programmatique, à un statut initiatique: elle se veut une 'attitude de rêve et d'extase', instruisant sur les choses essentielles ».

5. En considérant la « paraphrase » de *La veillée de Roderick Usher* comme une « méditation cryptée sur l'espace et sur la nature de la poésie » (« libre de la figure humaine, comme une porte espérée »), dans laquelle « le héros pénètre la nature de l'objet de sa méditation sur la voie d'un savoir 'non divisé' (Roderick Usher... connaissait indivisiblement l'être longuement hélé de la Poésie) », Ioana Em. Petrescu ouvre le thème de la connaissance poétique; la superposition du sujet et de l'objet refait une unité indestructible de la situation première, d'une unité originaire « non divisée », la connaissance participative, désignée dans le texte barbien par encore un autre syntagme: « 'La connaissance était ici habitation', c'est-à-dire incorporation, installation du sujet dans l'espace intérieur de l'objet connu ».<sup>8</sup> « Comme dans les rites initiatiques des mystères antiques, la poésie est connaissance par fusion, par participation et non

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 126.

pas par séparation, non pas par une distanciation du regard comme celle qui fait débiter le trajet gnoséologique de type rationnel. La création – et la réception – de la poésie est donc une installation organique dans son espace ('en soi-même centré, assis, en pierre'), et non pas une approche rationnelle. »<sup>9</sup>

Voici ainsi posés les accents fondamentaux pour ce qui va être, dans l'interprétation de la critique, « la poétique de l'infraréalisme », la crise de l'individu, définitoire pour l'univers poétique barbien. La relation qui s'établit entre les deux livres<sup>10</sup> qui se penchent sur la poésie de Barbu définit, à son tour, une conviction, une fois que l'on a atteint l'ossature ferme de cette construction herméneutique exceptionnelle : la « mutation poétique » est absolue, Barbu est un poète « sans précurseurs ». Les théorèmes de l'interprétation, posés dans *Eminescu et les mutations de la poésie roumaine*, se retrouvent fortifiés dans la spirale d'une revisite ample, où la clé de voûte du système demeure l'infraréalisme.

« Selon ma perspective – écrit dans son *Journal* Ioana Em. Petrescu le 20 septembre 1980 – celle de l'effort qui a échoué – la meilleure chose de tout ce que j'ai écrit est *Ion Barbu* (mais là encore, la rhétorique y est très mauvaise, tout est comme une quenouille très très serrée d'idées, tout doit être repris). (...) Je ne me fais pas d'illusions à propos de ce livre, mais je veux qu'il paraisse (moi, je l'aurais écrit, selon mon système de procrastinations, en premier; Liviu s'y est opposé et il m'a demandé d'écrire *Eminescu* (...). *Configurations* est un doux repos. Je voudrais maintenant I. Barbu et ensuite N. Stănescu »<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 126.

<sup>10</sup> À part le livre que nous avons déjà cité, *Eminescu și mutațiile poeziei românești*, Ioana Em. Petrescu, s'est penchée sur la poétique de Barbu dans une monographie: *Ion Barbu și poetica postmodernismului*, éd. Cartea Românească, București, 1993.

<sup>11</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Jurnal. 1959-1990*, éd. par Rozalia Borcilă et Elena Neagoe, préface de Elena Neagoe, postface de Carmen Mușat, éd. Paralela 45, 2004, pp. 258-259.

## THE EMINESCIAN MYTH AND NATIONAL MYTHOLOGY IN THE LITERARY CRITICISM OF THE '70S. THE MODEL SET BY IOANA EM. PETRESCU

FLORINA ILIS<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *The Eminescian Myth and National Mythology in the Literary Criticism of the '70s. The Ioana Em. Petrescu Model.* The present study explores the issue of national mythology in Mihai Eminescu's theatre, as it appears reflected in Romanian literary conscience across the '70s. Taking advantage of the ideological *openness* which encouraged the research of national mythological and historical themes, Mihai Eminescu's theatre reenters the attention of literary critics, which, alongside the editing of his theatre, will exploit this new vein of the Eminescian creative universe. In her book, *Eminescu. Cosmological Models and Poetic Vision* (1978), Ioana Em. Petrescu manages to escape the limiting equation of official, mythologising ideology, without eluding the theme. She will reconstitute the Eminescian dramatic mechanism and integrate theatre creation in the conceptual structure of cosmological models.

**Key words:** *Eminescian myth, national mythology, national theatre, Ioana Em. Petrescu.*

**REZUMAT.** *Mitul eminescian și mitologia națională în critica literară din anii '70. Modelul Ioana Em. Petrescu.* Studiul de față explorează problema mitologiei naționale în dramaturgia lui Mihai Eminescu, așa cum apare ea reflectată în conștiința literară românească pe parcursul anilor '70. Profitând de *deschiderea* ideologică care încuraja cercetarea temelor de mitologie și istorie națională, dramaturgia lui Mihai Eminescu reintră în atenția eminescologiei care, concomitent cu editarea dramaturgiei, va exploata și acest nou filon al universului de creație eminescian. Ioana Em. Petrescu, fără să eludeze tema, izbutește în volumul *Eminescu. Modele cosmologice și viziune poetică* (1978) să iasă din ecuația limitativă a ideologiei oficiale, mitologizante și, reconstituind mecanismul dramatic eminescian, va integra în structura conceptuală a modelelor cosmologice și creația dramaturgică.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *mitul eminescian, mitologia națională, dramaturgia națională, Ioana Em. Petrescu.*

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As the editing of Eminescu's works advanced, the literary critics of the '70s resumed dealing with the old issue of the periodisation of his creative stages (according to aesthetic, and not necessarily chronological, principles). It endeavored to also integrate in the Eminescian creative universe those texts that were less known, many of which were still in manuscript form, to be precise, his drama. The new ideological context, shaped around the idea of communist-type nationalism, was favorable to such research, as the obsessive interest the poet took in national mythology and history drew the attention of literary historians and critics, permitting new approaches in the study of Eminescu's works. Ioana Em. Petrescu's book, *Eminescu. Cosmological Models and Poetic Vision*, published in 1978, brought a remarkable contribution both in regards to the periodisation of creative stages, and in what concerns the perspective of unitary analysis of his work, with the help of the conceptual schematics of cosmological models. If the theoretical debates concerning the periodisation of creative stages were situated either on the realm of literary history or research of the poet's intellectual biography, without, however, exceeding the area of literature, when it came to the issue of national mythology, the complexity and nature of this matter certainly surpassed a strictly literary framework, as it became a point of interest to both the ideological and the philosophical.

Thus, after reviewing the main titles published in the '70s, I will attempt to situate Eminescian drama within the historical horizon of these works, concentrating mainly on the new poetic vision suggested by Ioana Em. Petrescu.

Undoubtedly, the posterity of no Romanian poet has had an evolution that would give it such a strong connection with the political, as it happened with Eminescian posterity. Eminescu owes this attention especially to his activity in journalism, which propelled him, ever since he was alive, in the middle of the fiercest political debates. As a result, taking into consideration his political commitment, a commitment which turned him more than a few times into the strongest and most well-informed voice of the conservatives, although his thinking widely overcame their ideological programme, interbellic literary history and criticism preferred to separate his literary activity proper from his journalistic activity in order not to do a disservice to his literary works. A similar separation, but owed to a strictly formal criterion, happened with respect to works published during his lifetime and to posthumous works, a separation which has also generated lively disputes ever since the moment the poet died, when the public voice, rhetorically admonishing Titu Maiorescu, demanded the recovery of Eminescu's fund of manuscripts.

Therefore, these hesitations in what Eminescu's works are concerned led to a strange situation after 1945, which is that Eminescu's political ideas, some of them camouflaged in genuine literary metaphors, penetrated literary

consciousness indirectly, either through his posthumous works or, especially, through Eminescian theatre.

The speeding up of facsimilisation of the manuscripts<sup>2</sup>, solicited by Noica sparked genuine impatience among critics to sink into the Eminescian creative laboratory as quickly as possible; but also, implicitly, it sparked increased attention on the part of ideologists, in connection with the yet unedited works of the poet.

In his 1972 *Eminescu*, Eugen Todoran devoted a chapter each to the mythology and history of the people, as recurrent themes in Eminescian creation. This is not altogether unimportant, even if, at the time, Eugen Todoran argued Eminescu's interest in Romanian myth through strong Romantic lineages, from which the great European Romantic literature was not at all foreign, the same as Romanian Pasoptist poetry. Historically speaking, the publishing of Eugen Todoran's text comes at an opportune moment, since two factors were happily conjoined at the beginning of the '70s: one of a political nature – communist ideology with increasingly nationalistic accents encouraged, with some exceptions, the elaboration of studies that would research the historical past with the purpose of glorifying the people's heroes and another, literary one – the project of editing manuscripts and recuperating Eminescu's full posthumous works through critical editions was no longer an utopia, but a well devised plan. The project continued even after the disappearance of Perpessicius in 1971.

With a concise analysis of the critical texts devoted to Eminescu's works it can be noticed that the '70s represented a period of upsurge and of renewed interest, from several directions of study. As such, in 1972, Eugen Todoran's *Eminescu* is published, which assembles favourable reviews almost unanimously. Also worth mentioning are two studies by Zoe Dumitrescu Buşulega, one from 1973<sup>3</sup> and another from 1976<sup>4</sup>. These studies, without having a previously defined conceptual unity, place Eminescu's work within the horizon of comparative studies (especially with German Romanticism). From the perspective of literary poetics, follows the applied study of Ştefan Cazimir<sup>5</sup> then, Ioana Em. Petrescu in 1978 with *Eminescu. Cosmological Models and Poetic Vision*, and, in 1979, Elena Taciuc with *The Poetry of Elements*<sup>6</sup>. In the field of study regarding Eminescu's language, G.I. Tohăneanu's work is to be noted, on the

<sup>2</sup> Constantin Noica, *Eminescu sau gânduri despre omul deplin al culturii româneşti*, Bucureşti, Editura Eminescu, 1975, p.23.

<sup>3</sup> Zoe Dumitrescu-Buşulega, *Valori şi echivalenţe umanistice. Excurs critic şi comparativ*, Bucureşti, Editura Eminescu, 1973.

<sup>4</sup> Idem, *Eminescu – cultură şi creaţie*, Bucureşti, Editura Eminescu, 1976.

<sup>5</sup> Ştefan Cazimir, *Stelele cardinale. Eseu despre Eminescu*, Bucureşti, Editura Eminescu, 1975.

<sup>6</sup> Elena Taciuc, *Eminescu. Poezia elementelor. Eseu asupra imaginaţiei materiale în postumele de tinereţe*, Bucureşti, Cartea românească, 1979.

*Eminescian artistic expression*<sup>7</sup>, which appeared in 1975. It is also a decade of reprints of some older works or studies on Eminescu, owed to the Eminescologists of the old guard (G. Ibrăileanu, M. Dragomirescu, George Călinescu, etc.), but also of translations of foreign exegeses owed to researchers such as Allain Guillerrou<sup>8</sup> or Amita Bose on Eminescu's relationship with India<sup>9</sup>. The great majority of these texts (reprints and translations) will appear in the collection *Eminesciana*, belonging to the Junimea Publishing House in Iași (a collection that had gathered in the '70s nearly 19 titles). Of great importance, not only as an exercise for the image of the communist regime in Bucharest, but also as a value in itself, was the Stuttgart colloquy (1975), organised to commemorate 125 years since the birth of the poet, which was intensely publicised in Romania as well. Two years later, in 1977, the volume<sup>10</sup> devoted to this conference was published as well. Undoubtedly, however, there was a strong impact on both researchers and the public at large with Constantin Noica's 1975 text, *Eminescu, Or Thoughts on the Complete Man of Romanian Culture*, as well as his next work, *The Romanian Emotion of Being*, which appeared in 1978 and that emphasised the idea – favoured also by the regime – that not only is a great poet expressing himself through Eminescu, but the very being of our people.

Yet, probably one of the most interesting reference points of the '70s is represented by the publishing in 1978 of the volume *Theatre*, edited with the care of Aurelia Rusu, in a very accessible critical edition. This made the interest for Eminescian creation enlarge its horizons towards Eminescu's drama as well. George Munteanu does not hesitate to give a significant title to the ample introductory study of the volume, thus definitely fixing the image of an Eminescu who was a *theatre man and a playwright*<sup>11</sup>. He closes with the conclusion (taken from N. Iorga) that nothing that Eminescu wrote, not even one line, "must remain unpublished". About Eminescu's attempts at theatre, one would speak with reservation, quite rightfully, since the few works published until 1945 (the first one owed to A.C. Cuza, in 1914 – incomplete) had not had a very strong impact on criticism. In the volume *The Works of M. Eminescu*, G. Călinescu is among the

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<sup>7</sup> G.I. Tohăneanu, *Expresia artistică eminesciană*, Timișoara, Editura Facla, 1975.

<sup>8</sup> Alain Guillerrou, *Geneza interioară a poeziilor lui M. Eminescu*, Iași, Editura Junimea, 1977.

<sup>9</sup> Amita Bose, *Eminescu și India*, Iași, Editura Junimea, 1978.

<sup>10</sup> *Wechselwirkungen in der deutschen und rumänischen Geisteswelt am Beispiel Mihai Eminescu*: aus Anlass d. 125 Geburtsages d. rumän. Dichters e Colloquium veranst. vom Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart, u.d. Dt. – Rumän. Studienvereinigung, Freiburg, am 17 u. 18 November 1975 in Stuttgart. Red. Ernst y. Tetsch u. Paul Miron. Stuttgart, Inst. für Auslandsbeziehungen, 1977.

<sup>11</sup> George Munteanu, *Eminescu – Omul de teatru și dramaturgul*, in M. Eminescu, *Opere*, IV. Teatru, Ediție critică, note și variante de Aurelia Rusu, București, Editura Minerva, 1978, p. XCII.

first to speak about Eminescu's projects of historical drama<sup>12</sup>, about the *Dramatical Dodecameron*, about the borrowing from the Eminescian creation laboratory of dramatic fragments that would later become, after intense polishing, stand-alone poems. However, it was only when the drama of Eminescu was published (comprising historical plays, dramatic dialogues, prose theatre, but also verse comedy or prose comedy) and when a strict chronology and lineage of these unfinished works was drawn up that the researchers were helped to sense the complexity of the theatrical projects (as Eminescu had conceived them) and to glimpse, out of his few finished works, the greatness of his vision.

Eugen Munteanu also approached this matter in his comprehensive volume on Eminescu. Analysis of the poem *The Panorama of Futilities* will lead the reputed literary critic to the idea that Eminescu will project the history of the Romanian people in "the poetic fiction of the Romanian myth"<sup>13</sup>, believing that the poet's propensity for mythology is due to both Romantic vision and poetics, as well as, in the spirit of the century, the need to answer (abreast with the bourgeois revolutions) the imperatives of constitution of national states and the awakening of the "national spirit"<sup>14</sup>. Thus, E. Todoran proves, starting primarily with Hegel, that the ascension and downfall in *The Panorama of Futilities* is submitted to both a dialectic system of functioning as well as to an eternal law of history, represented by the "idea of eternal growth in an endless becoming"<sup>15</sup>. Loyal to dialectic primacy, in the line enunciated by the Romantic conception on mythology (in Schelling's sense), the critic also utilises the methods of the same type of interpretation with regards to some Eminescian dramatic fragments (with Romanian myth as theme), proving the idea according to which, by confronting myth with history, for Eminescu, mythology becomes *artistic fiction* for expressing a sentiment of history. The only dissonant note in Eugen Todoran's analysis is hit by certain expressions tributary to a language of the age that was not yet completely purged of the need to offer itself legitimacy through the obligation of making some obeisances to censorship (which was officially dissolved in 1977): "the historical conditions of the feudal system" or "the drama of Moldavian history is the drama of the feudal system" as well as another striking example, affirmation of the idea that the usurpation of the throne of Sarmis (Eminescu's hero), although the result of a tragic conflict, "is based on political realities,

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<sup>12</sup> The first edition of *The Works of M. Eminescu* by G. Călinescu appeared between 1934-1936, at the Royal Foundations Publishing House (Bucharest), while a second edition was edited only in 1970, at the Publishing House For Literature, in the collection "Romanian Writers".

<sup>13</sup> Eugen Todoran, *Eminescu*, București, Editura Minerva, 1972, p. 181.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 182.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 217.

specific to the feudal system"<sup>16</sup>. This recourse to the reminiscences of a language still in effect during the age (maybe imposed by the censors) is happily not predominant in the case of Todoran, since the critic manages, despite these dissonances, to bring the idea he wished to prove to a conclusion, namely that Eminescu's interest in myth and history is owed, first and foremost, to the Romantic program which, within the representation of the dialectic evolution of the world, searched for "the beginnings of the history of his people in mythology, and when he descended to the temporal reality of its course, he did it through theatre"<sup>17</sup>. As a result, I believe that mythology was to Eminescu the means, rather than the ends proper, for expressing the sentiment of history.

As a follow-up to this idea, one may raise the issue of what history meant to Eminescu. The most convincing answer to this question was given in the '70s by Ioana Em. Petrescu in the book *Eminescu. Cosmological Models and Poetic Vision*. The critic from Cluj did not limit herself to a surface answer, as any lecturer could have done, starting, for example, with the poem *Epigones*, about which school textbooks said that it represents a poem on the *Romantic antithesis between the glorious past and the debased present*. Going directly to the base and the root of the problem, Ioana Em. Petrescu understood that the issue of History (as well as Myth) for Eminescu cannot be analysed outside the philosophical elucidation of the problem of Time. Thus, it is not accidental that the volume *Eminescu. Cosmological Models and Poetic Vision* debuts with the analysis of defining the stages of Eminescian creation in direct relation to the succession of cosmological models. With great finesse, Ioana Em. Petrescu elaborated, in merely one movement, not only an extremely precise periodisation of the Eminescian creative universe, but, in relation to this evolution, also the role (the character) of dominant cosmological models. These offer value to each stage of creation, both from a historical point of view (it is a model operable in the establishment of lineages and relation between versions – fact that Ioana Em. Petrescu probes with the poem *The Ode*), and from an ideational perspective, through the analysis of themes and motifs which are specific to the model of adoptive ages in the poet's work.

As she herself admits, the periodisation that Ioana Em. Petrescu suggests for Eminescu's works is not rigidly chronological, but aesthetic, and available and operable even for the texts that entered critical consciousness only later: namely, the drama. This periodisation also favours a more attentive ordering in regards to the lineages of some texts or to the migration of themes and motifs from one creative stage to another. Referring to the history of the people, Eminescu will follow in his works (implicitly comprising historical

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 247-248.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 243-244.

drama) three essential moments: the proto historical time of Dacia (mythical Dacia), the organic age of the patriarchal state (Alexander the Good), and the contemporary age (of alienation and estrangement). Thus, to Eminescu, the degraded form that the myth has reached, turning into history, is evidently also a consequence of the degradation of present times. But, especially, as proven by Ioana Em. Petrescu, it represents a method of perception of time, that belonging to a superior consciousness. And it is the perception missed by the common individual, a trait of the superior being, of the man of genius.

Bolintineanu's Pasoptist dream of realising a Dacian mythology was carried on by Eminescu, only the latter perceived that mythology does not have to be the purpose, but the means through which this wish should be fulfilled poetically. If Bolintineanu placed his talent under the service of realising myth, Eminescu submitted the functions of mythology to poetical purposes, processing the myth in favour of poetry. In order to achieve this goal, he did not hesitate in refining to perfection themes or characters that he himself had initially awarded mythical value and mythologising significance. It is the case of the hero Decebalus (from *Memento Mori*, but also from the epic *Decebalus*), whom, as Ioana Em. Petrescu senses as well, prefigures the Caesar's image of the tragic hero<sup>18</sup>. The distance from Decebalus to Caesar is enormous, but, as it will proceed in other situations as well, once the historical (or mythical) character retreats, according to case, his features absorbed to dissolution into the poetic idea that the poet gives life to, his mythical or historical functions disappear in favour of poetic function. An illustrative example for this is represented by the image of the Caesar, whose avatars may be observed, in various shapes, not only in the dramatic fragments. But, suffering a series of successive changes, the image comes to be identified in *Ode in Ancient Meter* with the poet himself. For Ioana Em. Petrescu, the Caesar represents the very emblem of the Eminescian tragic hero<sup>19</sup>, who, alongside Hyperion and the Teacher, completes the trio of the tragic essence of existence, all undoubtedly facets of their creator, Eminescu himself. The suggestion of the image of Eminescu – *tragic poet*, glimpsed in the last chapter of *Cosmological Models*, which is a chapter dedicated to the Ode, will only be refined and supported with new arguments subsequently, in later studies. Intuiting the true source of tragedy, despite the fact that he did not succeed with the theatre projects through which he dreamed to create a national drama after the model of Shakespeare, Eminescu prevailed, in poems such as *The Morning Star* or *Ode in Ancient Meter*, to offer a tragic aspect to poetry and lyricism to tragism. The synthesis between the traditions of the epic, of poetry and tragedy, magisterially

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<sup>18</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Eminescu. Modele cosmologice și viziune poetică*, București, Editura Eminescu, 1978, p. 147.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 206.

realised in *The Evening Star*, represents to Eminescu the formula for a complete work, which, unfortunately, in what the theatre is concerned, he never managed to conclude.

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## LITERATURE AND SCIENCE: SYSTEMIC READING IN THE FIELD OF LITERATURE. IOANA EM. PETRESCU AND THE CONVERGENCE OF SYSTEMS: A HYPOTHESIS

SANDA BERCE<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *Literature and Science: Systemic Reading in the Field of Literature. Ioana Em. Petrescu and the Convergence of systems: A Hypothesis.*

The paper is an inquiry into Ioana Em. Petrescu's creative participation in the construction of a new reading model, consistent with the emergence of another pattern of thinking triggered by the development of contemporary science. Her unfinished project had a reforming impact on the institution and the science of literature and can be viewed as a systemic theory deployed by her belief in the convergence of systems.

**Key words:** *science of literature, reading model, correlation, complementarity, interoperability, field of interaction, mapping.*

**REZUMAT.** *Literatură și știință: o lectură sistemică în câmpul literaturii (Ioana Em. Petrescu și convergența sistemelor: o ipoteză).*

Lucrarea investighează participarea creatoare a Ioanei Em. Petrescu la construcția unui noul model de lectură, în acord cu apariția unui alt model de gândire, generat de dezvoltarea științei contemporane. Proiectul său neterminat, a avut un impact reformator asupra instituției și științei literaturii, putând fi considerat o teorie sistemică, generată de credința ei în realitatea convergenței sistemelor.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *știința literaturii, model de lectură, corelare, complementaritate, interoperabilitate, câmp de interacțiune, cartare.*

When Thomas S. Kuhn's book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, was published, the physicist, historian of science encountered not only hostility but also opposition. Considered controversial, the book was not received well and was met with biting and barren judgments. To the common reader, the author

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seemed to contemplate a type of analysis about science as *a dynamic phenomenon of culture*. This was identified as untrustworthy for an interface of a decade with traumatic war consequences. To the scholar, Kuhn's book was the mirror of the early 1960's, the first decade of economic and financial development after the war. To this category of readers, the book's content was not only unusual but paradoxical with its definition of *change* itself, identified in the notion of "progress" and the "change of paradigm" in science, within the socio-cultural background caught in a paralyzing uncertainty where an American scientist, an emigrant himself, decided to speak about normality and normal progress of science, understood as "development -by- accumulation"<sup>2</sup>. At a larger scale, dynamics of scientific change itself was viewed as a "road into anomalies causing crisis"<sup>3</sup> and fostering change by changing the "rules of the game". Resistance to such a perspective was not an accident, as Kuhn's theory emerged in an unprepared and reorganized research community, not able to face radical suggestions. The question is *what* caused such a response and *why* the Kuhnian theory was so *disturbing*? Discussing ways of "assuming, understanding and changing of paradigm during the game itself"<sup>4</sup> and warning the scientific community over the fact that sciences themselves obey such "modulations", Kuhn's notion of "scientific progress" was disturbing with its train of significance. For "change" and "crisis" were seen to descend from *accumulation through knowledge* and modernization of science was connected to the "shifting" forms that turned theory into practice: "Scientists never learn concepts, laws and theories in the abstract and in themselves", said Kuhn. "A new theory is always announced together with applications to some concrete range of natural phenomena"<sup>5</sup>.

Two decades later, in a society affected by an authoritarian and totalitarian regime, and in an academic background completely isolated and not at all prepared to face radical changes, in the early 1980's, after a visit as a Fulbright scholar to America, the Romanian academic Ioana Em. Petrescu launched a new literature reading model she had, from the beginning, represented as "development – by – accumulation". Our paper mainly refers to the impact of this experience on her further academic interests and research, as revealed in the few texts published before her death, by some Romanian local cultural journals. All these, and what was left from her, was only later collected by her former students in a volume of 1991 (*Portret de grup cu Ioana Em. Petrescu*) and, long after her death which occurred in 1990, in the reconstitution of another, *Ion Barbu and the Poetics of Postmodernism* (2006). They are, as we shall infer, an illustration of a way of thinking and brilliant

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* [1962], Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1970, p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.78.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.115.

mind, always ahead of times, and the *testimony* of her contribution to the debate about new ways of reading and interpreting literature, synchronous to other European debates. We investigated Ioana Em. Petrescu's notes of her famous *57 Notebooks*: the reading cards (observations, notes, comments) and annotations on the margins of printed material not yet, and all of them, interpreted. Based on arguments that we shall tentatively develop below, our hypothesis is that her work is part of a well-framed programme of the *science of literature* renewal in the Romanian academic research of the 1980's, and that *this* may be spotlighted as a Kuhnian equivalent of the paradigm shift. The Romanian contribution to the "rise of a reading theory" owes to her a lot, no matter whether it was left to the stage of a preliminary phase of a project and, therefore, not widely known until the early 1990's.

I. Conceived against the prejudice with which contemporary science regarded the relationship between the scholar of the literary phenomenon and the object of his study, Ioana Em. Petrescu's project went beyond the excessive rationalization taking into account the effect that the literature work and text may have on its readers. Her "advanced methodology" of interpretation was neither "reductive", nor "exclusive", or "traditional" and "obsolete" within a model contested by Romania's important literary theorist, Adrian Marino, to whom methodologies of that age were "drastically diminishing the complexity of a phenomenon to a single dominant and defining feature".<sup>6</sup> So it seems that Ioana Em Petrescu decided to circumscribe her research project to a "logic of a modernist certainty"<sup>7</sup>, understood as a "geometric", "rationalist" analysis and apparently anti-hermeneutic, unilateral, exclusive while correlating it to a *conjoint analysis model* of a more flexible, interpretive, dialogic attitude, leading to "personalization of the idea of literature"<sup>8</sup>. Encouraging ways of reading to *function* on basis of *complementarity* instead of exclusivism, she proclaimed an interest in epistemology, triggered by directions in the development of science and the scientific revelations she had had as a Fulbright scholar. The source of such provisions were the scholarly contributions of the much acclaimed representatives of the Yale School of Criticism and the methods they employed, but also two texts by the Nobel Prize winner in chemistry, Ilya Prigogine: "Self Organization in Non-Equilibrium Systems", the scientific paper which brought Prigogine the Nobel Prize in 1977, and its disseminated content in "*Order Out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue with Nature*"(1984). Ioana Em. Petrescu read Prigogine in Romanian translation as testified by the annotations made on the book's margins and in her reading notes<sup>9</sup>. The notable impact this had on her

<sup>6</sup> Adrian Marino, *Biografia ideii de literatură*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1994, vol. 3, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Matei Călinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1987, p. 284.

<sup>8</sup> Adrian Marino, *Biografia ideii...*, p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, "Notes on Ilya Prigogine and I. Stengers' *Order Out of Chaos...*", 1984, Liviu and Ioana Em. Petrescu Trust, Cluj-Napoca.

appears in the comments she had made on the book's margins: the book's content appeared to her as a revelation of an/*the* "idea of change", influenced by scientific discoveries, and of their consequences in the reconsidering of the literary phenomenon. From the concept of literature submitted to an inductive-historical analysis based on the empirical collecting of data, Ioana Em. Petrescu moved further to the concept of a *reading and interpretive model* of literature, understood as a *deductive* and *dynamic* phenomenon. She defined a "new model of scientificity", the application of new scientific methods and principles being identified as "another type of relationship related to another type of space" deployed by the scientific reality as viewed from a new (methodological) perspective and understood "as an accomplishment of a rational project, conceived as a mathematical model"<sup>10</sup> (my translation). She also recognized in the "new scientific spirit" of the age "the great lesson given to the European thinking by the Copernican revolution"<sup>11</sup> leading to the change of "the plural content of this new reality". The insight into the implications of science for humanities prevails in her new vision about *enlarging the perspective* of literature studies: "What is important is that...we are forced to accept the idea of opposite spatial models which can be unified into an originary 'pangeometry' identifiable into *complementary* ways of thinking, ready to install an 'ontology of the complementarity' (...) within which *relationship* is favoured to entity"<sup>12</sup> (my translation). Inspired by Niels Bohr's "principle of complementarity" ("*contraria sunt complementa*"), the concept she had also outsourced from Bachelard and Heisenberg<sup>13</sup>, Ioana Em. Petrescu apparently favoured a new episteme in the process of text reading, ending by considering every interpretive approach as a "complex weaving of connections". Her allusion to Heisenberg's view about reality which influenced *her model of reading literature* appeared as such from Petrescu's highlighting – in red pencil – on the margins of Prigogine's book, a

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<sup>10</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Ion Barbu și poetica postmodernismului*, Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2006, p. 10; and also in Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Eminescu și mutațiile poeziei românești*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca 1989, p.16.

<sup>11</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Ion Barbu și poetica postmodernismului*, Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2006, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11: "what else is the aesthetics of reception but the *framing process of the work of art dynamics*, the work becoming an *aesthetic object* in the process of reception?" (transl. by S. Berce, my emphasis).

<sup>13</sup> References to Niels Bohr, Gaston Bachelard and Werner Heisenberg in Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Modernism in Portret de grup...* Diana Adamek & Ioana Both (eds.), Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1991, p. 160, 162, 163. With Bohr and Heisenberg as primary source (i.e Heisenberg's „tissue of events” in *Modernism*, cit., p.29, Derrida's "partial text-generalised text" emphasizing "the idea break and of discontinuity"), Derrida's deconstructionism was also approached by framing it in the context of post-einsteinian scientific thought in *Filosofia Post-Structuralistă a lui Derrida și soluțiile criticii contemporane* (1984-5) now in *Portret de grup cu Ioana Em. Petrescu* (1991), p. 176.

quote from Heisenberg, frequently referred to in her later papers: “a complicated tissue of events, in which connections of different kinds alternate or overlap or combine and thereby determine the texture of the whole”<sup>14</sup>. Such vision, in which opposites coexist on basis of complementarity, thus substituting the geometric approach by its dynamic, plural, variety is conjoint to the new perspective on the material reality as triggered by discoveries in physics, in a post-einsteinian age. This was her option - synchronous to the European historical-theoretical paradigm of the late 1970’s and early 1980’s, the innovative direction of Konstanz School of reception theory. However, there is no evidence in her *Notebooks* or any reference found in her papers on whether she had ever read or studied Wolfgang Iser’s *The Act of Reading* (1976) and *Prospecting* (1989), Iser’s other innovative book.

II. A reading model of a literary text is an interface between the World, the Author and the Work/Text, promoting a *new type of investigation* by referring to “alterity”. Ioana Em. Petrescu’s reading model was a “flexible construct”, however based on a solid scientific configuration, well-framed though left unfinished. From the outset defined by its systemic and systematic organization of reading, the method *is* an expression of her belief in the convergence of systems. Rooted in a *functionalist perspective* and dwelling in the realm of anthropology, convergence theory is traced back to the French sociologist and philosopher Emile Durkheim. As such, it assumes that there is a tendency for broadly *similar conditions* or *attributes* to emerge among otherwise distinct and *dissimilar facts* if “certain requirements [are] met” to make “such facts survive and operate effectively”<sup>15</sup>. As convergence theories are usually associated with *modernization*, the reference to them, in the present study, points at the complexity of processes leading to the paradigm shift in science and humanities as well, an idea well sustained by and inherent to Petrescu’s notes of the famous *Notebooks*, owned now by the Trust. Her *awareness* about these processes widely embraced her interest in *complexity* and *complementarity* of ways of judging texts, interweaving an inductive-deductive method with “the coexistence of opposites”.

III. Her reading from the Yale School of Criticism (J. Hillis Miller, G. Hartmann, J. Derrida, H. Bloom) was, as it seems, of outstanding importance *when* associated with her other readings of the European schools of theory and criticism (the French school with Barthes and Riffaterre and the Konstanz School with W.

<sup>14</sup> Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy*, New York, 1958, London, Bantam Books, 1984, p.107 quoted in Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Modernism in Portret de grup...*, op.cit., 1991, p. 161 and also in Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Eminescu și mutațiile poeziei românești*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1989, p. 17; Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Conceptul de text în viziune deconstructivistă în Portret de grup...*, op.cit. 1991, p. 175 or in Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Ion Barbu și poetica postmodernismului*, Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2006, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> Richard M. Coughlin, *Convergence Theories in Encyclopaedia of Sociology*, 2nd ed. Edgar F. Bogatta (ed.), Seattle, The University of Washington, 2012 in [edu.learnsoc.org/Chapters/3theoriesof sociology/3 convergence theories htm](http://edu.learnsoc.org/Chapters/3theoriesofsociology/3convergence%20theories.htm): the core notion is that “changes” are achieved “by convergence via the crossing of thresholds rather than changes in absolute differences” (my emphasis).

Iser and H. R Jauss). Tied to the institutional and formal construction of theory of literature in the late 1940's with René Wellek, the representatives of Yale had an influence on Ioana Em. Petrescu in the reconstitution of her innovative research about the poetics of modernism and of postmodernism, only retroactively acknowledged and highly valued by academia. In another area of research, which is the object of our study, such influence basically framed the new methodology she had predicted as an *outline of interconnections* of three perspectives (history, theory and criticism), so far understood to separately serve the institution of literature. The recognition of their *inter-operability* or the ability of their systems to exchange and make use of information on basis of *interconnection* and *complementarity* - in the same field of action was obviously part of a literature reading programme she intended to develop. Models of reading generated from complex exploration of means and methods she had found in literary theory, competing with information of literary history, appeared to elicit her awareness about the *variability* of the text reading *practice* in such ways as to promote the literary studies beyond impressionistic, subjective practices. She went against and beyond the "subjective model" of the Romanian academic and scientific interpretive practice, in the 1980's still dominated by a positivist way of thinking in the good tradition of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. As such, she committed herself to the *challenge* and *change of science of literature* throughout a process that was cleverly connected to the different and varied levels of significance of the work employed to "correlate" its different "constitutive elements". This *kind* of correlation is the premise of her unfinished but announced project, only anticipated in her few published texts, such as "*I, the Reader*"<sup>16</sup>. We believe that the method of "correlating different constitutive elements" of the work or of the text, was aimed to highlight *the* "change" that had occurred in the relationship between Author-Reader, in a poststructuralist, post-einsteinian and in the quantum world, featured by the complexity of the non-equilibrium systems<sup>17</sup>. In such a world, the Observer is part of the World observed, a fact that radically changed the traditional observer into an "observer-participant"<sup>18</sup>. In a philosophical sense, *this* describes an apparent *change of direction* caused by the *change of position* of the observer and of the object observed, altogether. The reading of the text, in such a world, becomes a "space of

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<sup>16</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Eu, Cititorul* (revista Tribuna, Cluj-Napoca, 1986) in *Portret de grup cu Ioana M.Petrescu*, D. Adamek & I. Both (eds.), Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1991, p.158-159; *Modernism in Portret de grup*, op.cit., 1991, p; *Ion Barbu și poetica postmodernismului*, I. Both & L.Tudurachi (eds.), Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2006, p.9-35. We relied only on *Notebooks* 36, 42, 46,47 as suggested by the classification we found in Elena Voj-Păcurar, *Reading Places: Ioana Em.Petrescu and the Practices of Reading*, Transylvanian Review, vol. 19, Summer, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> Ilya Prigogine defined in *Order out of Chaos* (1984) "non-equilibrium systems" as *complex systems* for which the utility of "mathematical models" based on a "complementary move towards complexity" in their analysis and understanding is requested.

<sup>18</sup> For Ioana Em. Petrescu's reconstitution of the influence of the new physics on the "observer-participant" and about the sources and history of the concept, see Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Modernism in Portret de grup*, op.cit., 1991, p. 163.

play” in the Iserian way, in which any form or act of the world’s construction is intrinsic to its reality, while, for *that* matter, any reading would promote a vision of the world as a *field of interaction* between its component elements. It is where Ioana Em. Petrescu’s research on ways of reading had come to: a reading model that set the reader within the *complex field* created by the text, outside the trite and atomist vision of the world. In a similar way, in *The Act of Reading: A Theory of the Aesthetic Response* (1978), opposing the atomist vision of the world, Wolfgang Iser chose to examine the reading process suggesting ways of setting into motion *chain of events*, depending on *both the text* and the practice of *human faculties*. He called the chain of such of events a “space of play”. Petrescu’s view - an interaction between the component parts of the text - is similar to Iser’s view and to what she called “a space of reciprocal giving in” (“of literature”, “of interpretation”): “In the space of play between ‘letter’ and ‘spirit’ (...), the Reader is now invited (...) while learning to say ‘I’..., [to proclaim], with detachment, his fictionality (...) opposing the atomist vision throughout the Reader - Poet interaction where the Work is being born ...The Work emerges from a *space of reciprocal giving in* of two forms of freedom: mine/the Reader’s and his/the Poet’s”<sup>19</sup> (my translation). Thus, the Reader finds confirmation as Reader within its socio-cultural horizon of knowledge, beliefs, experiences, of its own (his)story<sup>20</sup> in an inspiring act of merging or confluence with the writer’s, a pluralist dialogue which goes beyond the auctorial-authoritative message. The *crisis moment* of revelation may bring some light on (human) ways of thinking and is triggered by the unveiling of the text’s significance in the convergent system thus created. In this *field*, the Object (which can be the Text, but also the World) and the Subject (which may be the Poet, but also the Reader) are *interchangeable* and *complex interaction* between *all* the elements of the respective field (including the text’s content, genre, mode of writing and period, literary taxonomies as such) are instantiated: “As Einstein himself declared, and the quantum physics experiments have proved”, says Ioana Em. Petrescu, “the object observed changes itself according to the process of observation, transcendence of the Subject’s conscience as well as its identity, ...in a universe in which the only reality – from a Sartreian perspective – is *positionality*, or, in more general terms, inter-relationships of phenomena understood as pure process...[and] in the space of the new episteme, I, the Reader, become a producer of meaning and – forgetting that meaning is a process, that is to say inter-relationship – I try to take revenge substituting myself to the Poet”<sup>21</sup> (my translation). With her outstanding confidence, Ioana Em. Petrescu engaged herself in the problem-solving. Her

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<sup>19</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Eu, Cititorul* (revista Tribuna, Cluj-Napoca, 1986) in *Portret de grup cu Ioana M. Petrescu*, D. Adamek & I. Both (eds.), Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1991, p.158-159 (tr. S. Berce).

<sup>20</sup> Hans-Robert Jauss, *Historia Calamitatum et Fortunatum Mearum: A Paradigm Shift in Literary Theory*, in *Future Literary Theory* Ralph Cohen(ed.), London, Routledge, 1989, p.113.

<sup>21</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Eu, Cititorul* (revista Tribuna, Cluj-Napoca, 1986) in *Portret de grup cu Ioana M. Petrescu*, D. Adamek & I. Both (eds.), Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1991, 159 (tr. S. Berce).

solution goes beyond the “reading of pleasure” or “the pleasure of reading”, as she really plays with the universal heuristic dimension of the reading act and with the *form* that the “reading as play” may take: “...By this *superior manipulation* of the text, I, the Reader substituted myself to the Poet, out of pure accident by which the text is weaving itself (...) my conscience is wavering guilty, dear Reader, between your consciousness and the unconvinced renegated writer’s conscience”<sup>22</sup> (my translation). That is to say, as theoretical research about complexity in meaning-making, the *reading – understanding - comprehending* act is a *way of mapping (inter-relating and correlating)* and “weaving” what it mapped – the echo of the writer’s conscience thrown as net onto the Reader’s.

Ioana Em. Petrescu’s “reading model” may meet, indeed, contemporary expectations.

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*.

## ION BARBU AND THE POETICS OF POSTMODERNISM: AN UNACKNOWLEDGED BOOK

ROBERT CINCU<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *Ion Barbu and the Poetics of Postmodernism: An Unacknowledged Book.* The paper analyses Ioana Em. Petrescu's book *Ion Barbu and the Poetics of Postmodernism* trying to determine some of the socio-cultural, editorial and theoretical reasons for which the book did not receive recognition in the Romanian cultural context (despite the fact that the book proposes an original and coherent view on important topics such as postmodernism or the works of canonical poet Ion Barbu).

**Keywords:** *Ioana Em. Petrescu, Ion Barbu, postmodernism, communism.*

**REZUMAT.** *Ion Barbu și poetica postmodernismului: un volum problematic.* Lucrarea de față analizează o serie de motive socio-culturale, editoriale și teoretice care pot sta la baza receptării slabe a volumului Ioanei Em. Petrescu *Ion Barbu și poetica postmodernismului* (în ciuda faptului că volumul propune o reinterpretare originală și coerentă a unor subiecte precum postmodernismul sau opera poetului canonic Ion Barbu).

**Cuvinte cheie:** *Ioana Em. Petrescu, Ion Barbu, postmodernism, comunism.*

In Romanian culture Ioana Em. Petrescu is considered one of the most important critics on the works of national poet Mihai Eminescu, her book, *Mihai Eminescu – a tragic poet*, becoming an essential critical reference in this field of study shortly after its publication in the late 70's. However, other works of Ioana Petrescu that had a less favorable evolution and, from this point of the view, one of the most interesting cases is her book *Ion Barbu and the Poetics of Postmodernism*. This very complex study on the works of Ion Barbu has gone almost unnoticed in Romanian literary history even though it provides an original and most relevant view on this topic. There are, however, a series of historical and theoretical reasons for this outcome and my aim here

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is to analyze these aspects<sup>2</sup>; by doing so I will implicitly point out some key aspects specific to Ioana Em. Petrescu's critical thinking.

One of the first aspects that must be discussed here is the title of the book which can seem highly controversial. Since Ion Barbu is considered one of the greatest *modern* poets in Romanian culture, then, without a doubt, a title such as *Ion Barbu and the Poetics of Postmodernism* generates a certain amount of confusion. However, this pushing-forward of modern poet Ion Barbu towards postmodernism does not appear so unusual if we take a look at other works of Ioana Petrescu. For example, in the critically acclaimed *Mihai Eminescu – a tragic poet*, the author discovers a series of *post-romantic* esthetic principles in the works of the *romantic* poet Eminescu. In fact, the two books share a lot of common features, even though one of them is highly famous while the other has gone unknown.

Both the correspondence and the importance of these books in Ioana Petrescu's bibliography have been suggested by the author herself in a letter dating from the early 80's (when she started working on *Ion Barbu and...*) and published posthumously: “[concerning *Mihai Eminescu – a tragic poet*] that was a book that I cared about (and I still do), this [book, *Configurations*] is just scrap, an interlude towards Barbu that I am already begging to care for like it was my second child”<sup>3</sup>. Even though the two books were equally favored by the author herself, while having similar theoretical principles, it seems, as I've said, that their place in Romanian literary history would be quite different and I shall go on analyzing the content of *Ion Barbu and the Poetics of Postmodernism*.

