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Faith Testimonials

The present paper is x-raying a number of three prison testimonies belonging to three Romanian Greek-Catholic prelates: a cardinal, a priest-professor and a simple minister. The testimonies signed by these three are documents of both sufferance and enlightening. These texts depict and revive horrors, but they feed themselves with a certain ethos of sufferance Christification, they would feed themselves with a pious feeling of self-sacrifice and also with a particular devotion of prayer and of enlightening through sufferance..

In 1948, the communist state, recently installed in Romania, would suppress with the use of a governmental decree the Romanian Church United with Rome (the Greek-Catholic Church), a religious denomination that has its roots in the years 1700, when a fraction of Transylvania's Orthodox clergy has crossed over to Catholicism (preserving both the Greek rite and the Eastern spiritual traditions). The official cancellation of The Romanian Church United with Rome would bring about, on one hand, its survival as a clandestine religious movement and, on the other hand, the consequential arrest and imprisonment of a pretty consistent number of priests and believers (including those seven bishops still performing religious mass at that time) who had strongly opposed to the idea of embracing the Orthodoxies instead of Catholicism. In the years following 1989, in other words: at the end of the Romanian communist regime, the Romanian Greek- Catholic Church was partially given back its former legitimate rights and thus acknowledged as an official creed once again. Soon after the communist collapse, many testimonies have been published – in the prison journals or diaries' formula – testimonies containing and uttering the martyring undergone by the prelates, priests and believers of the Romanian Church United with Rome. Their testimonials mark a specific tonality within the generalized testimonial enthusiasm which used to define the very beginning of the post-communist era, an era filled with testimonies of the endured sufferance and injustices. Out of this generous testimonial patrimony, our option concerns a number of three Greek-Catholic depositions, and we have arranged them on a so-called "hierarchic" scale: a bishop (Iuliu Hossu), a priest-professor (Tertulian Langa) and a simple minister (Matei Boila). Their texts are distinct martyring narratives, each individualizing itself both due to their personalized temperament and due to their remembrance process temperature; their common denominator is given by the authors' devotion in confessing their faith and by the Christic ethos of sufferance.

A Cardinal's Will

A pretty consistent volume of testimonies (*Our Faith Is Our Life/ Credința noastră este viața noastră*) signed by Iuliu Hossu, the cardinal, made its public appearance to « Viața Creștină » Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca. According to Letitia Gavrilă's editorial

introduction, the volume is structured in three differently sized note-books (as many as Traian, the cardinal's brother, was able to rescue, escaping implicit persecutions); these three note-books contained events belonging to the August-November 1961 temporal frame, a period that the cardinal had spent imprisoned and isolated in Caldarusani Monastery. The events compressed by the cardinal in this book start in 1947 (more accurately, beginning with the exact date of his arrest, October the 29-th, 1948) and stop to November 29-th 1961, when the note-books have been successfully saved from the monastery and well-hidden by the person who much later brought them to their editor. These testimonies' publishing might have represented a sort of *a reminder* of our nation's moral conscience, but in fact their echo was quite discreet. That's why the 2 priests in charge with the volume's motivation, Silvestru Augustin Prunduș and Alexandru Nicula (the first being also responsible for the volume's coordination) were most probably right to complain about "the outrageous delay" of the editing process of these testimonies, a "harmful" delay, in these two priests' opinion (p. 19). The damage extends to several levels: firstly, since it has missed the best responsive moment for such confessions, secondly, since the interest climax for such writings has been already consumed, while their publishing has reached a point when everybody was fed up with them, so everyone became no longer concerned with this typology of writings. Finally, the most appropriate moment for these texts to turn themselves into a persuasive piece de resistance regarding the process of the Greek- Catholic Church's resurrection had been already missed, as well; it failed to be taken into account as a direct document on martyring, a document necessary both for the disputes that Church has engaged itself into over the years and mainly for identifying a departure point, a particular root for either a primary inspiration, or for an enlightening theology on sufferance (and not for a simple rhetoric); the damage is even unpardonable if we are to remember the cardinal's own words often naming his memoirs his «will» - and he obviously did not refer to its legal or secular significance. Furthermore, the testimonials' earlier publishing would have better served the process of the cardinal's sanctification, since his memoirs go beyond their martyr/ witness status and they may most likely be accepted as being uttered by a saint. Romanian testimonies do not generally display so much enthusiasm and humility in holiness.

In this particular respect, the cardinal's testimonies do exclusively resemble N. Steinhardt's *The Journal of Happiness (Jurnalul fericirii)*, a famous book, due to its various translations. Moreover, we may talk about a parallelism in the respect of the authors' spiritual essence and their suffering, implying its inner transfiguration. Obviously we are talking about a mere parallel targeting the nature of the two testimonies, because the cardinal's remembrances do not equal the monk's memoirs in their artistic brilliance or their essayistic gift. No need for such a comparison, certainly. But the cardinal succeeded in turning his remembrances into an intense, sincere and permanent prayer. In this respect, his testimonies are quite unique: never before the confession turned into prayer in such a striking and substantial manner ; never before one's memory knew how to pray so intensely and warmly. Never before one's memory prayed so humbly and passionately. Never before one's memory was so holy and one's sufferance so saint.

His Grace Florentin Crihălmeanu, Iuliu Hossu's successor in the Episcopal chair of Cluj-Gherla region, is totally right when he notices that « the entire text seems to be a dialogue with God and also a pious confession delivered in front of His Glory's Throne » (p.14). Not only is the testimony beginning and ending with a prayer, but almost every page of it – respectively, every remembered sequence – is actually glimmering with this fusion among

memory and prayer. And it's not about the so-called favor-prayers – although there are some, not for him, but for his believers, his church and mostly for the entire Romanian nation – but rather about gratitude-prayers; in other words, it is all about the purest prayer, the one that never asks for anything, the one that merely expresses gratitude for whatever he has been given to endure; the one that gladly accepts everything as part of something already arranged for him, even if he does not fully comprehend its purpose. The praying status is the very equivalent for Iuliu Hossu's primary state of mind, whenever his memory is in question. We are facing a real Christification of both sufferance and remembrance; it is indeed a literal Christification implied, a genuine one. The cardinal's testimony starts with a prayer as if his memoirs were to become a mass (his testimony is actually the bishop's last pastoral letter: "Dear brothers and Beloved faithful sons! I speak to you as I do in all my pastoral letters", p.36); its "themes" would later on reverberate throughout his entire memoirs, they would invade and irrigate all the pages and they would often emphasize themselves within the discourse. Nevertheless, the initial prayer is a synthetic one: "Glory Thou Lord, Glory, for now and for ever and ever, for everything You have blessed me with in my life/ .../ Open, Thou Jesus, my lips for me to herald your light in this will for them, for the clock that You alone master/ .../ I wish to show them, in my own poor words, how kind, merciful and forgiving you've been, on this glorious path, Your Cross's path, on which You've generously called me too in Your vicinity/ .../ Praised be Thy name for ever and ever for everything You've offered us on this dearly beloved path of Yours/ .../ Make these lines empowering and enforcing for everyone dear to me" etc. (p. 35). And this is exactly what his testimonial successfully does: to transform all the endured suffering and injustices into Christic substance, into "comfort and reinforcement". The cardinal is never complaining, although he is accurately recording all the injustices he and the other Greek- Catholic bishops, along with the entire Church, have endured, he would simply express his gratitude for the sufferance proof-test which has been given to him and to the other bishops, to the clergy and to the believers. Nevertheless, the list of such injustices is meticulously compiled and the testimonial's documentary function is rigorously preserved. The cardinal's memoirs would draw a minimal history of the Church's forced migration into catacombs, starting with the first aggressions and continuing then with the bishops' arrest and imprisonment and with the believers' persecution. Since the bishops were held together for a while (the Romanian bishopric office had been, in Iuliu Hossu's bitter words, the very Sighet prison, for five years), the cardinal had the opportunity to find out details related to everyone's arrest circumstances (furthermore, he had enough time at his disposal in order to deliver some concise biographies; some of these biographies would rather turn into funeral epithalamium, since some of the inmates were "buried" right there, in his memoirs). Not even the persistent attempts that have been made "to persuade" him to accept collaboration with the regime in exchange for the position of Moldavia's Orthodox metropolitan bishop are reduced to silence by the cardinal who felt personally offended by them, each time answering in the same pattern: "our faith is our life". The Orthodox Church association to the Greek- Catholic Church's abolition act would fill the cardinal's soul with deep sorrow; it is a fact that his heart and conscience simply fail to accept and thus this particular sorrow becomes a recurrent motif throughout his memoirs: "how are we supposed to comprehend that holy hands are able to suffocate a Christian Church, a Church belonging to brothers" (p. 54). This is probably the cardinal's most excruciating pain, because it is beyond comprehension and it does not belong to the

Christic ethos. Otherwise, the arbitrary injustice of this "union" act has been recognized by Petru Groza as well and he was Romania's prime-minister at that time (the cardinal's memoirs would depict him as quite an intriguing jovial cynic character; he displayed a sort of a sympathy towards those who were prosecuted and arrested as a result of his direct orders; actually, as a sympathetic gesture, obviously, he sent the bishops a photo album with pictures of Mao receiving him!, after they had been released from Sighet prison and while they were treated in a hospital in Bucharest), the very person who was just applying the Greek-Catholic Church's abolition act (although with great sadness or quite impotently): "You are not to blame – he says to bishop Hossu on the occasion of the latter's requested meeting with Petru Groza – but you are the victims of the international turbulences" (p.56). In opposition to the other ministers or Orthodox hierarchs, who allusively courted Iuliu Hossu, the prime-minister Groza would openly propose the cardinal to embrace Orthodoxy from the position of Moldavia's metropolitan bishop and his proposal would be accurately revealed in a vivacious scene, vivacious due to the cynic's off-handedness: "then Mr. Prime-minister tells me smiling: *Would you like to be a metropolitan bishop in Iasi?*"; completely shocked, I really did not understand his true meaning and I answered: *Durkovits has the position there, he is a Roman-Catholic; Ah*, Groza answered laughing, *not like this!* Only then did I realize that he was referring to the Orthodox metropolitan bishopric in Iasi, the vacant one; then I told him: *Mr. Prime-minister, our faith is our life*. Hearing this word/ .../ he quietly answered while smiling to me: *If only we were talking about life and nothing else!*" (p. 81) Petru Groza is quite successful in delaying the bishop's arrest, but eventually unable to prevent it, since Iuliu Hossu would be retained while in Bucharest, where he had travelled to present the new version of the Church's regulations to the creeds' minister: "I was apprehended on October the 29-th 1948, at 1,30 in the night, and taken out of my brother's apartment to the Police Headquarters by three agents of the National Security" (p. 116). He would still enjoy propositions to play "a much bigger, greater and historical role", in the minister Stanciu Stoian's words; these propositions would reach him from everywhere: from the government, from the patriarchate, and even from Justinian, the Orthodox Patriarch. But all of them are taken as a cruel offensive to his own faith. The Greek-Catholic bishops were initially imprisoned to various Orthodox monasteries (such as: Dragoslavele, Căldărușani), later on they were taken to Sighet, acting as fragments of a larger group filled with priests. Their reception here reveals everything regarding their later treatment: "We are taking the buffaloes into the stables", these were the first welcome-words heard by the bishop while they were being pulled out of the vans (p. 212). Life in prison is meticulously documented, often quite methodically structured (in chapters: the feeding, the hygiene, "the voluntary" work etc.), but above all, the most recurrent moments would be those relating the sufferance's transfiguration, if not entirely bright, at least enlightening. And, most certainly, bright is strongly attached to all the imprisoned, to all the doomed ones, who are all conjured up on the warmest and the most compassionate tonality throughout the book. In his memoir-writer hypostasis, the cardinal would often try to concentrate the information, the details (he had only three note-books and who knew how much time), he would often try to rigorously relate facts in their chronology, capturing the essence of testimony. (But – once again – his testimonial's essence is the prayer). Thus, he would constantly impose censorship to his own "stream-of-consciousness", although it constantly takes him on a voyage remembering the days and the places of communion with his believers (especially during his country trips in the police van, inferring the fact that he actually travels along the very places where he has

served as a priest; or, later on, during the more permissible years of his imprisonment, when he receives the clandestine visit of one of his believers). But whenever he feels himself facing the danger of detouring and losing himself in too many details throughout his note-books, he would stop and return to a more concise writing, in a total accordance to the facts' reality: "I keep forcing myself not to make a halt on this long road, but to run so I can reach its end safe and sound, but still my soul keeps asking me to sit and talk to you along my journey for a while; that's why I'm going to take a short cut for now; we shall see what the future holds for us, later on" (p. 175). The memoirs' composition is, consequently, severe, precise, concise due to its circumstances: the whole experience had to be tamped in these three note-books. That's why, even if the cardinal "is talking" to his believers, his colloquial speech is rather a fondness sign and not a proof of a digressional style. On the contrary, Iuliu Hossu is accurately describing the story of his Golgotha; nevertheless, his Golgotha is filled with prayer breaks and with prison-breaks into the specific temporal frame of the communion (be it present or past). Once the Greek- Catholic bishops reached Sighet prison, they would suddenly realize that from that moment on the holy sacrament practice was no longer tolerated and this revelation is quite dramatically and symbolically acute: "this was the last sacrament for the following five years, as we were about to see" (p. 213). Still they would always feel deeply connected to God's grace, they would always have the acute impression that God himself was imprisoned with them right there. Thus, it becomes a certainty the mere fact that the bishop is almost enchanting a sufferance hymn resembling a Christic ordeal, a hymn on suffering re-evaluated both as a faith testimony and as a faith trial: "Ah, beloved brothers and sons of Christ, to be incarcerated for your own religious belief, this is the supreme happiness given to us, the unworthy ones" (p.214). "The temptations" would persevere, masking themselves into various messengers, but the answer stays the same: his sufferance increased his motivation, but did not diminish his obstinacy. There is always one request made: "freedom for the Church and its constitutional rehabilitation" (p. 266). Nevertheless, this is the very price that the political regime is not at all interested in paying, that's why the bishops are one by one dying and the rest of the survivors would be eventually released from Sighet prison and taken to some more humane detention establishments (such as: Curtea de Arges monastery, Trivale hermitage, Ciorogîrla, Căldărușani), where they have been pretty frequently visited by Teoctist the dean, the future Orthodox Patriarch. In these more humane imprisonments, the detention conditions may have been slightly improved in comparison to Sighet, but the bishop would soon identify a series of lacks as one of the blessed "happiness" there: "the caress lack! Yes, the absent comfort, one being aware for Who and for what reasons it is burdened; the light that covers all deprivations, all sorrows, that particular light is the one offering comfort, joy and redemption; that light belonging to God/ .../ Yes, my dearly beloved, God was right there" (p. 400). This is the very tonality chosen by the cardinal for Christifying his testimonies, this is the very articulation chosen by him for transforming his sufferance into hymns, as if they were some blissfulnesses rewarded to him.

Martyrology Pages

Tertulian Langa's testimonial, *Stepping beyond the Silence/ Trecînd pragul tăcerii* (Galaxia Gutenberg Publishing House, 2009, second edition) may be also included in a

martyring archive. It is definitely a heritage memoir, along with some others of its kind, starting for instance with N. Steinhardt's *Journal of Happiness/ Jurnalul fericirii*, the best aesthetic achievement and the first chronologically published. Its confession's authenticity, its writing's clearness and thrill, all these qualities recommend father Langa's testimonial as one of the most accomplished Romanian memoirs. Perhaps, it hasn't earned its position due to a pure artistic merit (since, beyond the somehow Latin elegance of its sentences and beyond a certain metaphorical sensibility of the writing, it is rather the testimonial's clearness that has constituted the basic ingredient for such a judgment), but surely its place is a result of its endurance and remembrance process, both expressing authenticity in connection to an injured memory, painfully resuscitated over and over again.