Before explicitly discussing features of Ion Barbu's poetry, the book begins with a theoretical description of postmodernism and we find here another unusual approach that raises confusion in the Romanian cultural context. It seems that for Ioana Petrescu some resources such as the works of Jacques Derrida or quantum physics are essential in her understanding of postmodernism and such an approach is not common among Romanian theorists (this does not mean, of course, that Ioana Petrescu does not take into consideration studies of canonical postmodern theorists such as Ihab Hassan or Jean-François Lyotard). In fact,

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<sup>2</sup> Ioana Petrescu was a professor at the University in Cluj-Napoca. It is possible that this (marginal) cultural climate could affect her visibility in the larger context of Romanian culture (centered on Bucharest). I will not be discussing these (geographical) aspects here, mainly because Ioana Petrescu's books on Eminescu's poetry have reached critical acclaim even though they are associated with the same (marginal) cultural climate of Cluj-Napoca. Also, I have already written a detailed analysis on this topic: see Robert Cincu, *Localizing Postmodernism in Mănăştur* in „Dacoromania Litteraria”, vol. II, 2015, pp. 187-194. The article also points out the fact that Petrescu's articles on postmodernism are rather atypical in the Romanian cultural context and this feature could also affect the visibility of her book. However, I will not be (re)discussing these general aspects here, focusing exclusively on *Ion Barbu and...*

<sup>3</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Molestarea fluturilor interzisă (The Molesting of Butterflies Forbidden)*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1998, p. 46.

not just her understanding of postmodernism is rather atypical in the cultural Romanian context, but also her reading of Derrida. After visiting U.S.A. in the early 80's and discussing with numerous American university professors, Ioana Petrescu writes home a letter about the theoretical trends in America, and her words are very relevant in relation to this issue: "The trend here is the deconstruction school of Derrida's disciples that had conquered America. It is a sort of poststructuralism that, to me, looks alarmingly like the so-called French «textualism» [...] following them I understood why they were suspicious of me when I praised Derrida. The things I most like in Derrida's works have not made any impact here, since the deconstructionists perform just a mild continuation of Heidegger's phenomenology"<sup>4</sup>. It seems, to Ioana Em. Petrescu, that Derrida's legacy in literary theory has suffered a certain malformation, since (some of) the deconstructionists following him have only selected a few (textualist) aspects from his works, ignoring some key-features of this philosophy. Also, she is convinced that (some of) the American deconstructionists perform *just a mild continuation of Heidegger's phenomenology*, even though they relate this activity to the works of Derrida. It is important, in this part of my study, to point out Ioana Petrescu's reading of Derrida, since it appears that she does not agree with the strictly textualist (or, in a sense, tel-quel-ist) understanding of this philosophy. Also, some reasons for this selective (mis)reading of Derrida should be explained here as well.

In the *Preface to Of Grammatology*, Gayatri Spivak points out on numerous occasions the fact that Derrida can be, and has been in several cases, misread or misunderstood as a philosopher. In the case of literary criticism, a field that has borrowed many of Derrida's ideas, critics often try to *deconstruct* texts. However, in a strict Derridean sense, this operation is useless, since any form of discourse is in a (permanent) *state of deconstruction*: "Derrida is now ready to suggest that, in a certain sense, it is impossible not to deconstruct/be deconstructed. All texts, whether written in the narrow sense or not, are rehearsing their grammatological structure, self-deconstructing as they constitute themselves. The single act of critical deconstruction is as necessary yet pointless, arrogant yet humble, as all human gestures"<sup>5</sup>. From this point of view, deconstructionist criticism is in itself, a misreading of Derrida. Deconstruction can be understood more as a characteristic of discourse, rather than a method of dissecting discourse. Such selective (mis)readings are, however, quite often in Western culture. One very famous and similar example would be that of Freud's theories and surrealism. It would seem that André Breton had founded surrealism based on his enthusiasm towards the Freudian studies of the unconscious mind. However,

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>5</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Transaltor's Preface* to Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1997, p. LXXVIII.

Freud himself pointed out in several letters addressed to Breton that he was greatly misunderstood and that surrealism (contrary to its own beliefs) had nothing to do with the unconscious mind. Basically, Freud analyzed the unconscious trying to cure his patients, his goal being that of clinical sanity. In a certain sense, the unconscious mind was the problem, not the solution (and not a form of ultra-reality that should be pursued), and it is this problem that surrealists favored<sup>6</sup>. It is the same in the case of most deconstructionist critics. As Derrida points out, discourse is always deconstructing (itself) and it is this feature that we must acknowledge and be aware of. However critics seem to favor the process of endlessly deconstructing discourse by phenomenologically discussing a certain reflexivity of the text. I will conclude this brief presentation of misreadings by pointing out the fact that both deconstructionist criticism and surrealism are highly important cultural movements, however their theoretical origins are not so much Derrida's or Freud's works but, in a sense, selective enthusiastic (mis)readings of these texts.

Returning to Ioana Em. Petrescu's criticism, we must note that her approach corresponds to Derrida's philosophy in a less textualist manner. The fact that a text deconstructs itself while it is being produced and also the fact that texts can (and should) be read as being permanently "*sous rature*", finally, the permanent coexistence of contraries (as complements) seem to function for the critic as a solid theoretical basis. In other words, Ioana Em. Petrescu does not focus on deconstructing texts or ideas, rather, while acknowledging the deconstructionist character of language, she proceeds to a rhetorical analysis of the text, avoiding the interpretative fallacies that Derrida argues against in his books. Unlike other deconstructionist critics that try to reaffirm Derrida's views, Ioana Petrescu's criticism has fully assimilated the deconstructionist perspective and it is from inside of this perspective that she continues with her observations. The link between postmodernism and Derrida in Petrescu's works is, in fact, this apparently paradoxical synthesis between contraries (discourse *destroys* itself while it *constructs* itself – it *deconstructs*). In the same way, quantum physics is regarded by the author as a postmodern shift in science (Niels Bohr's motto, for example, was *Contraria sunt complementa*).

Therefore, the beginning theoretical chapter in *Ion Barbu and...* discusses the concept of postmodernism as a cultural mutation that favors the coexistence of contraries (in a Derridean sense, or in a sense similar to that proposed by the quantum revolution in physics). It would seem that for Ioana Petrescu deconstruction is the quantum physics of the humanities and, as she acknowledges this reality, she does not, however, transform it into a critical

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<sup>6</sup> See, for example, the chapter *Freud, Breton, Myers* in Jean Starobinski, *Relația critică (The Critical Relationship)*, Univers, București, 1974.

methodology as some deconstructionist (textualist) authors do. Postmodernism itself would be, from this point of view, that cultural paradigm in which the coexistence of contraries is naturally accepted, a paradigm that does not search for visible or invisible opposites, but rather “already knows” that they are there and proceeds to function according to this (new) criteria. Such an understanding of the concept of postmodernism was, as I’ve said, rather rare in Communist Romania, and it could prove to be challenging even by today’s standards. This, however, could be one of the reasons for which Ioana Petrescu’s book did not reach a larger public. Even her other works on postmodernism, deconstruction or contextualism did not make an impact in Romanian literary history, even though such contributions would have given a broader understanding on the subject in the local cultural climate.

I’ve pointed out so far the fact the Ioana Petrescu’s book had a controversial title and that the first theoretical chapter discussed an unusual understanding of postmodernism. There are, however, other reasons that limited the distribution of the book to the public and one of these reasons involves communist editorial policies. The manuscript was finished in 1987 and the author delivered it for publication but it was delayed by communist censorship<sup>7</sup>. In 1990, after the regime had fallen, Ioana Em. Petrescu had passed away without getting to see her book published<sup>8</sup>. A first edition was published in 1993, however it was a local printing house and very few copies of the book were printed and distributed. The first relevant edition of the book was published only in 2006. Unfortunately the topic of postmodernism was less relevant or interesting in the Romanian cultural climate of those years and Ion Barbu was considered a canonical modern poet that apparently raised no further critical interest, even though Ioana Petrescu’s view on the subjects remains singular to this day in Romanian literature.

As far as the communist censorship of the 80’s is concerned, it is important to acknowledge that during the Romanian communist regime most publications that seemed to be dealing with any form of occult philosophy were immediately prohibited. In such a context, *Ion Barbu and...* can, indeed, be very problematic to the censorship. After her theoretical description of postmodernism, Ioana Petrescu continues by chronologically analyzing Ion Barbu’s works. However, taking into consideration a series of motifs that the poet himself cared for, she discusses topics such as: numerology, tarot, Judeo-Christian spiritual philosophy, oriental spirituality etc. If the first part of the

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<sup>7</sup> For common practices of Romanian communist censorship see Ilie Rad (coord.), *Cenzura în România (Censorship in Romania)*, Tribuna, Cluj-Napoca, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Ioana Bot, Ligia Tudurachi, *Editor’s Note* to Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Ion Barbu și poetica postmodernismului (Ion Barbu and the poetics of postmodernism)*, Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca, 2006, p.5.

book was a theoretical chapter on postmodernism, this second part of the book has almost no references to postmodernism and it would seem that Ioana Em. Petrescu's intention here is to describe the very profound layers of Barbu's poetry. In order to reach these occult schemes that can be traced in Barbu's poetry, the critic (implicitly) deconstructs other layers of his texts (the geometry behind Barbu's syntax, the semantic implications of the syntax, the explicit cultural references, the implicit cultural references, the patterns in the evolution of Barbu's texts throughout time and so on). From this point of view, her analysis is very complex, and many readers could find these demonstrations quite challenging, however, we are dealing here with a critically adequate and (at the same time) multi-layered reading of one of the most challenging Romanian poets, therefore such complexity is more than understandable.

As I've said, in many cases Ioana Petrescu's inquiry into these texts leads to a paradigm of occult philosophy, and it seems that it is this layer of the texts that she favors the most. Several letters sent by Ioana Em. Petrescu from the time she was beginning to work at the book are quite relevant from this point of view: "I've found many interesting titles for Eliot, Barbu or my theoretical schemes. There is a whole bibliography here on tarot, astrology, hermeticism, Trismegistus, Orpheus, Pythagoras"<sup>9</sup>, "I've moved on to Jung (he has some works on alchemy just perfect for my Barbu)"<sup>10</sup>, "When I came here I had three ambitions: to recover the bibliography inaccessible at home, for hermeticism-grotesque-psychoanalysis – that is, for Ion Barbu [...]"<sup>11</sup>. And indeed, most of the analytical observations that the critic makes are rapidly related to the traces of occult philosophy that can be found in the deeper layers of Barbu's texts. These observations, however, not only raise the complexity of Ioana Petrescu's analysis, but they also activate the repressive mechanisms of communist censorship and these facts have probably both contributed to the limited reach of the book.

Finally, it is important to clarify the last part of Ioana Em. Petrescu's study. After a theoretical sketch of postmodernism and after a very detailed and complex analysis of Barbu's works, the author establishes the connection between these two by pointing out the fact that one of Barbu's late texts is, by many standards, postmodern. The argument is that Ion Barbu's texts have evolved from a strictly modernist paradigm (by contamination with occult / oriental philosophy) towards postmodern principles. It is this late text of Barbu, entitled *The Wake of Roderick Usher (Veghea lui Roderick Usher)*, that manages to correspond entirely to the postmodern paradigm, marking a sort of creative climax in the poet's bibliography. In these final pages of Ioana Petrescu's book

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<sup>9</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Molestarea fluturilor interzisă (The Molesting of Butterflies Forbidden)*, ed. cit., p. 52.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

we can see that her demonstration is quite coherent and her interpretation of Barbu's works could easily open this line of study to new areas

It would seem that a book such as *Ion Barbu and...* had indeed a series of reasons for which it would remain less visible in Romanian literary history, yet none of them are entirely related to the critical relevance of the book. The title could indeed seem controversial, even though the author manages to deliver a very coherent and adequate demonstration. The theoretical description of postmodernism may seem quite singular in Romanian culture, not just by its strong associations to deconstruction, but also because of Ioana Em. Petrescu's reading of Derrida (such features, however, have been suggested by numerous Western critics in the last decades). The remarkable amount of occult/spiritual references, on the other hand, have not only raised the attention of communist censorship but have provided Ioana Em. Petrescu's text with a complexity that many readers could find challenging, even though the works of Barbu are, themselves, quite challenging, therefore such an interpretation would only seem adequate. Finally, the fact that only one (late) text belonging to Barbu is postmodern makes Ioana Petrescu's book seem like a long demonstration (of 180 pages) that reaches its conclusion only in the last few pages. Once again, this would imply great patience from the reader and could be another reason for which the book has gone unnoticed. Even the few critics that have tried to point out the theoretical relevance of Ioana Em. Petrescu's studies on postmodernism have not been able to relocate her studies to a more visible context<sup>12</sup>. In a sense, such an outcome would seem to prove that the process of *natural (critical) selection* in Romanian culture has some gaps, leaving similar books such as *Mihai Eminescu – a tragic poet* and *Ion Barbu and the Poetics of Postmodernism* on opposite sides of the critical cannon.

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<sup>12</sup> Some of these titles include: Mihaela Ursa, *Optzecismul și promisiunile postmodernismului (The 80's generation and the promises of postmodernism)*, Paralela 45, Pitești, 1999, or Elena Voj, *Ioana Em. Petrescu's Contributions to the Study of Postmodernism in Literary Theory*, Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca, 2006.

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## MIRRORING POSTMODERNISM(S): IOANA EM. PETRESCU AND LIVIU PETRESCU

ELENA PĂCURAR<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *Mirroring postmodernism(s): Ioana Em. Petrescu and Liviu Petrescu.* This article revisits the concept of postmodernism, as formulated in the contributions of Ioana Em. Petrescu and Liviu Petrescu. The investigation focuses mainly, but not exclusively, on the similarities and difference of vision and perspective, especially with regard to the understanding of postmodernism as new humanism.

**Key words:** *postmodernism, modernism, literary theory, new humanism.*

**REZUMAT.** *Postmodernism(e) în oglindă: Ioana Em. Petrescu și Liviu Petrescu.* Lucrarea este o revizitare a conceptului de postmodernism, din perspectiva complementară a analizei ce reiese la o relectură a studiilor Ioanei Em. Petrescu și ale lui Liviu Petrescu. Mai mult decât o *punere-împreună* a două perspective asupra postmodernismului, investigația de față propune o *dispunere* a înțelegerii fenomenului postmodern ca nou umanism.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *postmodernism, modernism, teorie literară, nou umanism.*

While the title of the present article might mislead its readers into assuming that it represents (yet another) overview of the concept of postmodernism or an in-depth analysis of its past and current debates, the focus of this study shifts towards an act of *re-cognition*: in other words, to what extent does one of the theorists reflect the other's perspective on postmodernism, what are their similarities and differences when it comes to issuing a definition and to drafting a theory of postmodernism?

In order to be able to answer the question, a contextual chronology of dates and facts is offered as preamble to a more elaborate investigation of the topic. Christmas Eve, 1951 – Samuel Beckett published his *Textes pour rien*. In December 1966, fifteen years later, his English version of the *Textes* appeared

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under the title *Texts for Nothing*, covering thirteen *texts* which record the gradually alienating monologue of an estranged consciousness that seems to have lost its sense of self and of writing. Most of the texts (especially the third in the collection) echo the uselessness of uttering and writing in lines that have become internationally famous for the voiced/voiceless efforts to perpetuate a speech on disintegration: "Leave, I was going to say leave all that. What matter who's speaking, someone said what matter who's speaking."<sup>2</sup>

One year later, Roland Barthes published his essay proclaiming the 'death of the author' and reminding its readers that linguistics had ushered the gradual exit of the Author from the literary stage, whereby the act of enunciation becomes an "empty process": "Linguistically, the author is never more than the instance writing, just as *I* is nothing other than the instance saying *I* (...)"<sup>3</sup> Two years later, in 1969, Michel Foucault returned to Barthes's question in an extended lecture featuring an invitation to exploring the authorial position under the title *What Is An Author?*. The opening lines of the lecture recycle Beckett's previous rhetorical question ("What matter who's speaking") and reshape it under the apparent indifference towards any form of authority not *of*, but *upon* the text. Distancing himself from the perspective of the death of the author, Foucault substitutes the author with the "author-function" (with its four characteristics), thus making it possible for the "dispersion of the multiple selves" which account for the affirmation of several "subject-positions."

Bracketing the seventh decade that witnessed the theory and practice of deconstruction, our chronology further includes Ioana Em. Petrescu's article entitled *I, the Reader*, published in 1986 in *Tribuna*. Beyond the theoretical variation of perspective – which might privilege one category or another (reader-author, work-text) –, the article also discusses the ambiguous category of *reader-as-critic*: for half the century before *I, the Reader* was published, the position of the *reader-as-critic* had been constantly negotiated in the "meddling space of all seclusions, which is the Book."<sup>4</sup> In an act of self-reflection, the critic ("a wretched reader who takes his own condition seriously"<sup>5</sup>) refuses the act of separation between text-author-reader which ultimately accounts for their seclusion: "In the surrounding silence, when all transcendent voices have been silenced, I, the Reader, overcome my own seclusion by rejoining the other greater seclusion which calls up on me, the seclusion of the Poet."<sup>6</sup> Acutely aware that its place in the theoretical debates of the past fifty years had gradually undermined any claim

<sup>2</sup> S. Beckett, *Texts for Nothing and Other Short Prose, 1950-1976* [2010], London, Faber and Faber, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> R. Barthes, *Music, Image, Text* (Essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath) [1977], Great Britain, Fontana Press, p. 145.

<sup>4</sup> I. Em. Petrescu, *Modernism/Postmodernism. O ipoteză* [2003], Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24-5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

for authority, the subject has been granted the role of mediator; *I, the reader* (the nominative *I* in syntagmatic relation with an appositional *reader*) understands that any form of negotiation of power is deemed equivocal with the change of paradigm: “I, the reader, discovered fifty years ago that the eternity of a book is mere illusion, that the work is born in the space of reciprocal yielding of liberty: mine and the poet’s.”<sup>7</sup> As Sanda Berce best illustrates in her essay entitled *Narrative Identity between Ethics and Aesthetics*, this ethical awareness of the position of the *self/subject* and the *other* finds its expression in the “contemporary phenomenon of critical revisionism.”<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, in the meeting space of the reader, author and critic, the ethics of literature (and, why not, criticism) requires the *self/subject* to constantly adapt to the *other*<sup>9</sup> and to assume its relation with the *other* as *critical responsibility*. It is, certainly, the attribute of a *responsible* theorist and critic to seek the organic and coherent completion of a project and, in doing so, to bring it to the attention of its readers, time and again. Before the publication of *I, the Reader*, Ioana Em. Petrescu had signed an article entitled *Mutațiile conceptului de critică*<sup>10</sup> (*The Mutations of the Concept of Criticism*), where she discussed the coordinates in the evolution of criticism in the afterwar period. Two of these coordinates are worth rereading for our present analysis: the “revisitation of the classics” and the interference of the critical discourse with other discourses in contemporary science and arts, since they both legitimate the complementarity of vision and perspective that feature in Ioana Em. Petrescu’s later studies, as well.

Ten years after Ioana Em. Petrescu’s *I, the Reader*, Liviu Petrescu published *Poetica postmodernismului* (*The Poetics of Postmodernism*) – a “substantially revised and considerably updated” version (his own words) of the 1992 study entitled *Vârstele romanului* (*The Ages of the Novel*). One of the final chapters of the book includes an analysis of postmodernism as “new humanism”, in a rhetoric similar to Ioana Em. Petrescu’s refusal to see a drastic separation of the categories involved in the theoretical demonstration: “(...) postmodern thinking aspires towards the establishment of a new humanism, (...) one that accepts the possibility of an identification of man and life, and which is nothing more than the project for a philosophy of Force, Life and progression.”<sup>11</sup>

Our contextual chronology - covering exactly three decades (1966-1996) – is meant to foreshadow some of the conclusions that both Ioana Em. Petrescu and Liviu Petrescu have formulated in their studies which discuss the phenomenon of postmodernism in a post-binary rhetoric of complementarity.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> S. Berce, *Interfață* [2015], Cluj-Napoca, Limes, p. 209.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210.

<sup>10</sup> I. Em. Petrescu, *Mutațiile conceptului de critică* în *Studii de literatură română și contemporană* [2005], Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, p. 146-8.

<sup>11</sup> L. Petrescu, *Poetica postmodernismului* [2003], 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Paralela 45, p. 132.

This aspect is all the more interesting as their theoretical and critical analyses were mostly voiced before or immediately after 1989, as almost exclusive exercises of critical responsibility. In the following lines, we will investigate their understanding of postmodernism with a mind to trace both their areas of shared interest and their points of separation.

Whether it is called “a new age of the baroque” (G. Scarpetta), “a new form of Mannerism” (U. Eco), “the literature of silence” (J. Barth), “a vision of the apocalypse” (G. Graff), “a paradox of the future in the past” (F. Lyotard), or “a tendency towards indeterminacy” (I. Hassan), *postmodernism* seems to be an equally uncomfortable and insufficient label for the variety of its perspectives and critical evaluations. Undoubtedly reticent towards the accommodation of the label in the theoretical discourse and the acceptance of this case of conceptual indecision, Ioana Em. Petrescu advances her own definition of the phenomenon as follows: “Given the absence of another term, I shall name *postmodernism* the cultural model aspiring towards a new synthesis, integrating and overcoming the modernist crisis, in an attempt to rehabilitate (on dynamic bases) the category of the individual.”<sup>12</sup> Starting from the given definition, we will focus on a postmodern symptomatology that authorizes a theoretical diagnosis known as *postmodernism*, namely the rehabilitation of the category of the individual and the proliferation of a “new humanism.”

The philosophical rehabilitation (restructuring) of the category of the individual does not point to its centrality or isolation, but its redistribution inside a system of relations or its understanding inside a “dynamic system of relations”<sup>13</sup>, whereby “(...) the individual is no longer conceived of as independent entity, but as an assembly of relational textures.”<sup>14</sup> This represents a discreet point of demonstration in the configuration of a postmodern symptomatology since it indulges the convergence of the poetic and the scientific discourse, it resurfaces the concepts of *subject* and *conscience* (previously biased by the modernist tendency towards seclusion), and, last but not least, since it bridges the ideological gap between modernism and postmodernism. Going beyond readings of Ihab Hassan, Ioana Em. Petrescu extends her theoretical project beyond the implied forms of *de-humanization* (infrahumanism, posthumanism, cosmic humanism). Where Ihab Hassan asserts: “Modernism does not suddenly cease so that Postmodernism may begin: they now coexist”<sup>15</sup>, Ioana Em. Petrescu nuances: “I think that postmodernism is a cultural model (coexistent, at the

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<sup>12</sup> I. Em. Petrescu, *Modernism/Postmodernism*, p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> I. Em. Petrescu, *Ion Barbu și poetica postmodernismului* [2006], Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>15</sup> I. Hassan, *The Postmodern Turn. Essays in Postmodern Theory and Culture* [1987], Ohio State University Press, p. 46.

present moment, with the modernist one, hence their opposing tendencies), characterized by the attempt to reconsider the status of the individual and the rehabilitation of anthropocentrism.”<sup>16</sup>

This element of postmodern symptomatology closely accompanies the second one: the understanding of postmodernism as a form of new humanism. In its efforts to “reconsider” the rehabilitation of anthropocentrism, this perspective does, in fact, bracket it (as it does with most manifestations of *centrism*), with an aim to essentialize the category of the individual, to mathematically reconfigure it as *modulus*. In the comparative analysis of Barbu and Brâncuși, Ioana Em. Petrescu recalls essentialization in the act of (linguistically and artistically) polishing matter: “Polishing (one of Brâncuși’s favorite technical devices) means caressing the matter with one’s own hands, in search of its hidden ‘cosmic essence’ and of the key-form that could realize that essence. Act of sacrifice, act of love, act of ecstatic self-renouncement, the collaboration between artist and matter echoes the anonymous creative power of nature itself (“without stain and without any trace of the author”).”<sup>17</sup> From the point of view of a nonanthropomorphic and transindividual art, the subject abandons its own biography and becomes *modulus*; likewise, in literature, Barbu’s poetry is essentialized to the level of abstraction which is only made possible by the use of metaphor. Not to be confused with the disappearance, let alone the death, of the subject (author), the process of essentialization is the immediate consequence of an artistic self-effacement, which one can identify in both Ion Barbu and Constantin Brâncuși’s non-figurative art. This new art leaves aside the empirical data of the subject, objectifying it in metaphor and in non-figurative representation: “Let us still specify that however transindividual, antipsychological, nonanthropomorphic, the new art, consubstantial with pure mathematics, is not free of the human spirit. On the contrary, its goal is precisely to mirror the human spirit more faithfully than the older art obsessed with the accidentals and the peculiarities of the figure.”<sup>18</sup>

Simultaneously with the project for the rehabilitation of the category of individual, the project for a “new humanism” adds fundamental details in the investigation of the postmodern symptomatology. Brâncuși’s critical revision of classical humanism<sup>19</sup> makes way for a “new, mathematical humanism” is offered as possible response to the modernist crisis of the individual. This new

<sup>16</sup> I. Em. Petrescu, *Sub semnul principiului antropic* in “Steaua”, 40, no. 9/1989, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>18</sup> I. Em. Petrescu, *Modernism as “Radical Traditionalism” in Ion Barbu and Constantin Brâncuși’s Artistic View*, in “Rumanien Studies – An International Annual of the Humanities and Social Sciences”, vol. V, 1986, Leiden, E.J. Brill, p. 165.

<sup>19</sup> “Anthropomorphism has determined man to try at producing and expressing himself, and thus man has neglected the life of matter” – *Ibid.*, p. 151.

humanism recycles the transindividual and non-anthropocentric features of modernism and adds a scientific scaffolding to it: "What I saw in postmodernism was the neohumanist solution to a crisis, by the instantiation of a cultural model different from the Renaissance one, a model that retains the transindividual and nonanthropomorphic character of modernism; the model is trusted to a mythical tradition, 'recuperated' by this century's thinkers (Niels Bohr or W. Heisenberg)."<sup>20</sup> Since "mathematics operates spiritual powers not very different from those required by poetry and arts"<sup>21</sup>, postmodernism is hailed as a new, *mathematical* humanism. There is nothing more comforting than reading postmodernism against the bleak previsions of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: this later acceptance of a (re)new(ed) humanism could be the redeeming, the reconciliation with a past choice (favoring Rome and its cult for individual values, for the man, not the Being). This type of humanism, claiming a return to essentialized, mathematical forms, authorizes the Being to regain its fundamental manifestation of authenticity, which is pure *joy*: "The artist's self-sacrifice does not imply any tragic feeling; on the contrary, it is experienced as a redeeming act, and is achieved happily, in keen joy. *Joy* is, maybe, the most frequently used word whenever Brâncuși speaks of his own work: 'primeval joy', 'your joy,/ which makes you able to give others happiness', 'movement and life, impetus and pure joy.'<sup>22</sup>

At this point, we shall shift our attention to the other reflection in the mirror, namely to Liviu Petrescu and his *Poetics of Postmodernism*, with a special focus on the concluding chapters of the study, which revisit the identification of postmodernism with a form of "new humanism" from a slightly different perspective than that of Ioana Em. Petrescu. The fifth chapter of the book begins, quite abruptly, with a decisive opposition between two types of humanism: "Postmodernism is, for many reasons, an annihilation of traditional humanism, whose fundamental values it subjects to a substantial project of deconstruction."<sup>23</sup> Yet, on the same page, the author denies the nihilistic dimension of postmodernism, in that a project of deconstruction is necessarily and naturally followed by reconstruction: "Postmodernism should not be assimilated to forms of contemporary nihilism; by deconstructing the past, postmodern thinking aspires towards the establishment of a new humanism."<sup>24</sup> While Ioana Em. Petrescu theorizes the postmodern symptomatology as visible in a type of new, mathematical humanism, one that professes a concentration of (poetic, artistic, scientific) expression to the level of pure essence, Liviu Petrescu anchors his

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<sup>20</sup> I. Em. Petrescu, *Ion Barbu*, p. 180.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238-9.

<sup>23</sup> L. Petrescu, *Poetica*, p. 132.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

theoretical demonstration of a new humanism along the lines of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Alvin Toffler or Francois Lyotard.

Symptoms of a “new humanism” are traceable to Jacques Derrida’s principle of *force*: “the force of a work, the force of a genius, the force of anything that generally produces novelty.”<sup>25</sup> This, in turn, entails, in Derrida’s philosophy, a Nietzschean choice: between Apollo and Dionysos, between “structure” and the more symptomatically relevant for the reconstruction of a “new humanism”: “ardor”. Similarly, Foucault’s concept of *power* understood as a “multiple and mobile field of force relations”<sup>26</sup> contributes to the articulation of a said postmodern humanism, one which privileges *force* over *form* and *joy* over *reason*. Liviu Petrescu’s analysis pinpoints the change of ethical and aesthetic codes in the transition from a modern to a postmodern sensibility, or in Toffler’s words, in the passage from the Second to the “Third Wave”: while the second wave asserted the industrial ethics of precision, reason and conformity, the ethics of the third wave feasts on the governance of spontaneity and *joie de vivre*. This new ethics promises to dissolve form of oppression (known as family, workplace, economy and the state<sup>27</sup>) and reinstate what Lyotard termed a philosophy of unleashed “life energies and vitality.”

Similarly, Fredric Jameson’s seminal 1980 essay entitled *Modernity – An Incomplete Project* rehashes the incompatibility between a modernist sensibility and culture and the demands of contemporary society. In critically rereading neoconservative Daniel Bell’s *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, Jameson states: “Modernist culture has come to penetrate the values of everyday life; the life-world is infested by modernism. Because of the forces of modernism, the principle of unlimited self-realization, the demand for authentic self-experience and the subjectivism of a hyperstimulated sensitivity have come to be dominant. This temperament unleashes hedonistic motives irreconcilable with the discipline of professional life in society.”<sup>28</sup>

A change in the aesthetic codes additionally confirms the process of revision whereby postmodernism reclaims the possibilities of a new humanism, one which derives from concepts such as *pleasure*, *seduction* or *joy*. It is the merit of poststructuralism to have restored the principle of pleasure: the pleasure of writing and that of reading. Roland Barthes’s *Le Plaisir du Texte* or Derrida’s *Implications* promote pleasure as dominant in both processes of textual production and reception. In his final chapter of the *Poetics*, Liviu Petrescu further takes his analysis of the postmodern novel and the Romanian poetry of

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<sup>25</sup> J. Derrida qtd. in *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>26</sup> M. Foucault qtd. in *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>28</sup> F. Jameson in H. Foster (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic. Essays on Postmodern culture* [1998], New York, The New Press, p. 6.

the 1980s to summarize his theory of a new humanism that stems from: the poststructuralist will to produce pleasure (in a Barthesian interpretation), the post-industrial tendency towards decentralization (which ultimately hints at converting the project of de-humanization into re-humanization<sup>29</sup>) and the “authenticity” of poets like Alexandru Mușina or Călin Vlășie (an authenticity translated in a form of *new anthropocentrism* identifiable in a “focus on the human being, in its concrete, physical data”<sup>30</sup>).

Our declared aim to faithfully mirror the portrait of the theorists and their position with regard to the topic under investigation in the present paper would not have been possible without access to the collection of manuscripts, notebooks, letters and documents hosted by the “Octavian Goga” County Library. The couple’s American experience between 1981-1983, together with their collection of books and bibliographic notes enable their readers to speculate on the couple’s preoccupation for contemporary theoretical debates and their (in)direct participation to these debates, in more or less declared forms. Ioana Em. Petrescu’s summary notebooks record side comments, interpretations, critical apprehensions of the readings and strategically paced responses to theory and criticism, and they are just a few examples that are included in this consistent project of the Romanian theorists’ reflections on the margins of postmodernism.

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

## TOWARDS AN ETHICS OF CRITICAL DISCOURSE: IOANA EM. PETRESCU AND “RESPONSIBLE READING”

PETRONIA POPA PETRAR<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *Towards an Ethics of Critical Discourse: Ioana Em. Petrescu and “Responsible Reading.”* The present attempt to investigate the ethical prospects of criticism, as instantiated by the work of Ioana Em. Petrescu, starts from the definition suggested by Attridge (2004, 2015) for both the act of literary reception and its theory, revolving around the concepts of “hospitality” and “responsibility.” The ethical nature of such terms opens critical acts to radical alterity and subjects them to a kind of authority “other” than that of political regimes, which allows for a new placement of Ioana Em. Petrescu’s original input within its cultural and historical context.

**Key words:** *ethics of criticism, responsibility, hospitality, event, alterity.*

**REZUMAT.** *Către o etică a discursului critic: Ioana Em. Petrescu și „lectura responsabilă.”* Lucrarea pornește de la o definiție a actului receptării și a discursului teoretic influențată de sugestiile lui Attridge (2004, 2015) și axată pe conceptele de “ospitalitate” și “responsabilitate.” Natura etică a acestor concepte transformă discursul teoretico-critic într-unul prin excelență deschis Celuilalt, supus unei “autorități” de tip alteritate radical diferite de autoritatea politică și poate constitui o cale de explorare a originalității operei Ioanei Em. Petrescu în contextul ei cultural și istoric.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *etica discursului critic, responsabilitate, ospitalitate, eveniment, alteritate.*

My paper attempts to explore the ethical potential of Ioana Em. Petrescu’s interpretive practices from the somewhat anachronistic perspective of the contemporary interest in ethical criticism, while simultaneously suggesting a model of what the latter might mean. If my arguments prove valid, their success

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would further confirm the continuing relevance of the work of the Romanian theorist, beyond her undisputed contribution to our understanding of national literature, or to the introduction of deconstructionist practices to the Romanian academic field. However, apart from the objection against reading Ioana Em. Petrescu's texts through the anticipatory lenses of current theoretical trends, my selected method – of illustrating the tenets of such trends through an assortment of seemingly arbitrary textual samples – might in itself appear questionable. While the accusation of arbitrariness in the choice of examples cannot be entirely refuted, I would argue it need not be an objection, since it can constitute one of the cracks in the wall of signification that allow the ethical to burst through.

Before embarking on a brief detour of the origins and meaning of the phrase “ethical criticism,” I shall lay out the premises of my approach by resorting to Derek Attridge's take on the importance of literary interpretation in his recent study, *The Work of Literature*: “The value of criticism lies primarily in enhancing the reader's experience of what I term the work's singularity, alterity, and inventiveness, though it may well have intrinsic value itself as a result of its own singularity, alterity and inventiveness.”<sup>2</sup> In Attridge's acceptance of the term “work” in the title, literary texts are *events* that break forth into the world, interrupting the continuity of experience and effecting changes which may range from the intangible to the obvious, so that the ethical dimension of literature originates in its provision of a site for radical alterity to arise (“the literary occupies, in the practices and understandings of Western culture, the place of the other.”)<sup>3</sup>

The resurgence of ethical criticism during the last decades of the twentieth century essentially embraced two directions, inimical in theory, but in actuality informed by the common purpose of reasserting the impact of literature upon the world, while freeing it from the shackles of politicised reductions. In an introductory survey of critical discourses at the beginning of the new millennium, K. Womack points out that “ethical criticism's European manifestations [which he distinguishes from the North-American attempts rooted in analytic and liberal-humanist philosophy] offer a more forceful analysis by emphasizing continental philosophy's various and ongoing accounts of alterity, otherness and phenomenology.”<sup>4</sup> From within the American tradition, such landmark studies as W. Booth's *The Company We Keep* and M. Nussbaum's *Love's Knowledge*<sup>5</sup> attempt to resuscitate reflection on the axiological value of fiction as a guide for the good

<sup>2</sup> Derek Attridge, *The Work of Literature*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature*, London and New York, Routledge, 2004, p. 137.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Womack, “Ethical Criticism” (106-, in Julian Wolfreys, ed., *Introducing Criticism at the Twenty-First Century*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2002, p. 106.

<sup>5</sup> See Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*, Berkley, University of California Press, 1988, and Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992.

life, and therefore direct their attention mainly to questions of theme, character and content. As Booth puts it, "[e]thical criticism attempts to describe the encounters of a story-teller's ethos with that of the reader or listener"<sup>6</sup> with a view to "mak[ing] and remak[ing] ourselves."<sup>7</sup> This statement may also be used to illustrate the probable reason behind the reservations ethical criticism continues to encounter: the doubts it raises as to the danger of arrogating "superior positions of moral privilege and arrogant didacticism,"<sup>8</sup> or at least stepping into the muddy waters of "definite" moral standards and values. As Womack shows, the role Booth or Nussbaum assign to ethical criticism is disputing or reassessing the validity of communal moral norms through the practice of reading texts. But while the very notion of "shared understanding" of moral values has constantly found itself on shaky ground for more than a hundred years, the appeal to a "reflective consciousness" capable of querying the premises of such communal agreement seems to resonate, however uncomfortably, with continental theory's attempt to destabilise the supremacy of the liberal subject as the origin of the ethical relation.

Reflexive re-evaluation is thus identified as the common factor uniting North-American versions of ethical criticism, incongruously derived from initial assumptions as different as those of Booth and Nussbaum, on the one hand, and J. Hillis Miller, on the other hand. Reading's potential to exceed the particular social and political circumstances of the encounter between the text and the individual consciousness lies at the heart of the ethical stance of criticism, according to Miller (see *Versions of Pygmalion*). However, I would add that the point where Miller and Booth or Nussbaum part ways is precisely the point in which fiction seems to appear, for the latter, in the guise of a practical self-help book, smoothing the individual's path towards self-understanding and knowledge of the world. Booth or Nussbaum are, of course, much too subtle to allow texts the dubious status of sets of rules for conduct; however, their approaches emphatically focus on the rapprochement between the reader's "real" or "primary" experience and the moral value of fiction, embodied by the values of the characters within the novel. On the other hand, J. Hillis Miller, Adam Newton, Andrew Gibson, Robert Eaglestone, and, more recently, Derek Attridge fruitfully draw on the suggestions of continental philosophy – specifically, the work of Levinas and Derrida – to construct a literary ethics that breaks with sociological or psychological interests in favour of a concern for the confrontation between the reader and radical otherness, via forms of *responsibility* triggered by the encounter with the literary text: it was Levinas's radical redefinition of ethics as "the first

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<sup>6</sup> Wayne Booth, *op. cit.*, p. 8-9.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth Womack, "Ethical Criticism," in Julian Wolfreys, ed., *Introducing Criticism at the Twenty-First Century*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 106-125, p. 110.

philosophy” and his repositioning of the subject in relation with alterity (towards which he or she is infinitely responsible) that underlies the renewal of ethical criticism.

One of the earliest and best-known attempts to draw an explicit association between ethics and Derridean deconstruction belongs to Simon Critchley, who states “that the textual practice of deconstructive reading can and, moreover, *should* be understood as an ethical demand.”<sup>9</sup> Critchley detects the emergence of ethics from within the work of deconstruction in its extension of Levinas’s distinction between “the Said” and “the Saying” in *Otherwise than Being*. To quote Critchley, “one might say that the content of my words, their identifiable meaning, is the Said, while the Saying consists in the fact that these words are being addressed to an interlocutor. The Saying is the sheer radicality of human speaking, of the event of being in relation with an Other [...]”<sup>10</sup> If we separate literary ethics from themes and content (the “Said”), it is not difficult to see why it may seem tempting to look for such destabilising practices in the work of Romanian critics active before 1989, but it is equally easy to understand why they cannot be identified without trouble, maybe even without forcing an alien grid upon local critical writing. Ethical reading, still remaining largely a carefully avoided issue, was fraught with a double peril: firstly, there could have been only one official acceptance of the concept, which meant following the party line, and which often clashed with personal definitions of the moral life; secondly, the solution provided by formalist and deconstructionist teachings on the divorce between art and morality came in handy (maybe too much so). However, while the commitment to both the deconstructionist lesson learned during the American stay, and the attempt to bypass censorship may explain why the concept of ethical criticism could not appear as such in Ioana Em. Petrescu's writing, traces of the sense of responsibility to texts and readers abound. Consequently, the aim of my approach is not finding declaratively subversive topics in Ioana Em. Petrescu’s published essays, but – maybe more importantly – probing the ethical potential of the interpretive acts she made available.

In a 2015 study, Attridge revisits concepts he had put forth in his *The Singularity of Literature*,<sup>11</sup> published more than ten years earlier, where he defines “singularity” as the capacity of literature to create radical novelty through the “inventive” use of language. Here, the term “inventiveness” carries as specific connotation: “inventive” works retain the sense of absolute novelty across historical epochs and transcend their origin in familiar conventions to reveal

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<sup>9</sup> Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas* [1992], Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2014, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> *Idem*, *The Singularity of Literature*.

the excluded that exceeds<sup>12</sup> them by unveiling "the unprecedented, hitherto unimaginable disposition of cultural materials that comes into being".<sup>13</sup> Since the excluded escapes the awareness of all members of the culture in question, the responsible writer will allow himself/herself to use the symptoms of exclusion – fractures, tensions, contradictions – to make room for the irruption of alterity. While the artist's task is finding ways to bring the excluded to light, the ethical and responsible critic will attempt "to clarify and explain the experience of the work's singularity, inventiveness and alterity in an alert and committed reading".<sup>14</sup> In Attridge's view, echoing Critchley's understanding of deconstruction, the ethical effect produced through specifically literary means (rather than by using literary texts as replacement to historical, moral, psychological, or sociological discourses) has to do with the unpredictable nature of writing or reading the *event* of otherness. The ethical responsibility of the reader consists from a kind of "hospitable" attention to the cultural circumstances which have produced the text, coupled with a curious form of forgetting the very same circumstances that impede the recognition of the new.<sup>15</sup>

All this being said, we still have to determine whether Ioana Em. Petrescu's critical practice corresponds to the definition of ethical discourse as a response to the singular, radically different character of the literary text. Paradoxically, the historical context renders this task both easier and more difficult: even though we are more likely to define the internal tensions and contradiction of the dominant cultural discourse (as the splinters within the communist dogma itself), the reader is left with the dangerous mission of navigating the precarious territory of censorship while keeping abreast of the illusion that he or she may occupy a position outside ideology. I would suggest that ethics emerges precisely from within the crack between the certainties of official doctrine (Levinas's Said) and purged insecurities of the Saying of the critical utterance, which unequivocally presents itself as availability for the relation (or, as I will show, for hospitality). The best example in support of this argument is probably an extract from the essay entitled "I, The Reader" included in the collection *Modernism/Postmodernism*: "In the great surrounding silence, when all transcendent voices have become muted, I, the Reader, overcome my solitude by responding to the other great solitude which beckons me, the solitude of the Poet; out of our encounter – as Sartre puts it – the Work is born. Fifty years ago, I, the reader, discovered that the eternity of the book is but an illusion, that the work emerges when two freedoms, mine

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>14</sup> *Idem*, *The Work of Literature*, p. 156.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

and the poet's, cancel each other."<sup>16</sup> [my translation]. In Levinasian terms, the act of interpretation reveals the disruption of the subject in its double manifestation as author and reader, since the "sameness" of the knowing ego is radically destabilised by the text's temporary cancellation of personal freedom. To follow Ioana Em. Petrescu's reasoning further, the text's undecidability and instability mirrors the view of the world as "interrelated phenomena conceived as pure processuality,"<sup>17</sup> where the foundations of identity are replaced by the ethical imperative of welcoming the Other at the very heart of the Same. Simultaneously, the quoted excerpt may also be read as an illustration of literary criticism as a form of hospitality, in the narrow sense retraced by Attridge from Derrida's hesitant reformulations of the rapport between "unconditional hospitality" (an absolute form that opens the individual to invasion by the other, at the willingly incurred risk of the host's destruction; hospitality as opening to the infinite) and conditional hospitality (cautious, "political" hospitality regulated by day-to-day practices and laws).<sup>18</sup> The fragility of the text demands the protective hospitality of the critic, whose individual identity takes the form of the attempt to create meaning through the ethical relation.

Ioana Em. Petrescu's take on postmodernism offers an alternative avenue into the grafting of ethical concerns onto the act of reading. For my present purposes, her definition of postmodernism becomes relevant due to its outlining of the "ontology of the complement"<sup>19</sup> seen as the solution to the modernist problematisation of individuality. Where modernism shattered individual identity, postmodernism recovers it as the fragile node of in a network of relations primarily constituted through reading – both a trope for knowledge in general (the blurred bond between observer and observed), and the foundational, co-institutive act of identity and alterity. Exploring Petrescu's American notebooks, Elena Voj concludes that her understanding of the act of reading was deeply rooted in the unique, event-like encounter between the individual reader and the individual text, which allows her to save a form of "solipsistic" subjectivity from deconstruction's drastic assault on the

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<sup>16</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, "Eu, Cititorul"/"I, The Reader", in *Modernism/ Postmodernism. O ipoteză*, Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2003, 22-25, p. 23. The original reads as follows: "În marea liniște din jur, când toate vocile transcendente au tăcut, Eu, Cititorul, îmi înving singurătatea, răspunzând celeilalte mari singurătăți care mă cheamă, singurătatea Poetului; din întâlnirea noastră – o spune Sartre – se naște Opera. Eu, cititorul, am descoperit acum 50 de ani că eternitatea cărții e o iluzie, că opera se naște în spațiul de reciprocă cedare a două libertăți: a mea și a poetului. Și-n acest spațiu de interferență a tuturor singurătăților care e Cartea, eu, cititorul, asist la lenta agonie a ceea ce a fost orgoliu demiurgic în conștiința scriitorului."

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>18</sup> Derek Attridge, *The Work of Literature*, p. 284.

<sup>19</sup> In the Romanian text, "ontologia complementarului," in "Modernism/Postmodernism: a Hypothesis," *op. cit.*, 26-37, p. 29.

individual.<sup>20</sup> The concerted attempt to rescue the category of the individual (see the contrastive definition of modernism as the radical dissolution of anthropocentric models of identity versus postmodernism as an unstable recuperation of individuality in the guise of a relational node) corresponds to a vision of an ethical act of reading as the interaction between two poles of alterity, since the ethical cancellation of the ego through the Levinasian demand made upon it by the face of the Other presupposes the premise of a hospitable individuality to be erased. This is how the destructured Derridean text is proposed as a model for the "new ontology" instantiated by postmodernism: a relational ontology is best illustrated by the trope of an interpretive activity where the figure of the reader comes across as the hospitable host willing to be "interrupted" by the emergence of alterity (let us recall that J. Hillis Miller's "The Critic as Host" was one of her favourite readings).