The Foreword accurately reconstructs the testimonial's biography and painfully debates a few poetics and memoirs' ethos issues. The self-confrontation, the hesitations, they all end with the pertinent feeling of being compelled to confess: "I've been forced by my conscience to deliver a confession" (p. 13); this very feeling would invade the entire testimonial and it would be identifiable in a sort of reconstruction's tension, in the anamnesis strain. It is moreover recognizable within the decision to openly and "bluntly" confess, so that it becomes a real "torture", because of its aching sincerity (p. 15). The author is facing all his compunctions and he methodically analyzes each of them, in a self-dialogue. The relation between forgiveness and oblivion, memory and history, truth and confession and so on, they all are either hesitation themes or reflection topics along his decision's path. His testimonial becomes an imperative, while his past a guide: "everything lived inside of me and with me, breathing their lives, but also mine"; "thanks to the registered events, experiences and feelings" my past "would turn out to be my consciousness guidance" (p. 17). The intrusion within the past is so deep, so unsafe, that the temporal frames get mixed up together, while the present of writing often overlaps to the present of suggestiveness; now and then, the remembrance time and that of living become synonyms, this being the case of the episode referring to the ending of some constant torture, extended to a number of days: "here I was still thinking, and I thought I could never use my mind again! How come I was unconsciously still rationalizing? The mere remembrance of You, mysterious Love, was more than enough to make You come inside of me" (p. 151). The spontaneous alternation of tenses, but mostly their merging into the remembrance's present are all signs of an anamnesis temperature so high that it eventually explodes. There is no specific rule (or deliberateness) as far as these passages are concerned; the temporal mergings or the temporal separations preserve the rhythm and the tension of remembrance in its spontaneous parameters; they all circulate without restrictions, depending exclusively on the remembrance's temperature. Nevertheless, this particular spontaneity represents the guarantee for authenticity in the testimonies' case.

Besides, the chronological compunction is almost rigorously applied, although within the contemplative paragraphs, in both the debate's and the reflection's case, which are numerous enough, the present utters the same language as the past; the contemplations display a certain tendency towards timelessness, since they do equally belong to both present and past. The movie of the events is constantly doubled by a self-reflective dimension, since the author keeps examining himself, without mercy, x-raying each of his gestures and demandingly analyzing himself in his determined faith in God hypostasis. He would constantly accuse himself of not living a devoted enough existence, of not completely acting in a Christian pattern. The most insignificant gestures would give him reasons to suspect himself of not being worthy enough, leading him to moments of self-communion and Christ-communion.

For instance, his flying away from Bucharest to Blaj, right before his apprehension, would be initially characterized by self-confidence: "Where did all my previous composedness disappear? How fake may be my trust in God! I did not ask for His mercy, but for my own arrogant mailish ego, under the impression that I can handle anything" (p. 23). This particular lack of self-confidence is actually a result of his enthusiasm, because, otherwise, the author has no doubts whenever God's involvement is in question: "and God did not forsake me" (p. 47) acts as a sort of a leit-motif, be it on a textual, or on a sub-textual narrative level (the stress is rather on the latter one, in our opinion). He is actually experiencing some Christic miracles in his most troubled moments: "I really have no idea what might have happened, I only know I've heard myself crying out loud: Jjesuus! The very next minute there was a terrible silence, so deep that it had no other precedent. A happiness's silence; and not because, since that glorious moment, I did not feel the pain any more; and not because an unuttered peace replaced my horror, but simply because I felt Jesus with me and simply because I felt myself crucified with Him" (p. 53). One of the most touching dimensions of this book (sometimes a firm one, sometimes a fuzzy one) is represented by this particular effort to express the author's gratitude for the offered grace, including or, rather, especially for the sufferance grace. Tertulian Langa would Christically define his life, he would evaluate his life as both divine sign and picture: "This reference to the Holy Heaven was the essential mark to my incarcerated life: I became a political prisoner because this was Holy Providence's destiny for me, nobody made me embrace this destiny, I willingly identified my path and I willingly behaved accordingly" (p. 59). His exigency to consume the complete communion with Christ would be the one in charge of all events and happenings, the very one filling them with significance even when they stroke in their atrocity. Now and then, there is also a confirmation of such a concordance: "And here it is the Holy Providence's work in its sequel... Once again I was taken and incarcerated to Jilava's obscurity" (p. 129). Nevertheless, beyond this absurdity stamping his sentencing, the divine work is hidden, right there, in the brilliant closure of the significance stamped by a tormented existence.

Still the events' atrocity is right there. "The reminiscent" memory would eventually bring them to life in vivid details, apparently motivated by a faultless voluptuous memory. The author is actually reliving his ordeal, he is reviewing the scenes, live; some of them – the majority of them – are striking even the reader with their cruelty, thus surpassing any kind of *horror* fiction. Such an example might be the scene where the prisoner is effectively running up and down his hut in order to escape the cop-dog, Diana, and its ferocious biting (p. 70 sqs.); another appropriate example might be Stratache the guardian and his sadism lessons and demonstrations (p. 370); and there are, of course, many other examples concerning the process of torture or the inhumane labor. The pages reconstructing the horrors would alternate with those of contemplation and of portrayals (portraits of both the fellow-prisoners and torturers), due to his memory's spontaneous effort to protect itself. His memory would calmly breath whenever it starts reconstructing the huts' "conferences", the lectures delivered by all the personalities cramped inside the infernal quods. In such moments, Tertulian Langa proceeds similarly to the antique historians, he is recovering the conferences and the debates on the "trustworthiness" policy. Without questioning his memory's real capacity (given the fact that he knows by heart the holy mass's entire text and also all the poems he has written for himself), we find those discourses merely believable, but not quite authentic.

All the portraits that he has drawn bear the authenticity stamp, as they successfully

recuperate the guardians' brutal language, their lurid slang. Resembling the realist novels, the characters escape their own speech pattern: "Let-let mme see your fa-faces, you bou-bourgeois wre-wrecks... / .../ You, hell-o-hello, yes, you (...) keep your b-back s-straight, or else...!" (p. 96). All the figures populating the author's memory are substantial despite their episodic appearance. Some are simply intriguing due to their psychology and eloquence; a perfect example might be Angheliu, the ex-communist high-official figure, who became Langa's fellow-quod: "I know Suchianu, he wes (was) a petty medler (meddler), (...) but he used Ralea as a background, and Ralea usid (used) to be somebody; but I was not impresid (impressed) by Ralea either. I read him immediately, with his Frenchish (French) big brain. I talked to him for about two hours and I knew what he was made of, as I knew what that narrow-minded sculptor, Gheorghe Anghel, was made of" etc. (p. 270). The psychological insights of the protagonists are displayed with poignancy and refinement, reverberating to each turbulence of the soul, which is caused by brutality; brutality makes it unforeseeable. The humane gestures of some of the guardians are capitalized in a manner resembling the gratitude's thrill among this pretty diverse but still unitary gallery of people, unitary as far as their cruelty vocation is concerned; an appropriate example would be that of "It Is" Commandant, the very one who, when visited in jail by his wife and daughter by the first time, "took the little girl in his arms and crossed it over the fence so I could hold her" (p. 325). Even Stratache, the sadist, shows a moment of humanity when he asks the incarcerated to pray for his sick wife too (p. 420). These "humanizing" gestures would, certainly, be capitalized in the sense of grace's power, since Tertulian Langa's testimonial is also a proof of divine work and plan, not merely about evil's work in history. It is "a document book" doubling its significance.

The publishing-house's idea of emphasizing the "documentary" value of the book by adding and attaching to it the prison poems and the series of reproductions and photos was quite remarkable. These poems deserve a special attention as they reveal all the enlightening moments, all the suffering's levigation and sublimation, with a stress on the atrocious movie, dotted with prayers and self-communions. These are pure "breathings" within hell, some enlightening pain concentrates.

A Jail Breviary

Father Matei Boilă's prison memoires have resulted in a really thin book: *Bars Illuming/ Gratii luminînd* (Galaxia Gutenberg Publishing House, 2004). Its size would not be a big inconvenient, but the volume displays an extremely stern testimony, along with a really ascetic writing, ascetic and uncomplicated, so uncomplicated that it transparently and most accurately reveals everything. It propagates such a sober style that it is neighboring itself to shyness and it practices such a bashful writing that it is neighboring itself to humiliation, it simply displays a constantly en-guard and inhibited style, which paradoxically enough increases its precision. One might say we are dealing with a concise writing; or rather with a mathematic writing. The *Foreword* contains the author's, let's call them: excuses for this kind of stylistic poverty and austerity, blaming both his lack of story-teller gift ("I'm not talented and, mostly, I don't have any story-teller calling", p. 5) and his memory's precariousness ("and my memory does not serve me well whenever facts and people are in question", p. 6)

for his rough confession. These excuses might be true and not merely circumstantial modesties (although talent is not to blame, since such testimonies do not aim as high as literature; and anyway they don't even have to be taken as literature), but they are not definitely supported by the book's texture; on the contrary, the related scenes are substantial and the necessary details are right there; the only trouble is the fact that none of them is used generously and, thus, the text's final impression is that of rigidity.

Nevertheless, Father Boila's book represents an exception among all the other prison memorials, not only due to its confession's austerity and shortness (although these alone should suffice). We are definitely dealing with an exception, an exception by the book. This particular "exceptionality" is rather a direct result of the presented and reminded stuff. This tiny book, this memory's breviary would barely mention sufferings and torments, abandoning them in their innuendo status (and mostly leaving the other authors to underline such disturbing facts) and, instead, he exclusively chooses the very few grace moments, out of the jail nightmares ocean (and the priest has tasted quite a lot of these bad dreams' ingredients). Thus, he would preserve only the very few sequences revealing the miracle's infinite power; some episodes are undeniably attesting the concrete and touchable presence of Jesus right there, in the middle of the communist huts. So, out of the extended ordeal, father Boila has resumed himself in exploiting those few, fully privileged divine moments, and nothing else; he has suspended between brackets the daily sufferance and humiliations. The selected moments for his testimonial are simply the very moments stuck somewhere in the back of his mind, and he openly admits it: "out of this communist hell/ .../ there was nothing left for me but the moments of joy, or, in other words, the moments of light" (p. 6); otherwise, he feels "a little bit guilty" for attaching a positive connotation to sufferance, for exclusively selecting the graceful moments in their progress. But he should not be blamed for this, since his memory has been in charge with the final result: "the light sneaking through the bars" (p. 8). And his testimony concerns that light; the other events belong to people; these are divine acts; and Matei Boila is talking about these, being their witness; he displays, so to say, an Evangelic conduct: he acts as if he were a witness to miraculous deeds inside jail. And since he narrates about miracles, and since he is their *witness*, his stern, sober, simple and pious style proves its efficiency; maybe it was the only possible way to deliver such a narrative. Matei Boila would merely retell events he has witnessed himself; he would not advertize Jesus, he would not advertize miracles, he is not concerned with their rhetoric. But what he is narrating, all of it immediately becomes quite believable, and consequently his tiny book suddenly expands its weight.

Its gained weight is a direct result of the book's proofs of divine epiphany right there, in the center of the communist hell; the book also testimonies for some profound, incorruptible and above all surviving humanity moments. Its gained weight is also a direct result of the book's testimonial on the authenticity and mostly on the communion between man and God under the most inhumane circumstances. And especially for revealing that some facts are simply impossible to be explained and accepted without taking into account the divine intervention. In father Boila's breviary, these particular facts would turn into parables rooted in reality and attesting real manifestations of Christ's work among people. Part of this repentance miracle category is, for instance, the brief story of the lawyer Panaitescu who was suffering from excruciating hunger until "one evening I remembered the words of Jesus: *I am the bread of life; those who come to Me won't be hungry anymore and those who believe in*

Me won't be thirsty any more" (p. 28). Not without hesitations, the lawyer would eventually decide to renounce to half of his ration, which did not suffice him anyway, and to offer it to "someone poorer than myself"; which he eventually does, and "since then 5 months have passed; I was hungry no more, not even for a single day, for one brief moment, for one hour" (p. 29). Belonging to the already mentioned category of the inexplicable repentance miracle, the blessed transfiguration of an ordinary inmate is relevant (Geo Iliescu – who together with his gang and enjoying the support of the jail's wardens – used to terrorize the political inmates); and also, the recovery of the tiny box where the sacrament was hidden (the tiny box is thrown out during some search, by a guardian, but it finds its impossible way back to the inmates hut, all by itself – p. 58-60). Stamped by the same miraculous relevance, the "simple" acts of humanity performed by both prisoners and some guardians are spectacular. Among them, and "the greatest mercy act in my life" (meaning father Boila's life): the toilet's washing out episode (p. 38-41). And especially the communion miracle in Malmaison's jail, where 242 all sorts of inmates were cramped together and not one of them missed the Easter mass officiated by the Greek- Catholic bishop, Iuliu Hirțea. "In that very moment – father Boilă is remembering – something extraordinary happened, something unimaginable in these freedom-free circumstances/ .../ An accomplishment resembling in its glory the very biblical episode of the fish capture ashore the Ghenizaret lake, a fact exclusively explainable by Christ's immense power" (p. 23-24). This Easter episode would stick in their memory for ever, in father Boilă's strong opinion, because "that communion, that warmly invigorating liaison could only be Jesus Christ's work" (p. 25). The entire tiny book signed by father Boilă is actually talking about Christ's miraculous work, in a much more persuasive style than any other religious sermon.

Thus, we are dealing with a concise series of spiritual accomplishments, a mini-series of communion sequences; an enlightenings breviary; in other words, we are dealing with a positive book, since it is displaying so positive moments, almost brimming over with divine presence. On the other hand, there are few books breathing so much and so acute sadness although it exclusively cumulates the enlightening episodes; and this is a direct result of the fact that everything that has been willingly left out of the volume implies sufferance, injustice and humiliation. Hardly has any other book spoken so eloquently about the silenced suffering, entirely focusing itself on grace moments.

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ȘTEFAN BORBELY*Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca****The Literary Pursuit of a Historian of Religions: The Case of Ioan Petru Culianu***

Going into intellectual exile from an Eastern Communist country, the historian of religions Ioan Petru Culianu brought along a whole series of inner obsessions, that of being constantly monitored and controlled by voracious political and hermeneutic “systems” becoming the major structure of his literary fiction, where players act within or against coded plots or “riddles”, built in a more or less metaphysical manner. If you interpret politics in terms of the controller and the controlled, that is as a cat-and-mouse play between an instance that exercises power and an entity who feels caught inside the complex network of control, you get a perfect binary combination, which involves both the controller and the victim. Ioan Petru Culianu’s lifelong obsession was to escape binary relationships by generating alternative realities or hyper-realities by magic, eroticism, ecstasy, shamanism, dreams, Tantra techniques or journeys into the otherworld. The paper examines their occurrences in Culianu’s fictional writings, aiming to demonstrate that the great majority of these texts are versions of an eschatological thinking.

I must confess I did not intend to lend a political interpretation to Ioan Petru Culianu’s prose writings because I did not want to be suspected of attempting to narrow down the topic. One can understand politics in a social or historical way, as a system of state control and victimization, or in a broader sense, in terms of constructing a power network which alienates the individual by limiting his creativity and his access to personal freedom. In this latter sense, politics can be also metaphysical, because it ultimately expresses the complex power relationship between the Creator and his Creation. According to this interpretation, the Creation becomes a very complex program of generated reality, functioning inside the will and control of the Creator. If one interprets politics in terms of the controller and the controlled, that is, as a cat-and-mouse play between an instance that exercises power and an entity that feels caught inside the complex network of control, one gets a perfect binary combination, which involves both the controller and the victim. Ioan Petru Culianu’s lifelong obsession was to escape binary relationships by generating alternative realities or hyper-realities through magic, eroticism, ecstasy, shamanism, dreams, Tantra techniques or journeys into the otherworld. As Ted Anton says in *Eros, Magic and the Murder of Professor Culianu* (1996), Culianu’s almost irrational obsession of being controlled (or “programmed”) and the way to avoid entrapment led to the first big crisis between him and Hillary Wiesner.¹ Culianu imagined anti-programs: not only literary or scientific, but metaphysical ways of escape, within a cat-and-mouse game whose field was cosmos itself, or what was left of it after the structures de-structured themselves.

If one interprets Creation in terms of the binary relationship between the Controller and the controlled, one arrives at a scheme saying that Creation is nothing else but eschatology.

¹ Ted Anton: *Eros, magie și asasinarea profesorului Culianu*. Revised and improved Romanian edition. Translated by Cristina Felea. Preface by Andrei Oișteanu. Bucharest: Nemira, 1997, pp. 191-192

By asserting this, Culianu is closer to the Hebrew understanding of the creation rather than to the anthropological perspective adopted by Mircea Eliade. In Eliade's structural understanding, cosmos appears as a binary relationship between the sacred and the profane. By living within the profane, the individual is exposed to the so-called "terror of history" and heals himself by finding his way to the sacred. In such an understanding, life itself is nothing but epiphany, as the profane is a way of revealing the hidden structure of the sacred. Accordingly, man is guided by the sacred, as the hidden generator of his existential choreography, of which he is not always aware.

That is why - the most striking example is *La țigănci* - Eliade's fictional protagonists are somewhat somnolent, acting out on a sort of inexplicable lack of common understanding and lucidity. On the contrary, Culianu's fictional heroes are all active, driven by the will to vividly live the hermeneutical complex they are involved in, and to understand its mechanism. They exercise hermeneutics as personal liberty; that is, they generate symbols, paradoxes and hyper-realities in order to survive, in a life-and-death game whose deepest understanding is acting against the logic of Creation itself, which is eschatology. While in Eliade's fictional works, characters search death as a solution to the profane "terror" exercised by history, in Culianu's prose the protagonists act against death within history, since Creation implies the very logic of their personal extinction. They are trapped in existence, as it happens in the Bible, where life extends in between the Genesis and the Apocalypse. If our approach is correct, the Book itself is nothing else but eschatology, because when the Lord generates the first forms of being and traces their future destiny, his goal is to entrap being in an endless game of generational transformations, whose outcome is extinction, or even death. As such, Culianu's prose writings are eschatological transformations: an art of generating alternative realities in order to avoid the imminent logic of extinction, since the life-and-death game is, in itself, nothing but a new binary combination, assimilated to an entrapment.

Let us take a short walk into the realm of twentieth-century literature, in order to grasp the profile of creation and of the hero who inhabits it. The word we are interested in is *anti*: to act against the determinatives of the system the hero lives in, to behave differently, as an errant figure or as a trickster. In George Orwell's well-known *1984*, state control is everywhere: it is made possible by a vast and elaborated system of TV-sets, through which Big Brother generates a simplified ideology and watches everybody, as a secret and almost godly embodiment of power. If you want to escape the inhuman control network, you must be atypical: you have to act errantly towards the system, within a narrow range of limited possibilities, which do not allow full individual liberty, but only *hypotheses* of plausible existence, which define the individual as a calculated entity of programmed escapism.

In Salinger's famous *Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield feels trapped in a society of common logic and conformity, whose aim is to subdue the young individual and to transform him - in Herbert Marcuse's words - into a "one-dimensional man." For instance, Holden recalls a structuring technique they were accustomed to while having their classes of literature: each boy was asked to tell a story, and when the colleagues felt that he went into too many details, they shouted "digression" in order to punish him. While growing up, Caulfield progressively understood that if he wanted to escape the coercions of the system, he must act as a "digression": he must generate life acts and gestures which do not belong to the very core of the socially accepted behavioural code, but are completely different, original, or unexpected. He understood that if he wanted to be a little bit free, marginalization was not enough, since he must act paradoxically, by making conscious alterations of the system.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Sigmund Freud had proved to be one of the major prophets of the new era, by saying that history could be conceived as the malady of myth, as a form of metaphysical alienation, which implied both structure and its continuous or projective alteration. According to this understanding, human life and liberty prove to be a very subtle way of *controlled illness*: while you are ill, the paradoxical liberty you gain by this frees you from the restrictions of the system and from the very strict network of accepted and limitative social and existential codes. In Thomas Mann's *Magical Mountain*, malady and eroticism go together and provide Hans Castorp - a very limited engineer-to-be at the beginning of the novel - with an unexpected access to liberty, despite the fact that liberty means, in this case, death. In William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, the protagonist has a deadly chip implanted under his skin, through which he is both controlled and doomed to death, since the chip's program is conceived in such a way that the only outcome of his existence will be biological disorder and finally death. Since the hero cannot get rid of the chip and cannot make it stop (by which his life resembles eschatology), the only chance he has is to *alter* its electronic program by continuously generating false realities and electronic tracks in order to trick the original program and stay alive.

Let us go beyond particular fictional cases, and investigate how the system works on a larger scale. As I have mentioned before, Creation itself as a "program" is nothing but eschatological development in the cultures where the chance to escape time and go back into the realm of the timeless "paradise" does not function, or is irrelevant. God sets the initial structures, fixes the men's place in a cosmological system of going towards death, and leaves them as such, while time is nothing else but a continuous flow towards extinction. The only chance to smoothen the pessimism of the process is to act *against the Creation*, which means to act *against God himself*: to conceive life as a counter-creation. In Paul Valéry's *Eupalinos, or the Architect*, Socrates experiences this adventure in the afterworlds, while being dead in Hades, when he says to a disciple that if he was put in the situation of starting life again, he would not suppress "phenomena" in order to get to the ideas by thinking, but he would build an "anti-Socrates," including in his new existence many plays of the senses he had previously thoroughly eliminated in order to become what we know Socrates is according to Plato. In a famous novel of the same paradoxical modernism, in Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, Adrian Leverkühn, the composer (who is, by the way, Nietzsche in the author's hidden understanding) writes a composition *against* Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, suggesting that the only valuable artistic creation is anti-creation, oriented against the existing order, just like the new creator can be only the Devil, the great lord of the liberty that is gained by destroying existing structures and orders.

Let us examine now the Romanian roots of Ioan Petru Culianu's prose writing, more specifically, its two dimensions. Culianu left Romania in 1992 and never returned. Previously, he wrote and published some sketches and short stories, gathered later in a rather slim volume entitled *Arta fugii* (*The Art of the Fugue*²). The significance of this title is twofold in the Romanian original: it means, of course, the musical form of repetitive counterpoint, used by Bach and others, and it also suggests a wish to escape, to run away, since "a fugi" means "to run" in Romanian. We should examine the two aforementioned dimensions of Culianu's cultural attitude back then. The first one concerns the evolution and typology of the Romanian prose writing at the time Culianu started to publish. Is there disruption, or continuity? Does

² *Arta fugii. Povestiri. Cu cinci desene ale autorului*. Preface by Dan C. Mihăilescu. Iași: Polirom, 2002

his later fictional work go back to an original domestic trauma, or is it entirely different in shape and consistence? The second dimension concerns Culianu's fictional intentions as related to Mircea Eliade's fictional writing: what is - we may ask - the role and place of fiction in the economy of a scholarly-centred historian of religions? Are there similarities between Eliade's and Culianu's fictional writings, or are they totally dissimilar, governed by completely different intentional structures?

In the years when Culianu was a student and started to publish in several Romanian literary magazines, the pressure of history and of official ideology drove many Romanian writers into a sort of aesthetic defensive, in which the split between ideology and art was converted in a twofold representation of fictional characters and space. A good critic, Nicolae Oprea, labelled it as the literature of the "imaginary provinces" (*literature provinciilor imaginare*). Several writers (Mircea Ghițulescu: *Omul de nisip*; Eugen Uricariu: *Vladia*; Ștefan Bănuțescu: *Cartea Milionarului*, etc.) conceived a sort of remote and marginal fictional geography, in which not only history ceased to function, but also all ideological or political pressures. The protagonists of these almost utopian spaces were strange and hieratical figures, interested in the secret sciences, in the art of esoteric learning and in religions far beyond common human understanding.

The topic had even its black utopia (A. E. Baconsky: *Biserica Neagră: The Black Church*), where beggars and underclass people govern a society turned upside down, in which power and control are distributed through the dark corridors of filthy chivalry and delinquency. In Matei Călinescu's *Zacharias Lichter (Viața și opiniile lui Zacharias Lichter)*, the fictional geography of the "imaginary provinces" gets its grotesque prophet, whose tools are social cynicism, black humour, manipulated ecstasy, calculated marginality and laughter. By doing this, within a literary trend which gained much support in Romania at that time and even later, the writers wanted to suggest that mankind evolves on two separate generative flows: one belonging to history - and, therefore, permeated by political ideology or by state control manifested through alienation; and the other pertaining to a different mechanism of time and social evolution, whose essence is quality, residual (but improved) mankind, and liberty. Moreover, several symbolic aspects of the Romanian cultural life confirmed the utopia of purification through self-assumed marginality: an outstanding intellectual of the period, Constantin Noica (a friend of Mircea Eliade and of Emil Cioran) secluded himself in the high-altitude mountain village of Păltiniș (Sibiu County), starting an informal school of philosophy, based chiefly on the resurrection of ontology and on Heidegger's works. Many leading intellectuals of today's Romania belonged to that circle.

By being interested in chiefly strange, hieratical fictional characters, Culianu continued, in his *Art of Fugue*, the tradition of charting alternative intellectual geographies. His protagonists are strange mystics, Tantric sages, who believe in the transmigration of the souls and in the active force of generating simultaneous existences, in order to avoid entrapment and social or political control. In the small piece entitled *Fugue I – The Numbers (Fuga I – numerele)*, from the same volume, the protagonist wants "to build an Art of running out of the world, an art of escaping to an empire of pure sounds and triangles, outside time, beyond the mountains." Apart from what Eliade or some authors interested in fantasies have attempted, Culianu experiences his escapism as a technique of getting to a point where being becomes a generative mechanism of endless logical possibilities. The negative target is identity (*principium individuationis*), as defined by Nietzsche (in *The Birth of Tragedy*) and later by Freud, in his psychoanalysis: that is, the "fault" to select, from the virtually infinite

possibilities of your being, a specific and limitative one, which makes you prone to control and, as such, vulnerable. The technique was also described by Goncearov (in *Oblomov*), by Valéry (in *Monsieur Teste*) and especially by Robert Musil in his unfinished *The Man Without Qualities* (*Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*). The intention of this paper does not allow us to go deeper into this topic.

The ontological force of multiplicity has always interested Culianu, explaining both his fictional writings and his interest in magic and the Gnosis. Aside from regression into the sacred, heralded by writers like Mircea Eliade, Culianu imagined a mechanism of an infinite projection of simultaneous alternative realities, all of them explaining being as virtual multiplicity. In his seminal *Game of Dice* (*Jocul cu zaruri*), a part of the already mentioned volume *The Art of the Fugue*, the protagonist starts a life technique which makes him superior, by promoting an essential “indifference” to the outcome of the game. Derived obviously from the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the technique of getting to a point where multiplicity really works as a metaphysical insertion into cosmos presupposes freeing himself from two ultimate binary complexes: the future (which means freeing himself from the obligation to live as a “project”), and identity, that is, the burden to conceive himself within the dichotomy of Being and Non-Being. As Krishna puts it in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, people are pre-determined by the will to oppose life to death; when you get rid of the dichotomy Ego/Anti-Ego, as the protagonist of the *Game of Dice* says, you realize that your life is a source of endless, multi-dimensional self-projections. Moreover, you can generate alternative forms of reality by - Culianu will realize later - magic, ecstasy, eroticism, dreams, journeys into the outer worlds or even: literature.

In a book published in 2003, dedicated to the “Gnostic complex” of Mircea Eliade’s fictional works,³ I demonstrated that hermeneutical regression (similar to the reversion from the profane to the sacred) does not explain, by itself, many of Eliade’s fantastic writings, since historical projections, made through cultural and symbolical permutations, are at least as important in his books as the will to step out from the uncertain profane in order to gain the certainties of the sacred. It is so, I said, because of the Gnostic complex involved in Eliade’s writings: unlike many philosophical schools based on regression, the Gnostics worked both regressively and historically, conceiving history as a tool of transmitting and generating both random and essential cultural values. Accordingly, culture becomes both play and hermeneutics, Eliade saying that there is no use to “decipher” each “hidden” meaning and symbol inserted in his texts, since there are symbols which really count, and others that do not, similar to the famous “tree of Gnosis,” which has both “essential” branches and branches which grow randomly, in vain. Surprisingly enough, in the volume *Interrupted Dialogues*, which presents the collection of surviving letters that were exchanged between Mircea Eliade and Ioan Petru Culianu,⁴ I was happy to come across the same idea, in a letter Eliade sent on January 17, 1978: “It is true,” he said, “my prose writing proves to be more and more cryptic. The only possible hermeneutics would be to ignore the meaning (or the ‘symbol’), and to consider each story a ‘parallel universe,’ having its specific structures, morphology and language.”

³ Ștefan Borbély: *Proza fantastică a lui Mircea Eliade. Complexul gnostic*. Cluj-Napoca: Biblioteca Apostrof, 2003

⁴ Ioan Petru Culianu: *Dialoguri întrerupte. Corespondență Mircea Eliade – Ioan Petru Culianu*. Edited and notes by Tereza Culianu-Petrescu and Dan Petrescu. Preface by Matei Călinescu. Iași: Polirom, 2004, p. 125.

I liked very much Grazia Marchianò's term for such a literary and mental construction: "mathemagics,"⁵ a combination of mathematics and magic, involving "mind games" and an endless generation of cultural and cosmic values, based on the epistemology of the "fourth dimension," as derived from Uspenski (*The Fourth Dimension*, 1909) and Rudy Rucker (*Mind Tools. The Five Levels of Mathematical Reality*, 1987). It is not my intention to get into further details concerning these books, but I want to reveal a dimension which goes deep into the heart of Culianu's life, conceived as transformative art: the role of the trickster. I certainly believe that in conceiving his role as a Western scholar and as a professor of the history of religions in Chicago, Culianu perceived himself as an atypical and errant intruder: a tricky spot in the system, a very vivid figure coming from the Counterculture of the Sixties, prone to act within the academia not only as a professor who taught religion as an objective scientific subject, but as a man who taught students to existentially penetrate religion, to be part of it, becoming, as such, parts of a metaphysical projection whose secret was not only to interpret phenomena, but also to generate endless combinations of ontological values within them. A metaphysical victim of the metaphysical system, born as part of an existing network, whose essence is – as I have said – eschatology, Culianu wanted to emerge as a victor. In a period of sceptical post-Romanticism, his effort was purely romantic: to come out as a "demiurge" within an oppressive system, by using the reactivation of some of his residual values and techniques: magic, alchemy, Gnosis. These are, like all the symbols he used in his writings, allies from the past, not ingredients of the future, and my understanding is that if he had lived beyond 1991, he would have fully used the possibilities provided by the Internet in order to achieve his goals related to an errant *ars combinatoria*.