To briefly conclude, although the pressure of historical and political background of the 1980s represent the likeliest explanation for the absence of explicit ethical concerns in the work of Ioana Em. Petrescu (probably to a greater extent than the general lack of interest in such matters at the time), a careful reading of her critical texts promises to unveil not only the occasional occurrence of related topics, but also the ethical potential of the discourse as verbalising the attempt to meet the unknowable other half-way.

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<sup>20</sup> Elena Voj, "Reading Places: Ioana Em. Petrescu and the Practices of reading in the 1980s" (78-87, *Transylvanian Review*, vol. XIX, no. 2, 2010), p. 80-81.



## LE « BON GOUT » AU TRAVAIL. DE L'ESTHETIQUE AU TEMPS DU COMMUNISME : LE CAS DE ION BIBERI

LIGIA TUDURACHI<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *“Good Taste” at Work. Aesthetics in the Time of Communism: The Case of Ion Biberi.* This paper aims to discuss, within a more general frame, is a reflection, the way the intellectuals consecrated during the interwar period deal with the aesthetic phenomenon after the establishment of Communism. Even though the aesthetic point of view is not fully abandoned under totalitarianism, any re-emergence implies, in a way or another, a corruption or even a mutation. The present analysis builds around a case study, that is, Ion Biberi's effort in the early 70' to take back a critical discourse crediting the values of style and showing an interest in defining ways of existence through art's mediation. After he delineated, in the 30', a somatic frame for the coordinates of individual stylistics – his analysis tackling with the forms of corporeal expressivity as well as their ongoing variation, the communist 70s' encourage him to define a *collective stylistics*. This is conceived as a form of collective emotion, shared and unique, named by the critic “starea de mulțime” (crowd state). His texts (*Poezia, mod de existență; Arta de a scrie și de a vorbi în public; Arta de a trăi*) imagine the possibility to correlate the process of demographic amassment with that of mass aestheticizing. In order to discover a practical facet of this relationship, Biberi turns to three types of instruments, which should function, in his opinion, as “active principles”: “poetry in action/ motion”, “good taste”, and “apprenticeship”.

**Keywords:** *soma-aesthetics, lifestyle, performativity, taste, labor, creation*

**REZUMAT.** *Bunul gust la lucru. Estetica în timpul comunismului: cazul lui Ion Biberi.* Ceea ce ne propunem, în cadru mai general, e o reflecție în marginea modurilor de a vorbi despre fenomenul estetic pe care le adoptă în perioada comunistă intelectualii interbelici. Deși punctul de vedere estetic nu e cu totul abandonat sub totalitarism, orice aducere a lui în discuție în acest interval implică o pervertire de un fel sau altul a fenomenului, antrenează o mutație. Analiza de față se construiește pe un studiu de caz: efortul pe care îl face Ion Biberi de a relua la începutul anilor 70 un discurs încrezător în valorile stilului, preocupat de necesitatea definirii unor moduri de existență prin mijlocirea artei. După ce în anii 1930 definise, în cadre somatice, coordonatele unei stilistici individuale (aplicându-

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se, analitic, pe formele expresivității corporale, urmărite în variația lor neîntreruptă), Biberi ajunge în anii 1970 la definirea unei stilistici colective, înțelegând ca formă de emoție colectivă, partajată, unică, pe care o numește „stare de mulțime”. Textele sale (Poezia, mod de existență; Arta de a scrie și de a vorbi în public; Arta de a trăi) imaginează posibilitatea de a corela procesul „masificării” populației cu acela al unei estetizări („în masă”). În vederea realizării practice a acestei corelări, Biberi vede posibilă exploatarea a trei tipuri de instrumente, care ar funcționa ca niște „principii active”: o „poezie în acțiune”, „bunul gust” și „ucenicia”.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *soma-estetică, stil de viață, performativitate, gust, muncă, creație.*

## 1. Introduction

La situation des intellectuels qui ont débuté entre les deux guerres et qui ont été forcés par le changement du régime politique à redéfinir leurs choix et leur formule reste un des problèmes les plus complexes de la culture roumaine au XXe siècle. Car il ne s'agit pas seulement d'une reconversion en fonction des exigences de la propagande communiste. Parfois, l'atmosphère de libéralisation des années '70 a pu encourager la reprise des préoccupations esthétiques, le renouement avec certaines traditions de la culture entre les deux guerres. C'est la survivance de ces thèmes et d'une réflexion élaborée dans un tout autre climat intellectuel qui m'intéresse : les mutations qui ont permis le transfert des valeurs esthétiques dans le contexte communiste.

Le cas de Ion Biberi, auteur presque oublié aujourd'hui, est l'un des plus intéressants. Médecin, pratiquant la psychiatrie, il est l'auteur de quatre volumes littéraires, dont un seul est retenu par l'histoire de la littérature roumaine : *Proces* (*Le Procès*), qui date de 1935. Il est réputé comme le premier roman qui importe dans la culture roumaine les techniques joyciennes. En outre, il est l'auteur de plusieurs essais qui mobilisent des éléments de philosophie, de psychologie ou de l'histoire de l'art, dans une réflexion dont la vocation est fondamentalement esthétique: *Individualitate și destin* (*Individualité et destin*), en 1945 (la première variante avait été publiée en feuilleton en 1936); *Thanatos*, en 1936; *Bruegel, ciudatul* (*Bruegel, l'étrange*), publié en 1940, et repris en 1967 comme préface d'un album Bruegel (« l'étrange » ne figurait plus dans le titre). Il faut situer ces préoccupations dans le contexte intellectuel des années '20 et '30 en Roumanie, à une époque où l'obsession de l'authenticité et la philosophie de l'expérience (qui ont constitué une variante autochtone de l'existentialisme connue sous le nom de la « génération '27 ») s'entrecroisent avec une réflexion centrée sur l'engagement actif dans la réalisation des latences inscrites dans la vie commune et individuelle. Dans ce sens, on doit mentionner les théories de C. Rădulescu-Motru sur la vocation et

sur l'accomplissement du destin collectif<sup>2</sup>. Après les années de silence imposée par l'instauration du régime communiste en Roumanie<sup>3</sup>, I. Biberi revient avec de nouveaux titres : *Poezia, mod de existență* (*La poésie, mode d'existence*), en 1968, *Arta de a trăi* (*L'art de vivre*), en 1970, et *Arta de a scrie și a vorbi în public* (*L'art d'écrire et de parler en public*), en 1971.

Constant sur le parcours de cette réflexion esthétique, qui se déploie de cette manière sur plus que 30 ans, reste le sens élargi accordé au style : I. Biberi le suit dans l'espace de la vie, le définit comme « formule de vie ». Qui plus est, la perspective dans laquelle il discute le style est physiologique ; c'est en effet sa préoccupation pour la corporalité qui l'amène vers l'esthétisation de la vie. L'attention au somatique, telle qu'il la pratique, a comme support théorique des lectures faites entre les deux guerres, dans le champ également de la recherche psychologique (la théorie des émotions de James-Lange) et de la recherche littéraire (l'hypothèse de Frédéric Paulhan sur la force suggestive des mots, la définition du cliché et du proverbe chez Jean Paulhan). C'est à ce fragile noyau théorique que restent tributaires ses réflexions des années '70. Comme il ne s'agit ni d'une théorie du beau, ni d'une théorie de l'art, mais de la perception du style dans les expériences de la vie, ces textes de I. Biberi ont été jusqu'à présent complètement ignorés. C'est, en revanche, justement ce qui les rend intéressants dans le climat réflexif contemporain, qui conçoit les expériences esthétiques en continuité avec les expériences diverses des autres pratiques de la vie, cherchant non pas à les distinguer de celles-ci, mais à les confondre.

L'esthétique pragmatiste, telle que la définit Richard Shusterman, est un instrument qui peut s'avérer utile pour la description de l'interprétation que Biberi donne aux valences esthétiques de l'expérience corporelle. La formule d'une philosophie incarnée, ce que Shusterman appelle *soma-esthétique*, est, certes, le « domaine » qui puisse le mieux encadrer la recherche menée par I. Biberi sur les pratiques du corps et le façonnement de soi à travers la corporalité : « La soma-esthétique peut être définie à titre provisoire comme l'étude critique – fondée sur la recherche de la perfection – des expériences et de l'utilisation du corps envisagé comme lieu de l'appréciation sensori-esthétique (*aisthesis*) et de l'auto-façonnement créateur. Elle est par conséquent également consacrée au savoir, aux discours, aux pratiques et aux disciplines corporelles qui structurent

<sup>2</sup> Voir C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Rasa, cultura și naționalitatea* (*La race, la culture et la nationalité*, 1922) ; *Vocația, factor hotărâtor în cultura popoarelor* (*La Vocation, facteur décisif dans la culture des peuples*, 1932) ; *Timp și destin* (*Temps et destin*, 1940) ; *Etnicul românesc. Comunitate de origine, limbă și destin* (*L'ethnique roumain. Communauté d'origine, de langue et de destin*, 1942).

<sup>3</sup> Il s'agit du caractère exclusiviste de la politique culturelle du Parti Communiste Roumain entre 1948, l'année de son instauration, et 1953 (la mort de Stalin). Pas seulement l'activité dans les maisons des éditions, mais également celle dans les rédactions des journaux et des revues, comme aussi l'administration des théâtres sont entrées sous un contrôle idéologique sévère. C'est pourquoi la décennie 5 dans la culture roumaine manque, pratiquement, de références culturelles valables. (voir Cristian Vasile, *Literatura și artele în România comunistă (1948-1953)*, Bucarest, Humanitas, 2013).

cette attention portée au somatique ou qui sont susceptibles de l'améliorer »<sup>4</sup>. Nous trouvons surtout utile, afin de comprendre les déplacements internes qui se produisent dans la pensée de I. Biberi entre les années 30 et les années 70, la distinction que fait Shusterman entre une *soma-esthétique analytique* – et une *soma-esthétique pragmatique*. Pendant que la première décrit un état esthétique existant, tout en informant sur les normes et les principes qui règlent son fonctionnement (« comment les normes corporelles de santé, de l'adresse, de la beauté, et même ces catégories très élémentaires que sont le genre et le sexe, sont élaborés afin de refléter et de maintenir les forces sociale »<sup>5</sup>), la deuxième s'occupe à établir un ensemble de principes au caractère prescriptif, qui peuvent enduire eux-mêmes la fabrication d'un état soma-esthétique (« en suggérant des méthodes spécifiques pour l'amélioration du somatique et en s'engageant dans la critique comparative de ces méthodes, possède un caractère clairement normatif et prescriptif »<sup>6</sup>).

## 2. Une « soma-esthétique » des années '30

Quelles sont, très brièvement, les caractéristiques de la conception esthétique élaborée par I. Biberi dans les années '30 ? Comme l'indique explicitement le titre du volume de 1945, l'accent se met à cette époque-là sur l'individualité. I. Biberi se propose de décrire le processus de singularisation de l'individu créateur, veut identifier une « substance » humaine irréductible, à travers un examen des profondeurs. Retiré dans la « coquille » de son propre existence, solitaire, soustrait à toutes les influences sociales, l'individu se révélerait dans ce qu'il a de plus singulier, dans son unicité. « Le but de notre démarche est de comprendre l'être humain dans *l'unité centrale de sa vie*, au-delà de ses apparences occasionnelles et insignifiantes. On aspire, en d'autres mots, à obtenir une méthode de creuser l'individualité humaine jusqu'à son essence la plus intime et solitaire » (*I*, 71)<sup>7</sup>. C'est justement cette « essence » qui est recherchée par Biberi dans les réflexions corporelles, purement biologiques – dans la sphère somatique. La stylistique de l'individualité se lie de cette façon, étroitement, chez l'auteur du *Procès*, à l'expressivité corporelle. Le processus de formation de l'individualité est suivi dans la « dynamique corporelle », dans le « mouvements actifs de l'être » (*I*, 294). L'identifier, implique tout un ensemble de

<sup>4</sup> Richard Shusterman, *Conscience du corps. Pour une soma-esthétique*, traduit de l'anglais par Nicolas Vieillescazes, Paris-Tel Aviv, Editions de l'éclat, 2007, p. 63. Voir aussi pour une exposition synthétique de la proposition de Shusterman : R. Shusterman, *Thinking through the Body, Educating for the Humanities: A Plea for Somaesthetics*, in "The Journal of Aesthetic Education", Vol. 40, No. 1 (Spring, 2006), pp. 1-21.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 70.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 71.

<sup>7</sup> La traduction de tous les extraits des textes de I. Biberi nous appartient.

« méthodes de stylisation », qui faciliterait l'épuration de tout ce que les corps ont de « variable, de surajouté, d'insignifiant, de circonstanciel » (I, 246). I. Biberi appelle *Figure*<sup>8</sup> cette « forme inébranlable », obtenue par « l'élimination des données contingentes et variables du visage » (I, 246). Il lui oppose la *face* – comprise comme expressivité changeante, instable, qui « reflète la modélisation de la sociabilité ». Pendant que l'existence sociale falsifie l'individu, lui induisant des mouvements corporels qui ne le représente pas et dont la gamme des possibilités reste infinie – l'existence solitaire lui révélerait la forme stable, qui serait la seule authentique, non-truquée. « On doit distinguer l'expression mobile et variée de l'acteur, qu'est chaque homme social, et qui se fait en fonction de la circonstance ou du personnage interprété – et le besoin de constance, fixe, vraie, que révèle l'individu solitaire et sincère avec soi-même » (I, 246).

Cependant, la direction que suit la recherche du théoricien roumain est justement la contraire. Habitué par sa formation médicale plutôt aux analyses de cas qu'aux réflexions générales, Biberi constate bientôt que, projetée dans la sphère des essences, l'individuation est, en réalité, un processus qui s'illustre seulement sur la surface du corps. Et que, loin de rendre nécessaire l'éloignement de la communauté, elle suppose, tout au contraire, l'existence sociale comme une condition obligatoire. Ce détournement du raisonnement a pour I. Biberi deux causes bien différentes. D'une part, il s'agit du fait que « l'essence » irréductible de l'être retiré de la société ne se laisserait perçue que pendant le sommeil (parce que « Le sommeil efface la mobilité et la masque de la physionomie et annule tout ce qui tient du social et du contingent, révélant la *Figure* ». I, 249) ; mais, surtout, devient-elle visible sous le masque mortuaire. Or, ces formes essentialisées d'expressivité corporelle ne sont plus du corps vivant. En conséquence, elles sont difficiles à intégrer dans ce que Biberi appelait « unité centrale de vie ». D'autre part, il s'agit du fait que la *forme* individuelle, une fois qu'elle avait été définie dans la sphère somatique, ne pourrait s'apercevoir *que* de l'extérieur (« l'unité de l'individualité est perceptible *uniquement* de l'extérieur, à travers sa forme ». I, 30). La surprendre, fera donc nécessaire une exposition du corps sur sa surface.

Pour toutes ces raisons, à la reprise du texte, en 1945, Biberi transforme la *Figure*<sup>9</sup> dans l'unique ressource de la stylisation de l'individu. Sa nouvelle aspiration sera, à ce moment-là, d'établir un classificateur exhaustif de ces expressivités éphémères, qui comprennent les mouvements instinctuels, l'expression des émotions et les conduites. Il les suivra de manière analytique, non seulement au niveau du visage, mais également sur les yeux, le nez, les chevilles, les poignets et le

<sup>8</sup> Les termes roumains pour ce couple conceptuel sont *Chip* (traduit par *Figure*) et *față* (traduit par *face*).

<sup>9</sup> Dans la première variante de ce texte, celle de 1936, sur la position de la *Figure* apparaissait la « masque » (le titre premier du texte était d'ailleurs *Masques et destins*). Cela montre à quel degré I. Biberi percevait, tout au début, cette forme instable d'expressivité, comme se situant dans la proximité d'une performance de type théâtral, avec tout ce qu'elle implique de négatif : fausseté, superficialité, « simple jeu », manque d'authenticité, etc.

corps dans son entier. « L'observateur pourra distinguer [...] des actions originales, nouvelles, destinées à répondre à des conditions uniques de vie, ou à construire à chaque moment un « personnage » social, qui doit *cacher* la vraie structure individuelle, qui *ne veut pas se révéler* dans sa vérité ultime » (I, 299). Cependant, aucune de ces expressions faciales ou corporelles ne sera pas considérée en elle-même comme définitoire pour l'individualité. Elles feront nécessaire une opération de totalisation. I. Biberi parlera d'une « unité totalisante de forme », qui se constitue à travers la mise ensemble de cette multiplicité expressive ; ou, autre part, d'un principe de « corrélation des formes » ou d'une « somme des visages ». Ce qu'il appelle la « personnalité totale » sera le résultat d'une telle opération totalisante. Important de souligner est justement le fait qu'il s'agit d'une « somme », d'une « corrélation » ou d'une « totalisation » qu'on ne doit pas confondre avec une procédure d'unification. Chacune de ces opérations fait possible, à sa manière, la maintenance de la particularité et de la différence des termes qui composent la série.

Le style individuel, comme style d'une telle « personnalité totale », se constitue de cette façon dans le jeu des réactions corporelles éphémères : à travers les réponses circonstancielles, provisoires et changeantes, provoquées par les interactions sociales. La manière la plus propre de représenter une telle succession expressive en variation infinie est le rythme. « Chaque individu imprime à ses mouvements un *rythme* et une nuance particulière, qui peuvent servir à sa définition et à son identification » (I, 303) ; « Gesticulant, l'être dessine en l'air sa *rythmique biologique* » (I, 332). Le « rythme propre » de l'individu se constitue ainsi, à son tour, comme la somme de son expressivité somatique. C'est justement ce qu'il faut comprendre par « formule de vie » : « Au moment où, suite à l'examen approfondi d'un sujet, on arrive à définir la caractéristique de ses mouvements sous rapport rythmique, on peut dire que nous avons surpris sa *formule de vie* » (I, 312). Qui plus est, défini en tant que rythme organique, comme rythme du sang, le « rythme du style propre » illustre d'une manière absolue le principe de la non-répétabilité. « Il n'y a pas, dans le régime biologique, des rythmes uniformes et régulières, mais seulement des oscillations et des irrégularités » (Th, 102).

### 3. Une « soma-esthétique » des années '70

Au début des années 70, l'intérêt de I. Biberi quitte l'individu, pour s'attacher à la collectivité. Il s'intéresse cette fois aux formes d'expressivité communautaires. Le cadre de la réflexion reste pourtant stable (la soma-esthétique), tout en suivant, cette fois, le rythme biologique du corps social. Il s'agit de la capacité de la masse humaine de sentir un état de « plénitude », de se laisser pénétrer par le « tumulte de la vie anonyme ». Le corps collectif ne constitue pourtant point l'objet d'une réalité donnée, existante (et par conséquence, il n'arrive plus à être décrit à travers un processus analytique). On a affaire à une réalité corporelle qui sera instituée dans l'avenir et qui rend

nécessaire un processus d'éducation sensorielle. Dans les termes de Shusterman, il s'agirait d'une soma-esthétique pragmatique. Le théoricien essaie de constituer un ensemble de principes normatifs qui puissent assurer le ramassement de la collectivité et les cadres de l'expérience commune : des principes qui arrivent à gérer l'éducation de la foule, afin d'obtenir de sa part une réaction à l'unisson. Biberi appelle cette manifestation émotionnelle partagée – « état de foule », ou « témoignage de foule », ou « état poétique de foule » (P, 34), ou « acte extatique de foule » (P, 31), ou, encore, « tension émotive de foule » (P, 33).

Comme premier instrument qui fasse possible une telle éducation, il indique les discours de la littérature. Il renvoie au texte de Fr. Paulhan<sup>10</sup> (qui faisait une de ses références récurrentes entre les deux guerres), tout en le complétant avec les idées de Jean Paulhan<sup>11</sup> sur la force des mots et leur capacité de changer l'ordre du réel. A partir de ces lectures, Biberi esquisse une catégorie des « mots puissants » ou des « mots en action » – à qui il délègue la mission d'une suggestion collective.

Trois sont, selon lui, les catégories de mots « actifs », capables d'instrumenter un processus collectif de suggestion : dans *Poezia, mod de existență* – ce sont les mots de la poésie ; dans *Arta de a scrie și a vorbi în public* – ce sont les mots de l'orateur ; dans *Arta de a trăi* – ce sont les mots de la littérature lue publiquement, à haute voix. Ce qui est commun dans sa manière d'imaginer ces trois formes de discours performatif est la présence physique simultanée, dans le même espace, de celui qui produit les mots et de leur destinataire.

Pour l'orateur, la « qualité » de cette présence corporelle compterait dès le début plus que le message transmis : « Comme il parle de tout le corps, impliquant sa personnalité entière – qui, bien que formée au four et à mesure, devient *actuelle* dans le moment de la parole publique – l'orateur confère dynamisme à son discours, lui induit force de convaincre et d'irradier, ainsi que *présence* » (Asv, 150). Par sa (simple) implication physique, l'orateur se voit déjà assurée la condition nécessaire pour la production d'une forme participative de discours ; à son auditeur, il transmet un pathos, qu'il partage avec la salle. La réussite du discours oratoire est atteinte au moment où les mots arrivent à être en mesure égale un produit du rhéteur et de son public. Les deux « parties humaines » doivent se rencontrer dans une émotion commune, qui soit également source et effet du discours. (« La communication verbale de l'orateur est conditionnée par la psychologie collective, est une *manifestation actuelle de foule* » (Asv, 153). La valeur active des mots prononcés par l'orateur (leur « actualité vive », leur « présence immédiate ») viendrait de la capacité qu'ont ces mots de créer un effet émotionnel unificateur, dont la nature est en même temps physiologique et psychologique, et qui se produit obligatoirement dans la présence des corps qui seront affectés.

<sup>10</sup> Fr. Paulhan, *La double fonction du langage*, Paris, Félix Alcan, 1928.

<sup>11</sup> Jean Paulhan, *Les Fleurs de Tarbes ou la Terre dans les Lettres*, Paris, Gallimard, 1941.

En fonction du même critère, I. Biberi distingue entre la lecture à haute voix et la lecture solitaire. C'est toujours l'émotion engagée qui fait la différence. Impliquant une communauté qu'elle présentifie, la lecture à haute voix agit dans le sens d'une transformation émotionnelle à unisson de la communauté respective. Elle produit une « massification » des individus présents (tandis que la lecture silencieuse engage une émotion singulière, non-partageable, comprise dans le « rythme intérieur »), tout en leur infusant un rythme gestuel commun : c'est-à-dire, tout en les entraînant dans un mouvement d'esthétisation collectif. C'est pourquoi Biberi prévoit la lecture publique comme un exercice obligatoire de l'éducation civique : elle va de pair avec l'éducation esthétique et augmente la conscience du corps.

En ce qui concerne la poésie, pour devenir à son tour source d'une telle « massification », elle rend nécessaire la descente aux origines – à la poésie chantée, aux incantations magiques, aux formules verbales qui fonctionnaient dans les cultes des morts ou dans ceux de la fertilité. La poésie contemporaine devrait absolument refaire, d'après I. Biberi, le lien avec ses valences magiques originaires et avec sa fonction incantatoire. Au « poète des masses » des années 70, on lui recommande de suivre le modèle du poète primitif, qui, parlant au milieu de sa communauté, produisait de manière spontanée un texte qui le reflétait non pas dans sa singularité, mais précisément dans ce moment de présence (discursive et corporelle) qu'il partageait avec l'auditoire. Comme pour le poète ancestral de la tribu, la fonction qui revient au poète contemporain serait de « suggestionner » un discours des autres, tout en le proférant au nom des autres ; qu'il devienne incarnation d'un discours qui le dépasse. La présence du poète au milieu de la communauté se charge de cette manière d'une signification plus profonde que dans la représentation des lectures publiques. Elle ne conditionne pas seulement l'usage de la poésie (« poésie en présence », poésie descendue dans la rue), mais rend nécessaire, également, la reprise d'une manière spécifique de production. Afin de devenir « poésie active », ou « poésie d'action », – la poésie sociale des années 70 avait besoin d'un poète qui use de sa présence corporelle au milieu de la foule pour suggestionner la production d'un texte commun : avait besoin d'un poète qui exploite ses ressources émotionnelles afin de produire une émotion collective qui soutient, elle, à peine, la génération du discours poétique. C'est dans ce sens-là que la poésie devient chez Biberi un « état de foule » : « Etant un fait vécu, faisant partie d'un contexte ritualisé, d'un cérémonial complexe, qui comporte souvent des chansons, des danses, des masques, des tatouages et la peinture des corps des participants, ce qui donne à la poésie le caractère d'une représentation théâtrale, elle n'arrive plus à être distinguée d'un *état de foule* » (P, 54).

### ***Le « bon goût » et la communauté joyeuse***

I. Biberi va d'un pas plus loin dans sa réflexion. Il dépasse ce niveau concret des mécanismes (discursifs) qui produisent l'esthétisation collective de la vie, vers

la définition d'un principe général. Il appelle ce principe le « bon goût ». Certes, il ne s'agit pas du « bon goût » tel qu'on le connaît. C'est, encore une fois, une définition élargie (At, 144). On ne ferait pas preuve de « bon goût » seulement « devant un tableau ou devant un texte littéraire », mais, également, dans les expériences banales de la vie quotidienne : devant les vitrines d'un magasin ou dans la manière de s'habiller. Entre les deux contextes esthétiques, celui restreint de l'art et celui élargi de la vie, Biberi introduit une différence qui va jusqu'à l'opposition. Dans la sphère de l'art, le *bon goût* est défini en tant que « attitude » : c'est un principe passif, édifié sur l'admiration. Dans le domaine de la vie, le *bon goût* est, par contre, une « aptitude » (At, 145) – c'est-à-dire un principe actif, qui oblige à l'action. « En vrai, le *bon goût* n'est pas seulement l'*attitude passive* ; il constitue une incitation à l'activité, selon un certain critère. A peine considéré sous ce double aspect, il laisse deviner son importance dans la vie individuelle et sociale. Le *bon goût* ne se voit pas uniquement dans le choix d'un habit, mais aussi dans la confection de celui-ci. Le client qui choisit une paire de chaussures apprécie implicitement le *bon goût* du spécialiste qui avait inventé le modèle et le *bon goût* de l'artisan qui l'avait exécuté » (At, 145). On se rend compte, dans ces phrases, de la rapidité avec laquelle on passe de la définition « active » du *bon goût* – à la représentation du processus de production des biens matériels. Cela implique, évidemment, un déplacement, tout aussi rapide, du *goût*, vers le domaine du travail. Par le même geste associatif, I. Biberi reconstitue le rapport conditionnant avec une communauté. Une fois opéré en fonction du goût, le choix d'un objet utilitaire crée un *lien* entre celui qui utilise l'objet – celui qui l'a inventé – et celui qui l'a produit. De cette manière, le goût figure les trois personnes comme une petite communauté virtuelle. Qui plus est, ce n'est pas n'importe quelle sorte de communauté ; mais une communauté affective. L'objet ne passe pas tout simplement d'un individu à l'autre. Ce n'est pas sa valeur de circulation qui intéresse. Mais le fait que pour chacune de ces personnes, il devient source d'un « état ». L'objet induit un état de « contentement », un « état heureux », un « état joyeux ». Chacun des trois le vit séparément, mais, par leur mise en réseau, leur état devient « commun », et, du coup – « état de foule ». « S'établit une *correspondance* de sympathie et de solidarité sociale, guidée par le critère du beau, qui dépasse, tout en l'impliquant, le simple acte marchand d'acheter un habit » (At, 145).

On arrive de cette façon à la représentation d'une communauté qui se constitue *esthétiquement* par l'intermède d'un travail déployé dans l'espace de la vie quotidienne. « Le critère du *bon goût*, en apparence purement subjectif, avec référence exclusive à une catégorie humaine restreinte, a, en réalité, une signification sociale très étendue : celui qui a choisi une paire de chaussures qui lui *plaît*, établissant, de cette manière, un accord entre le *bon goût* et le goût de celui qui a réalisé les chaussures, les met à pied avec *contentement* ; il fait, en même temps, *plaisir*, au passant inconnu qu'il croise sur la rue. S'établit un climat psychologique général de *satisfaction* et une émulation des gens, par



leur simple mode de se comporter et de s'habiller » (*At*, 145). « Satisfaite » et « joyeuse », la communauté de goût, telle que la figure I. Biberi, continue à être, par tout ceci, l'objet d'une représentation somatique.

### *Sur l'apprentissage*

Après avoir développé – par le « pouvoir des mots » – l'instrument discursif pour obtenir la « massification » des formes de vie individuelles, après avoir défini, par le *bon goût*, le principe général de cette massification, I. Biberi arrive à décrire effectivement le processus éducatif d'une telle « formation esthétique », en tant qu'*apprentissage*. Le rôle de celui-ci serait double : d'une part, de « former la personnalité » ; de l'autre part, « d'organiser le travail ». Les syntagmes y sont, déjà, de la langue en bois communiste. Néanmoins, I. Biberi continue de les investir d'un sens personnel. Qu'est-ce que veut dire, pour lui, « formation de la personnalité » et « organisation du travail » ?

*L'apprentissage* est le cadre qui rend possible la reprise de la même opération jusqu'au moment où elle se transforme en « habitude » ; jusqu'à l'automatisme. Il donne l'occasion d'essayer comme de simples « exercices » (pris dans un cadre encore non-lucratif) – les gestes qui deviendront plus tard essentiels et définitoires pour le travail. C'est dans ce sens-là que l'*apprentissage* devient constitutif pour la personnalité (suivie toujours à un niveau somatique). L'exercice repris induit un « rythme » du travail futur, qui est, du premier moment, un « rythme » caractérisant de l'individu. « Sous un certain aspect, la vie signifie répétition, passage des certaines activités – qui, tout au début, comportaient des tâtonnements, des incertitudes et des efforts – à des compétences automatisées. La continuité et la persévérance dans l'effort offrent l'expression d'un lois à la fois physiologique et psychologique, et deviennent la base de n'importe quelle activité lucrative » (*At*, 98). D'un autre côté, la familiarisation avec un tel „rythme” facilite cette fois non pas la définition singularisée de l'individu (comme c'était le cas entre les deux guerres), mais la possibilité de l'individu de s'accorder au rythme du corps professionnel auquel il va se rallier par son travail. Une bonne « organisation du travail » allait être assurée justement par le geste de se rythmer ensemble qui, longuement exercé, arrive à synchroniser parfaitement le corps individuel et le corps collectif. Toute aussi importante qu'avait été le principe de la variation pour la constitution du style personnel, se prouve maintenant être, pour la constitution du corps social, le principe de la répétition.

Certes, une telle orientation amène à un changement radical de perspective sur la définition et les possibilités de la création. Répéter la même opération jusqu'à ce qu'elle devienne un automatisme qui ne sollicite aucunement la conscience équivaut avec l'annulation, dans le geste, de toute déviation, et, en même temps, de tout investissement subjectif et particularisant. C'est opérer, en effet, une réduction extrême de la gesticulation. La « perfection » du geste est pour

Biberi atteinte au moment de l'ultime dés - individualisation, de la sortie définitive de soi-même pour la rencontre avec le « commun ». Et les choses se passent de la même manière dans toutes les professions, depuis le travailleur dans l'usine jusqu'au « travailleur intellectuel » : « la sûreté des mouvements du patineur ou de la dactylographe, la précision de l'accomplissement du travail au tour, la virtuosité du pianiste, la rapidité de l'écriture sténographique, le calme du chirurgien qui forme et « entretient » sa main par des opérations journalières, la formation au four et à mesure d'une *habitude* manuelle, d'une manière de penser et de se comporter qui sont spécifiques à chaque profession – qu'elle soit manuelle, intellectuelle ou artistique – sont le résultat d'un effort prolongé et repris sans interruption » (At, 98). La forme de création associée à une telle perfection n'est point basée sur l'innovation ; n'implique aucune découverte. Elle est, tout au contraire, une activité stéréotypée, fondée sur la répétition. C'est pourquoi une telle création se revendique elle-même du domaine de l'« organisation du travail ». N'est qu'une simple question de discipline. « Dans l'activité humaine, l'inspiration géniale et la création sont bâties sur l'automatisme ; habitude et nouveauté, activité stéréotypée et résultat créatif se conditionnent, dans le sens que la création dépasse l'automatisme, se l'approprie, mais sans l'annuler » (At, 103). Dans la conceptualisation de l'*apprentissage*, Biberi ne fait, de cette manière, que transposer, dans son propre système de représentations, les principes de base de l'éducation communiste : le travail, l'effort comme nécessité de toute création, le « salut » accordé à l'individu par son travail, etc.

#### 4. Conclusions

Pour synthétiser, on peut dire que, après avoir exploré, entre les deux guerres, les possibilités d'un rythme de l'infinie variation, qu'il considérait définitoire pour la constitution du corps individuel – I. Biberi essaie, les années 70, la définition d'un rythme répétitif, qu'il croit nécessaire (voire obligatoire) pour la constitution d'un corps collectif unifié et harmonieux. Il associe le rythme variable à une création comprise comme forme originelle de l'art ; tandis que le rythme répétitif et monotone devient propre à une création conçue comme *travail*. Les cadres de la réflexion restent sur tout le parcours ceux d'une soma-esthétique. Avec cette différence importante que la valeur unique de l'émotion individuelle cède la place à une émotion collective et partagée – commune et monotone. Sous le totalitarisme, la répétition et ses mécanismes deviennent obsédantes pour I. Biberi : l'instrument que lui offre « le pouvoir des mots » doit son efficacité à la valeur répétitive et conventionnelle des formules verbales ; le *bon goût* fait apparaître la sympathie entre les individus parce qu'ils se reconnaissent les uns dans les autres, se ressemblent et se « correspondent » ; l'*apprentissage* suit la reprise du geste qui induit le rythme du travail et qui, par

répétition, devient définitoire pour l'individu au même moment où il l'est pour la communauté lucrative qui l'intègre.

Ce qui se voit clairement dans une telle réflexion est la manière dans laquelle un instrument esthétique a été impliqué dans une représentation de type politique. La possibilité d'esthétiser une existence collective est spéculée ici comme moyen pour obtenir une « massification » de la population. En effet, I. Biberi fait de la *suggestion des mots* et du *goût* – des instruments de l'idéologie. Son retour à l'esthétique ne doit pas se confondre avec l'option habituelle de l'intellectuel communiste, qui décide de se retirer de la vie politique pour s'enfermer dans une réflexion esthétique autiste. C'est, à l'extrême opposée, le comportement de quelqu'un qui essaye d'instrumentaliser l'esthétique en vue d'une action sociale. Ce qui ne veut pas dire qu'on aurait affaire avec autre chose qu'une utopie d'intellectuel, qui continue de croire, dans un monde qui avait changé ses règles de réalité pendant la nuit – qu'il puisse encore s'y adapter.

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### Abréviations:

- I* – Biberi, *Individualitate și destin*.
- Th* – Biberi, *Thanatos*.
- P* – Biberi, *Poezia, mod de existență*.
- Asv* – Biberi, *Arta de a scrie și a vorbi în public*.
- At* – Biberi, *Arta de a trăi*.

## LA CULTURE – « UNE FORME DE RÉSISTANCE » CONTRE LE RÉGIME TOTALITAIRE ROUMAIN

LEONTINA COPACIU<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *Culture – “a Form of Resistance” against Romanian Totalitarianism.*

Based on the volume *Memories in Dialogue*, the study examines the training process of Matei Calinescu – in early stages – as a literary theorist, considering the political and the social context in which the critic was formed; the role of culture as a parallel universe, seen as a compensation in building a cultural identity in the era of socialist totalitarianism, namely counter-current reading and criticism as a solution vs. “a replica” to reality.

**Key-words:** *cultural identity, collective conscious, counter-current reading.*

**REZUMAT.** *Cultura – „o formă de rezistență” împotriva regimului totalitar românesc.*

Pornind de la volumul de memorii *Amintiri în dialog*, acest studiu analizează procesul de formare – în fazele incipiente/ de început – ca teoretician literar a lui Matei Călinescu, având în vedere: contextul politic și social în care criticul s-a format; rolul culturii ca univers paralel/ „compensativ” în construirea unei identități culturale în epoca totalitarismului socialist; respectiv, lectura contra-curent și critica ca soluție vs. „replică” la realitate.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *identitate culturală, conștient colectiv, lectură contra-curent.*

*Souvenirs en dialogue* représentent une autobiographie surprenante par sa capacité de reconstruire le parcours des destins individuels et le profil de ces années sombres et difficiles à comprendre (les années '48-'89) qui ont marqué un changement au niveau historique pour la plupart des gens. La création de ce dialogue autobiographique a été déterminée par une nécessité aiguë de compréhension, de communication, de refuser le silence et la façon de vivre ambiguë. Les mémoires contiennent des reconstructions de thèmes de réflexions sur les situations personnelles et sociales où ont été formés dans la Roumanie communiste les deux auteurs, qui appartiennent à la génération, éparpillée partout dans le monde, des intellectuels formés dans le régime totalitaire.

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Le dialogue est marqué par les avertissements et les interpellations : « je souhaite peindre l'histoire de l'amitié avec toi, Matei »<sup>2</sup> ; « Te souviens-tu de tout cela ? »<sup>3</sup>. Ainsi, *Souvenirs en dialogue* devient un jeu d'échecs des souvenirs, un dialogue épistolaire explicite à travers lequel le lecteur implicite, ayant une identité diffuse, se transforme dans un « tu » réel ; représente l'anamnèse commune de ces deux amis et la découverte de l'altérité par une amitié narrative, anecdotique, car ils ne parlent jamais l'un de l'autre, mais des « choses » communes. Il y a un temps de vivre et un temp de l'histoire, « du récit »<sup>4</sup>. Ci-dessous nous n'exposerons que le processus de formation - dans les phases initiales - de Matei Călinescu en tant que théoricien littéraire.

Le désir de Matei Călinescu de devenir critique littéraire se concrétise dans un monde totalitaire où l'être humain oscille entre l'acceptation de la réalité et son refus. La société dictatoriale roumaine ressemble à la société totalitaire dystopique, Océania, d'Orwell<sup>5</sup> où, le fait de provoquer la peur, la paranoïa aux gens, crée le contexte idéal pour prendre des mesures de sécurité extrême et « le texte déterminé par son contexte (historique, social, auctorial etc.) »<sup>6</sup>. Il s'éloigne de la réalité, en suivant le chemin onirique découvert en adolescence: une maison avec un toit vif « frémissant, fait de centaines d'oiseaux entassés l'un de l'autre, de centaines de colombes, prêts à prendre la fuite, à monter en flèche jusqu'au ciel », ayant la sensation d'une enfance éternelle, mythique - une *Arcadie* assiégée par le cauchemar de l'histoire, mais sans être touché par lui. *Et in Arcadia ego!* « Ah, si tu pouvais fermer ta gueule ! » c'est le conseil du père à son fils M. Călinescu et cela devient pour lui le début de l'apprentissage dans ce temps hostile durant lequel il était difficile d'échapper à la censure. En revanche, le double-langage utilisé pendant le totalitarisme conserve une certaine liberté.

Au début de leur formation, les intellectuels de cette période essaient de construire leur identité (de soi) par la culture. Voilà pourquoi, pendant le totalitarisme, la sagesse qui consiste à vivre à la croisée des livres et de la vie et, parmi les lettres, la terreur, la musique et les premières sensations érotiques correspond à leur désir de connaître le monde et son sens. Ainsi l'amitié culturelle de ces deux auteurs se caractérise par les discussions sur la philosophie de Nietzsche et Schopenhauer, par la musique de Wagner et Beethoven... C'est aussi l'époque marquée par la Naissance de la philosophie (de la vie). C'est l'âge d'or de l'amitié,

<sup>2</sup> Matei Călinescu, Ion Vianu, *Amintiri în dialog*, deuxième édition, Polirom, Iași, 1998, p.59.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p.77.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récit*, vol.I, *L'intrigue et le récit historique*, Seuil, Paris, 1983, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> George Orwell, *1984*, trad. de Mihnea Gafița, préface de Vladimir Tismăneanu, Polirom, Iași, 2002.

<sup>6</sup> Oana Fotache, *Divanul criticii. Discursuri asupra metodei în critica românească postbelică*, (*Discourses on the Method in Postwar Romanian Criticism*), Éd. Universității București, 2009, *passim*.

« musicale, profonde, pas dépourvue de crises dramatiques, de jalousies ou de rivalités, mais surtout de la célébration et en tant que telle intangible par la mesquinerie et par la laideur du quotidien » (*n.t.*)<sup>7</sup>.

Avec d'autres jeunes intellectuels, Ion Vianu et Matei Calinescu font partie d'une Société secrète, ayant la devise : « Nous sommes nous et personne d'autres ! »<sup>8</sup>. Le refus d'accepter n'importe quelle liaison, directe ou indirecte, avec le régime les met en opposition avec le règne de la terreur sous laquelle ils vivent. Les deux ont essayé de créer un univers parallèle/ compensatoire et deux identités : l'une privée et l'autre sociale, complètement étrangère à la réalité de ces années de russification stalinienne du pays. Selon Thomas Mann, le slogan *Il faut que les intellectuels agissent !* est mis en question,

« parce que toute expérience montre que l'intellectuel, transposé par la passion dans la réalité, vit au milieu de la fausseté, en se comportant mal, pareil à un dilettante malheureux, et subissant la dégradation humaine »<sup>9</sup>.

Dans une époque des interdictions violentes, la culture est l'univers parallèle et compensatoire, le livre « étant un témoin du sommeil et des insomnies, des luttes et des retraits, un aide et un ami » (Ion Vianu). « Les intellectuels préoccupés par la crise de la culture ont "une structure spirituelle" influencée par le "choc d'après-guerre" ou le communisme »<sup>10</sup>. Lire dans un monde totalitaire est presque l'équivalent de la lecture dans une prison – évidemment lorsque les gardiens le permettent. La lecture qui résulte est aussi rigoureuse, vigilante (les livres dignes d'être lus, qui sont relativement peu, sont soumis à une lecture profonde, intense), que projective – le lecteur projette dans le texte ses propres aspirations secrètes, ses propres désirs, pensées, théories. L'intérêt pour ce type de lecture est déterminé par la tension entre l'attention et la projection, entre le respect de la lettre et la tendance de voir dans le texte une expression allégorique du drame du lecteur. Si l'on suit cette tendance, nous pouvons dire que le texte lu – même celui le plus réaliste – est allégorisé, transformé en un texte ésotérique qui dévoile à l'initié toutes sortes de tanières que le non-initié ne peut pas soupçonner.

À cette époque hostile, la littérature était une forme de résistance qui donnait la possibilité de mouvement et de choix. Les lectures du futur théoricien littéraire correspondent à un âge différent, c'est-à-dire l'année scolaire, à savoir les vacances et le temps passé en école, chacun représentant deux types de

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<sup>7</sup> Matei Călinescu, Ion Vianu, deuxième édition, p.75.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p.76.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Mann, *Considérations d'un apolitique*, trad. de Jeanne Naujac, Paris, 1975, p.481.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Sloterdijk, *Critica rațiunii cinice (Critique of Cynical Reason)*, vol.I, trad. de Tinu Pârvulescu, Polirom, Iași, 2000, p.152.

lecture : une interdite, qui devient privée, secrète, avec un but constructif, cathartique et l'autre officielle, totalitaire, ayant un but éducationnel. Ce qui en ressort ainsi est la souffrance déterminée par une lecture imposée ou par l'absence de la lecture, en raison des interdictions dictées par la censure.

*Craii de Curtea-Veche (Les Princes de la vieille cour)*, de Mateiu Caragiale, se trouve parmi les livres préférés de Matei Călinescu parce que l'auteur du roman y configure la topographie imaginaire de la ville de Bucarest. Le lecteur retient aussi la théorie des princes sur le péché (qui) amène la purification. Les romans de Dostoïevski et les essais de Nietzsche, interdits en raison de leurs traits existentialistes et de l'engagement dans une réflexion sur la question de la liberté individuelle, sont envisagés par Matei Călinescu comme des livres essentiels, nécessairement mis à la base de la formation culturelle de l'être humain. En dernier lieu, il lit Marx, auteur naturellement agréé par le régime communiste. Sauf que la lecture de Matei Călinescu est une lecture à contre-courant, puisqu'il lit les œuvres de Marx d'une manière distante, ironique, voire hostile. De la sorte, ces lectures marxistes n'engendrent aucun effet pervers de « rééducation » et il n'y a aucune influence de Marx chez ce théoricien de la littérature.