The programmed logic of extinction governs both major literary works written by Culianu: the novels *Hesperus* and *The Emerald Game* (*Jocul de smarald*). Both are eschatological texts. *Hesperus* sets up a post-apocalyptic plot: in order to improve mankind, several scientists conceive a universal program of human rehabilitation, whose aim is to fix people into limpid structures by eradicating all "shadowy" values of life, like uncertainty, anxiety, sufferance and even love or aggressiveness. Property is eliminated, demography is thoroughly controlled, and memory represents nothing else but plausible history programs run by computers. The key value of the new civilization is "Effortless liberty," with processes governed by hardship and pain being eliminated.

In a true and very subtle Marxian way (I mean *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844, which define "reification" and "alienation," and not *The Capital*), Culianu demonstrates that the starting impulse of the new civilization lies in the conversion between work (as control) and leisure (as liberty): as necessity diminishes, larger and larger amounts of population pour into the realm of leisure, which activates suppressed dimensions of their being, driving them to act "ingeniously" and "chaotically." Some scientists believe that they can use this unexpected "happiness" by establishing elitist "reservations," containing the core of future human improvement. In a purely countercultural perspective, the "reservations" are the sound alternatives of "states," which generate only misery, delinquency, terrorism and killing. In the year 2382, an intergalactic ship, *Hesperus 1*, is launched towards Venus (the planet), in order to gain space for the purified, new civilization. Two years later, a nuclear catastrophe occurs in Greenland, apparently killing all the people who remained on earth, but several of them still survive, leading to a confrontation between

⁵ Ioan Petru Culianu: *Omul și opera*. Volume coordinated by Sorin Antohi. Translated by Corin Popescu, Claudia Dumitriu, Ioana Ieronim, Cristina Ionică, Tereza Culianu-Petrescu. Iași: Polirom, 2003, p. 336

Hesperus, as the realm of “perfect human minds,” and *Hyperboreea*, where residual human values still exist, such as the primitive sense of community, fear or anxiety, and even understanding and love. It is also important to mention that the new reality is, on both sides, liberated from any form of belief in idols or religion: God is absent from the new system, which does not function as a “cosmos” (or as an organized, harmonious structure), but as a mere chaotic reality, which nevertheless has its logic: the antagonism between perfection and incompleteness.

Acting as a God substitute, or as one of the “Gods of revenge,” the “brain” of the *Hesperus* expedition, Dennis Horton, threatens mankind with the so-called “Art of Transformation,” which consists in the power to generate “paradoxical phenomena, illusions,” which penetrate “the latent possibilities of the human psyche” and destroy all certainties humans are accustomed to, like “space, time, the causes of nature, the physical and chemical composition of the universe, the structure of the atom, etc.” On the other hand, Horton controls the dreams and the desires of the humans, generating hyper-realities and “life tricks,” which make humans feel powerless, reactionless.

Culianu shows that in spite of the tremendous generative power, which turns the conflict between *Hesperus* and *Hyperboreea* into a clash of “mind games,” *Hesperus* has a weak spot in its very hyper-intellectualization: by reaching the intensity of perfection and by becoming “paradise,” it cannot evolve, being doomed to fixity and sterility. As such, the only way of surviving for *Hesperus* becomes *antagonism* itself, violence as a weak paradox of perfection. There is also another meaning that drives Culianu closer to the Counterculture of the Sixties and to the forthcoming postmodernism: the novel asserts that only *imperfect systems* can last, survive and evolve. It’s a “soft” understanding of culture and history here, which marks a sharp post-structural approach. Structuralism was Culianu’s main intellectual enemy: compulsory in the realms of his specific scientific community (Eliade himself was a “structuralist” by promoting the binary antithesis of the sacred and the profane), it was overcome by Culianu in his understanding of life as a caption of ecstasy, magic, shamanism and transformative love.

To come back to *Hesperus*, if the “perfect civilization” cannot evolve, the less perfect one - of the humans - can. The clash between the two types of systems, as found in the novel, is similar to the solutions provided by Zamyatin (in *We*) or by Orwell (in *1984*): “impure” memory (encapsulated in history) and “impure” gestures (meaning especially love and eroticism) can regenerate the system. They are, for the time being, old fashioned, belonging to an old code of existence, similar to magic or ecstasy (or shamanism) in the era of triumphant rationalism. Nevertheless, in the novel, Dennis Horton’s powerful “Art of Transformation” has a leak, since he detects on Earth the secret presence of a so-called “Mutant” (or trickster...), who cannot be controlled by the “Art of Transformation” because he generates “counter-arts” or counter-programs. In the end, the humans who fight Horton start searching for the “Mutant” themselves: nobody knows him, but everybody realizes that if they want to avoid the powerful control network set up by Horton, they must step out of the already accepted “codes” of civilization, and to act errantly, as tricksters used to do.

Starting from Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose*, the novel *The Emerald Game*, written together with Hillary Suzanne Wiesner,⁶ is similar to a Mediaeval *ludibrium*, which is an enigma turned into a game. In mediaeval times and even later – for instance in 1616, when

⁶ *Jocul de smarald*. A novel. Translated from English by Agop Bezerian. Iași: Polirom, 2005

Johann Valentin Andreae claimed to find *The Chymical Wedding of Charles Rosenkreutz* – *ludibrium* was believed to be a “divine comedy”: a game played with humans by God himself, who offers them the world as a riddle and invites them to uncover its secrets. Accepting it like that, *ludibrium* becomes a game of life and death, which turns *The Emerald Game* into an eschatology: a young “trickster,” Thomas Anglicus (a trickster, because he has no professional or intellectual identity, being investigated as a potential wrongdoer by the Italian authorities) comes to Florence to visit a friend, Pietro degli Ecati, and finds himself in the middle of a very elaborated and sophisticated serial killing, executed according to the logic of planetary conjunctions. The killer uses the old Chaldean system of planets and moving stars, in which The Moon is followed by Mercury, then by Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, in an order which reproduces the ancient will of God. Since Creation provides life, the assassinations are, as one of the protagonists says, a metaphysical “counter-show” (or counter-spectacle) aimed at destruction. The perplexity is eventually deepened when the enigma hunters (Doctor D’Altavilla, Thomas and Vittoria Pitti, the first victim’s fiancée) discover that many threads lead to Botticelli’s *La Primavera*, a painting related, in one way or another, to each victim. The complex plot of the novel is based on the logic of the anti-Creation, whose fundament is love as an eschatological attitude. Since Florence is governed by Savonarola (considered by many to be the Antichrist), civilization is saved by love, whose embodiment is Marsilio Ficino’s Academy, protected, as a cosmic seal reproducing planetary conjunctions, by Botticelli’s *La Primavera*, and having Mercury (or Hermes) as its key figure. Aiming to destroy the Academy, the killer activates several defenders of the existing order, whose mission is to preserve and protect. In order to achieve this, they must enter the logic of the “anti-Creation” and act errantly within it, by generating alternative life values (or hyper-realities) that de-structure the system by simply going beyond its rules

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Sphinx Riddles for Zamolxes. Ethno-Politics, Archaic Mythologies and Progressive Rock in Nicolae Ceausescu's Romania

The study investigates the intricate mingling of the Romanian echoes of the Western Counterculture, on the one hand, and the nationalist-Communist ideological elaborations of the Ceaușescu regime, on the other. The perspective is that of the young alternative musicians of the 1970s and the early 1980s, who, confronted with the necessity of constantly adapting to an uncertain and hostile political environment, where simultaneously oscillating between pre-Communist forms of exalting an archetypal national soul and the Western countercultural blend of futuristic and regressive utopias. The manner in which this nexus of tensions could be packaged into a relatively consistent expressive lingo is analyzed through the evolution of the lyrics of the progressive rock act Sfinx/Sphinx.

After experimenting with mixing folk & pop with classical musical forms (e.g. the 1972 *Șir de cocori*/ Line of cranes contains the rhythm and blues transposition of one of the modernist Romanian-French composer George Enescu's seven Lieder on the love verses of the 16th century French protestant poet Clément Marot) with its first LP *Lume albă*/ White World (1975) the Romanian act *Sfinx* (its name meaning, quite intuitively, sphinx) decidedly opted for progressive rock. Even if *White World* was not exactly a conceptual album, its general structure being rather eclectic, it conveyed a sizable intention of reaching a higher degree of elaborateness, in point of both form and "visionary" content. But the album is also highly instructive in the ways of accommodating the countercultural sensitivity with the official ideology of the Communist regime. Once an act aspired to exit the niche of quasi-informal student festivals and acquire a truly public status through the state controlled media channels, the level of political monitoring was upgraded accordingly. Which implied for the young musicians the introduction to the game of a multilevel ideological negotiation.

In the case of *Lume albă*, the marks of this interaction are immediately perceivable in the very fact that the musical pieces carrying the message of the album display the image of a very abstract Progress, devoid of historical-political or personalizing features. The more neutral the notion, the lesser the risks of disturbing the ideological orthodoxy. But, at the same time, the higher the possibilities of articulating diverse and even opposing figurative semantic connotations. At least two of the main pieces recorded on the album, *Secolul vitezei*/ The Century of Speed and *Magelan*/ Magellan are instantiations of this communicative policy.

*Secolul vitezei / The Century of Speed*¹ (Music and lyrics: Dan Andrei Aldea)

Viața aleargă mai iute Cu fiecare ceas, Anii devin minute, Timpul e-n greu impas Și în lume e-o	Life keeps on speeding up With each and every hour, Years are turned to minutes, Time is in dire straits, The whole world's in
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¹ For better or worse, the translation of the lyrics belongs to the present author.

continuă goană Fără popas. Omule, nu mai privi înapoi peste umăr, Gîndul să-ți fie-mpreună cu fapta mereu. Mergi înainte, chiar de ți-e greu, Este drumul tău.	perpetual hurry Without a brake. You, man, stop looking back over your shoulder, o, do stop, Make sure you always bring thought in accord with your deed. Keep on advancing, even when hard, This is your true way.
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Magelan / Magellan (Music and lyrics: Dan Bădulescu)

Da, rămîneți toți cu bine, Meleaguri noi ne-așteaptă. Soarele-a vestit că vine Clipa plecării iată!, iată! Primejdii multe te vor încolți, Arșița cruntă te va face scrum, În bezna adîncă te vei rătăci, Cît mai e vreme, copile, te-ntoarce din drum! Mîine visul meu se va împlini, Drumul îl voi găsi, Orice-ar fi! Da, da, da, mîine Alții vor veni-n urma mea, Mai departe vom colinda, Adevărul îl vom afla. Da, rămîneți toți cu bine, Planete noi ne-așteaptă. Spre o nouă galaxie Plecăm îndată, iată!, iată!	Yes, yes, farewell to you all, folks, New realms wait for us. Th' Sun has just announced the moment Of our departure, lo!, lo!, lo!, lo! Countless dangers will threaten you, The dreadful heat will turn you to ashes, In profound darkness you will lose your way, While there's still time, my child, pray do come back! Tomorrow my dream will come true, I will find the way, No matter what! Yes, yes, tomorrow Others will follow me, We will wander further and further, We will find the Truth. Yes, farewell now to you all, friends, New planets wait for us. Towards a brand new galaxy We're about to take off, lo!, lo!
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Severed from their musical background, the above lyrics seem quite elementary. But it has to be said that these two pieces, composed by Aldea, respectively by the bass-guitar prodigy Dan Bădulescu, are considered landmarks in the Romanian rock music. Another member of the band, Cornel "Muzicuță" (Harmonica) Ionescu, who was also one of the most active rock journalists of the time, later on glorified Aldea's technical performances in *Secolul vitezei* as having anticipated, and even as having remained unsurpassed by such guitar giants such as *Queen*'s Brian May. A judgment which almost certainly emerged from an overflow of

nostalgic enthusiasm, but that still indicates the excellence of Aldea's both musical ideas and interpretative dexterity (C. Ionescu interviewed in D. Ionescu, 2005, p. 151). At the same time, Bădulescu's *Magellan* is also a sophisticated composition, one of the first in Romania that introduced the cosmic sonorities of a moog synthesizer. It also shows an influence of the dodecaphonic music – difficult to say whether received through a direct contact with the “high” musical culture (a group of experimental Romanian composers were teaching at the Bucharest Conservatory since the 1960s) or mediated by the influence of some of the most sophisticated British progressive rock bands (it has been suggested that the composition might have been influenced by *Emerson, Lake and Palmer* – Plămădeală, 2002). The song is intentionally broken in its very middle: the first two stanzas are associated with an insurgent self-confidence, while the third one, rendering the voice of doubt and fear before the unknown, brings a note of psychedelic strangeness. The last stanza, that moves the reference from the historical maritime explorations of Magellan to the modern conquest of the cosmic space, comes back to the initial purely “progressive” tune. But the abrupt cadence and the use of the counterpoint induce a nuance of irony to this otherwise decided and self-confident march chanting the scientific enlightenment. Actually *Magellan* is one of the few pieces from *Lume albă* that directly anticipates the experiments of the group in the coming double LP *Zalmoxe*. Therefore it is somehow strange that Dan Bădulescu was no more a part of the *Sfinx* lineup at the time of their full-fledged progressive rock phase. But his musical thinking has fundamentally marked the evolution of the act. It has to be added that Bădulescu seems to have nurtured intellectual and spiritual interests that associate him with the mystic branch of the Romanian counterculture (Oişteanu, 2006; Dobrescu 2011). It suffices to say that, after 1989, he returned from his Swedish exile to become an Orthodox priest (Ionescu, 2005, p. 151).

But besides all that might be said to the credit of the 1975 musical aesthetics of *Sfinx*, the messages of the two songs are expressive of a calculated ambiguity dramatically departed from the candor characteristic of the initial phases of the rock movement. The acclamation of the universal benefits of Progress in both *The Century of Speed* and *Magellan* was meant to send signals in many directions at the same time. It hinted at the old guard of the Communist party, who could identify here a remembrance of the proletarian Titanianism of the 1950s. At the same time, it seemed to vibrate with the more liberal circles of the Party bureaucrats, who were entertaining an interest in frontier disciplines of the 1970s as for instance the American “futurology” (besides having facilitated a number of book translations, these circles also made possible the visit of Alvin Toffler to Romania). But the “progressive” touch of the *Sfinx* sound was also expressive of the sensitivity of the Union of the Communist Youth, headed by Nicu, Nicolae Ceauşescu's younger son. This “new wave” Party bureaucrats were directly in charge with approving rock concerts and tours (they had for instance approved *Sfinx*'s participation, in the same 1975, to the Youth International Festival of Engaged Music, held in the German Democratic Republic - Caraman Fotea & Nicolau, 1979, p. 277), and it is more than plausible that they vibrated with the idea of covertly identifying with the spirit of “The Century of Speed”, or with the implication that they, the young *apparatchiki*, were called to carry on in the next century a modernization process symbolized by the intrepid explorations of Magellan. At the same time, the Aldea and Bădulescu lyrics sent signals on the other side of the political border, to the rock fans community, who might have felt itself secretly honored as a privileged receiver of the *Sfinx* message of allegedly daring progressivism. Last but not

least, the lyrics were ambiguous enough to accommodate even what was left of the countercultural spirit, by pretending to send to the children of the 1960s liberalization the vaguely subversive message that, in spite of the momentary closure, they should not lose hope, but stick together and persevere in following their Flower Power ideals.