Matei Călinescu décide de devenir critique puisque la critique est une réponse possible aux contraintes de la réalité! Selon Catherine Verdery, le contrôle politique dans un régime totalitaire est *symbolique-idéologique*<sup>11</sup>. En extrapolant le sens, la critique ou la théorie littéraire, de manière symbolique, constituent une menace pour tout régime politique répressif. « Le critique détermine un lecteur à lire un auteur d'un certain point de vue et à travers un état d'âme créé par lui »<sup>12</sup>. Tudor Vianu a exercé une grande influence sur Matei Călinescu, étant pour le dernier, jeune diplômé de la Faculté des Lettres, un modèle intellectuel – digne d'être suivi – à une époque totalitaire :

« Je me suis engagé sur le chemin du professionnalisme aussi apolitique que possible, avec un minimum de concessions idéologiques tactiques, justifiées par l'attente stratégique de la possibilité de réformer un système détesté - un système dont je ne voyais pas la moindre possibilité d'évasion et qui semblait irréversible et éternel » (*n.t.*)<sup>13</sup>.

Pour lui *la recherche est une forme de vie*, un mode de résistance contre le réalisme socialiste. À cette période il y a eu trois types d'institutions : la Critique qui se concrétise dans l'activité de la chronique littéraire ; la Recherche littéraire, spécifique au milieu universitaire et l'Institution pédagogique, ancrée dans

<sup>11</sup> Katherine Verdery, *Compromis și rezistență. Cultura română sub Ceaușescu, (National Ideology under Socialism; Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania)*, trad. de Mona Antohi, Humanitas, Bucarest, 1994, p.21.

<sup>12</sup> Emil Faguet, *Arta de a citi (L'art de lire)*, trad. de Lidia Cucu-Sadoveanu, Albatros, Bucarest, 1978, p.121.

<sup>13</sup> Matei Călinescu, Ion Vianu, deuxième édition, p.94.

l'enseignement préuniversitaire. Matei Călinescu sera connu en tant que théoricien littéraire dans un espace étranger à sa formation, mais propice, et ses études sont un fondement pour l'interprétation du « devenir » de la littérature roumaine.

Celui-ci se sent dégoûté par la politisation excessive staliniste de l'enseignement humaniste, mais, en dépit de tout cela, il n'a pas le courage nécessaire de renoncer à la littérature et ainsi il préfère faire des concessions au régime :

« La vérité c'est que moi-même je n'ai pas eu la chance d'être privé des raisons pour me mépriser, bien que leurs sources étaient diverses, publiques et non secrètes. Je me réfère ici à l'entrée dans la vie littéraire et aux concessions idéologiques conscientes, calculées que j'ai bien fait; des concessions qui semblaient à cette époque-là nécessaires pour pouvoir publier, mais qui en fait n'étaient pas » (*n.t.*)<sup>14</sup>.

Que signifie faire de la critique? Au niveau idéologique, une des conséquences de l'univers concentrationnaire communiste c'est la définition sévère des limites de l'imagination et de l'imaginable. L'imagination, c'est quoi? Au sens le plus élémentaire, c'est simplement la capacité de recréer l'image d'une réalité absente dans le champ de perception. Le souvenir c'est l'une des formes fondamentales de l'imagination. Dans ce contexte, ce qui est « inimaginable », ce qui ne peut pas être représenté est notamment une société civile et un monde « normales » :

« Dire quelque chose dans un système qui essayait de vider la langue de tout contenu vif, communiquer une vérité (personnelle et peut être partielle) dans un système fondé sur la dictature du mensonge, assurer la possibilité que la vérité survive - voilà ce qu'on exigeait à l'écrivain. L'éthique de l'acte critique était principalement une éthique de la lecture, qui définissait ses critères par le culte presque mystique des classiques (Gogol, Tolstoï, Dostoïevski, Tchekhov) » (*n.t.*)<sup>15</sup>.

Le problème éthique de l'exil et de l'auto-exil (par émigration légale ou pas) apparaissait comme un concours de circonstances heureuses. Par contre, concernant Matei Călinescu, c'était une forme d'évasion. Sa décision de ne jamais revenir dans le pays de l'enfer moral – c'est-à-dire la Roumanie – a été « un acte de bon sens et une option pour la normalité »<sup>16</sup>, conformément au théoricien littéraire. Le principal motif de départ à l'étranger c'était la sécurité de la vie quotidienne. En 1975, depuis son exil, Matei Călinescu discute avec Toma Pavel sur le caractère traumatique de la séparation du pays natal, de la langue et de la culture dans laquelle il a été formé; son identité américaine était dans un état embryonnaire (jusqu'en 1978).

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p.185.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p.220.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p.236.



« Je continuais à être roumain, en vertu de la transparente fatalité qui était la langue dont on pense, [...] la culture au sein de laquelle (et contre laquelle) on a été formé [...] l'impensable qu'on amène avec nous sans le savoir » (*n.t.*)<sup>17</sup>.

Celui-ci souhaite garder son ancienne identité roumaine, en essayant de la mieux comprendre et de la mettre en dialogue avec la nouvelle. L'histoire de la nouvelle identité (américaine) est celle d'une série de découvertes et de rencontres, ayant au centre les révélations de la relecture et, conformément au théoricien littéraire, de la relecture de soi en tant qu'acte spirituel, en tant que sagesse mélancolique et en tant que dévotion de soi à travers la vigilance.

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Dans un monde totalitaire hostile, dont la normalité est un simulacre préalablement défini, il est nécessaire de créer un univers parallèle et compensatoire. Dans ce contexte il s'agit de la culture et de la littérature en tant que forme de résistance face au régime répressif. Dans le cas de Matei Călinescu, la littérature et la critique ne sont jamais des formes d'exil intérieur, mais des symboles idéologiques utilisés contre l'idéologie officielle.

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p.279.

## TWO TYPES OF RESISTANCE TO THEORY

ADRIANA STAN<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *Two Types of Resistance to Theory.* This article analyzes the intellectual background and development of Matei Călinescu, Virgil Nemoianu, Toma Pavel and Sorin Alexandrescu, considering them from two viewpoints: of the Romanian critical canon and of Western theoretical models. The aims of the study are: to assess the chances to reform Romanian criticism at the end of the 60s; to outline the continuities between the Romanian and Western academic careers of the authors discussed; to underline their organicist and conservative stances against the background of Western academic-ideological trends.

**Key words:** *comparatism, linguistics, structuralism, exile, history of ideas.*

**REZUMAT.** *Două forme ale rezistenței la teorie.* Articolul de față analizează formarea și dezvoltarea intelectuală a lui Matei Călinescu, Virgil Nemoianu, Toma Pavel și Sorin Alexandrescu, din două perspective: a canonului critic românesc, respectiv a modelelor teoretice occidentale. Obiectivele studiului sunt: evaluarea șanselor de reformă a criticii românești de la sfârșitul anilor '60; relevarea continuităților dintre cariera academică românească și cea occidentală a autorilor discutați; aprecierea pozițiilor organiciste și conservatoare pe care ei le adoptă în raport cu modele academico-ideologice occidentale.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *comparatism, lingvistică, structuralism, exil, istoria ideilor.*

This paper is based on two older projects of research about Romanian literary studies between the 60s and the 80s, one of which dealt with the expansion of structuralism, while the other with Tudor Vianu's legacy. On both occasions I tackled, from various viewpoints, the case of a team of Romanian critics and theorists whose intellectual destiny, although deeply embedded in its native culture, only came to fruition in exile: Matei Călinescu, Toma Pavel, Virgil Nemoianu and Sorin Alexandrescu.

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They are part of what we might call the second wave of Romanian comparatists' and, largely, literary theorists' migration, preceded by an interwar (Basil Munteanu and Al. Ciorănescu) and followed by another post-war wave of exilés from the field (Marcel Corniș-Pop and Mihai Spăriosu). If we add the linguist and semiotician Sanda Golopenția, with her many literary contributions, to the four theorists mentioned above, we might say the image of the Romanian criticism of the 60s remains incomplete without this theory-oriented contingent of the generation that settled abroad (unfortunately before having the chance to fully take part in the history of Romanian post-war criticism). Pavel, Alexandrescu, Călinescu and Nemoianu left Romania between 1969 (the first) and 1974-1975 (the last two). Given the taboo upon exilés' names, they would almost vanish from the local critical map, apart from the rather clandestine circulation of M. Călinescu's books or the occasional dropped references (such as Manolescu's review on *The Taming of Romanticism*). Upon their post-1990 return to Romania, the exilés were received as international academic celebrities, rather than as "ours" wholly, even though they involved in many cultural debates of the 90s and published acclaimed volumes in Romanian. Of course, the problem of assimilation of exile writers in the history of Romanian literature extends way beyond the case of theorists analyzed here; unfortunately, as we know, the issue is still unsolved at a systemic level, but rather remains tangled in individual controversies.

Pavel, Alexandrescu, Călinescu and Nemoianu stand, however, as an illustrative case for a two-fold debate. In a first instance, we can see that the exact critical reasons that marginalized them in the Romanian criticism of the 60s were the ones to, on the other hand, ease their way in Western academic milieux. In a second instance, an in the bigger picture, we can observe that their intellectual development remained, to quite a remarkable extent, faithful to certain typically Romanian cultural reflexes or, at least, proved their gradual reassessment.

In this respect, the similarities between Pavel, Alexandrescu, Călinescu and Nemoianu are more relevant than the differences in their research topics or their writing styles. Of course, we should not forget their Romanian careers started from uneven standpoints within the local literary establishment. Matei Călinescu was the best situated of the four, not in the least due to the ideologized literary reviews he had written for a while. Holding editor, then academic positions and publishing frequently in literary journals, the young critic seemed likely to develop a career at least comparable to that of Nicolae Manolescu. Indeed, Matei Călinescu was a vocal participant to most critical debates of the 60s and showed adherence to principles held dear by his critical generation: by valuing creativity in criticism and pleading for artistic autonomy, the young critic appeared to lead, like many of his peers, on G. Călinescu's legacy. However, during the last part of the 60s, while working on his PhD research (which, interestingly enough, was coordinated by Cluj professor Liviu Rusu), Matei Călinescu started to

take distance from a critical milieu which was already functioning as a star-system. This evolution was hinted at once Călinescu joined *Family* critics in their plea to extend the comprehension of aesthetic value, the former fetish of the '65-'66 critical debates, towards an axiological dimension. But Călinescu's shift stood even clearer in the formula of his works from the beginning of the 70s – *The Modern Concept of Poetry* and *The European Classicism*: they practically reinvented the young researcher – formerly just a reviewer – in another, more complex register of critical writing. These studies saw Călinescu no longer practising text criticism, but a method reminding of his master Vianu which could be called archeology of literary notions, in both their history and synchronic typology. A couple of years later, this viewpoint of history of ideas would serve as the perfect intellectual ground once the critic moved to the States.

While Matei Călinescu stood for a while as one of his generation's upfront literary reviewers, Virgil Nemoianu, Sorin Alexandrescu and Toma Pavel were placed from the start on opposite sides of the literary field. In fact, they seemed to belong to a whole other caste entirely, from which viewpoint, as Nemoianu funnily wrote, "literary life barely looked like insects buzz"<sup>2</sup>. The critical generation of the 60s was divided institutionally in two groups, one working in research groups confined to university or academic institutes, the other enjoying a constant and visible public presence in literary journals. In fact, neither of Pavel, Nemoianu or Alexandrescu could have been considered a literary critic in the way Nicolae Manolescu was: none wrote literary reviews per se, but, at the most, intervened in methodological debates upon the state of criticism. Nemoianu and Alexandrescu taught at the University of Bucharest, (departments of English Literature, Comparative Literature respectively), while Toma Pavel worked as a researcher at the Linguistic Institute. Of course, most of what they published or chose to research (including the case of the linguist Pavel), had to do with literary criticism, which then stood as the prime and unavoidable genre in the Romanian intellectual scene. Moreover, a frequent publisher like Sorin Alexandrescu, as well as Virgil Nemoianu, also close to *Family* critics, managed to transgress the symbolic line between reviewers and academics, which our interwar literary culture had often enacted. But despite these, all three of them would fall outside the winning critical party during the famous debate on G. Călinescu's legacy.

Pavel, Nemoianu and Alexandrescu came from different backgrounds and worked in different fields of research. However, they shared a lesser emulation of local critical traditions, as embodied by Lovinescu and Călinescu, the two masters whose prestige was on the full rise in the mainstream critical discourse from the middle of the 60s. More indebted were they instead to Anglo-American New Criticism, Russian Formalism or West European Structuralism. Nemoianu, for

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<sup>2</sup> Virgil Nemoianu, *Arhipelag interior. Eseuri memorialistice*, Timișoara, Amarcord, 1994, p. 196.

instance, was both a pupil of the philosophically oriented Circle of Sibiu and an avid reader of Cl. Brooks, I.A. Richards or T.S. Eliot, in whose writings he praised the symbiosis of tradition and modernity and the moral-metaphysical aims of criticism. Pavel, but also Alexandrescu were highly learned in sciences of language and from this viewpoint they argued for a more objective literary study and for a rationalist critical paradigm. In consequence, all three young authors expressed their dissatisfaction with the aestheticizing/impressionist understanding of the aesthetic which was slowly becoming dominant in Romanian criticism post-cultural liberalization. Virgil Nemoianu considered "the current, reviewing" critical genre should be completed by "a specialized or comparative criticism" and by "an essayistic criticism tending to a philosophy of culture"<sup>3</sup>. Sorin Alexandrescu argued in similar terms for an enlargement of critical options, stating that the common alternative "aesthetic"-or-"sociological" should be completed by a "scientific, non-intuitive criticism"<sup>4</sup>. Toma Pavel, on the other hand, was even more vocal in pinpointing "the crowded forum of literary journals" or "the retarded snobbery of local literary criticism who discovers Croce and Thibaudet in the 60s"<sup>5</sup>. All these point to the fact that Pavel, Nemoianu and Alexandrescu were rather ill-at-ease in the Romanian critical milieu which had already become autonomous at the end of the 60s: on the one hand, they felt the then fashionable practice of textual criticism rather limiting (hence trying to shift towards the history of ideas, like Matei Călinescu and Virgil Nemoianu); on the other hand (the case of Toma Pavel and Sorin Alexandrescu), they felt they couldn't capitalize their theoretical background in the empiric and proudly anti-methodological trend advocated by G. Călinescu's followers.

But as already suggested, the two critical parties were uneven in terms of symbolic prestige and authority. This gave little chances for two competing critical paradigms to actually emerge from the incipient polemic. After all, Romanian aesthetic criticism's resistance to theory would have been hard to surpass in the 60s or even the 70s. The local critical community had more practical tasks then: to cement its own aesthetic autonomy, to counteract ideological dogmatism, to recover the previously censored literary tradition. The literary life of the time had to be accompanied and supported by a close, sympathetical criticism – not by a "transcendent theory"<sup>6</sup>, as claimed by Toma Pavel -, a criticism directly efficient in protecting literature and educating the public's aesthetic taste. The resistance to theory was doubled by a reluctance

<sup>3</sup> Virgil Nemoianu (și Sorin Alexandrescu), „Dialog despre critica literară”, *Familia*, 8, august, 1967, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Sorin Alexandrescu, Note la René Wellek, Austin Warren, *Teoria literaturii*, traducere Rodica Tiniș, studiu introductiv și note de Sorin Alexandrescu, București, Editura pentru Literatură Universală, 1967, p. 424.

<sup>5</sup> Toma Pavel, „Orientări în stilistica românească”, *Tomis*, 5, mai 1967, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Toma Pavel, „Critica literară sau «despre»”, *Tomis*, 7, iulie 1967, p. 7.

to any contextual, largely-cultural analysis (like the one Matei Călinescu and Virgil Nemoianu aimed at), since cultural investigation risked to fall into ideological traps. For these reasons, the four researchers were already mentally halfway out of Romania when they physically left it: Nemoianu and Pavel had not established themselves for their local peers beyond the status of aspiring critics, while Călinescu and Alexandrescu's critical profile and formula were still in full process of renegotiation.

So Călinescu, Nemoianu and Pavel took their chance to settle in North America, while Alexandrescu remained in the Netherlands. Their exile displayed, however, no apparent symptoms of cultural shock. In fact, their prior specialization in Structuralism (Pavel and Alexandrescu) and Comparative Literature (Călinescu and Nemoianu) ensured their quick integration within the foreign academic environment. At first glance, this happy-end story seems to bring forth the famous moral of the prophet who "is not without honor save in his own country"; but things get interesting especially from this point on. Undoubtedly, a strong continuity links their career in terms of style of writing and even topics of research: Nemoianu's study on *Micro-Harmony* was initiated as a PhD thesis in Romania, while Matei Călinescu outlined an idea about the circularity of reading as soon as a 1968 essay. Indeed, the structuralist-semiotic theories Pavel and Alexandrescu advocated (almost to no avail) in Romania were still in vogue in Western universities of the 70s, enabling the two researchers to continue their research directly under the mentorship of A.J. Greimas, himself an Eastern exilé; whereas the cultural analysis Nemoianu and Călinescu started practising in their last Romanian studies benefitted from speculative freedom and new multidisciplinary horizons in the American context. It's highly unlikely, in fact, that their great works on Romanticism or Modernity could have been written, or at least would have acquired their comparative extent, in Romania, where, until 1989 and with consequences far beyond that date, literary criticism was mainly understood as text criticism and generally avoided tackling philosophy, sociology, anthropology or other adjacent disciplines. However, it is equally unlikely that Pavel or Alexandrescu would have still been so faithful to structuralism and semiotics in the 70s, had they not come from an Eastern ideology-weary country. Nemoianu and Călinescu also might not have achieved such profound comprehension of Romanticism or Modernity, had they not stemmed from Central-Eastern Europe, where Romantic and Modernist currents were so extensive and so deeply embedded in the construction of national canons. Last but not least, the argument for their cultural filiation stands even at the level of style, with baroque, arborescent, hence un-American sentences. In this sense, Nemoianu and Călinescu changed the least, even after they moved to another culture.

As Edward Said famously wrote, theories may "travel" and are translatable. However, we should not forget the fact that the Romanian emigrés

landed on a foreign epistemological ground. If Sorin Alexandrescu settled in the smaller and typically European culture of the Netherlands, the other three authors arrived in North America, for them a new continent altogether. It's true that at the beginning of the 70s, American universities were swept by waves of French Theory, which Pavel, Nemoianu and Călinescu were already familiarized with from the 60s. But the theoretical revolution had completely different effects on the two sides of the Atlantic. If in Eastern Europe French Theory colonized mainly literary studies, in America it immediately fueled an anti-system discourse and ignited the topics of difference and minority that had been simmering for a while in the American society. This type of discourse was far from being metaphorical, as it had been with the French group *Tel Quel*, but quickly aimed at concrete social groups, two of its most obvious consequences being feminism and postcolonialism. Subsequent changes in academic disciplines and curricula would almost dissolve the monumental and traditional object called Literature, so the more as the long reign of New Criticism had left behind a bad name of elitism and autism.

Pavel, Nemoianu and Călinescu grew in Romania as a liberal intelligentsia shaped by readings, friendships or family traditions which, as shown in later memoirs, had often remained clandestine and hostile in spirit to the Communist regime. But in Western universities, much to their dismay, they had to face an even more Marxist milieu than the one left behind. Their reaction is appropriate in this respect: Virgil Nemoianu sees in the Western Left "cynicism and guilty complicity"<sup>7</sup>, Sanda Golopenția blames it of "willed blindness"<sup>8</sup>, Matei Călinescu feels "an unpleasant political-intellectual paradox"<sup>9</sup> when asked to teach Marxist topics, while Toma Pavel compares "political correctness" straight to Communism, saying that both leave him "in the same position of an astonished spectator"<sup>10</sup>. The ideological distance would even shape into clearer options, if we think of Virgil Nemoianu's 2000 essays written in support of the conservative doctrine or some of Matei Călinescu's studies (the last and most challenging of which was unfortunately not finished) consonant with the Romanian 90s' tendency to recover the interwar heritage.

In any case, such reluctance, understandable for an Eastern intellectual, was also likely to keep them remote from certain methods. Compared to the American contemporary academic milieu, swept by feminism, Neo-Marxism, deconstruction, New Historicism, cultural studies, Post-colonialism, Nemoianu,

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<sup>7</sup> Virgil Nemoianu, *Tradiție și libertate*, București, Curtea Veche, 2001, p. 106.

<sup>8</sup> Sanda Golopenția, *Vămile grave*, București, Univers, 1999, p. 37.

<sup>9</sup> Matei Călinescu, *Un fel de jurnal (1973-1981)*, Iași, Polirom, 2006

<sup>10</sup> Toma Pavel, „Nouă ne place lumea asta păcătoasă, cu cărți...”, interviu de Ioana Pârvolescu, *România literară*, 44, 2002.

Călinescu and Pavel seem to be writing their 80s' books right from the eye of the storm, where things are relatively serene. Far be it from suggesting they somehow stagnated. In fact, the Romanian authors' exile studies were enriched substantially by the American intellectual landscape, which we see in Matei Călinescu's dealing with otherness or in Virgil Nemoianu's reevaluation of the secondary (albeit not social-cultural, but aesthetic). Toma Pavel seems to be the one undergoing the most radical shift from structuralism and semiotics to cultural studies, respectively the hermeneutics of the imaginary and the theories of fictionality. It is more relevant, however, from the viewpoint of Romanian affiliations, what the second Pavel would eventually become than what he had reformed meanwhile.

The fact is that starting from the 80s, the three fellow Romanian authors' works outline very similar views upon the function of art in society and the function of art for the individual. *Rereading, A Theory of the Secondary or Fictional Worlds* tackle the complex dialectics of the artistic creation and the social imaginary, the scientific, philosophical or political discourses. For all three authors, the ultimate implied argument is that art holds a singular place in the dynamics of a culture and exerts a mediatorial, consollatory force: as a form of "the secondary", literature recovers all that the rushed pace of the "principal" has left behind; "fiction"'s specific cognitive power is irreducible to language and incommensurable with other types of "real discourse", which makes it indispensable to the functioning of any society. Art and specifically literature are thus endowed with privileges that many trends of post-structuralism or cultural studies had deprived them of. True to an organicist and conservative ethos, Pavel, Nemoianu and Călinescu try to reconcile tradition with modernity, as suggested by their slight reluctance towards postmodernism or their several attempts to counteract radical relativism. The idea that literature works for the moral benefit of mankind – an idea found, one way or another, in the blueprint of their theories on rereading, on the secondary, on fictionality or on novel – corresponds little to the authors' theoretical contemporaneity and to the academic-ideological trends then at stake in North America. But this very principle has much deeper roots in Europe, although going through many doctrines and transformations. This is an adequate way, I believe, to understand Monica Spiridon's well-chosen formula "the Central Europe beyond the Ocean"<sup>11</sup>. The idea of literature's uniqueness reaffirms the European mindscape that shaped Nemoianu, Pavel and Călinescu, but also measures the distance they took from their youth's critical milieu. Because their attempt to understand the aesthetic in a largely anthropological sense, to unbind it from narrow aestheticism and integrate it in an axiology of the

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<sup>11</sup> See Monica Spiridon, *Europa centrală de peste Ocean. Exil și construcție identitară*, București, Scrisul Românesc, 2011.



human would have likely failed during the so-called "Socialist aestheticism"<sup>12</sup> from Romania. No wonder that, up to this day, very few Romanian critics have managed to accomplish such a feat.

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<sup>12</sup> See Mircea Martin, „Despre estetismul socialist”, *România literară*, 23, 2004.

## JEUNE ÉCRIVAIN, JEUNE CRITIQUE – LÉGITIMATIONS DE LA GÉNÉRATION 80 DANS LA PRESSE LITTÉRAIRE COMMUNISTE

MAGDALENA RĂDUȚĂ<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *Young Writer, Young Critic – Legitimizing the 80's Literary Generation in the Communist Literary Press.* The article aims to investigate the possibilities of a literary group to follow its own legitimacy path on a background defined by a totalitarian society. As part of a wider reflection on the existence of a Romanian literary field in the 1980s, and using a bourdieusian and post-bourdieusian methodological frame, we will overview some moments of the (self)legitimacy trajectory of the literary group known as the 80's generation, having as starting point the literary press archives of the last communist decade.

**Keywords:** *Communist Literary Press, literary field, Romanian writers of the 80s*

**REZUMAT.** *Tânăr scriitor, tânăr critic – legitimarea generației 80 în presa literară comunistă.* Articolul își propune să investigheze modalitățile de legitimare prin presă ale membrilor generației 80, în condițiile presiunii ideologice a ultimului deceniu comunist. Alegând ca interval semnificativ perioada 1978-1983 (din momentul debutului până la impunerea în câmp) și folosind o schemă metodologică de esență bourdieusiană și post-bourdieusiană, articolul marchează câteva momente ale traseului de auto-legitimare a optzeciștilor, așa cum se vede acesta din presa literară centrală și regională a epocii.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *presă literară comunistă, câmp literar, scriitori optzeciști*

Le sujet de cet article porte sur les possibilités d'un groupe littéraire d'assurer son trajet de légitimation dans les conditions d'une société totalitaire. Faisant partie d'une réflexion plus large sur l'existence d'un champ littéraire roumain dans les années 1980, réflexion qui fait appel aux outils de sociologie littéraire de tradition bourdieusienne et post-bourdieusienne, l'article essayera de systématiser quelques moments du trajet d'(auto)légitimation du

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groupe littéraire connu sous le nom de la génération 80, ayant comme point de départ les archives de presse littéraire de la période. La question essentielle pour faire avancer la réflexion est une question de nature fonctionnelle : quelles étaient, pour un jeune écrivain qui fêtait son début à la fin des années 1970 (les nouveaux entrants, dans la terminologie bourdieusienne), la fonctionnalité et les enjeux de se présenter en tant qu'écrivain muni d'une conscience critique, y compris d'une conscience de critique littéraire ? Et, secondairement, quelles sont les conséquences au niveau du champ littéraire dans son ensemble au moment où ce discours d'autolégitimation passe pour un discours théorisant ?

On choisit de suivre le trajet d'autolégitimation de jeunes membres de la génération 80 en trois séquences complémentaires : (a) la double identité d'écrivain et chroniqueur littéraire (critique feuilletoniste) ; (b) les différenciations – vues dans la logique de la succession littéraire – entre les revues centrales, d'une part, et les revues régionales et celles gérées par les étudiants-mêmes, de l'autre ; (c) les structures auto-légitimatrices du discours théorisant des 'quatre-vingtistes', en prenant comme point d'appui l'approche textualiste de la génération. Dans ces trois séquences, on essaie de déceler les possibilités d'existence d'un *ethos* générationniste, forgé par les restrictions socio-culturelles d'une société totalitaire et par les conditions d'émergence d'un nouveau groupe littéraire.

#### **a. Jeune écrivain et critique feuilletoniste – une simultanéité obligatoire ?**

En ce qui concerne la question de la double identité promue dans les premières années après leur début par les jeunes membres de la génération 80, une première hypothèse de travail compterait l'effet de tradition de ce doublet professionnel. Comme c'est le cas de tout trajet de conquête de l'autonomie littéraire, l'espace littéraire roumain s'est constitué à son tour dans un effort de cohérence autour des valeurs autonomistes (gratuité de l'art, art pur, séparations d'outils analytiques entre dimension éthique et dimension esthétique de la littérature). Qui plus est, les figures du critique et de l'historien de la littérature se sont imposées comme figures tutélaires de la consécration. Familiers aux enjeux légitimateurs de l'histoire littéraire à cause de leur trajet éducationnel majoritairement philologique, les écrivains du noyau actif de la génération 80 – qui font leur apprentissage dans les principaux centres universitaires de la Roumanie socialiste, dans des cénacles et des comités de rédaction des revues – arrivent au moment de leur début munis d'un savoir essentiel : ils connaissent la position traditionnellement favorable d'un critique littéraire (en termes de visibilité parmi les pairs, facilité à se faire publier, bon usage des 'ficelles du métier', mais également en termes de responsabilité en tant qu'*hygiénistes des*

*lettres*, précieux héritage du père de l'autonomisme littéraire roumain, Titu Maiorescu). Si on prend en compte que la lecture critique est, selon P. Bourdieu, une « lecture scolastique »<sup>2</sup>, capable (sinon obligée) à gommer les préoccupations contextualistes et à ouvrir le livre vers un usage libre et intertextuel, on arrive à une image assez heureuse des 'quatre-vingtistes' vivant leur début sous les auspices favorables d'un terrain déjà exploré: ils comptent sur une familiarisation avec le système de valeurs spécifiques du champ (l'une des monnaies-forte de la bourse littéraire, selon P. Casanova<sup>3</sup>). Pour décrire cette nouvelle avant-garde, il semble toujours insuffisant de s'occuper de leur place dans la 'vraie vie' littéraire et dans la petite bohème; on voit s'y ajouter le privilège de signer une section de chronique littéraire dans une revue hebdomadaire ou mensuelle, simultanément à faire publier des volumes de poésie et de prose. Cette simultanéité fait de la figure du débutant une présence active dans l'espace commun du littéraire, connue et reconnue pour son expertise sur l'actualité – et cela puisqu'ils signent surtout des chroniques sur les nouvelles apparitions, et cette expertise s'exerce donc sur un phénomène littéraire qui les inclut. C'est un processus qui s'étale sur plusieurs années et qui finit par leur assurer une visibilité accrue, née d'une profusion de présences constantes (rythmées par les dates d'apparition des revues), de thèmes communes et surtout d'autodéfinitions (en tant que membres de plein droit du champ) indirectement incluses dans les hiérarchies et les valorisations présentes dans les chroniques dont le sujet porte sur leurs congénères. Une fois de plus, « l'action collective et constante produit des certitudes »<sup>4</sup>.

### **b. Les revues littéraires – une légitimation différée**

Le paysage des publications littéraires des années 1980 est loin de l'homogénéité que l'on attendrait d'un champ sous le totalitarisme communiste. On y voit des revues académiques de grande tenue, rigoureuses et d'une scientificité éloignée des demandes idéologiques – c'est, par exemple, la revue *Convorbiri literare* (*Conversations littéraires*), mensuel où on tombe rarement sur des chroniques-feuilleton et, si c'est le cas, dédiées spécialement aux éditions critiques, ou de *Viața Românească* (*Vie roumaine*), à l'aide de laquelle on pourrait construire une vraie étude sur la réception critique des classiques de la

<sup>2</sup> Qu'il oppose à la lecture critique, plus objectivante. Pierre Bourdieu, *Les règles de l'art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire*, Paris, éditions Seuil, 1992, p. 418.

<sup>3</sup> Pascale Casanova, *Republica Mondială a Literelor*. Traduction en roumain par Cristina Bâzu. Bucarest, éditions Curtea-veche, 2007, p. 24-25.

<sup>4</sup> Boris Gobille, « Être écrivain en Mai 68. Quelques cas d'écrivains d'aspiration », *Sociétés et représentations* no. 11, 2001, p. 457.

littérature roumaine. Pour s'orienter dans l'actualité littéraire on utilise plus souvent les revues hebdomadaires, également centrales et régionales, avec des sections d'actualité éditoriale, chronique-feuilleton, pages de poésie et de fragments de prose contemporaine. Si on regarde de plus près le contenu de ces revues dans un intervalle plus précis du début des quatre-vingtistes (1978-1983), on arrive à déceler une différence assez importante, commune aux espaces littéraires de tradition centraliste : c'est dans un noyau où l'on inclut les revues centrales – de synthèse et de sentence critique (idéologisée ou autonomiste, ce qui à l'époque peut être vu, pour aller vite, comme non-glorifiante) – que l'on retrouve les éléments essentiels de la poétique générationniste, forgés par la *doxa* critique du moment, tandis que dans les revues régionales, les jeunes écrivains signent et promeuvent eux-mêmes leur propre création littéraire. Revues comme *România Literară* (*Roumanie littéraire*), *Caiete critice* (*Cahiers critiques*) ou *Secolul XX* n'arrivent à inclure que très rarement des enquêtes, interviews, sections dédiés aux jeunes auteurs, tous ces genres de presse étant toujours présents dans la plupart des revues régionales et estudiantines (*Tribuna*, *Vatra*, *Echinox*, *Dialog*<sup>5</sup>). Généralement, les revues centrales autonomistes jouent le rôle de la tribune des voix critiques, où on voit se forger les tendances, les orientations, les valeurs déjà individualisées de la génération, s'établir les hiérarchies et se construire la réception critique. De ce que l'on peut avancer en ce moment, les membres de la génération trouvent ailleurs leur place et leur tribune : dans les revues ex-centriques, éloignées de l'attention de la capitale. Les quatre-vingtistes reçoivent les lettres d'accréditation de la *doxa* autonomiste, mais c'est dans les pages des revues régionales, où la douane est plus permissive, que leurs signatures se font plus visibles<sup>6</sup>. C'est donc une explication contextuelle de la différence central/régional : adaptation prolongée à la nouvelle structure de censure nationale, inaugurée en 1977, négociation plus avantageuse avec les censeurs régionaux, perception contrastée des 'audaces' à Bucarest et en province. Mais on pourrait avancer également une explication qui tient à la spécificité du contenu des revues centrales, qui cartographient et orientent une actualité plus large que les coordonnées de la 'jeune littérature'. Les

<sup>5</sup> La revue *Tribuna* (Cluj-Napoca) garde la section *Priviri în actualitate* [*Regards de l'actualité*], p. 2, de 1980 à 1989 ; de même, l'interview de Valeriu Bârgău avec grand nombre de jeunes écrivains. Dans la revue *Vatra* (Târgu-Mureș), une section dédiée à la nouvelle génération littéraire est *Dreptul la timp* [*Droit au temps*], gérée par N. Băciuț ; la section équivalente de la revue *Echinox* (Cluj-Napoca) porte le titre *Lupta cu inerția* [*La lutte contre l'inertie*]. La revue estudiantine *Dialog* (Iași) a deux sections permanentes d'actualité littéraire : *Litere et Poeți tineri* [*Lettres, Jeunes poètes*].

<sup>6</sup> La table de matières de l'anthologie *Generația continuă* [*Génération continue*], édition établie par Gh. Crăciun et V. Marineasa, Pitești, éditions Paralela 45, 1998, montre cette répartition inégale : de 106 articles de poésie et de réflexion sur leur propre littérature, seulement 6 apparaissent dans *România Literară*.

revues régionales, moins chargées en termes de responsabilité littéraire, sont plus libres à choisir leurs tranches d'actualité et peuvent prêter plus d'attention aux phénomènes littéraires les plus récentes et innovateurs.

### c. Le discours théorisant comme enjeu de l'autolégitimation

La dernière décennie littéraire communiste n'est pas particulièrement riche en débats théoriques – les polémiques entre les partisans de l'autonomie et ceux du mouvement hétéronome du nationalisme protochrone, proche des idéologues du parti, confisquent l'attention de la vie littéraire dans la première moitié de la décennie. Les jeunes écrivains viennent s'y heurter de plein fouet, étant perçus par les nationalistes comme apprentis de leurs ennemis. En cherchant une nouvelle modalité de se légitimer dans l'espace littéraire, les quatre-vingtistes arrivent à se présenter comme partisans du postmodernisme, nouvelle orientation littéraire d'importation américaine. La question du postmodernisme roumain anime pour peu de temps la vie littéraire de l'époque – c'est seulement après 1989 que la lutte pour imposer le terme et l'utiliser à des fins légitimateurs va s'intensifier de vrai. Mais, s'il y a un postmodernisme roumain, on peut parler également d'un textualisme roumain – une formule théorique adaptée pour fonctionner dans un espace littéraire hyper-politisé et tellement peu affiné idéologiquement à l'espace de départ. On n'insiste pas sur la nécessité de recourir au discours théorisant dans le processus de légitimation d'un mouvement d'avant-garde : c'est visiblement une ressource de différenciation plus puissante que le texte littéraire même. Le recours à la théorie légitimatrice ajoute à l'acte artistique un 'effet de scientificité', de prolongation du *cogito*, de préméditation que, par exemple, le manifeste n'arrive pas à assurer. Qui plus est, pour les avant-gardes, le discours théorisant est placé à mi-chemin entre l'écriture académique et l'écriture artiste : « l'essai théorique s'oppose simultanément aux *belles lettres* traditionnelles et au discours académique. Il circule très rapidement, ce qui lui imprime l'effet d'antériorité. Dans les essais théoriques, un intellectuel peut se permettre d'être également littéraire et moderne : plus moderne et plus sophistiqué qu'un écrivain, plus innovateur qu'un cadre universitaire »<sup>7</sup>.

L'importation de la doctrine du *tel-quelisme* dans la dernière décennie communiste n'est qu'un cas particulier d'un sujet de réflexion plus large : le processus de réception et d'utilisation des écoles de pensée marxiste et marxisantes occidentales dans un espace totalitaire. C'est le cas de la sociologie littéraire dans son ensemble ou de l'École de Francfort, pour n'en citer que deux

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<sup>7</sup> Niilo Kauppi, *The Making of an Avant-Garde: Tel Quel*, Berlin-New York, Mouton de Gruyter, 1994, p. XVII.

exemples, et des plus visibles. La présence – idéologiquement très marquée – de la revue *Tel Quel* dans l'espace français (marxisme-léninisme très stricte, accusation d'anarchisme pendant les mouvements de mai 68) n'empêche pas une importation à conséquences très fertiles pour un groupe littéraire non-idéologisé, qui affiche une poétique autonomiste. La plupart des textes critiques de la génération 80 combine le goût de la nouveauté théorique avec la sensibilité pour la littérature étrangère « à la mode ». On y décèle une forte influence des poètes d'expression anglaise et américaine, un air commun qui remonte aux études critiques sur la prééminence du texte et aux traités de narratologie, une réceptivité pour la formule des romans sud-américains et leur usage du fantastique. Cette liste d'influences trouve en effet ses correspondances dans les créations des jeunes écrivains. M. Cărtărescu, F. Iaru ou T. T. Coșovei écrivent une poésie citadine, explosive et colorée qui les approche des vers de Dylan Thomas, L. Ferlinghetti, Carl Sandburg ou Robert Frost ; des prosateurs comme I. Lăcustă ou E. Paraschivoiu sont très attentifs aux dosages du fantastique et de l'onirique dans leurs textes.

Cette série d'influences est partiellement le résultat du dégel culturel que les jeunes écrivains ont vécu pendant leur formation universitaire. Leur éducation philologique leur a permis l'accès privilégié aux textes originaux et aux commentaires qui les accompagnaient ; ils se sont formés comme gens de lettres en étudiant les textes du telquelisme, la poésie américaine contemporaine, les études critiques de l'Ecole de Genève, etc. Mais il nous semble que dans cette utilisation on peut trouver un effet paradoxal du dégel : le renversement des raisons idéologiques pour lesquelles ces œuvres ont été traduites et leur lecture à rebours. Presque toutes les séries d'œuvres philosophiques et critiques traduites dans les années 70 ont plus ou moins la caractéristique d'être marxisantes ou anti-américaines (on obtenait plus facilement la permission de traduire Althusser que Raymond Aron, par exemple). Mais ces ouvrages recevaient un sens tout à fait inverse dans la conscience des jeunes : « Ce sont les livres et les films censés être anti-américains et importés avec enthousiasme par la propagande communiste qui ont alimenté l'imaginaire anti-totalitaire (en fin de compte, anticommuniste) des jeunes de l'Europe de l'est et le sentiment de sympathie pour les Etats-Unis. C'était le pays où un artiste pouvait critiquer violemment, presque en délire, n'importe qui, n'importe quoi, et rien au monde ne lui en arrivait ! »<sup>8</sup>

La préférence des quatre-vingtistes pour les groupes de type « jeunes poètes furieux » pourrait, donc, être lue également sous cet angle : leur opposition à l'*establishment*, en occurrence au pôle idéologisé, prédispose les

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<sup>8</sup> Caius Dobrescu, « Nume de cod 'Poetul' » [« Nom de code 'le Poète' ] (I), *Observator cultural*, nr. 80 (46), 2001. Les traductions en français nous appartiennent.

jeunes écrivains roumains à une nouvelle lecture, plus politisée, de la littérature contemporaine anglo-saxonne. Les quatre-vingtistes se sont appropriés ces changements de sens et se sont imposés à travers la nouvelle lecture comme la génération 'libre' des lettres roumaines, comme des *hippies* de la littérature autochtone.

Les lettres roumaines doivent aux jeunes écrivains un système de pensée de la création, qui n'est pas étranger aux théories de la sémiologie et la pratique signifiante du *Tel Quel*. La fonction ludique de l'écriture (théorisée par Jacqueline Risset), la production consciente du sens simultanément au processus de la constitution du texte (Julia Kristeva) ou la prééminence de la conscience structurale sur la conscience sémantique (Roland Barthes) sont mises en œuvre par la littérature des quatre-vingtistes, qui récupèrent massivement, dès leur début, d'une part la technique et de l'autre la pratique signifiante du groupe français. Selon le témoignage de M. Nedelciu dans la préface du roman *Tratament fabulatoriu* (1984), la 'nouvelle littérature' est « une activité textuelle à travers laquelle on peut intervenir constructivement dans le monde »<sup>9</sup>, par un « processus de production du sens »<sup>10</sup>. On est, précisément, très proche des déclarations de Sollers, qui défendent le monde comme écriture, qui peut se rendre visible seulement par l'écrit. Mais, si on pense plus attentivement aux ressources de différenciation mises en jeu par le discours théorisant, on peut déceler une valorisation de plus dans l'utilisation roumaine de la doctrine telqueliste : d'une part, la technique sert à marquer la séparation entre la nouvelle poétique et les programmes littéraires des générations immédiatement précédentes, mais également à objectiver le discours ; de l'autre part, l'intervention constructive dans le monde à travers le texte joue le double jeu de la confiance sans bornes (dans le texte tout-puissant) et du mécontentement (envers le monde 'réel'). Qui plus est, ce jeu se voit mis à l'abri de l'intrusion idéologique : le textualisme, dans sa version accueillie en Roumanie, est déjà infusé par le discours dénonciateur anticapitaliste et par les thèmes obligatoires du marxisme-léninisme, mais sa principale utilisation dans l'espace littéraire d'adoption est le texte et rien que le texte. Une preuve de plus pour donner raison à Th. Adorno, dans sa théorie esthétique de 1969, restée inachevée : l'art est donc à la fois autonome et hétéronome, il se sépare de la réalité par son effet sur elle.

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<sup>9</sup> M. Nedelciu, *Tratament fabulatoriu [Traitement fabulatoire]*, 2<sup>e</sup> édition, avec une préface de l'auteur (1984) et un avertissement pour la 2<sup>e</sup> édition, Bucarest, éditions Allfa, 1996, p. 26.

<sup>10</sup> Radu G. Țeposu, *Istoria tragică și grotescă a întunecatului deceniu 9 [La tragique et grotesque histoire de la sombre 9<sup>ème</sup> décennie]*, Bucarest, éditions Eminescu, 1993, p. 38.



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## GHEORGHE CRĂCIUN: THE LITERARY THEORETICIAN HIDDEN WITHIN HIS PROSE

IULIA RĂDAC<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *Gheorghe Crăciun: the literary theoretician hidden within his prose.* The aim of this paper is to analyse Gheorghe Crăciun's first novel: *Acte originale / Copii legalizate* (1982) [Original acts / legalized copies] and emphasize the consequences of the fact that theory permeates the fiction. Gheorghe Crăciun is one of the most representative personalities of Romanian postmodernism and an unusual theoretician, who has practiced his writing skills first as a writer, and then gave consistency to his ideas in the theoretical literary studies. This subterfuge allows the theoretician, condemned to be a teacher outside the books, to express himself. Moreover, this novel concentrates most of the ideas ulterior developed in his prose.

**Key words:** *postmodernist, (fake) "textualist", experiment, metafiction, character as narrator.*

**REZUMAT.** *Gheorghe Crăciun: teoreticianul ascuns în proza sa.* Gheorghe Crăciun este una dintre figurile reprezentative ale postmodernismului românesc, precum și un theoretician atipic, care și-a exersat mâna mai întâi ca scriitor, iar apoi a dat consistență ideilor sale în studii teoretice asupra literaturii. Încă din volumul de debut, *Acte originale / Copii legalizate* (1982), literatura sa „se contaminează” cu teoria – subterfugiu care îi permite-teoreticianului obligat să se desfășoare în afara cărților, să nu poată fi mai mult decât un profesor – concentrând astfel câteva nuclee pe care Crăciun le va dezvolta ulterior în toată proza sa.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *postmodernist, (fals) textualist, experiment, metaficțiune, personaj-narator.*

Gheorghe Crăciun was one of the most representative personalities of his generation, interested in literature as well as in critique, theory and collecting literary and theoretical writings in anthologies. Due to the complexity

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of his activity, he has permanently drawn the attention of Romanian critics, raising polemics often disguised as admiration. On one hand, everything mentioned above justifies the attention received from the authorities in the field of literary studies and the fact that his work is still a valuable object of research. On the other hand, his premature demise led to several forms of commemoration encouraged by the writers of his generation and brought him to the attention of young researchers.