The most spectacular *Sfinx* ideological hybridization was to be gradually crystallized in the *Zalmoxe* project. According to Aldea, the lyrics and the music were written in 1976, and in the following years parts of it were staged within the ordinary concert tours of the *Sfinx* group, but the censorship systematically refused permission to the recording of a double album. The official reason offered for the repeated cuts on the structure of the concept album was that it manifested “mystical” tendencies (Aldea & Stratone, 2002). In the end, the censors have agreed with the recording of a normal LP, so that the whole *Sfinx* body of work had finally to be reduced by a half. The album was released in early 1979.

Zalmoxe is a very strange mélange of themes and value systems, sometimes intended as such, sometimes probably exceeding the control of its initiators. The album should be a goldmine for all cultural studies scholars that follow in the steps of Stuart Hall’s theory of negotiation and articulation. We could start to understand its structural paradox by saying that it fused the futuristic visions of the British progressive rock and the obsession with the roots and origins of the ethnic identity of, on the one hand, a line of philosophical thinking inherent to Romanian modernism (Ornea 1980, 1995), and, on the other hand, the official discourse of the Ceaușescu nativist and indigenist ideology (Tismăneanu 2003, Malița 2007, Dobrescu 2007).

The concept album follows the imaginary and ideal stages of the biography of the alleged founder of the religion of the ancient Dacians, a Thracian tribe that, in the local official narrative, are considered the older registered ancestors of the modern Romanians. The Dacians were mainly a Romantic discovery (Merlo, 2011), partially a logical consequence of the emulation of the French national identity discourse, which derived the French sense of political freedom from the character of the ancient Gauls, partly a contamination with the German cultural trend that fused the exploration of ultimate ethnic origins with the very idea of personal introspection, of self-revelation. Later on, the interbellum Legionnaire movement managed to accommodate their aggressive call to an anti-Semitic Christian Orthodox fundamentalism with the cult of the Dacian “spirituality” (Ioanid, 2004). In the interbellum epoch the theme was also resonantly approached by the ethno-phenomenologist Lucian Blaga, a philosopher who had no connection to the xenophobic right-wing movement (Blaga, 1921). The 1960s nationalist turn in the Communist politics gradually projected the Dacians to the forefront of the regime’s legitimation discourse (Boia, 2001, pp.102-106).

It is impossible to assert that, as far as the creators of the *Zalmoxe* album are concerned, the theme choice implied a cold political evaluation. It is a fact, for instance, that Aldea has sung already as a teen-ager in a band candidly called “Dacicus” (Aldea & Stratone, 2002). But it is equally unlikely that the sudden resurrection of his interest in local archaic mythologies could have been completely unrelated to the surrounding political atmospherics. By choosing to elaborate on a Dacian theme, he consciously placed himself on the ideological orbit of the epoch.² But by placing the Dacians in a utopian-surrealist perspective, he tried to stay

² It should be noted that Cornel “Harmonica” Ionescu, the *Sfinx* member who was already evoked above as a musical journalist, collaborated at first with the nationalist-populist *Flacăra*/The Flame magazine, and then with the most aggressive nationalist publication of the epoch, *Săptămîna*/The Week, whose policy was to alternate virulent attacks on liberal and Westernizing intellectuals with attempts of seducing the young public with the

connected to the mental universe of the Western avant-garde rock music.

For the observers of the musical scene, *Zalmoxe* was the effort made by *Sfinx* to level the record with the rival *Phoenix*, whose legacy, even if erased from the public sphere after the escape of its members to Western Europe, was more alive than ever in the hearts of the rock fans. But according to Dan Andrei Aldea, he and his *Sfinx* collaborators had a totally different artistic reference in mind:

[...] the whole *Zalmoxe* album is to some extent our answer (a timid and imperfect one, marked by our paucity of means) to Jon Anderson's album *Olias of Sunhillow*. To this day, *Olias* has been for me the best album ever released on this planet (Aldea & Stratone, 2002).

What the two albums, *Olias* and *Zalmoxe*, hold obviously in common (besides the ethereal, cosmic, otherworldly moog-synthesizer sonorities) is that they both chant and cherish a providential political and spiritual leader. Jon Anderson's character Olias is the unifier of the tribes of an unnamed planet threatened by an imminent and complete disaster. His moral fiber and charismatic beaming help his race to overcome its despair and to build the glider that will carry them both to a safer place and to a state of pantheistic ecstasy (Snider, 2008, p. 232). *Zalmoxe* (or "Zamolxe", the variation of the name in ancient sources having fueled unending battles among the Romanian scholars) might have been a historical character turned by his countrymen into a god after his physical death. The most notorious mentions of his existence are to be found in Herodotus' *Histories* (Book IV, 93-96), and in Plato's *Charmides* (156 D -157 B).

The *Zalmoxe* album was born at the intersection of Aldea's fascination with the *Olias* futuristic mystique and of the fascination with the *Zalmoxe* myth re-sparked by the interest a part of the Romanian intelligentsia took in Mircea Eliade's speculations on the crucial importance of the alleged Thracian/Dacian god as a European forerunner of monotheism (an evolution analyzed in Antohi, 2000: xx). Initially chastised by the Communist regime for his involvement with the Fascist Legionnaire movement, the exile Romanian scholar of creeds and religious ideas affiliated with the University of Chicago was gradually recuperated as a central figure of the national Romanian pantheon. Even if Eliade's book dealing directly with the figure of the founder of the Thracian religion, *De Zalmoxis à Gengis-Khan*, published in France in 1970, was permitted the Romanian translation and publication only ten years later (Eliade, 1980), it should have circulated in Romania previously to this date, since it is quoted in the bibliographies of several books that appeared during the 1970s.

The creator of the *Zalmoxe* lyrics, Adrian Hoajă, an author without other noted poetical contributions and a rather discreet editor and contributor of the popular science monthly *Magazin istoric*/The Historical Magazine, was most certainly representative for the segment of the public touched by this wave of Eliade enthusiasm. His treatment of the *Zalmoxe* theme is not without resonance with the fundamentalist agenda of the so-called "Protocronism". This ideological group hailed, in defiance of the interbellum theory of the necessary synchronization with the West (Lovinescu, 1924-1925/1997), the alleged anticipation within

coverage of the rock and pop domestic stage (C. Ionescu, quoted in D. Ionescu, 2005, p. 38-9). In order to give a closer idea of the substance of the *Săptămîna* magazine, we should add that one of its main editors and contributors, Corneliu Vadim Tudor, became, after 1989, the director of the publication *România Mare* (Greater Romania) and eventually the president of the homonymous party, a political organization which epitomizes chauvinism and primitive populism on the Romanian political stage.

the Romanian and proto-Romanian cultural space of some of the most important breakthroughs in European history – i.e. monotheism, or... the discovery of writing (Tomiță, 2007). This mystique of the ethnic *Urgrund* is obvious in Hoajă's case in the very choice of his pen name: on the cover of the *Zalmoxe* album he appears as "Alexandru Basarab", an obvious allusion to the 14th century Basarab the Founder, the first recorded *voievod* of Wallachia.³

It should be noted that the implicit reference to Eliade's exploration of the Dacian religion had also a cosmopolitan side. As an internationally acclaimed scholar and as a widely learned comparatist of religions, Eliade also talked to the aspirations of the Romanian intelligentsia towards both universality and cultural globalism. According to the Wikipedia article on the *Zalmoxe* album, which most probably is due to the *Zalmoxe* lyricist himself, the research for the project implied besides the scrutiny of the ancient Greek and Roman sources on "this mysterious character", also the exploration of "other texts, on different topics, of the Ancient Orient (from Egypt, Babylon, India)". The numerous blanks in the symbolic life story of the Thracian enlightener have been filled with corresponding elements taken from the sacred texts of other Indo-European cultures. The resulting portrait brings *Zalmoxe* in line with major mythological themes. Thus, his origin is the one of a "bear-god" (see *Ursitoarele*/ The Fortune Tellers, *Blana de urs*/ The Bear Fur, *Mierea* - the honey, an aliment preferentially enjoyed by bears, becomes a divine nourishment that the god takes to his cave – see *Mierea*/ Honey, *Peștera*/ The Cave), and his doings turn him into a civilizing hero: he educates his people and leads it to victory against its foes (The Bear Fur), than he disappears at the peak of his glory, retiring for three years in a cave on the sacred mountain of Kogaion ("The Cave"). He returns at the head of the Dacian nation (*Epiphania*/ Epiphany) for a last victory (*Furtuna cu trup de balaour* / Dragon Shaped Storm), and finally he comes to live only in the ever more blurred memories of the mortals (*Călătorul prin nouri*/ The Cloud Traveler, *Epilog*/ Epilogue).

Although, it might have been the intention of the lyricist to balance arch-nativism with a suggestion of esoteric cosmopolitanism. But, anyway, a too narrow focus on the lyrics would not do justice to the sophistication of the album, to the effort of harmonizing the archaic percussion with the futuristic sound of the synthesizer, or to its embroidery of recurring musical motives (Plămădeală, 2002). And, beyond the commercial leanings of Mihai Cernea (who composed two of the pieces), and the technical fascination with the electronics of the keys performer Nicolae Enache (who composed one piece), it is obvious that the leading musical conception of Dan Andrei Aldea (who composed the rest of the pieces) was driven by his infatuation not with the Dacian mythology, but with the British prog-rock, and primarily with Jon Anderson and his *Olias of the Sunhallow*. But in order to approximate the *Zalmoxe* ideology, or, better-said, ideological nebula, we will have to abide by our limited means and shortly analyze some of the texts. Not necessarily those that accompany the most accomplished musical segments, but those which are more relevant for understanding the symbolic discourse and policy underlying the project.

Mierea/ The Honey (Music: Mihai Cernea, lyrics: Alexandru Basarab)

³ This being a telling example of the chaotic eclecticism hidden behind the boisterous representations of ethno-cultural continuity, since "Basarab" is an Asian (Cuman) name, which could not be plausibly associated with the ancient Dacians.

<p>Lîngă noi, lîngă mine stă Şi cîntecul vremii se-aprinde-ntr-un roi. Lîngă noi, lîngă mine stă, Ca mii de albine pretutindenî pătrunde, În orice ungher, Oglindă de cer, Mai blînd ca lumina, mai dur ca securea de fier. Stă lîngă noi, stă lîngă voi</p> <p>Şi cînta...</p> <p>Lîngă voi, lîngă mine stă Şi viaţa în faguri de miere descîntă. Lîngă voi, lîngă tine stă, Tăria durerii, dulceaţa mieriî,</p> <p>Gîndind să pătrundă Prin fapta rotundă, Mai stîns ca tăcerea, mai greu ca un munte Stă lîngă noi Stă lîngă voi Şi cînta...</p>	<p>Next to us, next to me he sits And the song of time flames up in a swarm. Next to us, next to me he sits, Like thousands of bees he reaches allover, In every corner, Mirroring the sky, Gentler than light, harder than an iron ax. He sits next to us, he sits next to you, And was singing...</p> <p>Next to you, next to me he sits And charms life out of the honeycombs. Next to you, to you all he sits, The burden of pain, the sweetness of honey, Meaning to reach out Through his thorough deed, Fainter than silence, heavier than a mountain, He sits next to us, He sits next to you, And was singing...</p>
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The text is built, on the one side, on the pronominal ambiguity, between us/me, you/me, plural you/singular you, playing on the physical approach-distance (the verses are partly sung in a canon, very much in the Gregorian style of *Yes*, each voice uttering a different pronoun). On the other side, on a verbal tenses ambiguity ("He *sits* next to us / An *was singing*...), which projects the approach-distance play on the temporal line. The sense of this shifting perspectives is to show that the charismatic leader is a paradoxical personality that both unites the people by giving them a communal object of worship, and creates the sense of a personal bond between him and each member of the organic community (represented by the beehive). At the same time, he moves in time, he is both presence and memory, which indicates that, essentially, he is an entity placed outside of and above historical contingency (it was a favored idea of Eliade, largely repeated in the milieu of his Romanian admirers, that the myth has a time of its own, opposed to the historical one). But we will certainly remember that these lyrics, quite similar to Jon Anderson's celestial worship of his imaginary Olias, were not performed in the liberal UK, but in Nicolae Ceauşescu's Romania. A contextual detail that certainly modulates the *Zalmoxe* theme of the providential leader in a quite specific way. It was said actually that Aldea's compositions have been several times saved from interdiction by highly-placed intermediaries who convinced Nicolae Ceauşescu that he himself was the secret object of the rock bard's arcane praise songs (Ionescu, 2005, pp. 41-2).

The ceremonial celebration of the supreme leader is equally obvious in the song *Furtuna*

cu trup de balaour/ The Dragon-Shaped Storm, where Zalmoxe, freshly returned after three years of initiatic isolation, leads his people in a battle against cataclysmic natural forces. The refrain of the song expresses the ecstasy of solidarity against Evil enhanced by a sense of the immediate presence of a quintessentially good and protective solar divinity. And, at the same time, it sounds like a sublimation of the “Comrade Ceaușescu’s fearless struggle for the world peace” propaganda theme.

Furtuna cu trup de balaour/ The Dragon-Shaped Storm (Music: Nicolae Enache, lyrics: Alexandru Basarab)

Lăsați bolta senină fără venin Lăsați ochiul lumii fără suspin Lăsați Soare S-adune popoare Să umple hotare!	Let the pure sky untouched by your venom, Let the eye of the world untouched by suffering, Let the Sun Bring together the peoples, And fill the lands with them!
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Of course, the verses are absolutely ambiguous and could even support the intention of reading a subversive intent into them: by underlining the complexity and spiritual fullness of an authentic spiritual leader (who unites in his being, as we have seen above, the conflicting attributes of tenderness and unflinchingly severe fairness), they might be supposed to point to the huge gap between this ideal vision and Romania’s Communist dictator. But the fact is that the ambiguity is so consistent that it seems utterly impossible to have evolved spontaneously, without a careful calculation. Does this suggest a political program? Most probably this high level of symbolic cunning, this obvious acquaintance with the sycophantic multilevel meaning strategies of the ripe phase of the Ceaușescu regime rather points to a blatant political indifference (as far as “political” is understood as having to do with some kind of personal creed).

The *Sfinx* alternation of “creative” ideological compliance and forms of unexpected insubordination is distinct also on the *Zalmoxe* album, one of the most obvious examples being *Călătorul prin nouri/ The Cloud Traveler*. A piece that, under the excuse of alluding to the Dacian’s shamanism, offered probably the only instance of a musical representation of a hallucinogenic experience in the whole Ceaușescu epoch. The first stanza of the text is enough to substantiate the former assertions:

Spre orice colț al lumii poate să zboare, Din vârful de munte cu ochi de cicoare, Din peștera oarbă cu ochiul de ceară, Din șarpe de apă cu duhul de sare, Călătorul prin nouri...	He can fly to any corner of the world From the chicory-eyed mountain crest, From the bee wax-eyed blind cave, From the water snake with a salt soul, The clouds traveler...
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The ecstatic mood is then continued in the purely incantatory piece *Kogaion* (the alleged sacred mountain of the Dacians), where Aldea clearly borrows elements from the “high” experimental music. Then, the final thematization of the ambiguity between the divine and the human nature of the central character (which had aroused the attention of the Communist censors who suspected an allusion to Jesus Christ – Aldea & Stratone, 2002), allows Aldea to

reveal himself as a guitar prodigy.