At Transylvania University in Braşov, there have already been organized two national conferences dedicated to the life and work of Gh. Crăciun and I wonder whether someone will continue the project of A. Bodiu – now that he has passed away too – that of meeting for a new conference every five years. Until 2000, the only integral study dedicated to Gh. Crăciun was Mihaela Ursa's monograph, which included an anthology of commented texts and a dossier of critical reviews. In the meantime, Gh. Crăciun's bibliography has substantially increased. In 2015, a book written by Liliana Truţă was published, namely *Gheorghe Crăciun, Cele două utopii [The two utopias]*, (Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă), a selective monograph in which the unique criteria of selection were the author's preferences. In the introduction to the volume of the second conference, A. Bodiu mentions another two Ph.D. theses from Suceava and three more which were defended in the last two years in Braşov. All of them contribute to the restitution of an important author to the circuit of Romanian literary studies. Temporary distance ensures objectivity in research and the plurality of perspective should enrich the subject. Unfortunately, passing through such an intimidating bibliography, I've noticed the redundancy of the same ideas and of the same references. There are usually two key-words that one may distinguish among all these various positions of interpretation and evaluation: "experiment" and "textualism". The last term defines a Romanian literary trend from the '80s that started from the French magazine, "Tel Quel" in the '60s. Textualist literature is self-referential, generating itself continuously by using intertextuality.

The experimental features of Gh. Crăciun's prose were received with equal admiration and hope, they were also violently challenged, and sometimes the initial enthusiasm was converted in the reproach of the excessive care for the method, in detriment of the vitality of his writing. Generally, his appetite for the experiment was associated with self-narration and postmodernism. Many of the reviewers think Crăciun is representative for textualism<sup>2</sup>, but there are, however, some – the most important being M. Ursa – that argue that he is a fake textualist and only uses textualist themes. However, the critics agree on two characteristics of Gh. Crăciun's prose. Firstly, the unity and coherence of his prose – to which the

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<sup>2</sup> M. Nedelciu, N. Steinhardt, L. Ulici, M. Mihăieş, Gh. Perian, Radu G. Ţeposu, Şt. Borbely, A. Bodiu etc., consider that Gh. Crăciun is a textualist.

“narrative obsessions” of the writer contribute – such as the central place of the body, using the same characters and special cues throughout his novels. M. Ursa thinks that his obsession of unity is a tribute paid to Modernism, and the body is one of the central elements of Lyotard’s metanarratives defining Modernism<sup>3</sup>. Secondly, the idea emphasized by A. Bodiou that “some nucleus-constants that define his work from the very beginning”<sup>4</sup> may be identified in his first prose.

I believe as well that Crăciun’s first novel, *Acte originale / copii legalizate* [Original acts / legalized copies] must be investigated especially because of the temporary distance, which means also diverging from the textualist and postmodernist ideas, but I suggest a suspicious approach would make justice to the text and allow it to come to the reader. The volume includes 13 very different and unpredictable stories: “spontaneous observations about the colours of the air, reading notes, pages of diary, apocryphal documents (letters from unknown persons, essays written by scholars), notes about the process of the current prose and generally about the art of narration and, finally, recordings of the daily conversations”<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, E. Simion thinks nothing is missing from a textualist scheme, which makes the text obsolete today.

On the contrary, A. Bodiou thinks Crăciun’s prose is “still fresh, without constructional cracks and extremely suggestive”<sup>6</sup>, for the whole writer’s work. In Bodiou’s opinion, this prose is defined by “contradictory assumed «fertile plurality»”, consisting in “the coexistence within the text of an ontological conservative attitude on which is overlapped the experimental utilization of more recent postmodern techniques”<sup>7</sup>. A conservative attitude is noticeable when evoking the lost essence of rural life, as well as that of the need of biographical continuity fractured by history. Bodiou also adds to this list the trust in traditional family values: the narrator expresses love for his wife and daughter. The postmodern elements observed by the critic are the irony and the intertextuality. He emphasized very well the particularities of Crăciun’s prose, and all of them should have led to at least an ingenious novel if the rest of the novel would have continued the lines drawn by the first story, as Bodiou suggested: “Actually, *Scene pregătitoare pentru o aventură* [Preparatory scenes for an adventure] opens the road to some essential interrogations in Crăciun’s work”<sup>8</sup>. He refers to the tension resulted from the interference of the author’s conception of life and his literary experiment, a tension that shapes his writing on many levels. One of the recurrent

<sup>3</sup> M. Ursa, *Optzecismul și promisiunile postmodernismului*, Pitești, Paralela 45, 1999, p. 133.

<sup>4</sup> A. Bodiou, *Pluralitatea fertilă*, [Fertile plurality], in *Trupul și litera. Explorări critice în biografia și opera lui Gheorghe Crăciun* [The body and the letter], Cluj, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2012, p.86

<sup>5</sup> E. Simion, *Scriitori români de azi*, vol. IV, București, Cartea Românească, 1989, p. 616.

<sup>6</sup> A. Bodiou, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 89.

problems that is already showing up is that of writing: the narrator Vlad Ștefan has the revelation of being a writer and, therefore, Bodiș considers him an *alter ego* of the author. These first pages open the promise to an interesting novel, but the rest of the novel cannot develop the initial intrigue or, at least, a similar feeling of credibility, despite the “visible seams” of the story.

“The fertile plurality” stated by the critic convinced me that a new and careful reading of the whole novel is required, even if the main result would be to follow the gradual dimming of some fundamental ideas for the first chapter and so, the way through which the theme of writing – one of the central nucleuses – then converts into a simple decorative artifice, incapable of carrying other meanings, except proving a self-imposed program. My observation is certainly not new, but only directly expressed. A. Bodiș has, perhaps, the same argument to analyse only the first prose from the volume. Also, even the monographic studies – like that of L. Truță – ignore the first novel of Crăciun, raising the question whether the novel may exceed the textualist experiment. Fearing that it can’t, the reviewers choose not to talk about it, focusing only on the later masterworks.

For instance, Gh. Perian wrote a subtle analysis of the novel in which he feels that it exceeds the features of the French novel<sup>9</sup>, even if in the beginning he states that textualism completely defines Crăciun’s novel. As a clue to a possible state of confusion, Perian’s analysis lacks an evaluative paragraph but, despite this lack, the critic highlights the text through his shrewd observations. From another perspective, according to R. G. Țeposu, Crăciun’s book is focused on the theme of writing as a “limiting” and “canonical exercise” and is characterized by “exhausting self-reflexivity which refuses to get out from the narcissist circle”<sup>10</sup>. The critic falls in the trap of judging the text according to the declaration of a ludic narrator, although a text is worth reading especially when our lecture cannot exhaust its meanings: “It is not a novel, it is a text simply constructed, which does nothing more than following the chronological appearance and disappearance of events, a sort of diary [...]”<sup>11</sup>. Țeposu’s comparison of the novel with a “demonstration at the blackboard” is still one of the most serious imputations and so far it received various polemic responses. One may oppose to my observations the novelty of textualism and, therefore, the lack of conceptual instruments of the Romanian critique, but we do remark that even today the same interpretative common places are perpetuated. So the mentioned lack justifies the reviews written shortly after the book appeared but not the recent re-evaluations.

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<sup>9</sup> For the mentioned analysis see: Gh. Perian, *Scriitori români postmoderni* [Romanian postmodernist writers], București, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> R. G. Țeposu, *op.cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>11</sup> Gh. Crăciun, *Acte originale / copii legalizate* [Original acts / legalized copies], București, Cartea Românească, 1982, p. 10, [our translation].

Despite the consistent bibliography on the subject, there isn't a close reading of the novel *Acte originale / copii legalizate*, an analysis that would emphasize the features of the character who narrates the story, who is a ludic projection of the author. The first contact of the reader with the narrator is in the latter's role of a reader in the book's universe. He reads to his daughter, Tea, a story about a quail – a bookish reference to *Puiul*, a story of Al. Brătescu Voinești – and interrupts his reading to give her explanations regarding the semantics of some words. So, from the very beginning of the book, the reader may anticipate one of the central themes of the book, which is the process of writing and reading. E. Simion identifies three elements which condition the creation, and they are: 1) someone who wants to write, 2) the pre-existence of some anterior texts and 3) the outside common world, with its dramas and languages<sup>12</sup>. What catches the attention is the way the writer uses the three variables in his "equation". A representative scene is that of his wife, Luiza, challenging the narrator to participate in a discussion on a literary theme, asking him what he feels about writing a book with two authors. Instead of answering, Vlad starts to talk about all the details that constitute daily life, the immediate reality. But writing has a redemption value for him, in spite of the fact that he postpones it because of the disbelief that he can write with "urgent strictness and canon, as resulted from books"<sup>13</sup>. Everything begins with "a sort of document of our existence": "I was a helpless character, with a predictable destiny"<sup>14</sup>. He imagines his book "made of cracks, of these sort of pieces", but begins to "hinder" him exactly the feeling he has been having for a little while, that of being a writer. I sense here a subversive action of catching the reader's attention.

The "engine" of the book is a continue highlighting of the metafictional character of a text that seems to build up under the eyes of the reader, from what he feels during reading the book; so it has a procedural character: „Now one tells about me, a father. I was not too familiar to it, either. I deduce it from the context. It was a very simple story, easy to follow"<sup>15</sup> but it seemed that "unknown words, misunderstood images" appeared forcing the narrator to interrupt the story and give his daughter various explanations. Doubling the reading acts represents a *mise en abyme*, which has the role to offer the narrator the possibility to dissimulate. He is a common father, who reads to his daughter and then recites her, maintaining the strategies through which he succeeded to catch her attention: he uses explanations through which both they and the readers go back to the real world, where the bird lives. The narrator also confesses that his lecture was often interrupted by linguistic

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<sup>12</sup> E. Simion, *op. cit.*, p. 420.

<sup>13</sup> Gh. Crăciun, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 15.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 10.

explanations and definitions. But, at the same time, he treats the reader as an ironic and playful puppeteer, because the following question to which he refers has also the purpose of drawing attention to narrator's position, who is the central character of the book we, the readers, are holding in our hands. „There's nowhere written that it is improper to read sad stories to children before sleep, stories didactic constructed, with moral endings”<sup>16</sup>, declares the narrator, defending himself in front of the reader for using the pretext of the reading scene in the beginning of his book. We do observe, though, that through his interventions, the narrator seems to wink at the reader. These interventions are inappropriate for a child and have the aspect of some digressions with a different aim. The pages dedicated to the description of nature's dynamics and to the complexity of sensations one feels related to nature are anticipating the other recurrent theme of Crăciun's prose, that is the fascination for somatic.

Another preamble is the ulterior episode in which he draws clouds with the pen, making sure that the reader catches the references: “Looking at them I was thinking of practicing my skills. Seeing them I notice the situation of my right hand. A domestic hand, constrained day by day to practice its purpose, to extend the body and make it spring his signs of lines and colours. The hand which I forget of. And his lost freedom [...]. More and more rarely catching the brush and the pencil, the charcoal, the graffiti. More and more often trying the hasty passing of a calligraphy through the severe regime of an alphabet. The hand that becomes a tool for writing. The rented hand, transposed in another space. Ready to be a writer”<sup>17</sup>. The passing from the general theme of creation to the central theme of the book, that is writing, is made through the graphic act, through the gesture of keeping a pen in the hand and to give up on controlling it: “distracted as in a game, anyway distracted, drifting in the hand's will and with the mind elsewhere”<sup>18</sup>. The last phrase is the first definition of writing given by the author.

Octavian suggests to his friend, the narrator of some of the chapters, because Octavian himself is a voracious reader with delicate preference, and to his wife he tells that “the act of writing and all this work of pleasure and torture are for the writer a sort of masochist penitence”<sup>19</sup>. So the writer is doomed to a permanent penance, one which starts with the first book and which has a crucial importance, profoundly and definitively condemning his author: “you assumed your purpose and now you get confused with it”<sup>20</sup>. The narrator becomes a writer impressed by Octavian's insistence and “his strength

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 13.

and trust in what he wrote". There's a recurrent dichotomy emerging among the most important motifs of the book: "the chatter on writing and art", on one hand, and "more serious things, profoundly thought of", on the other hand, that is: "the sensory practiced in strict isolation between hills and mountains"<sup>21</sup>. Despite the fact that literary theory is called "chatter" and it is understood as gossip, being needless, the enumeration of "the conventions of prose", "the chances of poetry" and "the linguistic adventures" prove the focus on metatextual mechanisms and even on the literary theory which is apparently detested.

On one hand, Gh. Crăciun is always associated with Romanian textualism due to the variety of metatextual instruments he uses. On the other hand, the features which make his first novel so valuable have little or nothing to do with textualism. Therefore, I think that in this particular case, unlike in other Crăciun's works, the theoretician doesn't intrigue, energize or challenge the writer but, in fact, he defeats him. The best written parts of the novel are those in which the author forgets for a while that he has some theoretical ideas to prove. Except those rare scenes of "genuine" – as in "not contaminated of a theoretical discourse" – narration, of picturesque descriptive paragraphs and a fragile psychology of the characters, the rest of the novel focuses on the experiment. Once the experiment and its intentions are consumed, reading the novel *Acte originale / copii legalizate* written by Gh. Crăciun, becomes no more – but also not less – that an episode of literary history. Is he often labelled by the critics as "methodologically obsessed" due to the saturation of this genre during the period? Or is it something else that differentiates his first novel from the following? A further research should compare his two novels published before 1989 – they very similar as regarding the narrative technique – and the other three, published after the communist regime, a period of complete liberalisation of Romanian theoretical studies.

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem.*





**PARALLEL LIBRARIES OF THE FORMER SECURITATE.  
ANA BLANDIANA, 'ÎNTÂMPLĂRI DE PE STRADA MEA'  
(‘EVENTS FROM MY STREET’)**

**CRISTINA GOGĂȚĂ<sup>1</sup>**

**ABSTRACT.** *Parallel Libraries of the Former Securitate. Ana Blandiana, 'Întâmplări de pe strada mea'.* The present article aims to reveal the measures that the former Securitate – Agency for National Security during communism in Romania – took against potentially subversive texts. The archives of Securitate offer a second contextualization of Romanian literature under communism. Intellectuals, and mainly writers, were always perceived by the communist regime as a potential danger towards national safety. Therefore, the intellectual elite never seemed to be monitored, manipulated, or sanctioned, accordingly to their attitude regarding the communist ideology. A case of such sanctioning is Ana Blandiana, whose children's book 'Întâmplări de pe strada mea' was denounced as anti-political and withdrawn from the public circuit.

**Key words:** *Ana Blandiana, Securitate, Întâmplări de pe strada mea, comunism.*

**REZUMAT.** *Bibliotecile paralele ale fostei Securități. Ana Blandiana, „Întâmplări de pe strada mea”.* Cercetarea de față restituie măsurile luate de fosta Securitate împotriva textelor cu potențial subversiv. Documentele din arhivele Securității permit un alt fel de contextualizare a literaturii române din perioada comunistă. Intelectualii, în special scriitorii, au fost întotdeauna percepuți de regimul comunist ca un pericol potențial la adresa siguranței naționale. În consecință, elita intelectuală a fost în permanență supravegheată, manipulată ori sancționată, în funcție de atitudinea față de regim. Un asemenea caz îl constituie cartea pentru copii a Anei Blandiana, „Întâmplări de pe strada mea”, denunțată ca anti-politică și retrasă din circuitul public.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *Ana Blandiana, Securitate, Întâmplări de pe strada mea, comunism.*

The complex relationship between writers and Securitate – as a mandatory of communist Power – may be defined in terms of Michel Foucault's

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concept of power-knowledge<sup>2</sup>. In a totalitarian regime, knowledge should be held exclusively by the Power. However, in communist Romania, there were two main rivals in the competition for power-knowledge – the writers and the Securitate, due to the importance writers had as keepers of the Truth. The writers were mainly interested in knowing who the other one was, his disguise, his informants. The Securitate employees, in their turn, wanted to break the possible anti-political messages coded in literary texts, or writers' friends and acquaintances networks. From the point of view of Securitate, writers were 'a problem', as one can see from the frequent use of the noun in official document headlines.

One of the most important cases of such 'problems' is represented by a children's literature book, Ana Blandiana's *Întâmplări de pe strada mea* (*Events on My Street*)<sup>3</sup>. The poem *A star from my street*<sup>4</sup> portrays its hero, the kitten named Arpagic, as a star who becomes praised by everyone in the neighbourhood. He receives flowers, songs are written for him, movies about his life are filmed, and even mice consider it an honour to be eaten by the kitten. The resemblance to the communist dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu is too obvious, due to the text's caricature nature<sup>5</sup>, so the denunciation is inevitable<sup>6</sup>.

The book published in 1988 was not the first political denunciation the author made. The four poems published in the students' literary magazine 'Amfiteatru' in 1984<sup>7</sup> echoed deeply in the hearts of Romanian readers<sup>8</sup>, for whom literature was a discourse of truth. However, the punishment was by far less severe<sup>9</sup>.

Although the book denounced is for children, the transparent nature of its anti-political message, along with its market visibility<sup>10</sup>, trigger all the

<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated from the French by Alan Sheridan, New York, Vintage Books, 1995, pp. 195-228, <http://dm.ncl.ac.uk/courseblog/files/2011/03/michel-foucault-panopticism.pdf> (10.02.2016): '[K]nowledge follows the advances of power, discovering new objects of knowledge over all the surfaces on which power is exercised.'

<sup>3</sup> Ana Blandiana, *Întâmplări de pe strada mea*, il. by Doina Botez, Bucharest, Ion Creangă, 1988.

<sup>4</sup> See *Ibid.*, pp. 18-22.

<sup>5</sup> See Corina Croitoru, *Politica ironiei în poezia românească sub comunism*, Pref. by Ioana Bot, Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2014, p. 148.

<sup>6</sup> See Ana Blandiana, *Fals tratat de manipulare*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 2013, p. 307.

<sup>7</sup> See Id., *Totul, Eu cred, Cruciada copiilor, Noi, plantele*, in 'Amfiteatru', no. 12/ 1984 (dec.), p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> See Naomi Frandzen, *Interviu cu Ana Blandiana*, available at <http://linguaromana.byu.edu/blandiana.html>, accessed in 11.07.2015, for a detailed reconstruction of the events, from Ana Blandiana's point of view.

<sup>9</sup> See Ionuț Cristea, István Király, Doru Radosav, *Fond Secret. Fond S „Special”. Contribuții la istoria fondurilor secrete de bibliotecă din România. Studiu de caz. Biblioteca Centrală Universitară „Lucian Blaga, Cluj-Napoca*, Anexa XXXVIII, pp. 332-333, for the official order to withdraw the issue on December from the public circuit, and move it to the 'Special Fund' of public libraries.

<sup>10</sup> The book was published in 100,000 copies. See George Zarafu, *Cum a apărut cartea „Întâmplări de pe strada mea”, de Ana Blandiana, interzisă de securitate. Amintiri de George Zarafu*, <http://www.literaturacopii.ro/stire-cartea-care-imi-place/cum-a-aparut-cartea-intamplari-de-pe-strada-mea-de-ana-blandiana-interzisa-de-securitate-amintiri-de-george-zarafu/203> (10.04.2015).

resources Securitate has, in order to remove the book from the public circuit. The attempted removal has two main goals: punishment and deletion. By eliminating the book from public circuit, the Securitate act as an agent of rewriting the history of literature, since the book vanishes from libraries, bookstores and even from homes. Also, Securitate's involvement in the deletion process implies institutional punishments both for the author and for the publisher<sup>11</sup>.

In the 1980s, each district in Romania received newly published books by two channels: the district bookstore central and the cooperative book deposits, so the Securitate are forced to take action on two levels. The documents indicating the withdrawal from public circuit specify the exact number of copies destined for selling, and the number of copies recuperated by each central. Afterwards, the person in charge of the Writers Union, Colonel Victor Achim, wrote down in pencil the total number of volumes sold and recuperated in each district<sup>12</sup>. As it follows, in 29 districts, 57,155 copies were sent, but only 13,290 withdrawn.

Securitate involved the so-called 'book instructors' in the withdrawal process. They were people responsible for taking charge of the unsold copies. As it turns out from the majority of the reports, most of the 'book instructors' were submitted to background checks with the purpose of certifying their reliability.

However, the withdrawal process turned out to be very difficult, despite the efforts of Securitate. The report from Zalău reveals the extent to which the employees are willing to go: *'The management of the Bookstore Central instructed the seller from the second-hand bookshop in Zalău to recuperate copies of the book from their rightful owners, and to send the copies accordingly to the instructions given by the proper authorities.'*<sup>13</sup>

Due to excessive bureaucracy, the Securitate in Constanța take schizophrenic measures: on the one hand, they allow copies in public libraries to be consulted by readers, under the pretext that they have no legal authority on libraries. On the other hand, Securitate employees believe it is their legal obligation to invade readers' bedrooms: *'At the level of our district, we act through our competent agents in order to recuperate the copies from the readers, and we continue to follow the pursuance of given instructions.'*<sup>14</sup>

On the contrary, the Securitate from Hunedoara explain their failure in not withdrawing a single copy of the book by the small print runs of literature

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<sup>11</sup> Ana Blandiana is banned from publishing and constantly surveilled, until the fall of communism, and the editor-in-chief, Georghe Zarafu, is fired. See *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, in the archives of CNSAS (The National Council for the Study of Securitate) I have encountered the documents for only 29 districts. See CNSAS, Fond Documentar, File No. 10966, Vol. V, pp. 221-222, 303-331.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 330. If not stated otherwise, all the following quotes are translated by the author of the article.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 319.

books for children<sup>15</sup>. In Alba – withdrawal rate of 16.23% – the authorities are more drastic and decide to take measures against the book sellers who did not comply with the order of removing the volume from the selling process<sup>16</sup>. In Arad – 28.33% withdrawal rate – the representatives explain their apparent failure by a radio advertisement recommending Ana Blandiana's book to young readers<sup>17</sup>. The detail is underlined in pencil on the original document, which proves again the Securitate's proneness to generalized suspicion.

However, the operation of hunting down a book for children – even in the bedrooms of plain readers – is not as monstrous as its justification. The withdrawal order is motivated by the fact that the book contains 'poems with an interpretable content'<sup>18</sup>.

One may conclude that, in the '80s, Romanian censorship – as a collective mechanism of denunciation – did not limit itself to ideological control or to identifying potentially subversive texts, but tried to annihilate the specificity of literature – its interpretability and plural meanings.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 316.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 320.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 221-222, 303-331.

## LA RÉFORME COMMUNISTE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT DE 1948, REFLÉTÉE DANS LES DOCUMENTS DE L'ARCHIVE POPOVICI

EMANUELA REȚE<sup>1</sup>

**RÉSUMÉ.** *La réforme communiste de l'enseignement de 1948, reflétée dans les documents de l'Archive Popovici.* Cette étude se propose de valoriser les documents de l'Archive Popovici afin de surprendre les effets de la Réforme de l'enseignement de 1948: la suppression de l'autonomie universitaire, l'uniformisation de l'enseignement supérieur roumain au niveau organisationnel et la subordination de celui-ci aux impératifs idéologiques communistes. L'établissement des programmes didactiques et scientifiques uniques; la réorganisation des cours (dont toute conception bourgeoise idéaliste a été bannie) et des bibliographies, conçus selon le modèle soviétique; l'obligation de suivre des cours de marxisme-léninisme; celles-ci sont quelques-unes des mesures de la réforme de 1948, documentées dans l'Archive Popovici.

**Mots-clés:** *réforme de l'enseignement roumain de 1948, Archive Popovici, programme d'études, cours de marxisme-léninisme*

**REZUMAT.** *Reforma comunistă din 1948 a învățământului, reflectată în documentele din Arhiva Popovici.* Studiul își propune valorificarea documentelor din Arhiva Popovici în încercarea de a surprinde efectele Reformei învățământului din 1948: suprimarea autonomiei universitare, uniformizarea sub aspect organizatoric a învățământului superior românesc și subordonarea acestuia imperativelor ideologice comuniste. Impunerea programelor didactice și științifice unice, a cursurilor (purificate ideologic de orice concepție burgheză idealistă) și a bibliografiilor pliate pe modelul sovietic, obligativitatea participării la cursuri de marxism-leninism sunt doar câteva din măsurile de reformă de după 1948, documentate în Arhiva Popovici.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *Reforma învățământului din 1948, Arhiva Popovici, programe ale cursurilor, documente, cursuri de marxism-leninism.*

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La présente étude se construit sur les documents contenus dans l'Archive Popovici, qui se trouvent à la Bibliothèque départementale « O. Goga » de Cluj-Napoca, dans l'intention déclarée de refaire le trajet de la vie du professeur D. Popovici, en complétant les informations trop succinctes qui ont été publiées sur lui. La restitution s'impose, puisque le professeur de Cluj est « l'une des plus grandes personnalités de notre histoire littéraire »<sup>2</sup> et que, malgré cela, il existe très peu d'articles de dictionnaire à son sujet et un seul livre sur sa vie et son œuvre, publié lors du centenaire de sa naissance. Il est vrai, pourtant, qu'il a vécu sa vie avec beaucoup de discrétion, qu'il n'a parlé de lui-même que lorsque l'occasion le demandait, qu'il a quitté les siens beaucoup trop tôt et à un moment historique qui a troublé l'existence de la plupart de ceux qu'il a laissés derrière.

En choisissant de faire une présentation des moments les plus importants de la courte existence de D. Popovici (1902-1952), nous prenons comme point de départ les documents autobiographiques, rédigés à la requête du ministère, suite la réforme de 1948, ainsi que les rapports qu'il élabore en qualité de chef de chaire ; ces documents attestent l'implication de Popovici dans l'histoire de son temps.

On a longtemps pensé que le professeur n'avait pas suffisamment connu le mécanisme du système politique qui venait d'être installé après la seconde guerre mondiale en Roumanie. Mais les documents de son archive personnelle prouvent que les transformations entraînées par la montée au pouvoir du régime communiste venaient à atteindre l'historien littéraire. La substitution obligatoire, dans le langage officiel, de l'appellatif « monsieur » avec le terme de provenance russe, « *tovarășe* », la participation à des cours de marxisme-léninisme, la formulation d'un soi-disant (obligé...) besoin « impérieux » d'avoir accès à la littérature soviétique, l'utilisation des syntagmes appartenant à la langue de bois lors de la rédaction des rapports sont seulement quelques-uns des signes discrets de cette intrusion de l'histoire dans le bureau du Professeur.

Avant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, lorsque D. Popovici avait occupé, par concours, un poste de professeur agrégé à l'université de Cluj (1936), la Faculté des Lettres et de Philosophie était une institution moderne, parfaitement synchronisée avec les institutions européennes correspondantes, ayant du prestige et de l'autorité dans la société roumaine. Le savoir-faire des professeurs et la qualité des étudiants assuraient la haute performance des activités d'enseignement et de recherche. Ceci dans le contexte de l'autonomie des institutions d'enseignement supérieur, où les programmes d'enseignement étaient établis au niveau des universités. La construction des élites par

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<sup>2</sup> L'affirmation appartient à T. Vianu, *Avant-propos in D. Popovici, Romantismul românesc Partea I: prima perioadă romantică (1829-1840), scriitorii de la „Dacia literară”*, préface de Dan Simonescu, édition soignée et notes par Ioana Em. Petrescu, Tineretului, București, 1969, p.7.

l'orientation théorique des futurs spécialistes et par la formation des scientifiques, la promotion et la dissémination de la science constituaient les buts établis par la *Loi de l'enseignement supérieur* de 1943<sup>3</sup>, bien que par rapport à la loi de l'enseignement universitaire de 1932 on puisse déjà constater une certaine restriction de la liberté universitaire et la présence de l'enjeu idéologique.

Une période distincte dans l'histoire de l'université commence avec la promulgation en 1948 de la *Loi de réforme de l'université*<sup>4</sup>. Le modèle occidental de fonctionnement de la faculté, y était remplacé avec un modèle d'inspiration soviétique : la structure et le contenu des plans d'enseignement ont été idéologisés, le corps professoral a été épuré selon des critères politiques (la Faculté des Lettres et de Philosophie étant parmi les plus affectées). Bon connaisseur de l'histoire (non seulement littéraire), le professeur de Cluj est le témoin silencieux des mutations de la société, essayant, lorsqu'il lui était possible, de dire la vérité, quoique son opinion ne coïncide pas avec celle des représentants du nouveau pouvoir. La preuve en est un document manuscrit, dont nous ne connaissons pas la destination, mais dans lequel Popovici soutient fermement son collègue, le grand philosophe L. Blaga, qui avait été destitué de son poste à l'Université clujeoise, tombant dans la disgrâce du nouveau gouvernement<sup>5</sup>. Datant du 9 septembre 1952, le document est rédigé à l'époque où D. Popovici travaillait avec Blaga à la Bibliothèque de l'Académie, la filiale de Cluj.

Afin de maximiser l'influence de l'idéologie soviétique, les relations de l'université avec l'Occident avaient été supprimées, comme en témoigne le refus reçu par le professeur Popovici lorsqu'il avait demandé par écrit la permission de participer au Congrès de Littérature Moderne de Paris, qui devait avoir lieu entre le 30 mars et le 1 avril 1948. Popovici avait annoncé un titre pour sa communication parisienne, *Le rôle social du Titan dans le Romantisme Roumain*<sup>6</sup>, mais nous n'avons pas encore identifié aucune preuve de sa participation au congrès, la sortie du pays n'étant consignée ni dans le passeport ni dans la déclaration qu'il donne en 1949 sur ses activités. Il y mentionne avoir quitté le pays seulement dans les années 1930 à l'occasion des études qu'il faisait à Paris. Fort probablement, les autorités ne lui ont pas permis d'aller à Paris en 1948.

<sup>3</sup> Gheorghe Bunescu (coord.), *Antologia legilor învățământului din România*, Institutul de Științe ale Educației, București, 2004, p. 304.

<sup>4</sup> Décret no. 175 pour la réforme de l'enseignement in Gheorghe Bunescu (coord.), *op. cit.*, p. 342.

<sup>5</sup> Bibliothèque départementale „Octavian Goga”, Cluj-Napoca, section Collections spéciales, fond Petrescu, sous-collection Popovici, série Manuscrits, dossier 49, f. 92.

<sup>6</sup> Bibliothèque départementale „Octavian Goga”, Cluj-Napoca, section Collections spéciales, fond Petrescu, sous-collection Popovici, série Activité universitaire, enveloppe 2, f. 48.



Pour réaliser un des principaux desideratas de l'époque, « le renforcement des liens avec l'Union Soviétique »<sup>7</sup>, l'activité culturelle était attentivement supervisée et mise au profit de la propagande communiste. Un document manuscrit de l'archive contient un discours que Popovici tient avant un spectacle de théâtre qui met en scène un texte dramatique faisant partie de la littérature russe<sup>8</sup>. Quoiqu'il n'existe aucun élément qui nous permettrait d'identifier la pièce de théâtre en question, l'approche du professeur est évocatrice : la langue de bois suggère le caractère imposé d'une telle action, l'absence des références à la valeur esthétique de la production littéraire nous permet d'inférer qu'il s'agissait d'une commande politique du jour.

Ignorant délibérément le spécifique et les traditions de l'enseignement universitaire roumain de la période de l'entre-deux-guerres, les représentants du nouveau pouvoir ont imposé une forme d'organisation discordante, politisant l'enseignement, tant par l'introduction des disciplines spéciales que par la modification du contenu des autres disciplines. La nécessité de planifier l'activité didactique et de recherche a été justifiée par le désir d'éliminer les « insuffisances » de l'enseignement universitaire bourgeois, reflétées négativement dans la formation des étudiants. À la suite d'une analyse minutieuse, on avait constaté qu'après la fin des études universitaires, les connaissances professionnelles étaient tout à fait incomplètes et que, pour déployer leur activité, les diplômés devaient aller chercher des informations dans les manuels de l'enseignement secondaire. On considérait que la révision était nécessaire parce que pendant l'ancien régime et jusqu'à 1948, l'enseignement aurait eu un « caractère non organisé ». On désapprouvait le fait que « chaque professeur ou maître de conférence enseignait, comme il lui chantait, des cours, ayant dans le meilleur cas un caractère cyclique, destinés à tous les étudiants de la même spécialité, quelle que soit leur année d'étude. Dans ces conditions, les étudiants débutants se trouvaient en compétition avec les étudiants de dernière année et ils ne pouvaient jamais entendre toute la matière de base de leur spécialité. En bref, il n'existait pas une planification scientifique et didactique-pédagogique du processus d'instruction »<sup>9</sup>. L'analyse de certains documents de l'Archive Nationale nous a permis d'établir le nombre d'étudiants de chaque section de la Faculté des Lettres, lorsque l'université était réfugiée à Sibiu<sup>10</sup>, d'étudier les options en matière de cours et

<sup>7</sup> En 1944, naît l'*Association Roumaine pour le renforcement des liens avec l'Union Soviétique*. Le but de cette association était la diffusion d'une nouvelle image de l'URSS dans la vie culturelle et scientifique. C.I. Parhon, Al. Rosetti, D. Gusti sont seulement quelques-uns de ceux qui ont contribué à la soviétisation de la culture par leur implication dans l'activité de l'ARLUS.

<sup>8</sup> Bibliothèque départementale „Octavian Goga”, Cluj-Napoca, section Collections spéciales, fond Petrescu, sous-collection Popovici, série Manuscrits, dossier 47, ff. 1-6.

<sup>9</sup> Ștefan Pascu, *Universitatea „Babeș-Bolyai” din Cluj*, Dacia, Cluj, 1972, p. 32.

<sup>10</sup> Direction départementale des Archives Nationales Cluj (D.J.A.N.), Le fond de l'Université « Roi Ferdinand Ier », Feuilles de cours A-Z de la Faculté des Lettres et de Philosophie, 1941-1942.

leur organisation par année d'étude et spécialisation. Cela confirme l'hypothèse que les données étaient vraies, mais que l'analyse était biaisée : les étudiants avaient bien le droit de choisir les cours, les fiches des cours en témoignent. Qui plus est, l'interaction entre les étudiants des différentes sections, ou des différentes années apportait un plus de connaissance et avait une valeur pédagogique, la compétition n'étant pas déloyale, mais stimulante.

Les professeurs ont d'abord été questionnés quant à leur orientation politique et idéologique<sup>11</sup>, et ensuite informés de l'obligation de « purifier idéologiquement » les cours, d'en enlever toute conception bourgeoise idéaliste, mystique ou cosmopolite. Après la réforme de l'enseignement de 1948, les cours des professeurs universitaires ont été soumis à l'« analyse »<sup>12</sup>, afin d'exclure les aspects qui ne correspondaient pas à la nouvelle vision de l'éducation. D. Pop, étudiant et ensuite collègue de Popovici, témoigne lui aussi que, suite à l'analyse, le cours d'Histoire de la littérature moderne enseigné par Popovici avait été décrété idéologiquement inadéquat.

Pour la mise en place de ces changements, on avait organisé des « discussions et des échanges fructueuses », à la suite desquelles « un nombre de professeurs de plus en plus grand sont arrivés à la conclusion que leurs anciens points de vues idéalistes et métaphysiques ne correspondaient pas à la recherche scientifique et ont commencé à les réviser »<sup>13</sup>. C'est justement pour soutenir ce genre de démarches qu'a été formulée l'obligation, pour le corps enseignant, de participer à des cours de formation. La thématique d'un tel cours est contenue dans des documents que nous avons identifiés dans l'archive : un cours de marxisme-léninisme, auquel D. Popovici avait participé le 5 décembre 1950<sup>14</sup> et, sur une page manuscrite, les notes d'un cours de *Matérialisme historique*<sup>15</sup>. En réalité, après 1948, les mesures de réforme au niveau de l'enseignement supérieur ont eu comme objectif la formation rapide d'un grand nombre de professeurs endoctrinés, susceptibles de façonner les futurs spécialistes, qui devaient appliquer la politique du parti dans l'appareil d'état, l'armée, la justice, la culture.

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<sup>11</sup> Déclaration de Popovici le 14 mai 1949 : « Comme information autobiographique complémentaire j'ai noté seulement que mes idées politiques sont reflétées par mes études et que celles-ci se trouvent dans toutes les bibliothèques publiques. » Bibliothèque départementale „Octavian Goga”, Cluj-Napoca, section Collections spéciales, fond Petrescu, sous-collection Popovici, série Activité universitaire, dossier 3, feuille 126, manuscrite sur une feuille lignée, à l'encre bleu.

<sup>12</sup> D. Pop, *Martor atent și modest părtaş la istorie*, Toderco, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 118.

<sup>13</sup> C-tin Daicoviciu, *Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai. Studiu monografic*, 1957, pp. 166-169.

<sup>14</sup> Bibliothèque départementale „Octavian Goga”, Cluj-Napoca, section Collections spéciales, fond Petrescu, sous-collection Popovici, série Manuscrits, dossier 50, f. 100.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 111. Le document contient la définition des termes : moyen de production, force et relations de production.

Les représentants du parti dans les universités étaient membres des Conseils des facultés et devaient être consultés impérativement par le doyen sur les problèmes importants de l'enseignement. Le profil des cours, des séminaires et des autres activités didactiques et scientifiques des années 1950-1951 ont révélé le fait que les professeurs universitaires se sont conformés, adoptant une position obéissante à l'idéologie du parti, et utilisant le matériel bibliographique soviétique<sup>16</sup>, chaque cours étant précédé par un rapport « critique et autocritique » de l'auteur<sup>17</sup>.

Lors de la rédaction des rapports, le chef de chaire était obligé d'introduire une section distincte pour noter les démarches entreprises pour « l'amélioration du niveau idéologique des cours »<sup>18</sup> : « les thèses stalinistes nous ont été très utiles pour l'enseignement de la linguistique [...] nous nous sommes également servis des discussions de la VIe Section de l'Académie R. P. R... ». Le fait que nous pouvons trouver dans l'Archive tant la version manuscrite, que le rapport dactylographié signé par Popovici, laisse place à l'interprétation d'une possible intervention extérieure engendrant le renversement des priorités dans l'organisation du texte final.

Tout comme l'activité universitaire a été circonscrite à la mission démocratique-populaire, l'une des exigences ministérielles était le dévouement profond que les cadres didactiques devaient manifester à l'égard de la « cause » du peuple et de la classe ouvrière. Bien que le serment de foi prêté par les professeurs à l'état ait existé également dans la période de l'entre-deux-guerres, un document rempli et signé par Popovici le 2 janvier 1949 prouve que cet engagement avait été modifié, son rôle initial étant idéologisé et dénaturé<sup>19</sup>.

Aussi étaient-ils obligés de reconsidérer leurs positions théoriques concernant les problèmes scientifiques discutés dans le cadre du cours et dans leurs recherches<sup>20</sup>. La réorganisation en profondeur du programme d'études était le premier pas vers l'uniformisation de l'enseignement, par la prescription

<sup>16</sup> Voir le rapport de Popovici en qualité de chef de chaire, gardé dans l'Archive, dans lequel il demande la dotation de la bibliothèque en littérature russe : fond Petrescu, sous-collection Popovici, série Activité universitaire, feuilles 8-11.

<sup>17</sup> C-tin Daicoviciu, *Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai. Studiu monografic*, 1957, pp. 166-169. C-tin Daicoviciu, *Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai. Studiu monografic*, 1957, pp. 166-169.

<sup>18</sup> Bibliothèque départementale „Octavian Goga”, Cluj-Napoca, section Collections spéciales, fond Petrescu, sous-collection Popovici, série Activité universitaire, enveloppe 1, ff. 4-11.

<sup>19</sup> « Je jure d'être fidèle au peuple et de défendre la République Populaire roumaine, contre les ennemis de l'extérieur et de l'intérieur » ; Bibliothèque départementale „Octavian Goga”, Cluj-Napoca, section Collections spéciales, fond Petrescu, sous-collection Popovici, série Activité universitaire, dossier 3, feuille 125.

<sup>20</sup> L. Nastasă, „*Suveranii*” universităților românești: mecanisme de selecție și promovare a elitei intelectuale [Vol.] 1 *Profesorii Facultăților de Filosofie și Litere, (1864-1948)*, Limes, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, pp. 542-543.

d'un programme unique (facile à contrôler). Puisque un programme de cours ne consiste pas simplement en une table des matières, des auteurs étudiés et des textes consacrés, la reconsidération devait partir des documents prospectifs vers la mise en œuvre des cours. Les documents gardés dans l'Archive Popovici<sup>21</sup> ont facilité une analyse des transformations idéologiques et de l'adaptation de son cours, *La Littérature roumaine à l'époque des « Lumières »*, aux exigences du moment, cours enseigné à partir de 1948-1949 jusqu'à 1950-1951.

La comparaison des, trois documents, contenant trois versions successives de ce cours, révèle une transformation graduelle perceptible. Cela vaut la peine de mentionner que le programme du cours pour l'année 1948-1949, après la réforme, n'est pas encore « vicié », étant compatible avec le sommaire des anciennes variantes de son cours, que Ioana Em. Petrescu allait éditer en 1972<sup>22</sup> ; ce document nous a servi « d'unité de contrôle » pour mesurer l'ampleur des modifications ultérieures. La première différence constatée dans le programme de l'année universitaire suivante est la présence d'un paragraphe contenant la précision de la position méthodologique : « Dans l'interprétation du phénomène littéraire on tiendra compte des facteurs liés à l'infrastructure et à la supra-structure : a. Le facteur économique ; b. le facteur sociopolitique ; c. le facteur culturel. Le rôle que joue en ce sens la position de classe de l'écrivain et la personnalité en tant qu'expression d'une collectivité »<sup>23</sup>.

Si, pendant l'année universitaire 1949-1950, les objectifs du cours étaient « La littérature roumaine à l'époque des « Lumières », terminologie et délimitation chronologique », l'année suivante l'objectif du cours était formulé ainsi : « la division de la matière : a. l'image de la société de nos jours à travers ses classes sociales ; b. la façon dont cette image est saisie par les écrivains appartenant aux différentes classes sociales ». La stratification sociale (la lutte de classe – thème marxiste, indiquant explicitement une orientation politique de gauche) revient comme un leitmotiv. Même dans la *Țiganiada*, l'œuvre illuministe de Ion Budai-Deleanu, il se proposait de suivre « le caractère révolutionnaire de cette œuvre, dévoilé par la façon dont elle reflète les classes sociales ». Les thèmes abordés dans la séance du 13 octobre 1950, la troisième leçon du cours, portant sur la littérature des « Lumières », constituaient une autre nouveauté. Nous pouvons mentionner par exemple : les exploités, les monastères, les propriétaires, les fonctionnaires, les voleurs (exception : les « *haïdouks* », brigands

<sup>21</sup> Programme des cours : *L'Histoire de la littérature roumaine moderne*. IVe année, semestre I / 8 X – 22 I / [1949-1950], Bibliothèque départementale „Octavian Goga”, Cluj-Napoca, section Collections spéciales, fond Petrescu, sous-collection Popovici, série Manuscrits, sous-série Écrits, dossier 1.

<sup>22</sup> D. Popovici, *Studii literare*, vol. I, Dacia, Cluj, 1972.

<sup>23</sup> Programme des cours : *L'Histoire de la littérature roumaine moderne*. IVe année, semestre I / 8 X – 22 I / [1949-1950], Bibliothèque départementale „Octavian Goga”, Cluj-Napoca, section Collections spéciales, fond Petrescu, sous-collection Popovici, série Manuscrits, sous-série Écrits, dossier 1, ff. 9-15.

qui se révoltaient contre l'ordre existant), « le développement de la vie commerciale et la dégradation des conditions de vie de la classe ouvrière » (sic!).

Nous sommes d'avis que Popovici entendait réaliser seulement une révision formelle de son cours, ne touchant pas à son essence lors de l'enseignement proprement-dit. Puisque nous n'avons trouvé aucune page de ce cours qui soit modifiée ou réécrite, nous affirmons que le professeur de Cluj reste identique à lui-même, malgré les documents officiels, et en tout cas il manifeste une résistance au changement. L'année universitaire suivante il donnera un cours sur *Le Romantisme roumain*. Et après il sortira de scène : il meurt en décembre 1952.

Suite à la déstalinisation, que Popovici ne verra plus, les plans d'étude allaient reprendre, malgré leur caractère fortement contrôlé par le ministère et le parti unique, une structure digne de l'étude philologique, notamment au milieu des années 60, moment où le régime communiste manifeste une relative « ouverture ». En dépit des difficultés d'ordre politique et idéologique, la faculté reste tout au long des années suivant la Seconde Guerre mondiale un centre d'enseignement et de recherche puissant, représenté par de noms illustres<sup>24</sup>. Mais le nom du grand professeur de Cluj vivait à l'époque seulement dans la mémoire de ceux qui l'ont connu et ont apprécié son effort créateur pour le devenir de l'histoire littéraire roumaine.