But it is a fact that, no matter how we evaluate the musical dimension of the *Zalmoxe* album, we have to insert it in a continuum that, at one end, is marked by Mircea Eliade-inspired personal explorations of both “countercultural” and “establishment” artists and intellectuals into an alleged Daco-Romanian mythology, while at its other end is marked by the agenda of the propaganda officials who were experiencing the preparation fever of a grandiose event meant to mobilize all the nation’s creative resources. The phrase that ritually designated this surrealistic 1980 jubilee was “2050 years since the foundation by Burebista of the Dacian unitary and centralized state” (Petre, 2010).

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Recordings of all the musical pieces to which the present paper refers can be found at the official site of the *Romania 3 Net* national radio program - www.radio3net.ro.

MIRCEA A. DIACONU*Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava****The Critical Spirit in "România Literară" in 1989***

This study analyses the identity of literary criticism in 1989 Romania, in the last year of communist dictatorship, by scrutinising literary chronicles published by Nicolae Manolescu and Eugen Simion in "România Literară" (Literary Romania). Through open confrontation with the political system and its ideology, the two critical voices with their authority constitute a bastion of defence for the aesthetic. Being in the first line, the critical feuilleton ensures the dignity of literary criticism and of Romanian intellectual life, at a time when the pages of "România Literară" were filled with articles that were not devoid of political substratum, and the critics were demanded to serve communist ideology.

The objective of this intervention pertains to the identity of the literary criticism as it arises from the way it was established and practised, in "România Literară", by Eugen Simion and Nicolae Manolescu. Of course we can make use of the principle of metonymy to suggest the idea that the part is eloquent for the whole. But it often happens for the details to make the whole. Looking back through the prism of a single moment, with all the risks that such a method entails, means, however, seeing the outlines.

Thus, what happened with "România Literară" in 1989? A quick glance shows that important personalities published here, in the literary history and criticism section, from Z. Ornea, Romul Munteanu, L. Ulici, Valeriu Cristea, Mircea Iorgulescu, Mircea Anghelescu, Al. Piru, D. Micu, Gabriel Dimisianu, Alex. Ștefănescu, Mircea Martin to the young Ștefan Borbely, Ioan Holban, Cristian Moraru, Vasile Popovici, Monica Spiridon or, indeed, to the very young Ramona Fotiade și Corina Ciocîrlie. Beneath this listing, in any case incomplete, and which should end with the realization of a common spirit, it could be implied that nostalgia lies. We would ask ourselves, as did Maiorescu, "Where are those times and where are those people?". This is the longing for a paradisiac time, when Nicolae Manolescu wrote about Grigore Vieru, when Eugen Simion wrote about Mircea Mihăieș. Ultimately, the following situation might appear rather carnivalesque-infernal: when Alex Ștefănescu defended Adrian Păunescu, accused by Zaharia Sîngeorzan in "Convorbiri Literare" that he was the "detractor" of Mihai Eminescu.

But time is by no account paradisiac. Time has been, to put it clearly, infernal. Because there existed no issue of "România Literară" free from photographs of the presidential couple or of one of the members of the couple. Photographs of the writers were, of course, missing. On page 1, were texts signed under the name of "R.L", whose titles were as follows: "With the people for the people", "Actuality and creation", "The Agricultural Revolution", "Work Visits", "The Vital Centre of the Nation", "Love of the Country" etc. Being either those who were well-established or youths in their debut, the writers themselves often signed such ideological texts, fulfilling a command which, if it came from the outside or from the inside, is less important now.

In issue no. 17, Nicolae Manolescu wrote about Gala Galaction, Eugen Simion about Ion Mircea, but the issue stood under the main title "Under flames of May". In issue no. 24 one could read "The message of the comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu, general secretary of the

Romanian Communist Party, president of the Socialist Republic of Romania, with the occasion of the Honorary Symposium «Mihai Eminescu». The last statement of “the message” read as follows: “By honouring the memory of Mihai Eminescu, we are doing all that we can to ensure the flawless implementation of the programme of the socialist party, for the continuous flourishing of Romanian art and literature, for enhancing its educational force, to create and to give the people new and valuable works of art which should cater to the progress and fulfilment of the country, to the rise of the socialist identity, to the development of the elevated traits of the new man, the mature, conscious creator of the fairest and most humane societies, of the golden dream of mankind – communism”. Also here, a “Telegram addressed to comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu, general secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, president of the Socialist Republic of Romania, from “The participants of Honorary Symposium dedicated to the Centenarian of Mihai Eminescu” signed by “The participants of the Honorary Symposium dedicated to the Centenarian of Mihai Eminescu”. No later, in issue no. 26, written on entire pages we find “Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu’s speech at the Central Committee’s of the Romanian Communist Party’s plenary”. Also, in issue no. 27, pages 3-9 feature “The Theses for the 9th congress of the Romanian Communist Party”. The literary criticism is represented in this issue by only four texts. Among them, one on Edgar Papu, signed by Nicolae Manolescu, another, on Bogdan Ghiu, written by Eugen Simion. Issue no. 43 features for the greater part (pages 1-6) “Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu’s statement regarding the issues of socialism, of ideological, political-educative activity, the development of the revolutionary conscience, of the creation of a new man, conscious builder of socialism and communism in Romania”. Nicolae Manolescu writes about Mircea Nedelciu, Eugen Simion, about Romulus Bucur, Daniel Pișcu, Marcel Tolcea. How can it not be subversive that within these pages massacred by ideology and politics, Nicolae Manolescu and Eugen Simion continue writing about books, often written by youths, completely torn from the oppressive, suffocating context? They seem to be an island of normality in a burlesque carnival. Finally, issue no. 46, from 16th November, is completely occupied by texts under the head title “Welcoming the Congress” entitled “The Pathos of Political Engagement”, “The Arguments of Devotion”, “History Is Calling Its People”, “The Ever-Living Stream”, “The Humanism of the Values of Socialist Cultures”, “A Revolutionary Concept of Art and Culture”, “The Congress of the Great Socialist Victories”, “The Involvement of Drama in Establishing the Principles of Socialist Humanism” etc. In any case, the ideological text is broken only by two critical interventions: those signed by Nicolae Manolescu and Eugen Simion. The first one writes about Dumitru Popovici; the latter on Titus Popovici, indicating that the pressure is in a way taking its toll on them as well. Even from these choices there the contraction is obvious. Issue no. 47 contains, from pages 1 through 13, “The Report of Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu regarding the current state of Romanian Society, at the Activity of the Central Committee between the XIIIth and XIVth Congresses, for the Achievement of the Directive-Programme for Socio-Economic Development in the IX Quinquennium and in Perspective until the years 2000-2010, with the Purpose of the Relentless Fulfilment of the Programme for the Creation of the Multilaterally-Developed Society and for the Evolution of Romania Towards Communism as presented by comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu”. There are no review texts this time. Thirteen, a sombre number, should have given some peoples’ vigilances food for thought. It is possible that Nicolae Ceaușescu was no longer superstitious. To have one’s portrait in issue no. 13, next to the title “The President and the Country” and to fully exclude literary criticism so as to introduce 13 pages of ideology should have said

something to Nicolae Ceaușescu. Or to those around him. In the end, as Nietzsche said, hazard, like God, does not play dice. And if Ceaușescu fell, it probably happened first of all because of 13 pages of ideology in “România Literară”.

What was happening with the critical spirit in these troubled times?! The critical feuilleton offered the chance of solidarity, its goal being, above all, the protection and promotion of values. And, despite some moments of constraint, Nicolae Manolescu and Eugen Simion offer the feeling of freedom. Without a doubt, despite not surfacing, many of their published texts will have had their own stories. Today, the tension which a well-versed reader would then come across when a text was published is not evident in some. And I wonder if when writing that “in every journal there are, in effect, two characters: one which talks and one which is hiding” about Micrea Mihăieș’s debut novel, Eugen Simion did not think that the critical feuilleton could function as a veritable journal. As a side-note, in a commentary from 1989 (from issue no. 31) about an essay-book by Nicolae Manolescu, he confesses: “these writings give the impression of a journal in which fiction calls upon the biographic (the existential, the anecdotic)”. Manolescu himself writes somewhere in the book in question, that he would have wanted to write an autobiography, but one about the experiences of reading... Ultimately, what is the weekly feuilleton in “România Literară”?! Besides university criticism, which in any case is toned down, Eugen Simion and Nicolae Manolescu prefer the feuilleton, where their point of view has a civic quality, even without them wanting it or without premeditation on their part.

Regarding the involvement in critique, the year begins with a surprising, bewildering article, signed by Ion Cristoiu. Entitled “1944-1947: The Moral Authority of Critique”, the article treats the subject of the state of literary criticism within the period mentioned in the title. It is the period of transition towards the age of socialist-realism – in such a way that it creates the impression that the statements which discuss this time have as a real referent the present time. Such is the transparency of the equivalences that it is surprising the article received favourable review and was not censored. Was it a matter of blindness? Or of complicity? Was it an act of courage? Hard to say. Thus: Ion Cristoiu cites from a balance of the year 1945 from the newspaper “Ardealul”, which spoke of “the fierce confusion between the aesthetical and the political”, of “all the so-called proletarian sighs” which are present in the poetry of the times, of a lyricism which is faulty by “using the same leitmotifs usually encountered at political meetings”. Of course, the citation is made from a newspaper from 1945. I do not believe that Ion Cristoiu mystifies things. But, written in 1946, the article makes visionary references to what was happening in the 1980s. It is not important that another type of poetry existed in parallel. Additionally, it is worth remembering Ion Cristoiu’s conclusion: “Nothing intimidates the feuilleton critique more. It firmly applies the aesthetic criterion to any literary work, dissociating between value and non-value.” If it is not intended as a diversion, Ion Cristoiu’s words seem to be of a mad courage. In effect, feuilleton critique was forced to disappear in 1947, to live out its agony and finally to abandon the battle for the dissociation between value and non-value. Ion Cristoiu’s statement is rather truer for what a few critics, first and foremost Eugen Simion and Nicolae Manolescu, were doing at “România Literară” even in 1989.

Let us return to Nicolae Manolescu and Eugen Simion, not only to analyse their critical discourse, but to see to what extent time takes its toll on these discourses. I would much rather look for their true professions, be they oblique, doubled by the background battles from which

something may emerge from time to time. What would I take from that? While discussing a critique book by Perpessicius, Nicolae Manolescu is interested in the way in which, by talking about others, Perpessicius talks about himself. That is why the text is entitled "Perpessicius, Memorialist" (issue no. 11). It concerns indirect memoirs, as Manolescu and Simion are forced to write themselves. When writing about Al. George, Manolescu confesses: "I usually avoid focusing my weekly commentary on works which I find have no merit or on authors who, at least to me, seem critically unverifiable." We may suspect that, within the context of literary life of the time, the statement is not so innocent. And finally, that writing about Ion Pecie, whom he dismisses for his lack of consistency in analysis and judgement, Manolescu considers that "today's Romanian novelist, fed up with creating 'simulations of reality' in his fiction, began to self-analyse himself, becoming his own character." An assertion which amounts to more than a denouncement. Because auto-referential prose is put on account of the impossibility of the author to refer to reality; in the absence of reality, he was forced to be content with "simulations of reality". The idea resurfaces, in one way or another, in the works of Eugen Simion, who often pleads, in his reviews of books of prose, for prose writers to turn from the text towards being, from theory towards the concrete. One day he confesses that "prose will move its focus from text to man". Is such a statement prophetic?! Because how could the writer turn his attention towards man without a radical change of context?! Today, it is hard to tell if such an idea had, back then, such a meaning and if it would have been understood by anyone as such? It is unlikely, since Eugen Simion had talked quite some time before about *The Return of the Author...* As far as Eugen Simion is concerned, some statements regarding the state of the feuilleton are worth remembering.

Firstly, it is worth noting the critical text about Mircea Mihăieș's debut novel "Keeping Watch in the Mirror", which received critical acclaim. Eugen Simion remarks that Mihăieș „writes criticism of welcoming” and continues: "This fact must be emphasised because many young talents abandon this, I admit, difficult endeavour which is not quick enough in bringing the success which the young spirit needs". I would not think that the feuilleton, which, it seems, was in trouble even then, but for completely different reasons than today, did not bring notoriety, if not recognition. A few articles regarding aesthetics published in a prestigious magazine could place one in an area of maximum visibility and interest. I rather incline to think the risks which the feuilleton entails would have made some youths (which ones...?) quit. The difficulty of the endeavour was caused by the context. Eugen Simion thus finds the opportunity to talk about the one of the illustrious agents of the feuilleton, Pompiliu Constantinescu, known for his firm verdict, for his radical position in supporting, implicit thorough analysis, of the autonomy of the aesthetic. Eugen Simion says: "he who still thinks that feuilletonesque literature is a frivolous endeavour and is, even through its nature, estranged from the superior spirit, should read Pompiliu Constantinescu's articles to convince himself that a man of talent and ideas can express himself in this manner as well". And after noting possible studies of the scale of Pompiliu Constantinescu, for example one about I. L. Caragiale, Eugen Simion continues: "I continue to like the very fragmentary, feuilletonistic, literary critic Pompiliu Constantinescu [...]. Within this reviewer with an immense love for literature and respect for the effort of creation a great critic lives and manifests itself". All these statements are, without doubt, programmatic.

Are there any other battles apart from these auto-referential ones?! Actually, it is these kinds of battles we are interested in, even though the feuilletonist's self-image is connected to his manner of engaging in the present. There are battles of which only shadows can be noticed

within the pages of “România Literară”. Or rather, only the soot. Take, for example, Nicolae Manolescu. In issue no. 8, he writes an article entitled “The Legacy of Magda Isanos”. The article itself is not of interest here, rather the Post Scriptum, which is a reply to Viorel Dinescu who, in “The Week”, considers that all the favourable statements made by Manolescu about Grigore Vieru in a previous issue must be read as the exact opposite, as reproaches. Upon reading it, we too thought the same, although if it was true, it is unknown whose feelings Manolescu was trying to spare. Some time before, while writing about Ioan Alexandru, he does not hesitate in saying his hymns “expose a rather primitive and simplistic poetic art, made up of rhetoric solemnities” etc. Maybe he had taken into account the national problem involved in the case of the Basarabian poet. What is certain is that Viorel Dinescu, who was not, after all, well-known, denounces this possible double-game in “The Week”. As a side note, it must be said that in order to have a clear understanding of the critical spirit (and not because it was manifested in “The Week”), Eugen Barbu’s magazine should also be read and consulted: only through comparison can we comprehend the scale of the critics’ engagement from “Romania Literara”. Mentioning the intention process which Viorel Dinescu aims at him, Nicolae Manolescu writes in this P.S.: “He (Viorel Dinescu, n.n) can slander me, but he cannot touch me, as we are situated in different intellectual plains. I’ve written (these lines of the P.S., n.n) (by overcoming the feeling which in Romanian we call disgust) only because I did not wish for even the smallest ambiguity in the superlative appreciation I gave Vieru’s poetry for it to keep existing. If it were about Grigore Vieru’s foolery, I would rather have bitten my tongue than utter a word”. Indeed, it is difficult to explain why Nicolae Manolescu engages in dialogue with Viorel Dinescu. Was it on account of the consequences which might have stemmed from such a “slander”? Today, Nicolae Manolescu could walk by Viorel Dinescu without noticing him. Such a Post Scriptum – a speciality of Nicolae Manolescu, willing to get involved in backstage games as an actor – can be found in an issue of “România Literară” from 1988 (no. 23). After a text about the re-editing of *The Woman in Front of the Mirror*, the novel of Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, Nicolae Manolescu notes that: “I’ve read with great surprise in the «Literary Life» section of our magazine that I’ve participated in a meeting with the readers from a company from Bucharest. I do not even recollect having been invited. I scarcely believe it is about someone else with the same name. And for someone to have impersonated me is even harder to believe. It is worth knowing, however, that, to my regret, I have not taken part in any meeting in the last months”. Irony prevails within. But, beyond irony, Nicolae Manolescu plays the part of being displeased about not being invited, of regretting it... These are things which speak of the possibilities of escaping from ideological imperatives. There is another P.S., concerning M. N. Rusu, also in “The Week”, in issue no. 21. Something else is interesting here. It is a text about Mircea Ciobanu’s poetry. Within this context, it reads: “Such a structure for a poem is not common in our lyric, maybe even because Modernism is preferred over the fragment, the momentary illumination, the thundering of the image. The exceptions to this are few: Sorin Mărculescu, Liviu Ioan Stoiciu (whose book, *Voices from the Labyrinth*, I talked about not long ago, omitting at that time – and for this I say *mea culpa* – to discuss a fourth book, *The Heart of Rays*, written by the poet, which was not, as the title of my review suggested, only his third book!) and a few more”. Obviously, what is in brackets is of interest here. This specification rather proves that Nicolae Manolescu could not have made any references to that volume. I believe that is the reason for his insistence on reminding, beginning with the title,

that LIS was at his third book.