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<sup>24</sup> Ion Vlad, *Universitatea „Babeș-Bolyai” din Cluj*, Dacia, Cluj, 1979, p. 75.

## LE FONDS PETRESCU OU LA TRANSMISSION DU SENS

CLAIRE BRESSOLETTE<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *The Petrescu archives or the transmitting meaning*, focuses on Ioana Em. Petrescu's literary theory elaborated in a cultural context marked by Kantian aesthetics and Schillerian theory of values seems to have escaped the structuralist fashion: her assimilation of the thought of the interwar period, by reading the books of her father's library, allowed Ioana Em. Petrescu to attach great value to sense. The author ponders over the possible influence of Jacques Maritain's thought traced out in the archives of the Petrescu family.

**Key words:** *literary theory, J. Maritain, Ioana Em. Petrescu, structuralism.*

**RÉSUMÉ.** *Le fonds Petrescu ou la transmission du sens* porte sur la théorie littéraire de Ioana Em. Petrescu, élaborée dans un contexte culturel marqué par l'esthétique kantienne et la théorie schillerienne des valeurs, échappe à la mode structuraliste : l'assimilation de la pensée de l'entre-deux guerre, qu'elle a pu faire grâce à la bibliothèque paternelle, conduit Ioana Em. Petrescu à s'attacher au sens. L'auteur s'interroge sur la possibilité d'une influence de la pensée de Jacques Maritain dépitée dans les archives du fonds Petrescu.

**Mots clefs :** *théorie littéraire, J. Maritain, Ioana Em. Petrescu, structuralisme.*

*Elle avait (bien) lu les auteurs  
d'avant, avant de se consacrer aux  
auteurs et théories de son temps...*

Ces deux décasyllabes augmentés d'un heptasyllabe ne sont pas un plagiat du vers de Victor Hugo,

Elle avait pris ce pli dans son âge enfantin  
De venir dans ma chambre un peu chaque matin<sup>2</sup>,

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<sup>2</sup> Victor Hugo, *Les Contemplations*, Éditions Baudelaire, Paris, 1966, p. 92.

... et pourtant ils parlent de la relation d'une fille à son père, de la transmission de la culture, et, plus particulièrement, dans le cas de Ioana Em. Petrescu, de l'assimilation de la bibliothèque paternelle.

Ioana Bot, spécialiste du fonds Popovici/Petrescu, installé actuellement dans l'appartement de la famille du quartier Mănăştur de Cluj, analyse ainsi cette transmission du legs paternel :

Elle connut, de cette façon, des textes, études et idées de l'entre-deux guerres, qui allaient lui être familiers, là où, pour ses collègues de génération, ces écrits étaient interdits ou difficiles d'accès [...] Beaucoup plus tard, à l'âge mur, cela lui valut une espèce de « navigation libre » dans la bibliographie critique, ainsi qu'une capacité particulière de métaboliser, dans ses lectures, cette bibliographie « ancienne », qui lui était beaucoup plus proche qu'à ses collègues de la même génération. De retrouver les sources, d'exercer des comparatismes parfois inouïs, etc. [...] Ceci dit, il faut aussi noter l'aisance avec laquelle Ioana Em. Petrescu met ensemble la bibliographie occidentale du sujet et les sources roumaines de l'entre-deux guerres (la philosophie de Lucian Blaga, la critique de George Călinescu), voire même avec les premières définitions roumaines du poétique, appartenant à Titu Maiorescu et au XIX<sup>e</sup>.

La théorie littéraire de Ioana Petrescu, formée par la pensée des années de l'entre-deux guerres, pourrait-elle avoir subi l'influence du philosophe Jacques Maritain dont les écrits sur l'art à cette même période comptent dans le paysage français traversé par le renouveau thomiste ?

S'interroger sur une possible influence de la pensée réaliste dans ce milieu universitaire clujeois semble une entreprise frappée d'avance de nullité, même si la Roumanie n'ignore pas ce renouveau thomiste véhiculé par les chrétiens catholiques romains ou grecs catholiques, et de manière ponctuelle par l'intérêt qu'ont pu lui porter pour différentes raisons un Nae Ionescu, D.D. Rosca ou Nichifor Crainic. La culture roumaine est en effet plutôt marquée par l'héritage kantien qui parle d'une esthétique plus que d'une philosophie de l'art, ce, via Baumgarten et Schiller, comme le suggère V. Nemoianu<sup>4</sup> :

Le rôle de la culture esthétique est d'après Schiller le rôle éducatif dans le sens le plus profond ; seule la culture esthétique serait capable d'assurer l'équilibre de l'humanisation complète entre l'homme matériel-sensoriel et l'homme idéal-abstrait. Le beau est, selon Schiller, à la fois la règle et l'instrument pour construire

<sup>3</sup> Ioana Bot, *Nici timp, nici loc... [Sans temps ni lieu...]*, dans Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Configurații [Configurations]*, étude introductive, notes et bibliographie par Ioana Bot, Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca, 2015, p. 19. Le texte a été traduit en français, « Sans temps ni lieu, innover en théorie littéraire au temps du communisme », dans *Dacoromania litteraria*, II, 2015, pp. 174-186.

<sup>4</sup> Virgil Nemoianu, *Surîsul abundenței [La sourire de l'abondance]*, Eminescu, București, 1994, pp. 140-141.

l'homme harmonieusement, parfaitement libre, tant face à l'arbitraire de la spontanéité que face à la contrainte extérieure. Il est clair qu'une telle définition du beau et du jeu réussit sans abandonner « ce qui est sa spécificité » ou « son autonomie », à ajouter une dimension élargie, éthique-pédagogique, de l'esthétique. Au fond il est question, sans qu'elle soit proclamée en tant que telle, d'une vision sociale de l'art. L'art n'est plus purement et simplement un modèle du monde, mais il agit comme modèle du monde.

Mais D. Popovici, par son séjour parisien entre 1930 et 1934, en tant que lecteur de langue roumaine à la Sorbonne et à l'Institut des langues orientales, élargit ses références au contact d'intellectuels comparatistes comme D. Mornet, F. Baldensperger, P. Hazard, M. Roques et A. Mirambel. Ainsi, ce brassage dont témoigne le fonds Popovici permet de penser que l'approche réaliste de l'art a également pu influencer la théorie littéraire de Ioana Em. Petrescu.

### **Des livres qui font signe**

Jacques Maritain, à cette période, jouit d'une autorité incontestable. Outre la *Réponse à Jean Cocteau* de 1926 et ses trois ouvrages majeurs qu'il a écrit sur l'art, *Art et scolastique*, 1920, *Frontières de la poésie*, 1935, et *Situation de la poésie*, 1938, il est connu pour sa métaphysique et sa pensée politique et sociale<sup>5</sup>. Il touche aussi par ses engagements très personnels en tant que chrétien, comme sa position à propos de la guerre d'Espagne en 1936, où il n'approuve ni le franquisme, ni les communistes, proposant une troisième voie, ou par sa lutte contre l'antisémitisme avec son livre retentissant, *Les juifs parmi les nations*, de 1938. Autorité intellectuelle, il participe ainsi en l'année 1937 à deux grands colloques, qui intéressent directement notre propos, l'un sur l'art, l'autre sur Descartes. De Roumanie, Tudor Vianu est également présent à ces deux colloques, aux côtés de cinq de ses compatriotes pour le premier.

Le seul livre de Jacques Maritain possédé par la bibliothèque de D. Popovici est *Trois Réformateurs*. Par comparaison avec un autre fonds clujene, propriété de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université « Babeş-Bolyai », celui du français Henri Jacquier, marié à une roumaine, les livres de Jacques Maritain sont peu présents dans le fonds Popovici. En effet, la bibliothèque de Henri Jacquier compte onze livres de J. Maritain qui sont tous annotés. Trois d'entre eux concernent la poésie.

Des annotations, on peut déduire une estime certaine de Henri Jacquier pour la pensée de Jacques Maritain, tel ce passage de la p. 154 de *Primauté du*

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<sup>5</sup> *Antimoderne*, 1922; *Trois Réformateurs*, 1925; *Primauté du spirituel*, 1927; *Distinguer pour unir ou Les degrés du savoir*, 1932; *Humanisme intégral*, 1936.



*spirituel* commenté en marge par « assez juste », souligné et prolongé en bas de page par « Que dire après 1945 ? »,

L'Europe a tué *son passé* [...] En fait, ceux qui en ont tant reçu, ont aujourd'hui le sentiment de n'en recevoir presque plus rien. Toute la douceur et la beauté, les formes, les valeurs, les images mêmes dont nos ancêtres ont vécu, qui leur faisaient la nature fraternelle et l'univers familier, et qui nous préparaient en eux de génération en génération, nous sont devenus tout à coup quelque chose de lointain, de séparé : parfaitement digne d'admiration et de respect, mais immobilisé dans ce qui n'est plus. Et voilà sans doute la cause profonde du grand désarroi de la jeunesse d'aujourd'hui. Elle se promène dans sa propre humanité comme dans une salle de musée, elle voit son cœur dans les vitrines.

Jacques Maritain n'est pas l'homme des cloisonnements entre les disciplines. S'il distingue, c'est pour unir. Cette caractéristique est aussi celle des intellectuels en Roumanie : Marin Ștefănescu a sa place dans la bibliothèque de D. Popovici, sa *Filosofia Creștină* lui est dédiée. De même pour Alexandru Claudian, avec *Cunoaștere și Suflet*, et Mihail Uță, avec *Auguste Comte și Estetica*. On y trouve aussi les *Études philosophiques sur l'Expression littéraire*, ouvrage couronné par l'Institut, de Claude-Louis Estève, qui propose de « défendre les droits de la poésie-jeu », contre ceux de la poésie-raison ou de la poésie-prière, ainsi que Ioan Petrovici qui, dans ses *Pagini filosofice*<sup>6</sup>, interroge les liens entre littérature et philosophie, deux disciplines davantage liées entre elles qu'en France.

On peut donc conclure que c'est à partir de ce lien organique entre littérature et philosophie que peut être comprise l'imprégnation, pour ainsi dire par capillarité, de la pensée de Maritain chez D. Popovici qui a aussi pu profiter de la bibliothèque de Henri Jacquier dans la situation d'exil à Sibiu, situation qui renforce les liens et favorise la circulation des livres.

### **Le fil d'Ariane du fonds Petrescu : Rolland de Renéville**

Après les livres, ce sont les carnets qui parlent. Dans le cahier XLI de la série XVII, consacré à Mallarmé, page 43, à propos d'*Igitur*, Ioana Em. Petrescu remarque Rolland de Renéville cité en note par Charles Maurron dans son livre sur Mallarmé qu'elle met en fiche. Rolland de Renéville est également cité par Jacques Maritain et Raïssa Maritain à propos de la différence entre le poète et le mystique dans *Situation de la Poésie*. Il est l'auteur de deux livres qui ont marqué la période de l'entre-deux guerres, *Rimbaud le Voyant* et *L'Expérience poétique*. Tous deux se trouvent dans le fonds Jacquier, annotés. Il participe, aux côtés de Jacques et Raïssa Maritain, au congrès sur l'art, tenu à Paris en 1937, dont le fonds Popovici possède les actes.

<sup>6</sup> Ioan Petrovici, *Pagini filosofice [Pages philosophiques]*, Alcalay et Calafateanu, Bucarest, 1923, p. 117.

Publié chez Alcan, ces actes du *Deuxième Congrès d'Esthétique et de Science de l'Art* rapportent les textes de 243 intervenants dont seulement 24 sont cochés par D. Popovici. Inscrit dans un projet international et pluridisciplinaire, ce congrès compte six intervenants roumains dont deux de Cluj, Coriolan Petreanu et Eugeniu Sperantia. Littérature et philosophie sont indifféremment les centres d'intérêt de D. Popovici, comme le suggèrent les conférences cochées, à savoir celles de Louis Lavelle, « L'Art ou le Temps vaincu », Étienne Souriau, « L'Art et l'Existence », ou Jules de Gaultier, « L'Art comme substitution du rapport de Représentation au rapport de Causalité ».

De Tudor Vianu, D. Popovici possède *Istoria esteticeii, de la Kant până azi*, et sa conférence à ce congrès est cochée. Elle porte sur l'idée de perfection dans l'art qu'il étudie à partir de l'esthétique du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, approche tout aussi éloignée de la pensée de Jacques Maritain que de celle de D. Popovici. Quant à ses émules roumains, leurs conférences ne sont pas cochées. Celles des deux Maritain et de Rolland de Renéville le sont. Ils défendent une philosophie de la poésie, le sens en poésie et le rôle de l'intuition comme moyen de connaissance, ce face à la fascination d'une grande partie des intervenants pour une approche positiviste et scientiste de la poésie ou face à ceux qui la relèguent dans le champ de l'activité gratuite, devenue seconde et non essentielle pour apprécier la maturité d'une civilisation.

Rolland de Renéville, à partir de l'héritage rimbaldien ou mallarméen du poète comme voyant, s'interroge sur la possibilité de la poésie comme lieu de connaissance, selon le titre de son intervention, *Poésie et connaissance*. Il rejoint les propos sur l'intuition de Jacques Maritain, dont les passages reproduits ci-dessous sont soulignés par D. Popovici lui-même, avec ces annotations en marge :

Il suit de là qu'un absolu ne saurait être donné que dans une intuition, tandis que tout le reste relève de l'analyse. Nous appelons ici intuition la sympathie par laquelle on se transporte à l'intérieur d'un objet pour coïncider avec ce qu'il a d'unique et par conséquent d'inexprimable. Au contraire l'analyse est l'opération qui ramène l'objet à des éléments déjà connus, c'est-à-dire communs à cet objet et à d'autres. Analyser consiste donc à exprimer une chose en fonction de ce qui n'est pas elle ; toute analyse est ainsi une traduction, un développement en symboles, une représentation prise de points de vue successifs d'où l'on note autant de contacts entre l'objet nouveau qu'on étudie, et d'autres, que l'on croit déjà connaître. Dans son désir éternellement inassouvi d'embrasser l'objet autour duquel elle est condamnée à tourner, l'analyse multiplie sans fin les points de vue pour compléter la représentation [...]

Ces lignes remarquées par D. Popovici situent l'intuition devant l'absolu, première étape qui conduira à l'œuvre magistrale de Maritain de 1953, *L'Intuition créatrice dans l'art et la poésie*. Elles font apparaître la différence entre la conception bergsonienne et celle de Maritain, pour qui l'intuition ne peut

être développée au mépris de l'intelligence. Ioana Popovici aurait donc pu lire, dans *L'expérience poétique* de Rolland de Renéville, dédié à sa femme roumaine, le peintre Cassilda Miracovici, motif supplémentaire de rapprochement avec les roumains, livre acquis par Henri Jacquier le 29 mai 1938, ces lignes suivantes :

Les livres de l'Orient nous enseignent justement que : *Dans la vérité absolue il n'y a place ni pour la parole, ni pour la pensée. La vérité dépasse tout ce qui est manifestation phénoménale ; elle n'est ni enseignée ni connue* (Madyamakavriti). Par conséquent, la fin logique où s'achèvent ces différents écrivains est le silence. Ne nous étonnons plus du silence de Mallarmé qui considérait ses quelques poèmes comme des griffonnages pour essayer sa plume, tandis qu'il rêvait d'une œuvre irréalisable. Comprenons le silence des surréalistes, et leur dédain vis-à-vis de l'expression littéraire. Ne soyons aucunement surpris d'entendre Paul Valéry nommer avec sincérité ses poèmes de simples exercices. L'identité des états poursuivis par ces méthodes aux démarches si divergentes, explique la sympathie, bientôt détruite, qui unissait au début de leur carrière des poètes tels que les surréalistes et Paul Valéry. Enfin ces aperçus projettent une clarté précieuse sur la profonde et succincte phrase qui ouvre les journaux intimes de Baudelaire : *De la concentration et de la vaporisation du moi, tout est là*<sup>7</sup>.

Cette fonction attribuée au silence comme lieu ultime de jaillissement et d'aboutissement de la poésie permet de saisir en profondeur la démarche apparemment contraire des surréalistes, de Mallarmé et de Valéry. Ces lignes sont comme une confirmation des conclusions de Ioana Bot à propos des interrogations de Ioana Em. Petrescu « sur la possibilité d'un niveau pré-linguistique de l'organisation du sens poétique ». En effet, elle

se retourne, pour argumenter cela, vers les théories de l'entre-deux guerre (ayant précédé le structuralisme, même en ayant fomenté dans les mêmes cercles) : *Gestalt*-théorie, mythocritique, critique esthétique ou esthétique mathématique y sont invoquées<sup>8</sup>.

### **L'entrée dans le débat mondial : raison et intelligence**

En cette année 1937 se tient aussi à Paris le IX<sup>e</sup> Congrès de philosophie, appelé aussi *Congrès Descartes*<sup>9</sup>, au cours duquel prend naissance l'Institut international de philosophie, fondé par la Sorbonne et l'Université de Lund.

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<sup>7</sup> Note 2, p. 27, *Mon coeur mis à nu*. Citation extraite des pp. 26-27.

<sup>8</sup> Ioana Bot, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

<sup>9</sup> Le Congrès Descartes s'est tenu à Paris du 31 juillet au 6 août 1937. Il y fut fait plus de 300 communications et plus de 800 membres furent régulièrement inscrits aux séances où s'est débattue la question des liens entre métaphysique et mystique (cf. Joseph Dopp, « Le Congrès Descartes », dans *Revue néo-scholastique de philosophie*, II, 1937, 56, pp. 664-679).

Le programme s'inscrit dans la dynamique des internationales, mais repose surtout sur un nouveau statut à donner à la raison : elle n'a plus le rôle de toute puissance que lui a accordé l'essor scientifique depuis le XVII<sup>e</sup> et plus particulièrement le positivisme. Depuis Freud et Bergson, elle est à penser en lien avec l'intelligence, l'intuition, l'inconscient et la foi. Marin Ștefănescu<sup>10</sup> perçoit ces enjeux en synthétisant ainsi le débat entre Bergson et Maritain :

Les néo-thomistes comme Maritain ont raison de signaler l'impact de la philosophie bergsonienne pour ce qui est de ne pas surestimer la raison, et en même temps la nécessité de rectifier cette philosophie par le fait de ne pas sous-estimer la raison en promouvant le retour à saint Thomas d'Aquin ou en rappelant qu'il faut admettre de fonder notre vie sur la foi.

La position philosophique de Jacques Maritain consiste à proposer une anthropologie fondée sur l'intelligence comme instance unificatrice :

M. Maritain ne peut accepter comme définitif un semblable déchirement à l'intérieur de l'intelligence. Il reproche précisément à Descartes d'avoir appuyé de son autorité écrasante une conception de l'intelligence qui se détourne de l'existence et s'ordonne aux seules essences, connues par le truchement d'idées-tableaux [...] M. Maritain estime urgent de revenir à une conception des essences naturellement orientées vers l'existence. Les essences ne sont autre chose que des puissances d'exister, des limitations de l'existence, elles sont dénuées de toute signification si on les coupe de leur relation à l'existence.

Parallèlement, il faut revenir à une conception pleinement réaliste de l'intelligence et M. Maritain appelle de ses vœux un « intellectualisme existentiel »<sup>11</sup>.

Si nos intellectuels clujeois proposent une approche personnelle et de ce fait originale, non par recherche de la nouveauté, mais bien, au contraire, par souci de ce qui est essentiel, alors ils sont dans la même perspective que celle de Jacques et Raïssa Maritain, eux-mêmes originaux par rapport au dogmatisme thomiste et à la prépondérance de l'approche historique dont la préoccupation n'est pas cette recherche de l'essence des choses, mais celle de la vérité du fait.

Cette conclusion est bien confirmée par les archives du fonds Popovici, comme en témoigne un article dactylographié de Liviu Petrescu, « Marcel Proust et la religion de l'art ». À partir de l'analyse de Bergson dans *Le Rire* sur l'impossibilité d'accéder directement aux choses et aux êtres sinon par une étiquette sous laquelle on les range, il interroge le rapport entre l'universel et le singulier ainsi que la lecture platonicienne de Marcel Proust que fonderait

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<sup>10</sup> Marin Ștefănescu, *Filosofia Crestină [La Philosophie Chrétienne]*, Universul, Bucarest, 1943, p. 308.

<sup>11</sup> Joseph Dopp, *art. cit.*, p. 668.

cette dichotomie. Il propose une lecture aristotélicienne à partir du livre de référence que fut *Marcel Proust* de Georges Cattai :

Loin de partager « l'erreur des matérialistes », qui croient « par l'analyse trouver la réalité dans la matière », l'erreur « des platoniciens » qui la cherchent « en dehors de la matière, dans les abstractions », Proust, comme Aristote – et c'est lui-même qui le précise (cf. « Chardin ou le cœur des choses », dans *Contre Sainte-Beuve*) –, comprend qu'elle ne peut être dans une abstraction, « qu'elle n'est pas pourtant la matière elle-même », mais ce qui en chaque chose individuelle est en quelque chose derrière la matière, « le sens de sa forme et la loi de son développement »<sup>12</sup>.

Liviu Petrescu montre que l'impression proustienne est à l'artiste ce qu'est le concept au métaphysicien et qu'elle n'est pas subjective, mais au contraire le moyen d'entrée dans la durée, ce qui n'est rien d'autre que le niveau métaphysique de l'être. Liviu Petrescu conteste Benoit-Méchin quand il affirme que

C'est toujours la deuxième fois qu'une chose lui apparaît qu'elle frappe son imagination. Ce qui est vierge encore n'a pas d'attraits pour lui [...] Ce qui lui échappe de plus en plus, dans la création, c'est ce que j'appellerai l'immense première fois<sup>13</sup>.

Pour lui, au contraire, cette saisie de l'être passe par *l'immense première fois*. S'appuyant sur l'essai de Lucian Blaga, *Stilurile fundamentale*, Liviu Petrescu articule les trois valeurs blagiennes, l'individuel, le typique et l'abstrait, pour conclure sur le rôle de la métaphore comme lieu d'unité de ces valeurs, et, chez Proust, de dépassement pour conférer à l'esthétisme une réalité aussi grande que la réalité des choses, ce qui aboutit à considérer la vie de l'artiste comme une manière d'être et non comme une profession.

Quoiqu'il en soit de la conclusion qui justifie un esthétisme existentiel, le passage par Aristote et la métaphysique de l'être comme interprétation de la démarche proustienne relève de cette circulation des idées d'autant plus renforcée que se trouve également cité Jean Mouton, ami des Maritain.

Pour conclure, c'est autour de la notion de circulation des idées beaucoup plus qu'autour de celle d'imitation des anciens, voire d'imitation d'un modèle, que peut être comprise la transmission du patrimoine paternel de D. Popovici à sa fille, et du pays tutélaire, la France à la Roumanie. Mais, s'il est possible de décrire comment circulent ces idées (par capillarité, marché noir du livre, etc.), il est

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<sup>12</sup> Georges Cattai, *Marcel Proust. Proust et son temps. Proust et le temps*, préface de Daniel-Rops, Julliard, Paris, 1952, p. 67.

<sup>13</sup> Benoit-Méchin, *La Musique et l'immortalité dans l'œuvre de Marcel Proust*, Simon Kra, Paris, 1926, p. 134.

plus difficile de tracer leur parcours. Une chose est certaine : la philosophie et la poésie sont deux modes de connaissance et cela développe un esprit de finesse dont l'intuition reste une faculté créatrice, y compris pour le domaine de la critique littéraire et du concept. Au contraire, la fascination de la science qui devient une imposture dangereuse pour le maintien d'une civilisation au sens profond du terme – qui place en son centre l'humanité et non l'efficacité, le qualitatif et non le quantitatif, la vulnérabilité et non la perfection, le sens et non le signe – s'accompagne de l'esprit de géométrie, s'arrête à des formes qui ne signifient plus, à des signes purement formels, et débouche inexorablement sur une crise du sens.

Il nous semble que Ioana Em. Petrescu échappe à ce qu'il a de strictement formel dans la mode pensante de l'après-guerre, eu égard au fond de pensée philosophique de l'entre-deux guerres, et à une réflexion comme celle de Maritain qui défend l'intuition créatrice comme mode de connaissance complémentaire du concept. Comment ne pas mettre en perspective ce point de vue avec ces lignes de Jean Starobinsky sur la critique littéraire et son rapport à la technicité ? Il oppose la critique impersonnelle, celle qui se fonde sur l'acquisition d'une technique transmissible à d'autres, à la critique qui est « participation à l'événement poétique, promue à son tour au rang d'événement » parce « qu'elle doit se faire œuvre à son tour, et courir les risques de l'œuvre »<sup>14</sup>.

Sans rien renier de « l'aspect matériel et formel révélé par la technique », Ioana Em. Petrescu semble être de ces créateurs qui, dans le domaine de la théorie littéraire, permettraient à la Roumanie d'entrer dans le monde de la pensée universelle, tel que le suggère Mario Roques, maître de D. Popovici à Paris entre 1930 et 1934, dans ces lignes également transposables à la théorie littéraire :

La littérature roumaine, qui a produit déjà des œuvres de valeur et de force, n'a pas eu le temps de donner encore de ces créations d'un caractère si large et si supérieurement humain qu'elles débordent d'emblée leur cadre originaire, le dominant et le font oublier. L'histoire de la littérature roumaine ne peut pas être encore l'histoire et l'explication d'un aboutissement ; elle doit être l'histoire de la formation d'un esprit, d'un goût, d'une langue, d'une âme. Un peuple, peu à peu, a dégagé du chaos sa pensée, son art, sa conscience : c'est de ces prises de conscience successives, de plus en plus larges et précises, qu'est faite l'histoire de la littérature roumaine<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Jean Starobinsky, *L'œil vivant II. La relation critique*, Gallimard, Paris, 2001, p. 55.

<sup>15</sup> Petre V. Hanes, *Histoire de la Littérature roumaine*, préface de Mario Roques, Librairie Ernest Leroux, Paris, 1934, pp. IX-X.

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## IOANA EM. PETRESCU'S AMERICAN EXPERIENCE (1981-1983), RECONSTRUCTED FROM ARCHIVE DOCUMENTS

LIANA VESCAN<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *Ioana Em. Petrescu's American experience (1981-1983), recomposed from archive documents.* This article aims at illustrating the manner in which archive documents (preserved in the Liviu and Ioana Em. Petrescu archives from the "Octavian Goga" County Library, Cluj) allow a recomposition of some daily life activities from the Communist era, but also of a mentality horizon confronted with the Western otherness, which is to say – the way in which Romanian intellectuals could, in those troubled times, construct fertile dialogues with the "free world".

**Key words:** *archives, Fulbright Scholarship, UCLA, the 80's*

**REZUMAT.** *Experiența americană a Ioanei Em. Petrescu (1981-1983), reconstituită din documente de arhivă.* Articolul își propune să ilustreze felul în care documente de arhivă (păstrate în arhivele Ioana și Liviu Petrescu, de la Biblioteca Județeană „O. Goga” din Cluj) ne ajută să reconstituim viața cotidiană a perioadei comuniste din România, dar și un orizont de mentalitate confruntat cu alteritatea occidentală – adică, felul în care intelectualii români ai epocii puteau, în acele vremuri dificile, să construiască dialoguri fertile cu „lumea liberă”.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *arhive, burse Fulbright, UCLA, anii 80.*

In autumn 1981, a period when Ceaușescu's dictatorship became increasingly oppressive, Ioana Em. Petrescu, together with her husband, Liviu Petrescu, travelled to the USA, with a Fulbright Scholarship, to teach Romanian culture and civilization as *visiting lecturer* at UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles), hoping to get the chance to take advantage of the great American libraries and bring her readings and specialized knowledge up to date. Much to her surprise however, one of the essential gains of her two years at UCLA would be a psychological one, because America represented a true paradigm shift.

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We are acquainted with her personal experience of discovering a new world due to the letters she sent to her mother, Elvira Popovici, and to her friends, Elena Neagoe (a former class mate) and Georgeta Antonescu (fellow professor at the Faculty of Letters, Babeş Bolyai University), edited by Ioana Bot in the volume *Molesting of Butterflies Forbidden*<sup>2</sup>. The book was published posthumously in 1998, when Liviu Petrescu was still alive, as an attempt to fulfill the author's wishes, as she had planned, based on these letters, to publish an American Journal.

We will not insist here on this correspondence, rather well-known, but instead we will try to recompose the particular experience framework of a Fulbright scholar in the 80's in Communist Romania, by examining the documents preserved in the Ioana Em. Petrescu archives. These documents complete each other, as if in a *puzzle*, shaping the American experience as a meeting point between two opposite worlds, with different political systems, mentalities and educational systems. As for Ioana Em. Petrescu herself, these documents reveal the same personality we are familiar with: a dedicated professor, highly appreciated by students and colleagues, with a solid background, an extremely serious and disciplined researcher, uncompromisingly focused on her projects<sup>3</sup>. Exemplary archive creators, Liviu and Ioana Em. Petrescu kept not only personal and family documents, but also documents concerning their professional activity, manuscripts, rough copies and a rich correspondence.

The scholarship received by Ioana Em. Petrescu, within the mutual educational exchanges of the Fulbright program, administered by CIES (Council for International Exchange of Scholars), aimed at allowing the beneficiary to enroll in a research and/or teaching program at a university in the United States. The candidates were nominated by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Instruction based on a file application assessment.

In the Petrescu archive we can find the congratulation letter from CIES<sup>4</sup>, addressed to Ioana Em. Petrescu for admission in the Fulbright Program, dated 19 October 1981 and signed by Cassandra A. Pyle. The letter is accompanied

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<sup>2</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Molestarea fluturilor interzisă. Scrisori americane, 1981-1983 [Molesting of Butterflies Forbidden. American Letters, 1981-1983]*, edited by Ioana Bot, Bucureşti, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică Publishing House, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> The archives of the Petrescu family belong to the "Octavian Goga" County Library from Cluj and are preserved *in situ* in the apartment where the Petrescu family lived. After Liviu Petrescu's death (July 5<sup>th</sup> 1999), because he did not have a testament, the apartment was taken over by the state. The succession trial lasted until 2003, when, on the basis of the Court Decision 379/April 2003, the Romanian government decided that the entire fund should be administered by the Cluj County Council and the County Library, respectively.

<sup>4</sup> "Octavian Goga" County Library Cluj, Compartment for Special Collections Knowledge and Local Memory, Ioana Em. Petrescu Sub-fund, University Activity Series, Fulbright Subseries, Correspondence, folder no. 8, p. 4. For all quotations from the documents of this fund, we will further specify the category, the name, the folder number and the page.

by a brochure containing information regarding the Fulbright Program. For the first year, the scholarship provided the following income for the scholar: 50 \$ per day for a period of 270 days; 600\$ for program related costs, 100 \$ accommodation fee, and in the following year 55\$ per day for a period of 300 days; 650 \$ for program related costs, \$100 accommodation fee, all taxable income. In California, the Fulbright program coordinator was Anne M. Bodenheimer, an excellent organizer, a real support for the Petrescu family and a close friend.

Due to the activities organized by Anne M. Bodenheimer (each activity is documented in the Petrescu archive<sup>5</sup>, through the invitations and the list of Fulbright scholars which confirmed their participation to these events), the Petrescu family had the chance to see the entire California, on a ten-day trip in June 1983, to visit prestigious scientific institutions like the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Huntington Library, to meet renowned specialists (although rarely from fields of studies similar to theirs).

The American documents prove the professionalism and involvement of all those responsible for the scholars included in the program. Although the language of the correspondence is mostly standardized, slightly artificial in its polite tone, these letters represent an example of a functioning bureaucratic system, a system whose purpose was to familiarize foreign scholars with the American values.

In contrast with the American side, for the Romanian state the scholar was nothing but a source of income. In the archives we can find<sup>6</sup> a commitment issued by the Ministry of Education and Instruction, typed on low quality paper, with suspension points for filling in data, which Ioana Em. Petrescu had to sign before leaving the country. The document abounds in bureaucratic jargon, denoting the state's complete lack of consideration for the individual. Through this document, Ioana Em. Petrescu acknowledged the fact that, as stated by art. 10 par. 1 of Decree no. 233/1974, her quality during her mission abroad was that of "working personnel relocated to UCLA, USA"<sup>7</sup>. By signing this agreement, Ioana Em. Petrescu acknowledged the provisions of the decree and agreed to not disclose the content of its annexes. In agreement with the above mentioned decree, Ioana Em. Petrescu would receive a 13 \$ pay and 25 % for her husband. The remaining sum from the American scholarship had to be given to the Romanian state. As a result, they had live on

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<sup>5</sup> Correspondence, Letters from Anne M. Bodenheimer to Ioana Em. Petrescu (October 23, 1981, November 11, 1981, December 16, 1981, January 18, 1982, February 9, 1982, February 16, 1982, October 6, 1982, November 11, 1982, December 13, 1982, April 6, 1983), folder no. 8, pp. 16-31.

<sup>6</sup> University Activity Series, folder no. 1, pp. 24-25.

<sup>7</sup> Decree no. 233/1974 referred to Romanian citizens paid in foreign currency and stipulated that the citizen had to transfer an important share of the monthly net profit (calculated in US dollars) to Romanian institutions, "to support families and cover all other obligations".

a tight budget. Not having the money to purchase even the strictly necessary books, Liviu Petrescu used to spend many hours in libraries photocopying books for them and for the friends at home. Moreover, the Romanian institutions expected the scholars to organize events promoting Romanian culture without providing any funds for them. In the activity report devised upon returning home Ioana Em. Petrescu expressed her frustration: "The financial conditions imposed on the Romanian lecturer are extremely harsh and have disadvantageous consequences for the cultural activity which cannot be undertaken with a complete lack of funds"<sup>8</sup>.

The Romanian lectureship at UCLA was established in 1974. Before Ioana Em. Petrescu, other Fulbright scholars from the Babeş-Bolyai University had taught there: Gligor Gruiță, Aurel Curtui, Mircea Țoca, which had built a good reputation for the Romanian program. Unfortunately, between Mircea Țoca's lectureship and Ioana Em. Petrescu's, there was a year-long interruption of the program, which made it difficult to attract students, uncertain whether they would be able to continue these courses.

Ioana Em. Petrescu arrived in Los Angeles in October, after the beginning of the academic year, and was supposed to start her classes in January, in the winter quarter. In her view, one major obstacle in attracting students was represented by the fact that the Romanian program was (and still is) hosted by the *Department of Slavic Languages*<sup>9</sup>. For the time being, she had to create leaflets and flyers for the "product" *Elementary Romanian* and *Romanian Civilization* in the winter quarter, and *Romanian Language* and *History of Romanian Literature* in the spring one. It was most certainly a mentality shift, but she handled the task with playfulness and the printed yellow and brown posters embraced the spirit of the American marketing, making use of superlatives, incentives and the Transylvania brand: "Ioana Petrescu, from the Transylvanian University of Cluj, Romania"<sup>10</sup>. In the first year she had 8 students: 4 – in the Elementary Romanian course, 3 – in the advanced level course and another one (Janice Foy, a violinist, who came to Cluj with the Petrescu family in the summer of 1982) – in the Romanian Civilization course, and in the second year - 12 students in Romanian Language, beginner and advanced, 3 of whom were PhD students (William Crowther, who later went to Romania with an IREX scholarship, Ann Briegleb, writing a thesis on the Romanian carols and David Forbes, preparing a thesis on comparative linguistics in the field of Romance Studies). Of course, her schedule, based on the low number of students and courses, might have seem

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<sup>8</sup> University Activity, folder no. 7, pp. 3-4.

<sup>9</sup> Correspondence, Visiting Scholar Final Report, folder no. 8, pp. 11-12.

<sup>10</sup> University Activity, folder no. 7, p. 12.

incredibly free to her colleagues at home. However, Ioana Em. Petrescu prepared very hard for each of her courses, as they were not her specialty<sup>11</sup>.

The anonymous evaluations of the students (unthinkable, at the time, in Romanian education which was part of a system that rightfully feared any evaluation of the pre-established order!) note as strong points of these courses: the professor ("Professor Petrescu is a delight. Her friendliness makes the class an enjoyment", "She is extremely knowledgeable in the field, She explains her points clearly, is patient and adapts herself to the needs of the student", "Professor likes to teach", "Enthusiasm, great ability to explain the course lecture", "The teacher has to work on improving English – but this comes with more practice", "We need more professors like Ioana!"<sup>12</sup>), and as low points: the textbook ("The major weakness of this course is that it needs a good comprehensive grammar of Romanian language", "Better texts will strengthen this course"<sup>13</sup>).

In the brief time she had between the challenging teaching activity and the socio-cultural activities she was involved in (of all of these, The Month of Romanian Culture, May 1983, presupposed great organizing efforts), Ioana Em. Petrescu spent her time in the library. The scores of copybooks and packages of reading sheets in the archives are an impressive testament to her readings, containing original observations, worth studying. Unfortunately, they are not dated, so it is difficult to precisely determine which of them belong to the American period.

From her official activity report, we know that her research in the UCLA libraries was mainly concerned with the following topics: contemporary American criticism and literary theory; theoretical frameworks of the study of hermetical poetry (necessary in completing a book about Ion Barbu which she had started working on before going to the USA) and the study of the bibliography about T.S. Eliot.

In April 1982 she sent a paper to the Romanian Studies Congress in Boston, the panel on Arghezi, which she connected with her subject of interest, Ion Barbu: "Between Tudor Arghezi and Ion Barbu"<sup>14</sup>. She participated in the symposiums and conferences organized by the department and together with Liviu Petrescu – for financial reasons, signing a paper together meant paying the conference fee only once! – she participated in the MLA (Modern Language Association) Congress – the biggest academic event of the year, in Los Angeles, in December 1982 (3 December 1982, letter to Elena Neagoe<sup>15</sup>).

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<sup>11</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Molestarea fluturilor interzisă. Scrisori americane, 1981-1983 [Molesting of Butterflies Forbidden. American Letters, 1981-1983]*, ed. cit., p. 70.

<sup>12</sup> University Activity, UCLA Evaluation of Instruction Program, folder no. 7, pp. 26-52.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>14</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Molestarea fluturilor interzisă. Scrisori americane, 1981-1983 [Molesting of Butterflies Forbidden. American Letters, 1981-1983]*, ed. cit., p. 109.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 169-171.

Professor Keith Hitchens, who had written the recommendation letter for Ioana Em. Petrescu's Fulbright scholarship application, asked her to write a study for the review *Romanian Studies* in Illinois, which he edited. Honored, Ioana Em. Petrescu proposed a topic close to her preoccupations: "Modernism as 'Radical Traditionalism' in Ion Barbu's and Constantin Brancusi's Artistic Views"<sup>16</sup>.

Upon returning home, she wrote a study about Murray Krieger, a critic which Ioana Em. Petrescu regarded highly<sup>17</sup>. Murray Krieger was a professor at University of Irvine, not far from UCLA and through close friends, Ioana Em. Petrescu got a chance to meet him. In the library of the Petrescu Fund we can find the book *Theory of Criticism*, with the author's autograph. Of all the American projects, her study on T.S. Eliot was the only one not completed. The manuscript of the book *Ion Barbu și poetica postmodernismului [Ion Barbu and the Poetics of Postmodernism]* was handed to Cartea Românească Publishing House in 1987<sup>18</sup>.

As one of the aims of the Fulbright program was to stimulate "mutual awareness between peoples"<sup>19</sup>, ever since her first year in the States Ioana Em. Petrescu organized self-financed Romanian soirees which included Romanian traditional food, an area in which (as revealed in the correspondence with her mother and with her friends), she did not consider herself an expert.

On 23 January 1983, invited by Vasile Ignătescu from the "Archangel Saints" Romanian Missionary Orthodox Church to commemorate the Union between the Romanian principalities Wallachia and Moldavia, she made a presentation of the event for the Romanian community in L.A. To celebrate the same event, on January 28 at UCLA, she organized a "Romanian afternoon" which proved to be a success. Ioana Em. Petrescu wrote to Ilie Pușcaș, the diplomat from the Romanian embassy in Washington who had given her "orders" to organize "events" to promote Romania.

"I have sent approximately 90 invitations and despite the harsh weather (the storms keep hitting California for a while now), I was happy to greet around 60-70 persons: colleagues, the head of the department, professors interested in Romanian Studies, students, former students that have studied Romanian etc. I was honored, for instance, that the director of the Institute for Eastern-European Studies, coordinators of the Fulbright program, the dean of the Irvine University and others all accepted my invitation"<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Correspondence, Letter from Ioana Em. Petrescu to Keith Hitchens, February 21, 1983, folder no. 8, p. 76.

<sup>17</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Murray Krieger's «Contextualism»*, *Cahiers roumains d'études littéraires*, no. 2, 1985, pp. 128-136.

<sup>18</sup> It was published only posthumously, *Ion Barbu și poetica postmodernismului [Ion Barbu and the Poetics of Postmodernism]*, București, Cartea Românească Publishing House, 1993.

<sup>19</sup> Fulbright Romania, <http://www.fulbright.ro/>, website accessed on 10 February 2016.

<sup>20</sup> Correspondence, Letter from Ioana Em. Petrescu to Ilie Pușcaș, February 6, 1983, folder no. 8, p. 98.

As a result of the event's success, Ioana Em. Petrescu was asked by ISC<sup>21</sup> to organize a more complex cultural program, a month dedicated to Romanian culture. As soon as ISC had confirmed a Romanian and Bulgarian cultural program for May (the first 2 weeks, around May 9<sup>th</sup>, a preponderantly Romanian program; the last two, around May 24<sup>th</sup>, a preponderantly Bulgarian one), Ioana Em. Petrescu started organizing the events. With organizational skills she didn't think herself capable of, Ioana Em. Petrescu managed to collaborate with reputed American specialists familiar with the Romanian culture and the series of events was a success. On the poster announcing the program of the Romanian Cultural Month, an event hosted by ISC and sponsored by the United Nations Association Pacific Chapter, Associates of Ethnic Arts at UCLA and the Center for Russian and Eastern European Studies, UCLA the following events are listed:

May 5 – “Romanian Monasteries” – illustrated lecture in Romanian (English translation by Eduard Jamgotchian)

Alexandru Petit, architect

May 6 – Evening of Romanian films on contemporary life

Introduction by film editor Ada Pistiner

May 9 – “Urban Gypsy Music in Romania” – lecture

Dr. Robert Garfias, Dean of Fine Arts, UC Irvine

Wedding in Maramureş, Romanian film

Exhibition of Romanian handcraft

May 14 – “Romanian – American Relations” – address by Academician Mircea Maliţa, Romanian Ambassador

May 26 – “Tradition and Transition in Romanian Architecture” – illustrated lecture

Dr. Nathan Shapira, Professor, Department of Art, Design and Art History, UCLA

May 27 – “The Balkans, 1877-1878” – lecture

Dr. Barisa Krekic, Professor, Department of History, Director, Center for Russian and East European Studies, UCLA

May 31 – “A Musical Journey through Romania” – lecture

Ann Brigleb, Archivist, Department of Music, UCLA

Lecture with demonstration of Romanian musical instruments (ţambal, cobză, tilinca etc)

Miamon Miller, Director AMAN Folk Ensemble

Refreshments will be provided by the Romanian community

Continuing Exhibitions

May 9-31 Particiu Mateescu (Sculpture, Tapestry)

May 9-15 Nell Cobar (Drawings)

May 9-30 Tudor Marionesco<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> International Student Center.

<sup>22</sup> Romanian Cultural Programs, folder no. 10, p. 1.

In addition to the initial program, Janice Foy, Ioana Em. Petrescu's former student, together with her chamber band, held a Romanian music concert, interpreting (to Ioana Em. Petrescu's great satisfaction, expressed in her letters<sup>23</sup>), alongside pieces by George Enescu and Ciprian Porumbescu, also never-before-heard pieces by Cornel Țăranu.

Another artist from Cluj that Ioana Em. Petrescu would have liked to present in Los Angeles was the director Nicolae Mărgineanu, whose film *Luchian* she would have liked very much to screen. Unfortunately, the Romanian side did not consider it necessary to get involved<sup>24</sup>, as the American side did, and the manager of the Romanian Library in New York did not reply to any of her letters. Instead, she is promised that another Romanian director, present at the time in Los Angeles for the FILMEX festival, would attend the event. However, despite being announced on the program, Ada Pistner did not arrive in L.A. and during the Romanian movie evening the audience got a chance to see Romanian short films presented by ... Liviu Petrescu. The main contribution of the Romanian Embassy was the presence of the ambassador, acad. Mircea Malița, who held a conference on the Romanian-American relations and had meetings with the rector of the university and with the coordinator of the Department of Slavic languages.

Just like in the letters sent home certain sensitive topics were avoided, we can assume that there was a certain degree of self-censorship in her conversations with her American colleagues as well, a kind of self-censorship practiced instinctively by all Romanians travelling abroad in those times. One topic was of particular interest to her American friends: the gypsies, whose traditional music was highly appreciated in Los Angeles. At the same time, Americans are very sensitive to minority problems. Because she didn't have actual information on the topic and she didn't want to speculate on it, Ioana Em. Petrescu asked Ilie Pușcaș for help again. Their letter exchange, preserved in the family archives, is humorously absurd: another example of the manner in which communist official understood (not) answering "free questions" on delicate subjects. As she received no answer, Ioana Em. Petrescu kept insisting in other letters:

"Mr. Pușcaș, I am sorry for my persistence, but it is proportionate to the high number of questions I am asked and which I am unfortunately unable able to answer. Did you manage to obtain the data about the gypsies I had asked you to (at least the ones about the results of the most recent census)? The topic is of great interest here (I think it is in 2<sup>nd</sup> place after Dracula). In a serious note, it is directly connected to the interest of minorities and the national politics of our state. I have unsatisfactory knowledge in the field and this cannot improve without your help"<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Molestarea fluturilor interzisă. Scrisori americane, 1981-1983 [Molesting of Butterflies Forbidden. American Letters, 1981-1983]*, ed. cit., pp. 226-229.

<sup>24</sup> Correspondence, Letters from Ioana Em. Petrescu to the Romanian Library, New York, March 1, March 20, 1983, folder no. 8, pp. 110-112.

<sup>25</sup> Correspondence, Letter from Ioana Em. Petrescu to Ilie Pușcaș, May 3, 1983, folder no. 8, p. 105.

The answer of the Romanian diplomat is a sample of *realpolitik*: he sent her a copy of a study on gypsy music “in case someone asks you to know what to tell them”, and when Ioana Em. Petrescu asked for the author and title of a dissertation her American friend needed, he replied: “here is the title of the M.A. dissertation, the name of its author, as well as a copy of the bibliography he used. I would like you to tell your friend not to contact him directly (the author) as he is unaware I have sent you a copy of that chapter”<sup>26</sup>. Their letter exchange ends here.

Before the end of the second academic year, learning that the Romanian lectureship at UCLA was in danger of being closed, Ioana Em. Petrescu pleaded its importance to Anne Bodenheimer, who, atypically vehement, wrote in to the CIES management. We will reproduce the letter in its entirety as it speaks volumes both for the prestige the Fulbright scholars from BBU managed to instill to the Romanian program at UCLA and also for Ioana Em. Petrescu who embarked in a battle that was no longer hers, but her colleagues’ and the specialty’s itself.

”Mr. William A. James  
Council for International Exchange of Scholars

As you know, I am rather close to your visitors from Romania and Bulgaria. I also have been following with great interest the efforts made over the last 8 years by the instructors of those two countries to contribute to the reputation of their department at UCLA. All of the instructors during the course of two years of residence have become personal friends to me.

The possibility that instruction in Bulgarian and Romanian may cease came somewhat as a shock to me. I know that Dr. Svenson under whom the Fulbright Program in southern California operates at the Chancellor’s Office level has discussed the programs with Mr. Pyle.

Only today am I able to add another dimension to the Romanian program at UCLA. Dr. Ioana Petrescu has just informed me that the Library at UCLA is holding more than 1,600 volumes on the Literature, Linguistics, Economics and Arts in Romania. Most of these books have been donated by the University of Bucharest for the purpose of programs in Romanian at UCLA.

I hope that this information will be useful in determining the possibility of continuation of the Romanian program. If you are interested, I could ask the librarian in charge of the Slavic holdings to furnish figures to me on the holdings in the Bulgarian area. I am not aware at this time of any donations to the Bulgarian program.

I would appreciate it, if you would keep me posted on any development which I hope will be favorable”<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> Correspondence, Letter from Ilie Pușcaș to Ioana Em. Petrescu, July 25, 1983, folder no. 8, p. 67.

<sup>27</sup> Correspondence, Letter from Anne M. Bodenheimer to William James, February 7, 1983, folder no. 8, p. 32.



Following Ioana Em. Petrescu, two other Fulbright scholars from Cluj taught at UCLA: Gheorghe Lascu (1983-1984) and Ion Șeulean (1984-1986). The Romanian lectureship continued to function at UCLA until the end of the 80's when, because of Ceaușescu's isolationist policies, it was interrupted. It was resumed, part-time, after 1990.

Kept in the family residence, the Petrescu fund represents a whole. Together with archive documents and books we can also find photographs, records or cassettes and CD-s, personal objects of the Petrescu family, all together reflecting the spirit, uniqueness, color and mentalities of an era, being at the same time experienced life and history.

The further we are from a certain historical period, the more our memories are unavoidably impregnated by clichés, and no matter how rich an archive material might be, it can never be juxtaposed to the reality. An archive is not the absolute truth, it is a collection of testimonies, but this collection is the starting point of any documented research.

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## LE REFUGE DE L'IRONIE DANS LA LITTÉRATURE D'ENFANCE. UN ABRI LUDIQUE PENDANT LE RÉGIME COMMUNISTE

CORINA CROITORU<sup>1</sup>

**RÉSUMÉ.** *Le refuge de l'ironie dans la littérature d'enfance. Un abri ludique pendant le régime communiste.* En admettant que le refuge de l'esprit critique dans l'ironie est explicable par des raisons qui visent la double définition du concept – simultanément principe de supériorité et symbole d'impuissance –, ce travail se propose d'interroger la présence apparemment inexplicable de l'ironie dans les poèmes dédiées aux enfants pendant la période communiste en Roumanie.

**Mots-clé:** *ironie, poésie roumaine, communisme, Ana Blandiana, Arpagic*

**REZUMAT.** *Refugiul ironiei în literatura pentru copii. Un adăpost ludic în regimul comunist.* Admițând faptul că refugiul spiritului critic în ironie este explicabil pe baza dublei definiții a acestui concept – totodată ca principiu de superioritate și ca simbol al neputinței –, lucrarea își propune să interogheze prezența aparent inexplicabilă a ironiei în poeziile pentru copii scrise în perioada comunistă în România.

**Cuvinte cheie :** *Ironie, Comunism, Poezie, Copii, Ludic, Ana Blandiana, Arpagic*

À plus de deux décennies depuis la chute du régime communiste, les discussions autour de la « résistance culturelle » roumaine – concept extrêmement volatil – continuent à souligner l'importance du *silence* en tant que solution héroïque à l'annihilation de la culture. Pourtant, puisque, comme on l'a déjà plusieurs fois souligné, les silences ne font pas une littérature, le chercheur intéressé par la littérature roumaine récente doit se confronter au *discours*. Mais, quand l'obstacle de la censure diminue la visibilité éditoriale du discours littéraire, la manière dont celui-ci se construit devient au moins aussi importante

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que le message transmis. Dans la poésie roumaine écrite durant la période communiste, une telle manière de configuration discursive est l'ironie.

### **La popularisation ironique**

Vu à travers les débats des spécialistes, le XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle demeure sous le signe de l'ironie moderne et des ironies postmodernes. Se différenciant de ces dernières et de leur caractère suspensif (qui n'essaye pas de dépasser le paradoxe) par une logique de la non-gratuité et de la disjonction, l'ironie moderne se distancie en même temps de l'ironie romantique, élitiste, dont l'abandon, dans le discours courant et en littérature, devient inhérent après les mutations de sensibilité qui surviennent, paraît-il, avec l'expérience de la Grande Guerre. Accessible à tout le monde grâce au même vécu<sup>1</sup>, l'ironie moderne souffre ainsi un processus de démocratisation qui est renforcé ensuite par l'impact de la deuxième conflagration mondiale sur le mental collectif et consolidé dans l'après-guerre.

Beaucoup plus intéressant que ce phénomène de la *démocratisation* de l'ironie dans l'après-guerre est, peut-être, pour le cas roumain, sa popularisation, comme effet de l'installation du régime communiste et de ses mécanismes coercitifs, qui encouragent deux tendances extrêmes par rapport à l'art<sup>2</sup>: le manque de subventions (ou, d'un autre point de vue, leur guidage exclusif vers l'art idéologisé) et la censure (devenue instrument exemplaire de contrôle idéologique après 1944). Condamnés aux fourches caudines de cette dernière, les poètes de l'époque transforment l'ironie en une pratique préférentielle de critique du régime, étant donnée sa capacité d'exprimer et de cacher simultanément le sens, soutenant la révolte sur des principes éthiques et l'esquive sur des critères esthétiques. Un nouveau type de «révolte» naît ainsi, intellectualiste et commode ; c'était d'ailleurs le seul possible sans que l'auteur prenne des risques majeurs. Ce type est important dans le cas de la poésie lyrique, car le genre s'avère beaucoup plus adéquat à l'absorption de l'ironie que l'épique, rapidement épuré de toute discordance face aux impératifs du réalisme socialiste. Grâce au besoin d'obliquité, l'ironie s'insère dans le répertoire de plusieurs poètes – à commencer par ceux qui débentent comme partisans du régime pour s'y opposer finalement, continuant par ceux qui restent fidèles au

<sup>1</sup> Pierre Schoentjes, *Poétique de l'ironie*, Seuil, Paris, 2001, pp. 277-284.

<sup>2</sup> Dans *Après la fin du monde*, Arthur Danto présente quatre type de rapports entre le pouvoir et l'art: -subvention/ - censure, - subvention/+ censure, +subvention/- censure, + subvention/+ censure. Dans son opinion, le rapport idéal serait constitué par la formule +subvention/- censure, c'est-à-dire l'opposé de la formule pratiqué dans le régime totalitaire. V. Arthur Danto, *Après la fin du monde*, Seuil, Paris, 1996.

parti malgré leur attitude contradictoire ou par ceux qui réussissent à maintenir une distance équilibrée face au parti, et finissant par ceux qui assument le statut de dissident –, parmi lesquels Geo Dumitrescu, Eugen Jebeleanu, Marin Sorescu, Ana Blandiana, Adrian Păunescu, Mircea Dinescu etc.

De manière inégale et avec les résultats des plus divers, l'ironie éthique est présente dans l'œuvre de tous ces poètes. En tant que technique, elle est soumise au phénomène de « transitivisation » de la poésie, d'évolution vers la dénotation et le référentiel quotidien<sup>3</sup>, direction inaugurée par les poètes de la génération de la Seconde Guerre, réunis autour de la revue *Albatros* (Geo Dumitrescu, Constant Tonegaru, Dimitrie Stelaru etc.), et développée jusqu'aux protestations civiques ressenties profondément dans les vers de la génération '70 (Mircea Dinescu, Dorin Tudoran).

Dans le paysage général de la poésie roumaine d'après-guerre, l'utilisation de l'ironie est une des marques du langage poétique transitif et, dans la situation particulière des quatre décennies communistes, un indice de l'écriture engagée *par rapport* à la réalité, et non pas *en vue de* la réalité (l'art prolétaire), selon la distinction de Predrag Matvejević<sup>4</sup>. D'ailleurs, paradoxalement, la poésie ironique se lance sur le chemin ouvert par les demandes politiques d'après 1944 concernant la nécessité d'avoir une littérature proche au réel, idée qui « semblait à l'époque une suggestion raisonnable – car le pays avait connu des années de guerre néfaste, une sécheresse impitoyable et de grandes dislocations ethniques, sans que l'art s'exprime tout à fait différent, sans qu'il fasse place au présent dur et au concret menaçant ou tout simplement qu'il se taise »<sup>5</sup>. Naturellement, l'art finira par se retourner de façon critique (grâce à la composante axiologique de l'ironie) justement contre la réalité, elle-même irréversiblement...retournée, entre 1945 et 1989, contre l'individu.

### **De la popularisation au particulier : l'ironie dans la littérature d'enfance**

Si le refuge de l'esprit critique dans l'ironie est explicable sur les coordonnées de sa définition comme principe de supériorité (intellectuelle de l'ironiste face au pouvoir) et également comme symbole de faiblesse (effective, pratique, de l'individu devant le même pouvoir), le refuge de l'ironie dans les livres dédiés aux enfants est, au moins apparemment, inexplicable. Puisque l'ironie représente, grâce à son ambiguïté foncière, un billet de passage pour beaucoup de poèmes au guichet de la censure, son apparition dans la littérature

<sup>3</sup> Gheorghe Crăciun, *Aisbergul poeziei moderne*, Paralela 45, Pitești, 2009, p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Predrag Matvejević, *Poetica evenimentului*, Univers, București, 1980.

<sup>5</sup> Eugen Negrici, *Literatura română sub comunism*, vol. I, Editura Fundației PRO, București, 2003, p. 11.

d'enfance est surprenante, surtout en sachant que son obliquité caractéristique la rend inabordable pour le jeune public<sup>6</sup>. En ce sens, « les théoriciens de l'ironie s'accordent en général pour identifier celle-ci à une pratique de la distanciation critique, elle-même reconnue de longue date comme critère de littéarité. Cette double précision nous conduit d'emblée à taxer le message ironique comme le public qui le reçoit, de mature"<sup>7</sup>. Dans ces conditions, la présence de l'ironie contre le régime communiste dans les livres d'enfance suggère une déviation du trajet de réception qui s'éloigne du jeune public pour se dresser vers le public adulte, à cause de l'impossibilité de l'écrivain de critiquer ouvertement le régime.

Pourtant, ceci ne veut pas dire que la littérature d'enfance serait en général étrangère aux idéologies, car, même sans les références au contexte politique, cette littérature reste profondément prisonnière de certaines tensions idéologiques, aspect observé par Charles Sarland :

« étant donnée l'inégalité de pouvoir entre les enfants et les jeunes qui lisent les livres et les adultes qui les écrivent, qui les publient, qui les lisent ou qui s'y engagent avec des commentaires ou dans leur dissémination, soient-ils parents, professeurs, bibliothécaires, libraires ou académiciens, il y aussi une question immédiate de politique, premièrement et surtout une de la différence d'âge »<sup>8</sup>.

Définie par le même théoricien comme toute considération ou discussion, ouverte ou cachée, concernant les *valeurs* sociales ou culturelles, l'idéologie apparaît ainsi indissociable du texte littéraire, indépendamment de sa nature ou de sa destination. D'autant plus, quand le texte fait usage de l'ironie (manipulation par excellence des valeurs : lois, étiquettes, normes de comportement, mode etc.<sup>9</sup>) pour se rapporter à l'idéologie dominante, sa présomption d'« innocence » est définitivement compromise.

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<sup>6</sup> Une étude publiée dans le *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* montre que les enfants ne comprennent pas l'ironie avant 6 ans et rarement entre 6 ans et 10-11 ans. V. Holly E. Recchia, Nina Howe, Hildy S. Ross, Stephanie Alexander, *Children's understanding and production of verbal irony in family conversations*, in „British Journal of Developmental Psychology”, no. 28/2010: 10.1348/026151008X401903 (consulté le 24.07.2011).

<sup>7</sup> Jean-Louis Tilleul, *Ironie et bande dessinée belge*, in *Cuadernos de Filología Francesa*, coord. Conception Hermosilla Alvarez, Servicio de Publicaciones Universidad de Extremadura, Cáceres, 2010, p. 88.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Sarland, *The Impossibility of Innocence: Ideology, Politics, and Children's Literature*, in *Understanding Children's Literature*, Peter Hunt (ed.), Routledge, London and New York, 1999, p. 39. [n.t.]

<sup>9</sup> Philippe Hamon, *L'ironie littéraire au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle : réflexions sur le rôle et les perspectives de l'écriture oblique*, in *Cuadernos de Filología Francesa*, coord. Conception Hermosilla Alvarez, Servicio de Publicaciones Universidad de Extremadura, Cáceres, 2010.

## Aventures dans la rue ... des poésies d'enfance

Même si, dans la littérature roumaine écrite pendant le communisme, la migration de l'ironie dans les livres destinés aux enfants est un phénomène plutôt isolé que symptomatique, il faut cependant rappeler un cas extrêmement intéressant de subversion ironique du pouvoir dictatorial, qui a provoqué non seulement une interdiction de publication – la quatrième dans la biographie accidentée du poète Ana Blandiana – mais aussi des rapports détaillés de la Securitate pour retirer des librairies le volume *Întâmplări de pe strada mea* [*Aventures de ma rue*] (1988). Paru après *Întâmplări din grădina mea* [*Aventures de mon jardin*] (1980) et *Alte întâmplări din grădina mea* [*D'autres aventures de mon jardin*] (1987), le volume a été interdit à cause du poème *O vedetă de pe strada mea* [*Une vedette de ma rue*], où Arpagic, le chat ayant fait son « début » huit ans auparavant, est surpris à l'apogée de sa popularité: « Quand il sort se promener/ Toute la rue émue/ Se presse pour l'observer ;/ [...] On lui offre des fleurs/ Du pain et du sel/ Une lettre enveloppée/ Et tout le monde acclame/ *Arpagic!* »<sup>10</sup>.

L'allusion au dictateur Nicolae Ceaușescu, opérée à base d'un type d'interaction sociale devenue lieu commun est incontestable, mais pas suffisante pour une exécution si violente du livre, étant donné que le premier volume, de 1980, n'avait pas été privé d'allusions et d'ironies qui visaient les réalités du régime, sans toutefois en pâtir. La poésie *Exploatarea lui Arpagic* [*L'exploitation d'Arpagic*], où le chat devenait source d'électricité, dans le contexte de la « crise mondiale d'énergie », et se voyait confisqué par les autorités du village à fin d'être utilisé par tous les habitants, est un exemple en ce sens : « On a trouvé que la source de lumière/ est Arpagic./ C'est pourquoi il a été convoqué/ Pour être enquêté// Ils l'ont fait clignoter/ Bouger ses moustaches/ Soulever la patte derrière/ Et ils ont découvert qu'il était plein/ D'électricité »<sup>11</sup>. Pourtant, la réception du premier volume, qui a eu un destin plutôt tranquille, étant réédité, pourrait être expliquée, d'un côté, par sa publication à un moment où l'irritation des esprits et la sensibilité des autorités n'avait pas encore l'intensité qu'elles allaient toucher à la fin de la même décennie et, d'un autre côté, par le fait que le premier livre ne touchait pas à la *personne* du dictateur, mais à sa politique économique. Par contraste, le volume *Întâmplări de pe strada mea* [*Aventures de*

<sup>10</sup> Ana Blandiana, *Întâmplări de pe strada mea*, illustrations de Doina Botez, Ion Creangă, București, 1988: „[...] Când iese la plimbare/ Toată strada emoționată/ Se îmbulzește să-l vadă:/ [...] I se dau flori,/ Pâine cu sare,/ Câte-o scrisoare în plic/ Și toată lumea strigă/ «Arpagic!» [...]” (*O vedetă de pe strada mea*). [n.t.]

<sup>11</sup> Ana Blandiana, *Întâmplări din grădina mea*, illustrations de Doina Botez, Ion Creangă, București, 1980: „[...] S-a aflat că producătorul de lumină/ Este Arpagic./ Drept care a fost chemat/ Pentru a fi cercetat./ L-au pus să clipească,/ Să miște mustățile,/ Să ridice laba din spate/ Și-au descoperit că-i doldora/ De electricitate. [...]” (*Exploatarea lui Arpagic*). [n.t.]

*ma rue*] apparaît dans un moment de tension sociale et attaque – symboliquement et dans un seul poème – l’image du dictateur, dont le culte de la personnalité était déjà à l’apogée<sup>12</sup>, en utilisant non pas l’ironie fine, mais l’ironie caustique : « Et on m’a raconté incroyablement/ Qu’une souris/ Attendant d’être avalé/ Par Son Excellence/ Pleurnichait discrètement : « Quelle honneur/ D’être avalé par Lui !»<sup>13</sup>.

La culpabilité du volume interdit réside, en un premier temps dans le remplacement de l’allusion par l’ironie et, plus loin, du remplacement de l’ironie par la parodie. Comprise comme référence indirecte à une personne ou à une situation, l’allusion n’a pas le trait axiologique, *évaluatif*, de l’ironie ; au contraire de l’ironie qui, à part le fait d’exprimer l’opposé de ce qu’elle dit vraiment, implique toujours un jugement de valeur, l’allusion se limite à une simple mention du référent qu’elle n’évalue pas nécessairement. Quant à la parodie, illustrative pour l’histoire du chat Arpagic, il faut mentionner qu’elle rend presque explicite le réseau de significations du texte, le transformant en objet incriminant. Définie par Pierre Schoentjes<sup>14</sup> en terme d’ironie intertextuelle, la parodie suppose une transparence que l’opacité ironique ne connaît pas et mène l’interprétation sur les traces des liaisons évidentes avec le signifié. Le dessin de Doina Botez, qui accompagne le poème en discussion, en rajoute car il présente Arpagic couronné et tenant sa main proche au cœur. La déconstruction parodique des stéréotypes comportementaux du dictateur se réalise ainsi non seulement à travers le langage, mais aussi à travers l’image. C’est pourquoi l’existence de certaines hypothèses qui soutiennent que l’interdiction du volume n’a pas été provoquée par le texte, sinon par les images, est tout à fait légitime.

En ce qui concerne l’intentionnalité de l’auteur, toujours questionnée quand l’ironie est présente dans une œuvre, Ana Blandiana avoue qu’elle n’a pas ciblé l’effet obtenu et que le devenir du personnage associé au dictateur a été décidé par la mentalité collective :

« Arpagic a été au début un chat très sympa qui est devenu le héros de mes livres pour les enfants. Il était devenu un personnage très aimé, mais dans un de mes dernières livres j’ai imaginé une situation dans laquelle Arpagic était fasciné par sa propre célébrité, ayant commencé à se comporter comme le dictateur. Cela a mené à l’identification de mon chat, qui était infiniment meilleur que celui qu’il parodiait, que Ceaușescu. En registre mineur, je dois

<sup>12</sup> Après une période de *dégel* idéologique entre 1965 et 1971, Nicolae Ceaușescu a imposé à partir de 1971 une réidéologisation de la vie culturelle et à partir des années ’80 le culte de la personnalité.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem.* : „[...] Și (culme a culmilor) mi s-a relatat/ Că un șoricel,/ Care-aștepta să fie înșfăcat/ De Domnia-Sa, // Scâncea subțirel: / «Ce cinste pentru mine/ Să mă înghită chiar El!»”. [n.t.]

<sup>14</sup> Pierre Schoentjes, *Op. Cit.*

dire que l'identification d'Arpagic avec un monstre m'a un peu dérangé. Je devrai publier une protestation d'Arpagic. »<sup>15</sup>

Promesse tenue, Ana Blandiana a publié en 1998 *Cartea albă a lui Arpagic* [*Le Livre Blanc d'Arpagic*]<sup>16</sup>, afin de réhabiliter *post mortem* son personnage. Écrit avec beaucoup d'humour, le livre est une réplique donnée aux dossiers de Securitate qui avaient enregistré les informations concernant les volumes antérieurs, dont le personnage était Arpagic. Le livre contient des « informations », des « réclamations », des « plaintes » etc., et mentionne en même temps que tous ces aspects représentent le début en poésie du « bureau d'informations des chats » autrement « spécialiste dans tous les genres littéraires ». L'ironie occupe maintenant la position inverse, qui n'est plus celle de l'impuissance, mais celle de l'évaluation rétrospective supérieure. En conséquence, le problème du destinataire naïf, (ou) étranger au contexte historique visé par le volume, reste actuel. Ayant essayé une solution, Ana Blandiana tire sa conclusion : « *Le livre Blanc d'Arpagic/ S'adresse au petit lecteur/ Et le prépare rapidement/ Pour le moment où il aura son propre dossier./ Donc,/ Dans les bibliothèques,/ Il peut être rangé également/ A la littérature éducative/ En archive/ Ou parmi les livres de perspective* » (*Notă asupra ediției*) [*Note sur l'édition*]<sup>17</sup>. La conclusion du poète ne clarifie pas le problème, mais confirme, par l'utilisation du même registre ironique, que le destinataire principal de la poésie ironique d'Ana Blandiana reste le lecteur adulte.

### Communication et excommunication

Les exemples tirés de la poésie d'enfance écrite dans la Roumanie communiste confirment la double fonction de l'ironie : celle de *communication* (avec un complice) et celle d'*excommunication* (du naïf). S'adressant en réalité aux adultes, cette poésie ironique, apparemment dédiée aux enfants, n'est pourtant pas incompréhensible, mais partiellement compréhensible, pour les petits ou pour les lecteurs actuels qui ne connaissent pas le contexte historique communiste. Par

<sup>15</sup> Ana Blandiana, in *Cine sunt eu?*, Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, p. 187: „Arpagic a fost inițial un pisoai foarte drăguț și a devenit eroul cărților mele pentru copii. Ajunsese un personaj foarte îndrăgit, însă în ultima dintre cărți am imaginat situația în care lui Arpagic i se urcase la cap propria celebritate și începuse să se comporte ca dictatorul. Asta a dus la identificarea motanului meu, care era infinit mai bun decât cel pe care-l parodia, cu Ceaușescu. Vorbind în registrul minor, trebuie să spun că identificarea lui Arpagic cu un monstru m-a cam necăjit. Va trebui să public un protest al lui Arpagic”. [n.t.]

<sup>16</sup> Ana Blandiana, *Cartea albă a lui Arpagic*, couverture et illustrations de Anamaria Smigelschi, Du Style, București, 1998.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*: „«Cartea Albă a lui Arpagic»/ Se adresează cititorului cel mai mic/ Și-l pregătește sumar/ Pentru când va avea propriul dosar./ Deci,/ În bibliotecă,/ Ea poate fi așezată deopotrivă/ La literatura educativă,/ La arhivă/ Sau la cărțile de perspectivă” (*Notă asupra ediției*). [n.t.]



conséquent, la double valeur de l'ironie rend possible la lecture de cette catégorie de poésie à deux âges, dans une sorte de cohabitation équilibrée de deux étages de sens entre lesquels le couloir reste toujours libre. Ce double accès permet, en même temps, l'entrée de l'auteur dans un espace de jeu qui ne lui appartient pas (« Peut-être vous vous demandez, les enfants,/ ce que je fais avec les paroles parmi les jouets// [...] En fait je ne cherche qu'un lieu/ Où je pourrais jouer ;// Et puisque je ne peux pas jouer dans les grands livres,/ Je me cache entre les couvertures d'abécédaire (*Joc*) [*Jeu*]<sup>18</sup>), mais où il retrouve sa liberté perdue.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*: „Poate că vă întrebați, copii,/ ce caut eu cu vorbele printre jucării// [...] De fapt eu nu caut decât un loc/ Unde-aș putea să mă joc;// Și pentru că nu mă pot juca în cărțile mari,/ Mă ascund între coperte de abecedar [...]” (*Joc*). [n.t.]

## ARS MEMORIAE: JAPANESE LITERARY HISTORY AS APPLIED CULTURAL MEMORY

RODICA FRENȚIU<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *Ars Memoriae: Japanese Literary History as Applied Cultural Memory.* With the starting point of the cult of the dead in Japanese folklore, which is based on an "ordered" process of forgetting, demanding that "the departed" be forgotten "carefully", the present study proposes to analyse the pragmatics of cultural memory exemplified by Japanese literary history. Seeing that one of the meanings of "remembering" also implies "to do something", it is to be explored, through a hermeneutical and cultural semiotics analysis, the way in which this particular type of memory archives the Japanese literary heritage, through the mediation of which one attempts to recall the past and understand history.

**Keywords:** *cultural memory, mnemonic knowledge, narrated time, imprint time, kuhi*

**REZUMAT.** *Ars memoriae: istoria literară japoneză ca memorie culturală aplicată.* Având drept punct de plecare cultul morților din folclorul japonez, bazat pe un proces „ordonat” de uitare, care cere ca „cel plecat” să fie uitat „cu grijă”, studiul de față își propune analiza pragmaticii memoriei culturale exemplificate prin istoria literară japoneză. Întrucât una din semnificațiile lui „a-ți aminti” presupune și „a face ceva”, explorăm, printr-o analiză de tip hermeneutic și de semiotică culturală, felul în care acest tip particular de memorie arhivează patrimoniul literar japonez, prin a cărui mediere se încearcă amintirea trecutului și înțelegerea istoriei.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *memorie culturală, cunoaștere mnemonică, timp povestit, timp amprentă, kuhi*

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*The object of memory is the past only.*  
Aristotle

人間ハバ (if someone asks  
マダ生きテ居ル say I'm still alive...  
秋ノ風 autumn wind)  
Masaoka Shiki, *Haiku*

The mnemonic phenomenon consists of the presence in the mind of an absent object which once was, but is there no more. Memory becomes representation, either in the form of evocation as presence, or of active search within the operation of remembering<sup>2</sup>. Thus, it constitutes the support that is used as a base to develop ethical and political discourses or to realize specific scientific activities.

Called "the present of the past" by Augustine, memory directs to a cognitive approach and a pragmatic one<sup>3</sup>, the former signifying the wish to represent the past faithfully, while the latter represents its "operating side". Therefore, the culture of memory as *ars memoria* is generated by the actual practice of memory, or, to rephrase, by the exercise of memory. Although it seems to be built upon ignoring the present and on a certain type of "abstraction" of the future, the culture of memory ultimately encompasses both, latently, since the passed quality of the past cannot be understood except "through association with the future quality of the future and the present quality of the present"<sup>4</sup>, as proved by "cultural memory", which is a term first coined by the Egyptologist Jan Assmann, who uses Maurice Halbwachs' theory of "collective memory" as a foundation.

As it is not only an individual, private experience, but also a part of the collective domain, memory becomes the conceptual instrument that is operable in any field of knowledge "that coordinates human behavior and experience"<sup>5</sup> within the interactive space of society. And *cultural memory*, as specific example, in its capacity of collective image of the self, constitutes itself as the result of a social practice that takes place across generations, since, for the spirit, *to be* oftentimes means *to act*. Delimited by "communicative memory" (day-to-day memory) and by "scientific memory", cultural memory

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<sup>2</sup> P. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, translated by Ilie Gyurcsik and Margareta Gyurcsik, Timișoara, Amacord, 2001, p. 229.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 502

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.424.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J. Assmann, *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity*, translated by John Czaplicka, in "Kultur und Gedächtnis", eds. Jan Assmann and Tonio Hölscher, Frankfurt / Main, Suhrkamp, 1988, p. 126.

actualizes itself both by private means such as a text, an image, a monument, but also through various institutionalised means, organizing activities or events. Cultural memory, which marks a temporal and spatial horizon, thus constitutes itself into a triangle whose tips are represented by memory (actualized past), group (society) and culture (the sum of the whole non-hereditary information pertaining to said group). And because *to remember* means *to do something*<sup>6</sup>, as proof of temporal experience, cultural memory also activates a pragmatic coordinate, simple memory turning into reflected memory, taking place within a spatial framework. As consequence, a temporal "topography" of memory is created, which renders one able to sum up the essence of the issue given by representation of the past with the question *how?* can memory occur. Doubtlessly, this does not take place randomly, but by adopting the point of view of a group<sup>7</sup>, seeing that the logic of perception enforced by the particular group helps the individual to understand the order it introduces in the representation of objects in space and to harmonise information coming from the outside world.

Therefore, every group has a history in which figures and events detach themselves, through which the particular group regards its past and becomes aware of its identity across time.<sup>8</sup> Yet, in order for the past to be conserved in the present and for the present to be introduced into the past, there is the "creation" of memory that enforces itself unconditionally. It necessarily claims a "politics" of correct remembrance. In what follows, the object of study is given by the method through which the construction of memory can be illustrated in Japanese literary history.

Following the basis on which the cult of the dead is built in Japanese folklore, which demands that, within "a permanence" of remembrance, "the departed" be "forgotten" carefully<sup>9</sup>, Japanese literary history, through the gestures initiated in order to interpret the literary past, and, implicitly, cultural memory, seems to support the literature that is taught across school cycles, with the counterfort of "lived memory"<sup>10</sup>. It calls upon visual tropes such as the memorial museum, the memorial house or stones inscribed with *haiku* (*kuhi*). Since they are symbolic objects, not only does memory find refuge and crystallization in these "places of memory", but a cultural memory is being written here, which suggests the understanding of the present and the future through the past and of the past through the present. Thus, the complex structure

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ricoeur, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. M. Halbwachs, *Collective Memory*, critical edition devised by Gérard Namer and prepared in collaboration with Marie Jaisson, translated by Irinel Antoniu, Iași, European Institute, 2007, p. 84.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>9</sup> See A. Hondru, *Japanese Festivals. In the Spirit of Tradition*, Sibiu-Constanța: Editura T. C. Sen, 2001, p. 70-71.

<sup>10</sup> Ricoeur, *op. cit.*, p. 479.

of "memory places" assumes three dimensions: material, symbolic and functional<sup>11</sup>, which are structured as follows: the first implies the anchoring of memory places into given realities, the second turns them into the work of imagination, ensuring the crystallization and transmission of memories, and the last takes a step towards the virtual world of founding events or spectacles. However, since it is understood that cultural memory is not just an inherited good, but also something that constitutes national identity, it obtains an extra trait: it becomes a discourse on the fear of forgetting.

In Matsuyama city (Ehime prefecture) on Shikoku Island, which is situated in the south-eastern area of the Japanese archipelago, Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902), the poet who innovated the *haiku* lyrical form, has been dedicated both a memorial museum and a memorial house.

*The Masaoka Shiki Memorial Museum (Matsuyama shiritsu Shiki kinen hakubutsukan)* was opened to the public in 1981, and it is an impressive construction with three floors, clearly detached from the urban ambient. It functions not only as a "place of memory" but, also, as it is written in the museum catalogue<sup>12</sup>, as a "cultural centre" of the town, as an "extracurricular resource" for school, as a "research fund" for specialists and, not lastly, as a "liaison" for the international relations of the town. The previously named catalogue mentions that the theme of the museum is "literature", whose understanding, however, requires a complex linguistic and cultural background. As such, the challenges of the museum periplus begin right from the entrance. Above the front door there is a filigree that is quite hard to make out at first, saying ホトトギス [*hototogisu*], ('cuckoo'), which is the alternate reading of Masaoka Shiki's literary pseudonym and also the title of the *haiku* magazine that he, among others, initiated. It is reproduced after the cover of the 1903 issue and written traditionally, from right to left: スギトトホ. The meanderings of this "road" of cultural history continue with an exhibit through which the visitor is introduced to the history and tradition of the place, matters that are important for the understanding of the literary and cultural profile of Masaoka Shiki. On the next floor follows another exhibit, dedicated to the dynamism of the age in which the poet lived, and the road closes on the last floor with an exhibit which follows the last years of his life, in an attempt to coherently configure the vision the poet had of the world. The museum route, which is not at all easy, as the catalogue warns, reminds the visitor, when it ends, that true access to this "place" of memory can only occur with some previous preparation. The museum is aware of this, and, in order to widen the age group of the visiting public, but

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 493.

<sup>12</sup> See *The Shiki Museum, Matsuyama shiritsu Shiki kinen hakubutsukan*, Matsuyama, Harainsatsu kabushikigaisha, 2006, p. 85.

also in order to facilitate a foreign guest's access to its deposit of cultural memory, the *Masaoka Shiki Memorial Museum* has not only issued a children's version of its excellent museum catalogue, called *Shiki kinen hakubutsukan e yōkoso!* ('Welcome to the Shiki Memorial Museum!'), where all the important information is presented very accessibly, but also published two English volumes titled *Masaoka Shiki. A Sketch of His Life* and *If Someone Asks... Masaoka Shiki's Life and Haiku*, in an effort of voluntary collaboration. These aid the visitor who is unfamiliar with the Japanese language to initiate himself in the poet's work. Evidently, the museum suggests emerging from the physical world in order to enter the world of merit.

Although it is situated in the opposite side of town, The *Masaoka Shiki Memorial House (Shikidō)* seems to offer a more acute "live" experience of cultural memory than the memorial museum. It allows the visiting public to find themselves, through the period objects and photographs belonging to the family, in the intimacy of the atmosphere in which the poet spent his childhood. *Shikidō* was built in 1926, at the initiative of Kyokudo Yanagihara (1867-1957), friend of the poet, who became editor-in-chief of the *haiku* magazine *Hototogisu*. However, since it burned down twice, it was rebuilt in 1946, after the initial plan of the house where Masaoka Shiki was brought up (it was initially found in another part of the city). The same as in any memorial house<sup>13</sup>, dialectics of presence and absence can be felt here, which are inherent to any mnemonic representation of the past, while viewing the past as "to have been" is in itself fortified as soon as "to have been" means "to have been present, alive, active"<sup>14</sup>. An individual is naturally connected to a place and manages to gain closeness to a certain space as a durable reality, axiom which applies especially in the case of personalities whose memory is conserved in a material medium. Naturally, cultural memory is explained by awarding spatial images a considerable place "as if the conservation of memories can be explained through the permanence of place or the durability of matter"<sup>15</sup>. Perhaps it is for this reason that a memorial house turns into a kind of conserved island of the past, which ensures the continuity of the ages.

Masaoka Shiki left his birthplace at sixteen, in order to pursue his studies in Tokyo, but, in 1895, having returned from China, where he had gone as a war correspondent, he returns to Matsuyama for a short while, attempting to recover from his worsening tuberculosis. However, the former teenager already has the literary pseudonym *Shiki* ('the Cuckoo', since 1889), a name he adopted

<sup>13</sup> See M. Gelețu & M. Teodorescu, *101 Museums and Memorial Houses and Five Cultural Pitstops in Moldavia across the Prut River*, foreword by acad. Prof. Eugen Simion, București, Agerpress, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 444.

<sup>15</sup> Halbwachs, op. cit., p. 233.

after his first serious pulmonary tuberculosis attack<sup>16</sup>. This caused him to adopt the destiny of the bird which, according to a Chinese legend, spits out blood when it sings. In fact, the *Cuckoo* (*Hototogisu*) will be the name chosen for the *haiku* literary magazine he will be one of the initiators of. Founded in 1898 and appearing without interruption until the present day, he will use it to plead for the reform of *haiku*<sup>17</sup> while exemplifying with the poems of the *Nihon-ha* (*Nippon School*) association. He will manage to adapt to contemporary times the poetic form brought into existence by Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694), through form and contents, through aesthetic standards and compositional rules.

Generations change and replace each-other, they modify their perspective, and a memorial house seems to confirm their differences and similarities, since "memory is a reconstruction of the past with the help of present information"<sup>18</sup>. In the Masaoka Shiki Memorial House, space is cut out and recombined into an architecture that attempts to reproduce the original, and here traces speak and enter history. It is a sort of "death redeemed by history"<sup>19</sup> (Ricoeur 2001: 448) of a poet with a tragic destiny, through a decor that gains significance and facilitates the remembrance of an individual fate turned into "impersonal memory". What was once individual, personal memory somehow becomes cultural memory. In order to avoid interruption, cultural memory "makes itself", places itself in institutionalized frames of memory, and what was external now becomes internal, interior. What was somehow the memory of another now completes and fulfills the memory of the visitor and of the time that they live. The same "place of memory" thus affects several distinct consciousnesses that will approach each other through common representation, and the experience between culture and memory will become an ethical act where intersubjectivity manifests, at the "crossroads"<sup>20</sup> of the subjective and objective spirits.

The past lingers in the present, a trait given by the fact that "referring to absence is a part of memory's method of presence"<sup>21</sup>, and the present absence engraves itself in the matter of representing the past. Certainly, the trace is in the present<sup>22</sup>, and only its semiotic aspect, as sign value, simultaneously makes it present in itself, but also a sign of the absent, the previous. It is a present effect of an absent cause, the function of an organisation that connects the destiny of memory to that of the *imprint*, after the model of the seal left by a ring in wax.

<sup>16</sup> See O. Simu, *Dictionary of Japanese Literature*, Editura Albatros, 1994, p. 153.

<sup>17</sup> See The Shiki Museum, *Masaoka Shiki. A Sketch of His Life*, Translated and Compiled by The Shiki Museum English Volunteers, Matsuyama: Sakawa Printing Co., Ltd., p. 42-46.

<sup>18</sup> Halbwachs, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>19</sup> Ricoeur, *op. cit.*, p. 448.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 518.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 476.

<sup>22</sup> See *Ibid.*, p. 513-514.

Yet, as in a sort of "renewal" of cultural memory, Japanese literary history resorts to other instruments of mnemonic knowledge, among which one may count the stones inscribed with *haiku* poems (*kuhi*).



*Kuhi*\*

These *kuhi* can be found anywhere in Japan. For example, Ehime prefecture suggests to those interested a literary "pilgrimage" to 575 stones inscribed with *haiku* (*Ehime 575 kuhi meguri*), all calligraphed in rock with the poems of 17 famous authors. Naturally, most of them can be found in Matsuyama city and contain the *haiku* of the famous *haijin* of the place, Masaoka Shiki.



Masaoka Shiki, *haiku* poem

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\* The pictures are taken from the personal archive.



The *kuhi* in the above image is placed close to Dōgo, which is considered to be the oldest hot spring in Japan and that, according to legend, brought a god back to life. Its fame caused it to be visited by Prince Shotoku, the founder of the first Japanese constitution, in 604, and to be mentioned in the oldest literary works<sup>23</sup>, such as the novel *The Tale of Genji*, written by Murasaki Shikibu in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The *haiku* on the stone is signed by Masaoka Shiki: 湯の山や炭売りかへる宵月夜, and its literal translation would be: *Hot water mountain / coming home from selling coal / a night with an evening moon*. Written in 1893 and following the *ars poetica* promoted by Shiki, according to which the new *haiku* has to have *shasei*, or the "sketch of life" as a basic concept, this poem notes the emotion of an instant, and speaks of the supreme relaxation that bathing in thermal water can offer a man who is tired from physical toil during the winter, at the end of an exhausting day. A *haiku*, which is considered to be a model of aesthetics of silence, through ellipsis and polysemy, and which develops infinite silences generated by an extreme economy of means, renders that which the author chooses to keep silent just as important as what he affirms. While western literature demands the development of a long rhetorical labor, "a few words", "an image", and "an emotion"<sup>24</sup> become the poetry of the habitual and of the ephemeral.

Yet, if entry into a museum facilitates the creation of a **narrated time**, the stones calligraphed with *haiku* poems generate an **imprint time**, simultaneous with a material imprint, which is affective and documentary. In his dialogue *Phaedrus*, Plato raises the issue of the paradoxical silence of written thoughts, associated with painting<sup>25</sup>. Initially, writing is considered to be just a *remedy* (*pharmacōn*, however, also means 'poison' in Old Greek) used to help memory, but that will eventually bring along forgetfulness. However, the Platonist dialogue admits that another type of writing exists, that, accompanied by knowledge, is written in silence in the soul of he who learns.

It is indisputable that the civilization of writing has profoundly modified not only the behaviors of writing and knowledge, but also those of memory<sup>26</sup>. It is becoming apparent that, more than speech, writing is the keeper of the function of treasuring cultural memory. To true memory, inscription gains the meaning of "insemination", and words, that of "seeds". As a result, the *haiku* that is carved in stone, read in order to be understood, and, eventually, learned, makes it so that, in Platonist terms, once the seed is spread to other people "with other tempers", it

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. The Shiki Museum, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 85.

<sup>24</sup> See R. Barthes, *L'empire des signes*, Genève, Editions d'Art Albert Skira S.A., p. 90.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus*, in Works IV, Edition attended to by Petru Creția, Bucharest, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1983, p. 486.

<sup>26</sup> H. Joly, *Le renversement platonicien*, chapter Notes on writing and speaking, in Plato, Works IV, Edition attended to by Petru Creția, Bucharest, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1983, p. 405.

will "sprout" "other thoughts and sayings"<sup>27</sup>, in its turn. It follows that *kuhi* turns into a sort of "live" writing, a writing of the soul, since the gardens of letters give birth to live memory as a simple reversion of forgetting.

The mystery of and fascination with stone has always been known. It has often been considered a spiritual "container" of life force, as shown by the solar disks of Sarmizegetusa or by the megaliths at Stonehenge. Similarly, for the Far East, stone has been and still is loaded with sacredness. In Japan, it was first associated with *mononoke*, supernatural forces that penetrate objects and space. Later, these undifferentiated *mononoke* forces were replaced by animistic deities, inhabitants of stones and rocks, as can be seen around shintō shrines, which are surrounded by stone and rock, venerated as spaces inhabited by deities and isolated by the environment with *shimenawa*, or ropes that mark the boundary between the sacred and the profane. Thus, not only the famous "dry" Japanese gardens, which are nothing else than stone gardens, but also *kuhi* bear witness to this mysterious relation between man and rock, *realizing* the quality of stone as instrument of the "oracular" or of a "message"<sup>28</sup>. In fact, this trait is also appreciated by C.G. Jung, as he places an engraved stone in front of his Bollingen house. Among others things, he had the rock sculpted with a Latin stanza belonging to the alchemist Arnaud de Villeneuve (d. 1313): "*Voici la pierre, d'humble apparence./ En ce qui concerne sa valeur, elle est bon marché,/ Les imbéciles la méprisent,/ Mais ceux qui savent ne l'en aiment que mieux.*"<sup>29</sup>

Through its qualities, stone acquires the symbolism of toughness as opposed to the perishable, and the trace left by the inscription only legitimizes and consolidates this trait. Through *kuhi*, nature and human gesture meet in the pragmatics of cultural memory, in order to record "the collective memory of cultivated people"<sup>30</sup>. But the memory of elites is left to humanism, and, without asking to subordinate history through abuses of memory, through remembrances imposed by political power or pressure groups, cultural memory, both formative and normative, gains a reflexive quality in the Japanese archipelago. It forces the group that created it, which it represents, to introspection on its own system:

"The concept of cultural memory comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose 'cultivation' serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image. Upon such collective knowledge, for the most part (but not exclusively) of the past, each group bases its awareness of unity and particularity."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Plato, *op.cit.*, p. 488.