We do not find Eugen Simion engaged in such battles. But, just as Manolescu, he somehow seems involved in what I call future battles. By this I mean we can perceive in some of the attitudes from 1989, something from their future state. This shows that breaking means continuity. Regarding this I would refer to the review called "The Anti-chamber of the Work of Art", in which Eugen Simion discusses the volume of documents about Rebreanu, signed by Stancu Ilin: "Stancu Ilin brings less significant documents, says Eugen Simion. I wonder, for example, if there was any point in reproducing the letter from 19th March 1932 of Elvira Pârvan Apăteanu, the sister of the philosopher historian, where we find abominable and absurd statements about E. Lovinescu («this Moscalo-Bulgarian Gargantua»). Not all insignificant rubbish must be brought to light". I would say *history continues*, were it not for the very title of a review from issue no. 40, signed by Nicolae Manolescu. In an obituary-review about Paul Georgescu Nicolae Manolescu talks about the ingratitude of some of those helped by Paul Georgescu at the beginning of the '60s: "Who lived through the age in question – of the beginning of the '60s – knows to what extent these «worthless things» about everyday life became essential in the future writer's biography". The words about Paul Georgescu are not conventional, and Manolescu pleads for honesty and calculated judgement. Before being a positive person, "the mentor, we are told, used to be one of the dogmatic spirits of an age in which they had not been born as writers. And they publicly reproached him that". Maioreescu continues (it would be good to know who those ingrates were) by saying Paul Grigorescu's articles from *Critical Endeavours (1957-1958)* "are not some of the most «narrow-minded» of the time". This is the conclusion: "The critic supported valuable literature, as little as it was, against subproductions, of proletcultist worthless works".

Before concluding, I would invoke a detail. In issue no. 33 from 1988 (by exception, I have made reference to two or three issues from this year), Nicolae Manolescu writes about *The Hymns of Maramureș*, the book by Ioan Alexandru, not with kind words, as we have already seen. But notice the following detail: the poet's lexicon, peasant-ish and biblical, and the structure of the phrase, borrowed from religious writers, should bring about an archaic, old feel. Manolescu goes on: "for the same reasons, to create the feeling of being old, he prefers *â* to *î*, everywhere, even where they have never been (doborâtă, urâtă)". Nicolae Manolescu could not suspect what battles would be fought on this issue a few years later.

Finally, two issues stand out. One regards the solidarity which was aimed at protecting the dignity of literary criticism: Nicolae Manolescu and Eugen Simion illustrate in "România Literară" the spirit of true literary criticism, used exactly by the refusal of being used. The other one concerns the ironic game of history. Looking back blissfully, one discovers an end which bears within it roots (why not the wanderings?) of the beginning. In any case, in hard times, the feuilleton seemed to be in the first line of battle with the omnipresent, yet hard to see or harder to identify, enemies.

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LIVIU MALIȚA

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Appealing to the case of Romania, captured at the inaugural moment of the Great Union in 1918, when the foundations for a modern national state were laid, the study focuses on the role of the memory in the establishment of the “imagined communities” (Benedict Anderson) which are the nations. The hypothesis is that the national identity is the outcome of a multitude of distinctive characteristics and of their persistence in time. These are some of the features “recounted”, namely the founding narrations / myths that we ourselves tell to each other and/or the ones that others tell about us. Inoculated educationally and interiorized polemically, such collective myths are responsible for both the identity fluctuations and for the way in which, temporally, the political stands in a multi-ethnic state are being renegotiated.

In a Europe torn between nostalgia and anguish, Romania gave, at the end of First World War I, the impression of a distinctive land of hope. The end of the hostilities coincided to the country with the accomplishment of an old ideal and of a grand political project: the union of Transylvania with the Kingdom of Romania¹. The context and the means by which the Great Union took place determined the perception of the event by the Romanians as more of a miracle than of the success of the coherent conduct and political effort.

The pervasive exhilaration stimulated the expression of a (new) political, national and community project, that the historical moment and the logic of the European revolution recommended it as necessary. Practically, the fresh Romanian state set up two major connective objectives: on one hand, the state reform and the democratization of the society, and on the other, the national consolidation (economical, cultural and moral).

The last aspect, considered a priority by the new power, would have expanded itself on two directions.

On a microstructural level, a re-balancing of the historical provinces separated from the Austro-Hungarian and from the Tsarist Empires was necessary. Their incorporation accentuated the internal social and cultural diversification. While Transylvania and Bukovina were beneficiating from a civilisation close the Central European one, Bessarabia presented many of the traits of an outdated peasant system. On the other side, the Romanian Kingdom had kept some of the unstructured influences of the Orient.²

In the interior of the newly encompassed province (Transylvania) the explicit stake was the recover on the historical handicap of Romanians, the coming out of the marginal condition and the bearing of the condition of protagonist on the new political scene (what has been called as “the restoration of the Romanian element”). It was considered that the action was morally entitled (the sense of justice itself was imposing it) and politically justified.

¹ At a time a principality, integrated in the Habsburg monarchy, but maintaining its own borders and its institutional and legislative autonomy, Transylvania belonged, in 1867, to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Along with the formation of the dualism, Transylvania was encompassed to Hungary, having its autonomy suppressed.

² The contrast between archaism and modernity would remain an exotic constant of interwar Romania, identified by both the foreign observers and by the Romanian analysts.

If on the national component of its ambitious project, the Romanian state expected inherent difficulties, it seemed that the reforms meant to accomplish the democratisation could have been assumed by the entire community. The community project had a greater amplitude and could have generated the citizenship resonance necessary for its coming into being as it offered more points of convergence (other than ethnical) and allowed mutual strategies for progression.

However, the plans had not unfolded as expected. The nationalist ideology, increasingly active in the years that would follow, did not leave enough manoeuvre space to civic action, installing a logic of exclusion.

Doubtless, the Union of 1918 represented, for the Romanian citizens, a turning point. It contained, as a tight ball of thread, the marks of the past, but also the promises and uncertainties of the future.

The political triumph was indisputable. The Greater Romania, as the outcome of World War I, was a new and multi-shaped reality. It had entered the war, in 1916, measuring 130 000 square kilometres and numbering a population of 8 million; at the exit, it counted an extra 170 000 square kilometres and 10 million inhabitants³. But it also had one new problem: **the minorities**. Out of the 18 million, over 5 represented the minority. The issue was of primal importance⁴.

The ratification of the Union of 1918 by the Great Powers, through the Peace Treaty of Trianon, that imposed a new existential border to a vast population, brought with itself, in Romania, a sudden change in paradigm. It established as the starting point of a radical mutation, consisting, among others, in a drastic shift of positions between ethnical minority and majority.

The **Hungarians** represented the most significant statistical, ethnical and socio-political minority of Transylvania⁵, an exponential minority with a significant symbolic fund. They were followed by the **Germans** (approximately 545 000 in Transylvania, standing for about 9,8% of the population of the province and 4,3% out of the total population of Romania). Immigrated from everywhere, from Spain, Poland, Galicia, Germany, the **Jews** were, according to the census of 1930, in a number of 178 421 in Transylvania (about 3,2%) and 1.050 000 on the entire territory. (Romania ranked third in Europe in terms of the number of Jews). To those were added **Gypsies, Serbs** (in greatest number – 43 500 as recorded by the 1930 census – out of the diverse nationalities that, along Slovaks, Ruthenians and a few Bulgarians, formed the Slavic element) and **Turks**.

³ The dates vary.

⁴ In Europe, after World War I, the minorities reached impressive proportions: about 40 millions, 12,4% out of the entire population. For Romania, in particular, the problem of the minority and the anxiety the new national assembly had aroused unleashed the dispute over the multiethnic state and the federalism. Minority intellectuals were trying to accredit the idea that Greater Romania was a “mixt” composite state. On the contrary, Romanian authors intensified efforts and multiplied arguments to rebut this thesis. The “national unity state” / “polyglot state” conflict, that would culminate in the debates regarding the voting of the Constitution in 1923, did not represent, obviously, a simple scholar controversy. It corresponded to some distinct interests and covered diverse political visions, even contradictory. Thus, to the principle of ethnic centralism, promoted by the Romanians, the minorities balanced against with the one of the increased autonomy. In this context, the correlation of the minority policy with the principle of securing the borders became a national imperative, it also being needed to reconcile the fear of irredentism of the minorities with the external exigence of their protection.

⁵ About 1 350 000 inhabitants were Hungarians, representing 24,4% of the population of Transylvania and 7% of the population of Romania. However, they did not form a compact and unitive ethnic block, being spreaded all over Transylvania, even if more concentrated in some regions.

The great event of the Union positioned differently the new citizens of Romania and, to a great extent, determined the relational dynamic between the majority and the minority⁶. As a foundation stood a polar thinking that would divide the population of the country into two opposed axiological categories: “autochthon” vs. “stranger”, endemic vs. allogene, sojourner. The age of a political competition was thus inaugurated, in which every protagonist had its advantages and its weaknesses.

Out of all the inter-ethnic relations, the most acute turned out to be the ones with the Hungarians, so divergent, that the problem of the minority had inclined to become the Hungarian problem.

As for themselves, the Hungarians illustrated, in 1918, the type of trans-bordered community. They lived in Romania, but the ethnos, the language, the habits and their national sympathies belonged to a neighbour “mother-land” (Hungary). A nation existed, a state of origin, and also a conscience of affiliation to that nation, that had formed before the separation imposed by the Treaty of Trianon. The aspirations of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania continued to develop in connexion with these correlations; so did the separatist and revisionist movements.

In 1918, the political state of the Hungarians from Transylvania changed dramatically. From a population with a lead role in the state, they found themselves, overnight, in a paradoxical situation: disunited from the “great Hungarian nation”, torn out of the body of the Great Hungary and integrated as a minority in the Romanian state, in which, of course, the Romanians, according to their majority number and their new political qualities, were summoned to take control of the public life.

The reversal of the political roles explained the opposed reference of Romanians and

⁶ The attitude of the minority from Greater Romania towards the new power, and consequently towards its own condition, was different. It oscillated in three definitive directions. On one side, it existed a form of neutral acceptance of the status of minority (that mainly characterised the Germans), correlated with a passive attitude or limited to the interest of conserving one’s own identity. Another category of minority (among which the Hungarians) recognised, rationally, its status (the reality called for it) but was denying it from a psychological level, displaying a “bad conscience” of the condition of minority. The uninventing that it imposed was compensated by hostility, more or less direct, towards the social and political present order, continuously suspected, but also by civic actions. The refuse of identification blended, in their case, with a conscience (vain) of their own loneliness. They preferred to define themselves not by the elements that had approached them to Romanians, by what they had in common, but by what was different and, being different, differentiated them. Finally, partial and discontinuous, the concept of “minority” had undergone, in time, a process of positive re-evaluation, a mutation that was for example visible and fulfilled culturally in the theory of Transylvanianism.

On the Romanian side, a tendency to represent the national body as a closed, homogenous circle could be observed. Without being excluded, the joining was possible only after some acceptance rituals that would certify the adhesion and the emotional attachment of the applicant. An ideal situation was aimed, even obsessively desired, of non-conflict, of perfect and spontaneous social harmony.

In fact, the official attitude of Romanians towards the minority depended upon the position adopted by each minority against the new Romanian state, following almost exclusively the criterion of fidelity. The diagram of the reports of Romanians with the minority, in the interwar period, was, *grosso modo*, the following: towards the Germans and Hungarians an authentic will of assimilation was manifested. The aim was for them being absorbed, integrated and included within the body of the majority’s nation. It must be mentioned that, in regard to Germans, there was a greater availability for dialogue from the Romanian government, while authoritarian tendencies were reserved to the Hungarians. Contrariwise, the attitude towards the Jews was antropoemic: it was desired that they be, as possible, shadowed, isolated or marginalised, when not directly banished from the social body.

According to the evolution of the events and the actions of the minorities, the affective connotation of Romanians towards them would change from one case to another, from one moment to another. Over the interwar period, according to the historical and political context, the xenophobic and intolerant attitudes coexisted with the positive and democratic ones.

Hungarians towards the Union. If for the Romanians, it was an inaugural moment, that set the foundations of a new state (Greater Romania) and placed the national history on an ascensional role, in the life of the Hungarians it brought a dramatic moment of crisis, accompanied by a sense of uncertainty, insecurity and anxiety, a “vertigo of the future”.

The significances that both attributed to the common event that marked their existence irreversibly were, thus, diametrically opposed. Romanians granted the act of the union of Transylvania with Romania with establishing values, which availed the embarking in a journey of construction. The Union represented to them the necessary positive fact able to mobilize them in the effort for identity reconstruction that stood in front of them. Simultaneously with the ecstatic national freedom, with the impatience and restlessness it implied, they felt capable of a will of social reconstruction. In opposition, the loss of the war and the disintegration of Great Hungary brought along, for the Hungarians in Transylvania, the shame of a terrible failure. That is why they associated to the act of the Union, if not thanatical, crepuscular meanings: an empire had fallen – that had belonged to them –, a country collapsed – that had been theirs – a world had been extinguished – that represented the only place where they had truly felt the feeling of *home*.

One might say that this was where it all began: what the Hungarians experienced as a dramatic national fracture was celebrated by the Romanians as an apotheosis. While some were living the joy of victory, the others were faced with the bitter taste of defeat. For the “greatly-lucky Romanians”, “the days of glory” seemed to begin: “Today, obviously, the conditions have changed – admits Alexandru Hodoș. All possibilities lay beyond us. We have only open horizons. We have, at last, the so desired freedom.”⁷ On the contrary, the imperative of resignation invaded the conscience of the Hungarians in Transylvania. To them, it seemed that the peace and the joy were no longer possible. The horizons were closing and obstructed the perspectives. The lights were fading, indicating, in the future, only sufferance and despair. Above all these laid a general feeling of incapacity that paralysed all efforts, in a universe of general extinction: “Our eye gazed [...] towards the west”⁸, wrote in the press of the days, Károly Kós, one of the elite Hungarian intellectuals. “I saw there how the sun had set. Our eye, drowned with hopes, faith, yearning and pain looked until tears burst from the effort. For the sun continued its path always descending, it set more and more; at first slowly, then quicker, in the end it disappeared, and in the sky only the crimson clouds of blood-coloured hue remained.”⁹

The new common life thus started with difficulty and tension, in an atmosphere electrified emotionally by profound anti-ethical feelings. The tonic mood of the Romanians contrasted violently with the immense frustration of the Hungarians. The Union represented the best engine for re-establishing self-esteem, for the first ones, while the last, it induced a psychological breach between the aspiration for grandeur – asserted by the invocation of a glorious past and the refuse of considering it perished – and the prosaic present. Separated up to opposition, none of them was ready to accept the other’s situation with detachment, to understand his condition and accept him under his new appearance.