<sup>28</sup> See J. Chevalier & A. Gheerbrant, *Dictionnaire des symboles. Mythes, rêves, coutumes, gestes, formes, figures, couleurs, nombres*, Paris, Robert Laffont/ Jupiter, 1982, p. 751.

<sup>29</sup> Apud Jung, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

<sup>30</sup> Ricœur, *op. cit.*, p. 473.

<sup>31</sup> Assmann, *cit. art.*, p.132.

The fate of memory, that of unifying the three instances of temporality, is written carefully, since it interferes with the history of mentalities. Man seems to ensure the survival of his belonging to a society or a culture not through the result of phylogenetic evolution, but through socialization and habits<sup>32</sup>. This function is plenarily claimed by cultural memory, so that "being able to create memory" can rightfully be considered, alongside the capacity to act or narrate, "one of the abilities of being as act, and as an ability in the field of a philosophical anthropology"<sup>33</sup>. *To have been* has anchored itself in mnemonic experience and has turned into *is* and *will be*, since in order to gain consistency and to endure, a society must offer its members the chance to come into agreement, to become close to one-another and to identify with various experiences. In reality, what lasts or seems to last is given by the relation between the fear of forgetting and remembering, between an invisible and a visible world, the latter often appearing to be controlled by the former.

For the "making" of memory, every society shapes its space in its own way, but always following the same lines, in order to constitute "a fixed frame that includes and retrieves its memories"<sup>34</sup>. But memory and remembrance do not imply only a simple "reconstruction", piece by piece, of a fact or event of the past. It is necessary for this "reconstruction" to start from common data or notions, since they are transmitted ceaselessly from one member to the other within the society<sup>35</sup>. In fact, the final referent is national consciousness. The final purpose of the "made" cultural memory is to "consolidate" the identity of a group or of a nation and all cultural representations converge in identifying their uniqueness and peculiarity. Considering history as being only a version of the past, the interest of memory moves to cultural heritage, which helps the group model a collective and national identity, thus becoming "visible" to itself and to others.

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>33</sup> Ricœur, *op. cit.*, p. 421.

<sup>34</sup> Halbwachs, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

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## CRICOTEKA – TADEUSZ KANTOR’S “LIVING ARCHIVE”

EUGEN WOHL<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** *Cricoteka – Tadeusz Kantor’s “Living Archive”.* The paper is a presentation of a unique cultural institution, an artistic establishment built around the creative activities of the Polish visual artist and theatre director Tadeusz Kantor (1915-1990): *Cricoteka – Center for the Documentation of the Art of Tadeusz Kantor* from Krakow, Poland. Founded in 1980 at the initiative of Tadeusz Kantor himself, Cricoteka offers, as we will try to show, a viable institutional model for preserving Kantor’s works (writings, sketches, video recordings, objects etc.), as well as for promoting his artistic ideas through workshops, exhibits, conferences and other events.

**Keywords:** *archive, Cricot 2, documentation, Tadeusz Kantor, theatre*

**REZUMAT.** *Cricoteka – „Arhiva vie” a lui Tadeusz Kantor.* Lucrarea se dorește o prezentare a unei instituții culturale cu un profil unic, construită în jurul activităților artistice întreprinse de omul de cultură polonez Tadeusz Kantor (1915-1990): *Cricoteka – Centrul de Documentare în Arta lui Tadeusz Kantor* din Cracovia, Polonia. Fondată în 1980 din inițiativa lui Tadeusz Kantor însuși, Cricoteka oferă, vom încerca să arătăm, un model instituțional viabil de conservare a operelor kantoriene (scrieri, schițe, înregistrări video etc.), precum și de promovare a ideilor sale artistice, prin organizarea de ateliere, expoziții, conferințe etc.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *arhivă, Cricot-2, documentare, Tadeusz Kantor, teatru*

*“The house has got a name.*

*Cricot 2 Theatre.*

*The Archives are called*

*CRICOTEKA.*

*When the house is in ruins,  
the archives have to survive-*

*I speak these words to YOU*

*My Friends, remember about the Archives.”*

*Tadeusz Kantor, 1990*

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## Tadeusz Kantor, artist and archivist

The year 2015 marked the 100<sup>th</sup> celebration of Tadeusz Kantor's birthday, a festive event that brought the entire artistic world together to commemorate one of the most renowned visual artists and theatre directors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Without a doubt, Tadeusz Kantor's artistic endeavors, first and foremost the five performances of the "Theatre of Death" period (1975-1990), are synonymous with a fundamental paradigm shift in the Art of the past century and the artist's legacy, almost 30 years after his death, continues to grow, inspire and intrigue both artists and researchers all over the world.

If we can speak today of Tadeusz Kantor's "presence" this is, to no small extent, due to the dedication and care of the artist himself, who understood that the only way to win the "battle" against the implacable passage of time, the only way both the artist and his art can be "saved from oblivion",<sup>2</sup> is to ensure that the artistic journey itself, in its entirety, is preserved and passed down:

"The Archives of Cricot 2 Theatre Centre have two functions – museum and institute. These two functions are coordinated by the main department of the Centre – the ARCHIVES. The archives are the only guarantee of Cricot 2 Theatre's survival, its maintenance in the consciousness of society, its being handed down to future generations. (...) The Archives' function as a museum is fundamental and necessary. The museum preserves: works, experiences, ideas. It guarantees the continuity of the development of culture. The Centre serves these purposes, preserving the theatrical and artistic achievements of Tadeusz Kantor and his TROUPE."<sup>3</sup>

In order to explain Tadeusz Kantor dedication to Cricoteka, the archive project designed to encompass his and his actors' artistic journey, in order to evaluate its function and impact in preserving the creator's legacy, we must understand it not as a "secondary" venture whose purpose was merely to deposit and catalogue, but as an essential part of his artistic trajectory, as his "last work of art"<sup>4</sup>, a rigorous and constructive attempt to give shape to "memory":

"Memory. When a human being and a work of art cease to exist, memory, a record sent into the future, into the next generation, remains. A memory-record must not be expurgated. It has to stay faithful to its creator's text. A record can be rejected,

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<sup>2</sup> A reference to the title of Kantor's 1988 manifesto "To Save from Oblivion". See Michal Kobialka, *A Journey Through Other Spaces. Tadeusz Kantor Essays and Manifestos, 1944-1990*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, University of California Press, 1993, pp.166-171.

<sup>3</sup> Tadeusz Kantor, "Cricoteka" in Anna Halczak (editor), *Cricot 2 Theatre Information Guide 1986*, Krakow: Cricoteka, 1986, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Tadeusz Kantor, "Texts, Essays and Intimate Commentaries", translated by Michal Kobialka, in *Performing Arts Journal*, vol. 16, no. 2 (May, 1994), p. 21.

but it must not be deformed. Memory is a necessary condition for the development. And development, in turn, is the essence of life. All our crises are because of the lack of respect for memory. The ARCHIVE, which is associated with the Cricot 2 Theatre Center, is the memory of the Cricot 2 Theatre (...)."<sup>5</sup>

### **From *Cricot-2* to *Cricoteka*: the paths of memory**

Tadeusz Kantor's artistic journey, begun in 1938 with *The Ephemeral and Mechanical Puppet Theatre* and the staging of *The Death of Tintagiles* by Maurice Maeterlinck, is synonymous with the troubled history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe, with the socio-political changes that occurred as a result of the two World Wars and the emergence of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. From 1939 to 1955, the year he founded, together with artists of the Krakow Group, Maria Jarema and Kazimierz Mikulski, the Cricot 2 Theatre (the name, a tribute to the Cricot Artists Theatre that existed in Krakow before World War I, is an anagram of the Polish expression *to cyrk* – "it's a circus"<sup>6</sup>), Tadeusz Kantor continued his artistic activities as a painter and theatre director, at the same time working as a set designer for various productions and, for a brief period, as a professor at the State School of Fine Arts in Krakow.

His international recognition however, came as result of the theatre productions he staged with the Cricot 2 Theatre and it began in 1972, when the company presented their 1967 production of *The Water Hen* by Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz („Witkacy”) at the Edinburgh Festival. Three years later, on November 15, 1975, "an important date in the history of world theatre"<sup>7</sup>, the production *The Dead Class* premiered, the first of the five performances from Kantor's last and most successful creative cycle, "The Theatre of Death" (it was followed by *Wielopole*, *Wielopole* – 1981; *Let the Artists Die* – 1985; *I Shall Never Return* – 1989; *Today is my Birthday* – 1991). In August 1976, *The Dead Class* was successfully presented within the Edinburgh Festival and this event "marked the starting point of the triumphant world tours to Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Iran, Yugoslavia, Belgium, Italy, Australia, Switzerland, Venezuela, Austria, the United States, Mexico, Sweden, Japan, Spain, Israel, Canada and Czechoslovakia"<sup>8</sup>.

The Cricot 2 Theatre, understood by Kantor as a "wandering", "fairground booth theatre"<sup>9</sup>, never existed as an official institution and the initial purpose

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance, Krzysztof Pleśniarowicz's "Preface" to *Tadeusz Kantor. Scrieri despre teatru*, translated by Sabra Daici, Bucharest, TracusArte Publishing House, 2014, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Krzysztof Pleśniarowicz, *The Dead Memory Machine. Tadeusz Kantor's Theatre of Death*, translated by William Brand, Black Mountain Press, 2000, p. 118.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Tadeusz Kantor, "Texts, Essays...", p. 23.



of what will later become Cricoteka was to “legitimize the [officially] <<non-existing>> Fairground Booth Cricot 2 Theatre”<sup>10</sup>. At the beginning, the institution, which opened on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 1980 at 5 Kanonicza Street, was entitled The Cricot 2 Theatre Centre.



**Fig. 1:** Entrance to the original Cricoteka Archives, Ulica Kanonicza, no. 5  
(Photo: Andreea Iacob, July 2011)

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Another reason for the creation of "The Cricot 2 Theatre Centre" (renamed Cricoteka in 1989<sup>11</sup>) was that, after the enormous international success of *The Dead Class*, the Krzysztofory Gallery, the location which, at the time, Cricot 2 Theatre was sharing with the artists of the Krakow Group, became crowded and too small for the company's real needs. The current executive director of Cricoteka, Natalia Zarzecka, explains:

"With the performances *The Water-Hen* (1967) and *Lovelies and Dowdies* (1973) the international destiny of Kantor's theater started (Rome, Paris, Edinburg etc.), which meant that very often the Krzysztofory Gallery couldn't function normally, as most of the time the space of the gallery was occupied by theater rehearsals, preparations for the trips etc. (...) At the end of 70's, Kantor started to think about a new place dedicated only to Cricot 2 Theater.

At the end of 1978 he got a proposal to create his new performance in Florence, Italy. Before leaving Krakow, he had looked hard for a place where his theater could work and exist. In November 1979 Kantor, together with a group of eleven actors, left to Florence. A few weeks after his departure, City authorities made a decision to give two rooms on the first floor and a cellar in a building on Kanonicza Street to Cricot 2 Theater – the Center for the Cricot 2 Theater has been founded there. The first exhibition in the new institution, entitled <<Ideas of Cricot 2 Theatre>>, was shown in January 1980."<sup>12</sup>

Upon returning from Florence, Kantor began to devote more and more time to the Archives project<sup>13</sup>, which he considered an endeavor of utmost importance in preserving and transmitting the legacy of the Cricot 2 Theatre to future generations. In the artist's own words, it was now the moment to "chronicle" the wanderings of his theatre company: "...initially, a tournée was a <<journey>> into the world. A conquest. There was no time to chronicle it. We conquered the world not in the name of success on our lips, but in the name of <<True Faith>>"<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> "In 1989, Tadeusz Kantor wrote to the Mayor of the City of Krakow to request changing the name of <<The Cricot 2 Theatre Centre>> to <<Cricoteka>>. As a result, such a change was made by decision of the Mayor, and a new paragraph was added to the statute of the institution to reflect this change." (Anna Halczak, "Cricoteka – <<The Necessity of Transmission>>" in Katarzyna Fazan, Anna Róża Burzynska, Marta Bryś (editors), *Tadeusz Kantor Today. Metamorphoses of Death, Memory, Presence*, Peter Lang Edition, 2014, p. 305).

<sup>12</sup> Anca Măniuțiu, "Kantor's <<Living Archive>> and the Challenge of the Present. Interview with Natalia Zarzecka, director of Cricoteka – Center for the Documentation of the Art of Tadeusz Kantor" in *Studia UBB Dramatica*, LVII, 1, 2012, p. 181.

<sup>13</sup> "Tadeusz Kantor devoted a lot of time to working on the Archives Collections, the way that they were stored and exhibited (...) The artist designed glass cabinets on stands to facilitate the display of prints related to his work." (Anna Halczak, "Cricoteka...", pp. 300-301.)

<sup>14</sup> Tadeusz Kantor, "Texts, Essays...", p. 22.

Gathering theatrical objects, props, costumes from the Krzysztofory Gallery, as well as objects belonging to Kantor himself (“programmes, posters and typewritten scripts, photocopied and placed in black canvas boxes (...), photographs to be reproduced and reviews brought from trips abroad”<sup>15</sup>), the center was designed as “the LIVING ARCHIVES, which will preserve and transmit the material collected and theatrical work as living load of the idea of a new theatre”<sup>16</sup>, a “collection” of archive documents, objects and manuscripts (the name Cricoteka comes from Greek – *θηκη*, *theke* - collection<sup>17</sup>) designed as both a museum and a research center revolving around the Archives. In his outline of the Archive’s functions, Tadeusz Kantor mentions the following:

“COLLECTING COMPLETE DOCUMENTARY MATERIALS:

- a) collecting photographic materials from performances
- b) collecting reviews, articles, catalogues, programmes, prints, posters, books and publications edited by Polish and foreign centers associated with Cricot 2 Theatre’s activities.
- c) classifying, listing, photocopying, providing commentaries to materials.
- d) collecting materials recorded on audio tapes, video tapes, films and slides; recording: performances, rehearsals, interviews, lectures, press conferences.
- e) organization of all kinds of recordings: radio, film, TV.
- f) its own recordings of all sorts of meetings, lectures and conferences.
- g) collecting theoretical texts of Tadeusz Kantor, essays, scripts and stage designs.”<sup>18</sup>

**Cricoteka today: aims and activities**

After Tadeusz Kantor’s sudden death, on December 8, 1990, while working on the production *Today is My Birthday* (premiere: January 1, 1991, Toulouse), the team of researchers from Cricoteka faced the difficult challenge of both preserving the original scope of the institution, as drafted by the artist himself, and, at the same, of broadening the scope of the institution, determining it to become more than a museum-like establishment, to become an incubator and a platform for new artistic ideas and research projects. In 1994, the mention “Centre for the Documentation of the Art of Tadeusz Kantor” was added to its name and “its new goal was to preserve and

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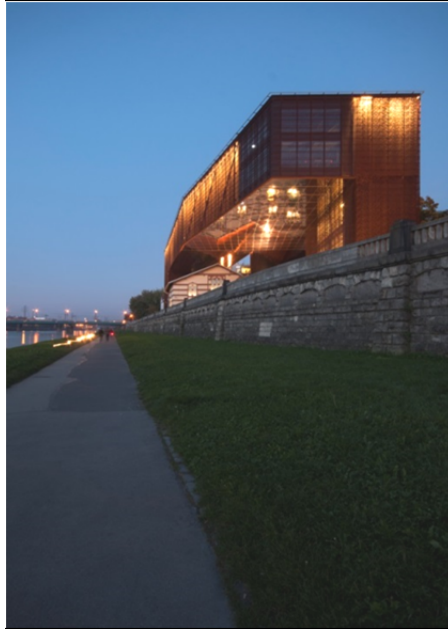
<sup>15</sup> Anna Halczak, “Cricoteka...”, p. 299.

<sup>16</sup> Tadeusz Kantor, “Declaration” in Anna Halczak (editor), *Teatr Cricot 2 Informator. 1989-1990*, Krakow: Cricoteka, 1990, p. 219.

<sup>17</sup> See Anca Măniușiu, “Kantor’s...”, p. 181.

<sup>18</sup> Tadeusz Kantor, “Cricoteka”, p. 4.

document the totality of Kantor's achievements, not only his theatre"<sup>19</sup>. A year later, in 1995, the artist's last Studio (located on Sienna Street) became "an annex" of the center, functioning as a museum.



**Fig. 2:** The new building of Cricoteka in Krakow, photo by Maciej Jeżyk



**Fig. 3:** The courtyard of the new building of Cricoteka in Krakow, photo by Maciej Jeżyk

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<sup>19</sup> Anca Măniuțiu, "Kantor's...", p. 183.

In their desire to keep up with modern times, the curators and researchers from Cricoteka devoted their time and energy to opening the doors of the center to all those interested in researching Kantor's works and to popularizing his artistic achievements:

"Dozen of exhibition catalogues have been issued. Since 2000, Cricoteka has been publishing monographs (...) A whole series of DVDs with documentaries and recordings of the performances has been released. The collections of the Archives have kept growing systematically, especially the photograph collection. Almost all records have been digitized. A web page has been set up in three languages. The collections have been open to the public. (...) Cricoteka has organized and co-organized numerous exhibitions – over a hundred in its own premises and another hundred and twenty elsewhere."<sup>20</sup>

In 2006, this cultural institution managed to obtain from the local authorities (the Malopolskie Voivodeship that, beginning with 1999, subsidizes the Centre) the permission to begin construction on a new, more ample, location, to renovate and modernize the abandoned building of the old power plant of the Podgórze district in Krakow, on the Vistula Riverside. The new location opened its doors to the public in September 2014 and the "state of the art" building, "whose design has been discernably inspired by Kantor's artistic concepts"<sup>21</sup>, houses a permanent exhibition of the works of Tadeusz Kantor (although the topic of this exhibition changes periodically), a Theatre Hall (used for performances and workshops with a capacity of 140 seats), an Education Hall (used for educational activities, lectures, seminars etc.), the Archives – Reading Room - Library<sup>22</sup>, a bookshop, a café, storerooms and a public open square, "designed specially to be transformed into an open-air stage"<sup>23</sup>.

Through all its cultural activities, this unique institution proves to be an excellent and successful model for anyone interested in preserving and disseminating the ideas, aesthetic values and artistic works of any creator or group of creators worldwide. Their example is to be followed by all those who understand that archive materials are not inanimate objects of the past, but a "living testimony" to "our difficulties, perseverance, our victories, our journeys,

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<sup>20</sup> Anna Halczak, "Cricoteka...", p. 308.

<sup>21</sup> "The New Cricoteka Headquarters", p. 2, available at <http://www.news.cricoteka.pl/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Cricoteka-new-headquarters.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> "It is envisaged that, with the Cricoteka Archives, created under the direction of Tadeusz Kantor, as its starting point, the collection will be enhanced by materials related to the most significant artistic phenomena of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in order to provide a comparative context for Kantor's art together with the documentation of current art events." ("The New Cricoteka Headquarters", p. 4, available at: <http://www.news.cricoteka.pl/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Cricoteka-new-headquarters.pdf>).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

and the battles fought” that can unquestionably be of value to those who “wish to continue the house, or to rebuild it using even different blueprints. No matter which, the initial blueprints will always remain its foundation – Remember this”<sup>24</sup>.



**Fig. 4:** Main hall of the new building of Cricoteka in Krakow, photo by Studio FILMLOVE

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<sup>24</sup> Tadeusz Kantor, “Essays, Texts...”, p. 21.

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## BOOK REVIEW

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**Claus Clüver, Matthijs Engelberts and Véronique Plesch (eds.), *The Imaginary: Word and Image/L'Imaginaire: texte et image*, Brill and Rodopi, Leiden-Boston, 2012, 364 p.**

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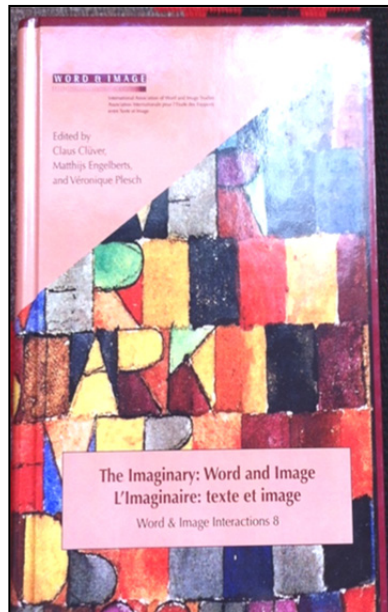
This collection of essays contains papers both in English and French that were initially presented in a preliminary form at The Ninth Conference on Word and Image Studies, held in 2011 in Montreal, under the auspices of the International Association of Word and Image Studies (Association Internationale pour l'Etude des Rapports entre Textes et Image, IAWIS). The conference was dedicated to the concept of the imaginary, and so the seven sections of the present volume are exploring this concept with special focus on how the imaginary is shaped in hybrid, intermodal artistic objects.

"Transpositions of the Imaginary in Word and Image: Illustrations", the first section, contains three essays that are examining the intricacies of text and image in book illustrations: Caroline Marie analyzes three sets of illustrations made by Duncan Grant, Napo, and Julie Vivas for Virginia Woolf's posthumously published short story *Nurse Lugton*. Eric T. Haskell investigates the intrinsic value of illustration as interpretation in several artis-

tic depictions of Baudelaire's famous sonnet "La Mort des amants", and Philippe Kaenel initiates a historical survey of abstract illustrations, especially of discursive strategies meant to deny the very illustrative functions of illustration in the name of artistic autonomy.

The second section, "Transpositions of the Imaginary in Word and Image: Verbalizations", explores image to text transpositions, from ekphrasis to the creative usages of the medium of writing. A classic case of ekphrasis is analyzed by Nataliya Lenina in Georges Rodenbach's novel *Buruges-la-Morte*, where-

as Simone Grossman is more interested in underlining the osmosis between writing and image in Paul Béliveau expositions. A special case of transfer is studied by Alexandra Catana in Christian Dotremont's (founder of CoBrA movement) *logogrammes* – conceptual artistic installations delineating the material dimensions and surfaces of the written trace, through which a reflection on the role of writing supports is opened.





The third section – “Re-imag(in)ing Words and Images in the Comic Book” – is focused on the adaptation of literary or graphic art into comic books. Two of the essays are analyzing Stéphane Huet’s adaptation of Proust’s *A la recherche de temps perdu* (France Lemoine and Evelyne Lepetre), Jean-Luis Tilleuil is working with Posy Simmonds’s Flaubert adaptation (Gemma Bovary), and Lynn Bannon writes about the transpositions made by the Belgian cartoonist Morris from Frederic Remington’s artistic world.

The fourth section – “The imaginary and the Screen: Books, Movies, Television” – focuses on the references to film or television in the work of three novelists. The evocative function of canonical films in Robert Coover’s stories is discussed in Françoise Sammarcelli’s essay. Sonia Lagerwall writes about one of the most interesting cases of auto fictional literature and theory, that of Chloé Delaume, whose preoccupation with the televisual is thoroughly analyzed. Arcana Albright discusses TV themes in Jean-Philippe Touissant’s novels.

A very different approach is set out in the fifth section, dedicated to “Imaginary in Digital Media”. Jan Batens and Fred Truyen are studying the writer’s image constructed on the Internet, and the way in which both publishers and authors are manipulating the digital literary mythologies. Anaïs Guilet is describing three cases of media hybridization of the literary text. The author uses the “cyborg” metaphor to describe the hybridization process (half book, half hypermedia). The last text of the section

is not concerned with any form of literary analysis. Caroline Bem studies the online Polyvore set, a platform on which digital objects are created by its users from images and text found on the web.

The last two sections of the book can be placed together in their own category. “The imaginary and Memory” and “The Imaginary and Places” are best suited for the role of reflective epilogue of this rich volume. Lilliane Louvel writes a theoretical piece on the relation between the visible and the readable in modern tales, and the way in which this negotiation preserves ancient figures. Claire Gheerardyn explores the iconoclastic ekphrasis of memorial monuments, and Maryse Ouellet connects Hanna Arendt’s reflections on historical discontinuity to Claudio Parmiggiani artistic explorations in memory and absence. The last three essays, concerning the geographical imaginary, are analyzing urban imaginaries. The first two, of Nathalie Roelens’s and Eleonora Diamanti’s are focusing specifically on the local flavors of Montreal, and the last one, written by Jorgelina Orfila, is exploring the black and white photography of Cézanne’s paintings and the site photographs trying to locate the actual places from where the scene represented in paintings were viewed.

With a great diversity of objects and methodologies, these essays are all exploring the extensive possibilities latent in the concept of the imaginary, and are broadening the theoretical and historical understanding of the word-image relationships in the digital era.

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## BOOK REVIEW

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**Corina Croitoru, *Politica ironiei în poezia românească sub comunism*  
[*La politique de l'ironie dans la poésie roumaine sous le communisme*],  
préface de Ioana Bot, Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2014.**

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L'ironie aura constitué l'un des mécanismes subversifs de prédilection pendant le communisme roumain, dont le contexte a restitué à l'ironie littéraire toute sa portée axiologique : le paradigme poétique s'est trouvé transformé par ce cadre historico-politique, qui offrait un espace extrêmement favorable à la prolifération des œuvres relevant de cette catégorie esthétique. C'est dans cette optique que Corinna Croitoru propose une exégèse des plus pertinentes de la poésie roumaine pendant la période totalitaire, mettant l'accent sur les formes de l'ironie poétique impliquée par le contexte politique, tout en faisant droit, avant tout, à sa fonction éthique.

La première partie du livre, *Les prémisses théoriques*, constitue un itinéraire conceptuel passionnant, suivant – de manière diachronique – le cheminement d'une catégorie esthétique-philosophique (de l'ironie socratique et de l'ironie rhétorique jusqu'à l'expérience moderne de l'ironie), qui a commencé à assumer, à partir du XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle, des implications

sociales et politiques de plus en plus complexes, au moment où la poésie même a pris contact avec la vie. L'auteure remarque avec justesse que la première conflagration mondiale a déterminé la disparition de « l'ironie esthétique et élitiste », qui revêtait d'« une tournure éthique, le rapport réflexif entretenu auparavant avec la création étant remplacé par un rapport lucide avec la vie ». Or, l'observation s'avère fondamentale, car cette nouvelle forme d'ironie perdurera et générera ses effets des plus spectaculaires dans le cadre des totalitarismes de la



deuxième moitié du siècle. D'autre part, l'auteure accorde une attention particulière à la conjonction de l'ironie, de la poésie et de l'engagement, en faisant des références intéressantes aux voix les plus autorisées de cette direction de la recherche (de Peter Sloterdijk, par exemple, à Philippe Hamon ou Dominique Combe).

La démarche exégétique, qui constitue la deuxième partie du volume, représente une analyse convaincante des solu-

tions par lesquelles l'ironie a assumé un important « bagage » politique dans les différents territoires de la poésie roumaine sous le régime totalitaire. L'étude met au jour, en fait, une dynamique de l'ironie qui tient aux modalités par lesquelles elle s'est rapportée à la réalité : à partir de la génération de la guerre, Geo Dumitrescu, par exemple, condamne de manière fervente le militarisme, en militant pour une « paix socialiste », mais, au moment où il prend conscience du « piège » d'une telle « promesse », il oriente son ironie vers les nouvelles réalités communistes. Dans un autre ordre d'idées, l'assouplissement idéologique des années 1965-1971 a permis à des poètes tels que Marin Sorescu ou Ana Blandiana – malgré leur confrontation permanente avec la censure – de déployer, dans leurs œuvres, une ironie éthique supposant des jeux de sens cachés par les stratégies discursives qu'ils utilisent. De même, quelques poètes de la génération '70, tels Mircea Dinescu ou

Dorin Tudoran, entrent dans le sujet de l'ouvrage par la manière dont ils transposent l'ironie littéraire dans leurs propres biographies, devenant des dissidents. La génération '80 surprend et intrigue le lecteur, dans ce tableau, par le contraste entre l'engagement dans la réalité et la poétique textualiste imposée par leur orientation postmoderniste. Il y a toutefois quelques poètes de cette génération (Matei Vişniec, Magda Cârneci ou Mariana Marin) qui ont dépassé l'autoréférentialité spécifique à l'époque, en pratiquant la même dimension de l'ironie éthique.

Attractif par l'originalité et par la pertinence de ses analyses, le volume de Corina Croitoru apporte, sans aucun doute, une contribution essentielle à la recherche littéraire roumaine, constituant un chapitre important de l'exégèse consacrée à la poésie de la période communiste et ouvrant des perspectives d'étude très prometteuses.

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## BOOK REVIEW

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**Ionuț Miloi, *Cealaltă poveste. O poetică a rescrierii în literatura română contemporană* (*The other story. A Poetics of Rewriting in Contemporary Romanian Literature*), Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj-Napoca, 2015, 290 pp.**

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In the last decades, two of the richest and most interesting discussions in literary theory are focusing either on space / geography in fiction and its symbolic, or on a larger phenomenon, that of rewriting, often referred to by using many theoretical concepts, as a consequence of the plural understanding of the phenomenon, but also as a proof of its complexity and wide occurrences.

Input Million's first book, *Geografii semnificative. Spațiul în proza scurtă a lui Mircea Nedelciu* (*Significant geographies. The space in Mircea Nedelciu's short prose*) was published in 2011 (Limes, Cluj-Napoca) and constitutes the result of his research for the master's dissertation. Last year, he published a study which was initially his PhD research, thus enriching, once again, the Romanian literary theory with a proficient work on the matter of rewriting. "The other story" is, in fact, the story of the literature of second degree and the central aim of the author is to offer an accurate analysis of the phenomenon

of rewriting, a hybrid practice whose definition includes various other concepts, but cannot be fully identified with none of them. Focusing on Romanian prose, Miloi's book not only brings Romanian literature into a theoretical debate of great actuality, but also provides a pertinent study on a segment left aside by our researchers. There is already a rich bibliography on intertextuality, but the particularities that led to the emergence of this narrative strategy in the Romanian literature wasn't paid much attention. Hence the novelty of Miloi's approach.

The book is structured in two parts: *Theoretical Premises* and *Rewritings in Romanian Literature. Five Case Studies*. The first one aims at systematizing the dissipated features – among different theoretical perspectives and schools – that form the theoretical profile of this phenomenon. Based on a substantial and prestigious bibliography, the author manages to follow the subject of his re-



search from different points of view, such as: contextual, metafictional, intertextual or even juxtaposing the history of mentalities with that of literary ideas. What makes this volume particularly interesting and significant is that it illustrates the existence of a relation between the socio-political plan and the literary plan, and it emphasizes the tension reflected in Romanian rewritings (and hypertextual practices in general), which stand up for the marginalized parts of the main ideology, such as feminism or postcolonial studies.

In the second part of his study, Miloi tests the validity of his subtle observations on five contemporary Romanian works, with fertile conclusions, often comparing them with similar works from universal literature: *Gulliver în țara mincinoșilor* (*Gulliver in the Country of Liars*) by Ion Eremia (rewriting of *Gulliver's Travels*, by Jonathan Swift), *Redingota* (*The Redingote*), by Mircea Horia Simionescu

(rewriting of *Death in Venice*, by Thomas Mann), *Educație târzie* (*Late education*), by Mihai Zamfir (rewriting of *Sentimental Education*, by Gustave Flaubert), *Pupa rusă*, by Gheorghe Crăciun (rewriting of *Madame Bovary*, by Gustave Flaubert) and *Domnul K. eliberat* (*Mister K. liberated*), by Matei Vișniec (rewriting of *The Process*, by Franz Kafka).

Despite the abstract language, which elsewhere would make the reading difficult, Ionuț Miloi's book fascinates its reader in an unexpected manner, especially due to the enlightening power of the rigorous discourse, doubled, here and there, by metaphorical references. The author's striking capacity of synthesis gives the reader the impression of breaking the ground of the literary theory's field, ordering and clarifying the concepts he discusses. His judgements are compellingly argued and with personal marks of the proficient theoretician.

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## BOOK REVIEW

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### **Eminescu, *Versuri din Manuscrise*, Ediție de Ioana Bot și Cătălin Cioabă, București, Humanitas, 290 p.**

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Restituting the literary works of a national poet can be a real challenge, especially when there is not a will mani-

fested by him toward this. Therefore, the image of his writings becomes the exclusive creation of the editors, their choices influencing the way he is apprehended. The book *Eminence versuri din manuscrise* [*Eminescu verses from manuscripts*] offers one the possibility to discover the poet from a new perspective without the preconceived judgments which perpetuated the mythical figure of the inspired genius in the Romanian literature. On the contrary, Eminescu's writings, as revealed in this edition, are very diverse and they seldom converge on a coherent poetical project. Verses that have been placed at the footnotes of the complete philological edition (coordinated by Perpessicius and published by the Romanian Academy) are available now for the public not as variants, but as autonomous lyrics, a fact that changes their status to independent poems, each one with a voice of its own.

It is a book very rigorously constructed, yet it is also accessible to the large public. Every poem is followed by a note, refer-

ringing it to the complete philological edition of Eminescu's writings. The chronology of the life and works of the poet covers the most important facts about him. The majority of the poems are selected from the footnotes section of the academic edition, while ten poems are added from the *Manuscriptum* review, where they were first published by another editor, Petru Creția, in 1991. The corpus is like a web, composed of various texts: independent variants of well-known



poems, ample overwriting of intermediary poems belonging to vast projects, verses as repetitive exercises, or ample poems that are reduced, finally, to ideas. The notes at the end of the book are useful for the public, since Ioana Bot explains there the migration of variants from a poem to another, connecting them (if possible) to well-known poems, so that the reader would be able to understand better the way Eminescu created in his own workroom.

The edition includes poems that describe the birth of the cosmos, showing the effort of the poetic logos to express the idea of nonexistence, poems reflecting on the question of the Creator, impromptu poems, Pythagorean, erotic or satirical ones, all together revealing another image of the Romanian, Romantic and national poet. One can read, for example, a poet who writes a poetic testament dissimilar from the familiar *Mai am un singur dor*, [*One last wish I have*], thus imagining “a happy world that is born from the death of the defeated subject, marching off in a line in front of our eyes with a richness of attributes as perfect beauty, harmony, ancient fairytale etc”. We see Eminescu experimenting the limits of language, fancying stories that do not exist nor have ever existed, so Ioana Bot asks herself and, by

default, the readers: “What kind of story is this? And, in particular, what kind of language can say something that has not been nor it is anymore?” There are love poems in this book that express a joyful and accomplished Eminescu, a fact that denies the critics’ perception of him as a melancholic poet.

Therefore, the publication of this new edition of Eminescu’s poems allows the readers to see him “at work”, practicing motifs and poetic images, in the very heart of his imaginative lab. The readers are given the chance to discover Eminescu’s multiple creative voices and the very different manners in which he wrote. The search for the perfect word, from variants to the final poems, reveals a poet testing the poetic language beyond its very limits.

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## BOOK REVIEW

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**Cosmin Borza, *Marin Sorescu. Singur printre canonici (Marin Sorescu. The Loneliness of a Canonical Poet)*, Art Publishing House, 2014, 348 p.**

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Cosmic Bursa's debut in literary criticism, originally a doctoral thesis, might mislead readers accustomed with the monographic tradition of Romanian criticism, for its object is not exhaustively studied (Marin Sorescu's dramaturgy and prose are eluded), but used as a pretext for dislodging numerous internal inconsistencies of the Romanian literary historiography. One of these inconsistencies makes a good starting point for Borza's versatile and flexible analytical skills: an incongruence between the pedagogical canon (Marin Sorescu is one of the 17 poets studied in Romanian schools) and the canon conceived in terms of literary evolution and influence (in this aspect Borza is an orthodox bloomian, not always explicitly so). Although Borza's methods and sources may seem hybrid and eclectic, the common denominator of its criticism is found in the theoretical rhetoric tradition exemplary practiced by Paul de Man and Harold Bloom.

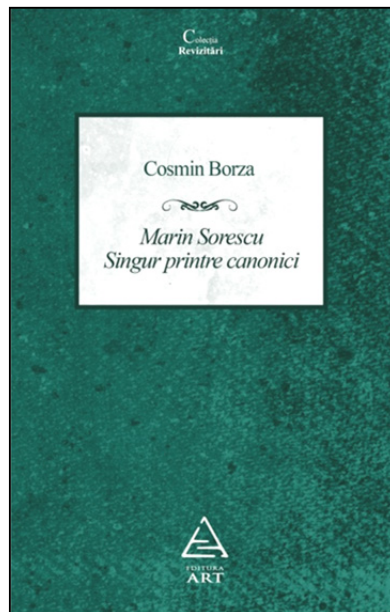
With great polemical appetite, the study launches two types of provocations:

first, it exposes the limitations of the various critical characterizations of "neo-modernism", and second, it questions the validity of "poetic transitivity" as theorized by the 80s generation's critics.

The volume includes four chapters: the first one, entitled "Marin Sorescu and the neo-modernism" is a meta-critical study calling into question the various characterizations of the 60s generation, especially those coming from the 80s postmodernist critique, for which their immediate literary predecessors were accused of

aesthetical escapism and their poetics were unilaterally understood merely as an attempt to rebuild the links of contemporary literature with the modernist canon between the wars.

The 80s generation claimed a radical rupture from this type of hermetic poetry. The new formula was best synthesized by the concept of "transitive poetry", meaning a poetry that is essentially anti-lyrical, narrative, referential, and prosaic. The most complex form of this concept can be found in Gheorghe Crăciun's seminal book





*Aisbergul poeziei moderne* (The Aisberg of Modern Poetry), but also in other well-known members of his generation: Mircea Cărtărescu, I.B. Lefter, A. Muşina. Although, Borza argues, they were right to place “transitive poetry” in Withman’s descendance, as a second-wave modernist poetry opposed to Baudelaire’s reflexivity, the 80s generation failed in their theoretical approach to understand the aporia present at the very heart of this edifice.

The author convincingly proves that the poetic transitivity is not simply an endeavor towards a new form of artistic anthropocentrism, but also a skeptic attitude towards the powers of literature and the very consistency of human identity.

Taking Sorescu’s poetry and his theoretical articles as key examples, Cosmin Borza exposes this polemic conceptualization as a weapon in a war between generations, insofar as many of their so called postmodern innovations were already present in neo-modernist poetics of Marin Sorescu.

In the second chapter, „Allegories of Transitivity”, Borza analyzes chronologically each volume of Sorescu’s poetry, with great contextual accuracy, bringing the conclusions concerning the poetic transitivity to a more solid ground. Although with a great number of variations from one

book to another, Borza manages to underline a coherent poetic project, one that is at the same time critical of neo-modernist purism and of social-realism’s dogmatisms.

Informed by allegory and parody, Sorescu’s poetry is read, in conclusion, as a tragic impossibility to experience neither the extremes of human essence nor its own apocalypse, thus succumbing in a burlesque dimension.

The third chapter “Marin Sorescu and the Romanian Postmodernism” extends the demonstration of the first one valuing Sorescu as a precursor of the transitive poetry, position that was usurped conceptually by the 80s generation. The author retraces the textual web in which Romanian criticism framed Sorescu’s poetry (the War Generation poets, and poets from more recent generations like Petre Stoica, Ioana Ieronim and Mircea Cărtărescu). From this perspective, the singularity of Sorescu’s poetics is underlined in the last chapter of the volume “The Epos of Transitivity” where the famous “La Lilieci” cycle is analyzed. For Borza, this maturity project can be resumed as an attempt to re-establish the “simplicity of existence” by accepting the diversity of otherness, and by integrating its divergent poetic configurations.

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## BOOK REVIEW

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***Paradoxes de l'avant-garde, la modernité artistique à l'épreuve de sa nationalisation*, dir. Thomas Hunkeler, Classiques Garnier, « rencontres 96 », Paris 2014, 327 pages.**

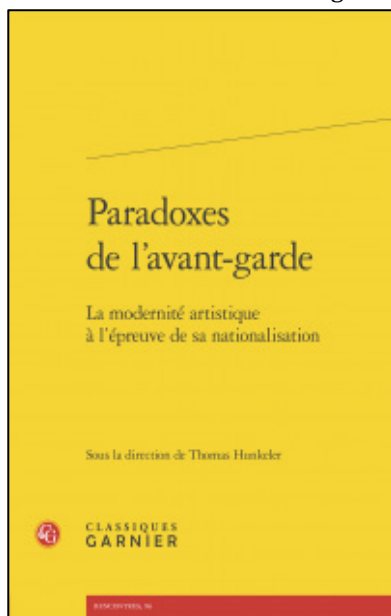
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La publication des actes du colloque qui s'est tenu à l'université de Fribourg en Suisse en mars 2011 réunit dix-huit universitaires dont le renom de la grande majorité n'est plus à faire, autour de l'inscription nationale de mouvements d'avant-garde dont la dimension internationale constituait une de leurs plus profondes revendications. L'énoncé du thème du colloque porte en lui-même toute la complexité du phénomène : Dada et le surréalisme peuvent être saisis dans un mouvement opposé eu égard au binôme nation/international. Le futurisme de Marinetti prendrait pour alibi l'international afin de mieux servir la cause nationale italienne.

Si la difficulté apparaît avec ces mouvements d'avant-gardes que leur caractère « historique », – qualification liée à une revendication énoncée dans un manifeste ou une déclaration – permet d'identifier, elle se corse à propos de revues, comme pour *der Sturm* devenu organe de propagande et entreprise secrète de renseignements du régime

impérial pendant la Première Guerre mondiale, ou pour la revue *Europe*, étudiée eu égard à la promotion et à la réception des avant-gardes, et de cas personnels comme ceux de T. S. Eliot, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, Maurice Barrès ou Ardengo Soffici. S'il est ainsi possible de rattacher l'art à la notion de nation à partir de la prédominance de la notion de génie depuis le XVIII<sup>e</sup>, au détriment de celle de modèle antique, le lien à l'international est plus flou : revendication artistique ou politique, levier, adaptation à un monde en mutation, état de fait, lien au marxisme ?

Il en découle un désarroi quant au choix d'un outil épistémique unique pour cette étude, question soulevée par Th. Hunkeler dans son introduction, et tranchée par le choix de la méthode comparatiste dans une perspective historico-géographique qui structure l'ensemble en trois parties, autour de trois pôles, le premier, « rivalités nationales et aspirations internationales », dont l'objet principal est la France, exception faite de



l'étude de la revue *der Sturm*, (6 articles), le suivant, de l'Europe à l'Est et au nord, autour de la question du centre/ périphérie (7 articles dont 4 consacrés à la Roumanie), le troisième, « quelles traditions pour la modernité ? », s'attachant à des cas particuliers (5 articles). L'article de Tania Collani, qui traite l'idéologie et les paradoxes des avant-gardes européennes, rend compte de manière thématique de cet ouvrage, alors que la posture intellectuelle des intervenants reste celle de la recherche du paradigme, ce qui fait la richesse de leur questionnement, comme celui qui porte sur les racines idéologiques des avant-gardes, indissociables de celles des idéologies internationalistes ; celui du critère de définition de la modernité qui est l'insuffisance du nouveau de toute sa tradition selon Antoine Compagnon; celui du rapport au stéréotype et à la démocratie..., questionnements particulièrement présents dans les interventions roumaines et qui inviteraient à un prolongement à partir du rôle et du point de vue roumain, nodal selon

nous, pour sa situation géographique, l'exemplarité de ses avant-gardistes de Tzara à Isou en passant par Fondane et Brancusi, et son histoire traversée par l'antisémitisme, le communisme, qui sont des formes d'internationalisme supra nationaux, le rapport unique au folklore, ainsi qu'au lien séculaire avec les deux puissances qui se disputent la première place en Europe, la France par la culture et l'Allemagne par la présence d'allemands et l'empreinte de l'empire austro-hongrois.

Cette publication envisage le phénomène, culturellement et politiquement peut-être le plus important du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, dans sa complexité et ses paradoxes, qui restent ceux de notre actualité dans la mesure où la question de l'avant-garde qui serait, dans la vision de Peter Bürger, celle d'une reconduite de l'art dans la vie, pose celle, plus originaire, du rapport entre le signe et le signifié dont il semble qu'ils se soient tellement séparés que seul demeure le signe.

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