In this context, what could have consisted in an authentic inaugural moment of a future

⁷ Alexandru Hodoș, *Dușmanul din noi înși-ne*, in „Țara Noastră”, V (1924), nr. 31 (3 aug.), p. 970-971.

⁸ Hungary has Romania as its Western neighbour.

⁹ Károly Kós, “Glasul care strigă”, [1921], in Lucian Nastasă, Levente Salat (editori), *Maghiarii din România și etica minoritară (1920-1940)*, Cluj, Centrul de resurse pentru diversitate etnoculturală, 2003, p. 45.

common existence, turned into an inefficient (even risible) dispute over the past, interpreted in a polemical manner. The memory of the past placed the orientation towards the future in between brackets.

The past was not an interest in itself, but was “approached or recognised only as long as it/ was/ experienced as affecting the purposes and interests of the present, and consequently, the concerns and passions of the present (including the aspirations and anxieties about the future) could not /have been/ but re-read back, in the past”¹⁰.

The memory of the past consumed together by the Romanians and Hungarians was divergent. On one hand, each invoked other calendar data and other names of this history to be celebrated as founding and legendary – that were attributed rituals and ceremonies sacrosanct for some, emptied of meaning for the others –, on the other hand, most of the times, the same dates and events of the past were given a different significance, often opposed.

The divergence in the lectures of history violently stands out when, for example, one of the fundamental myths is called into play: *the myth of origin*.

The dissensions upon the precedence in Ardeal had, firstly, a political base: the primacy *in* Ardeal was read, on both sides, as primacy *upon* Ardeal. However, the consensus could not be obtained also because in this dispute, unsolved to this day, in fact two types of memories of the past are opposed.

The Hungarians display with ostentation the vanity of a material history, invoking a super eminence in Ardeal that can be tested by means of the written and re-enacted documentary history. On the contrary, in order to prove their primacy, Romanians call upon the live memory – an “immemorial memory” – that drives the origin into myth. This age that foregoes history, logically and historiographically argued, is sustained by the force of the imagination and of the emotion of an entire community, passed down (orally) from generation to generation, persisting in the conscience of the contemporaries. The fact that, as Romanians believe, represents in itself the ultimate argument, invincible, that turns superfluous any effort of material research of the ancient past.

Regarding the recent history, the issue closes the opposition between *memory* and *oblivion*. There is a common past, that the Hungarians don't **want** to forget (as it is a glorious one that consolidates the self-esteem) and that the Romanians *cannot* forget (as it is traumatic)¹¹. The fact is that the fundamental narrations do not coincide. Inverting the myths – in a given situation one has manifested a “victim complex”, the other a “saviour complex” and the reverse –, the Romanians and the Hungarians have launched in a competition with no winner of interpreting the past. Each assesses as unfaithful the other's recollection and manifests the tendency of constantly imposing its own memory over the past. Strongly anchored in the past, the Romanians and the Hungarians are not yet ready to free themselves from it and don't accept any relativization. That is why precisely the memory of the past represents one of the main factors that preclude, for the moment, the hypothesis of solidarity in destiny.

Thus, what could have established as a (new) beginning, an excellent opportunity of re-evaluating up compromised relations, torn by a conflicted past, that had condemned the

¹⁰ Leonard J. Lamm, *Ideea de trecut*. Istorie, știință și practică în psihanaliza americană, translated by Adriana Neagu, Binghamton&Cluj, Ed. Sigmund Freud, 1995, p. 96.

¹¹ Apud Eniko Magyari-Vincze, *Antropologia politicii identitare naționaliste*, Cluj, Editura Fundației pentru Studii Europene, 1997, pp. 128-130.

Romanians and the Hungarians from Ardeal to live in parallel histories, transformed into a community handicap. The installed passionate climate, charged by conflicts, left little chance for a real meeting.

The memory of conflict of the past and the ideological battle it initiated blocked, at the beginning of the interwar epoch, the initiatives of the cultural forthcoming and cohabitation, substituted by the confrontation of the nationalisms. More precisely, of two nationalisms structurally competing, equally justified morally, but of which the cohabitation was politically impossible.

In the case of the Romanians, the nationalist spirit was kept alive by the late political unification and by the assumed imperative of identity reconstruction, through the consolidation of the national element. In that moment of a beginning, the Romanian nationalism (triumphant) marked the translation from the combatant nationalism to the one of consolidation of the state around one principal nation, easily majoritarian from a numerical point of view.

In exchange, the Hungarian nationalism feeds on a contradictory feeling: of frustration, on one hand, and of vanity, on the other. The Hungarians perceive the condition of “minority” as a double degradation: by the marginality that any groups placed in a position of numerical inferiority assumes, but mostly by the diminishing, by the decrease that the integration, against their will, as a minority precisely in Romania (a margin of Europe) has implied. The Hungarians of Transylvania feel that, as Romanian citizens, do not become only minority but a minority of an inferior culture, which places them, in their conscious, within a “marginality of marginality”. This imaginary excess of humiliation attacks the feeling of dignity as a Hungarian, strengthening their spirit of resistance. At the same time, the conscience of the cultural superiority and of civilization in regard to the Romanians¹² preserves their vanity. At a symbolical level, they continue to represent themselves as a “hegemonic” nation. The pride of the glorious past and the conscience of their cultural superiority have continued to infiltrate in the Hungarian minority in Romania the nationalist resentment¹³.

The two contrary attitudes, of rise and fatality, on one hand, and vanity, on the other, generated a unique tendency, fuelled with an interest by Budapest (the capital of Hungary), of keeping or even maximizing the difference against the Romanians.

¹² The Hungarians had a secular tradition of the exercise of the political power.

¹³ The fact that, up until the Second World War, both the Romanians and the Hungarians had maintained ponderate positions proved to be a benificent and redemptive fact.

The governments that passed on the power of the country have manifested, with some exceptions, the belief that the minority policy must be integrated in legality, considering that it was in the interest of the state to have silence in all the social sectors and segments. In this spirit, they chose to put the problem of the minority under the sign of tolerance and concord. The power, as well as the public opinion, have regarded the relation with the minority from a contractual perspective, that included obligations and opportunities. On her behalf, the *intelighentia* (intermittently and not quite efficient) militated in favor of the idea that the minority rights must be assured and not settled politically and electively. It would have been desired for the minority problem to stop being a question of pact between parties, but transforming into a state problem, into a national priority, that transgressed the electoral.

On the other side, the Hungarian minority's offensive did not achieve incontrollable excesses. Despite its retractile attitude, the critical demarche had rarely surpassed the borders of democracy: up until the nationalist collapse during the war, the Hungarians from Romania have appealed to the democratic institutions, employing democratic forms and means, even if, sometimes, also objectionable procedures. Although radical attitudes and moves, even extremist, like the revisionism and irredentism have accompanied relatively consequent the path of self-defining of the Hungarian minority from Transylvania during the interwar period, terrorism and sabotage have been, fortunately, excluded.

The positions of the two ethnical groups, Romanian and Hungarian, would never meet in the interwar period, but in conjuncture. But the sense of confrontation would persist.

The Romanians considered that they have opted for the right minority legislation (see the threat with resembling Yugoslavian nationalist laws) and labelled the actions of the Hungarian minority as a “fight for privileges” (for lost privileges). Our Hungarian minority, they claimed, would never be content as long as they related not to the present status of Romanian citizen, but regarded with nostalgia the lost one, of citizen of the Empire. As for the Hungarians, the preservation of their own identity, often assumed in exclusive terms, remained the main objective. They would engage in action on the narrow but profitable alley of the compensation of the frustration as minority by the guaranteeing of the state of their ethnical and cultural integrity and the enhancement of their own visibility and autonomy.

The shadows of the past reflect upon the present. The mutual suspicion and the conflicts persist, the imputation and the charges more or less accurate don't cease while excessive attitudes represent the currency. The Romanian majority is being criticised by their Hungarian co-habitants for all the deficiencies; they retort arrogating all accomplishments.

Accustomed to see the Hungarian minority as a presumptive enemy¹⁴, the Romanians perceive its effort of building a new and modern administrative structure that would reflect its historical presence in Ardeal, as anti-Romanian. Reciprocally, the Hungarians believe that the Romanians have lingered in an attitude of idealising the conquered position and disqualifying of the minorities.

The Romanians impute to the Hungarians the non-pacifying conscience, un-reconciled with the new realities and accuse them of the sick memory of lost privileges. The Hungarians reject the accusation and self-define the action as a fight for democracy, accusing, at their turn, the Romanians of political duplicity.

The opinions are always opposed. The era of national harmony, that the Romanians claim they have installed, is being described by the Hungarians as one of ethical prejudice. Instead, what the Hungarians denounce as nationalism is presented by the Romanians as a policy of national consolidation (similar to the one in Central Europe). The fidelity towards the national ideal justifies, in their opinion, any intransigency related to the minority's demands. That is why, their wish of keeping their own identity is interpreted as a desire of rupture, and any action in this respect and for this purpose is considered a challenge that must be suppressed as incompatible with the national and political imperative of the new Romanian state. In this spirit, tolerance itself towards the minority becomes, for the intransigent, a centrifuge to the national ideal of spiritual and cultural cohesion of the Romanians.

The circular nationalism – anti-Hungarianism as reaction to auto-Romanianism and vice versa – has weakened the policy of dialogue. The logic of the approach by culture has been less and less used, in favour of the confrontation on a juridical, ideological and political level. The maximum expectancies on behalf of the Romanians, the radical reactions from the Hungarians have blocked the collaboration initiatives, maintaining a climate of mutual suspicion that allowed the dominance of a permanent state of alert.

In this confronting context, the project of the democratic reconstruction of Romania,

¹⁴ One might say that, in the conscience of the Romanians, the Hungarians play the part of the “other” that spontaneously activates the pattern of confrontation. The presence of this “other” threatens the pertinence of the national construction. Numerically and historically, the Hungarians represent the designated enemy – even fated. That is why, by the common act of coexistence, the internal system of differentiation, legitimate and explicit, becomes problematic, the idealised image of the dominant groups being put into question, which arouses anxiety.

although favourable to both the majority and the minority is not preferred by any of them. Each chooses to act primarily in the sense of strengthening its own ethnical and/or national foundation, out of a common feeling, although motivated differently, of insecurity.

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The Transylvanian Printing in the 16th-17th Century

The present study, entitled “The Transylvanian Printing in the 16th-17th c. ”, is meant to be an analytic approach on two levels: the first, a diachronic one, refers to the development of the printing from a historical, political, social and cultural point of view in the Transylvanian towns of Oradea, Brasov, Sibiu, Alba-Iulia, Cluj, Sebes, Orastie, Abrud, and the second approach is a synchronic one as it sets one`s sight on both the description of the generic elements of the printing art within the geographic area and on marking the cultural affiliation that highlights the preoccupation not only of the laic intellectuals, but also of the clergy (Orthodox, Catholics, Greek-Catholics, Protestants) of founding the production of autochthonous books.

The creation and development of printing art in Transylvania, and also the spreading of printed works in the Western workshops have to be considered within the context of the extremely disturbed period of the 15th-17th c. The multitude of political changes with dramatic consequences on the communities in the territories east of the Carpathians created on the one hand the book trade (when the propaganda of new ideas was intended), on the other hand it prevented or even forbade the spreading of printed matters, of any kind (when their contents offended the religious rules, the state, communities, guilds, or organizations). It is worth keeping in mind, that, starting with the second half of the 15th c, Transylvania was caught between the dependence of the Romanian Principalities to the Ottoman Empire and the wars of the Ottoman Empire with the Hapsburg Empire, wars that ended with the Turks' hegemony in Central Europe and the “historical” moment of the Adrianople Peace (1452-1452), between the Ottoman Empire and Hungary. At the same time, the printed book was in the spotlight of the church, being promoted either by canonical printings and serving the interests of the clergy, or being overlooked or even forbidden, when opposing the ideas of the clergy. For this reason, the printing workshops (and later on the typographies) were subject to a strict surveillance, so that there was an obvious regress of the printing production in the second half of the 16th c. During the Renaissance, the printed book started its career as an art object, being appreciated as such by the art collectors in the following centuries. Book illustration by xylography, diminishes in the 17th c. in France, containing only two portraits per book. In exchange, the aqua-forte technique started to develop, favoring a superior alternation of shadows and lights, increasing the quality of the artistic work. Between 1500 and 1520-1525, the so-called “post-incunabula” were known, due to their common characteristics with the first printings, after 1525 the printed book acquires different qualities distinguishable from the mediaeval type. Thus, punctuation is used and paging enables an easy reading of the text. In the early years of the 16th c. colophony still exists to indicate the title of the work, the author, the translator, the printer, etc. The author and the title were mentioned in a “capitle”, the additional information appeared in an “cum indice”, “cum comentariis”, or “cum schola”, while at the bottom of the page, “basis”, the locality, the printer and the publication year were written. Colophony was frequently used in Venice in the late 15th c. and the beginning of the 16th c., as well as in Germany in the 16th c., in the form of half a clepsydra.

The 17th c. was considered a century of transition in the history of the book. It is the century when most literary genres appear, the folk creation having an important role. The book develops its role as an information or reading source. Most of the books are printed in almost 2,000 copies, except for the religious and theological works, the school books and popular literature books. Illustrations were still metal engraved, instead of wood and on the front page the author's portrait is more frequent. From the printed production in the 16th –17th c. only a quarter has been preserved, the more damaged books being the popularization ones, but also the leaflets, the manifests, the calendars, the "heretic" ones and the pamphlets.

The 16th-17th c. are important because of the great printing offices created in Europe, so that the printed book goes beyond a simple curiosity of the time, becoming a reading, information and educational object.

In the history of mentalities, the art of printing and book spreading play an important role, as the means of spreading the written works (different printing types and forms) may offer information about a historical, social, economic context, as well as about the extension and interference of the religious, cultural ideas or the spiritual atmosphere of the time. There are also some unquestionable effects of Transylvania becoming a principality as a result of the disputes between Ioan Zápolya and Ferdinand I, and of turning a part of Hungary into a pachalic. The influence of the Lutheran movement in Transylvania, ever since the first decades of the 16th c., was decisive for the cultural life in general and especially for printing. The first towns that promoted the ideas of the Reform and Lutheranism were those with a majority of German population: Sibiu, Brasov, Sighișoara, Bistrița. The Romanian Transylvanian printing in the 17th c. developed within a double context, a cultural one - promoting the autochthonous language – and religious – of resistance, or attachment to the Calvinist principles and the Counter-Reformation. After the printing activity was interrupted in Alba-Iulia, it started again, in Sebeș, where the *Golden Coffin*, by archpriest Ioan Zoba from Vinț, was printed in 1683

The history of paper within the Romanian area, started in the 14th c. In the 16th c., as a result of the battle from Mohacs (1526) and the limited trade relations with western Europe, and the dispute between Ferdinand I of Hapsburg and Ioan Zápolya, the authorities of the Principality of Transylvania had to purchase paper from abroad, through merchants, and to open some home printing offices and paper factories. In Cluj, Heltai Gáspár opened in 1563-1564, a factory for his own typography, and for the others in Transylvania, whereas in Sibiu, a new mill began to work in 1574 (after a first attempt failed in 1555), providing paper for the workshops and offices in Transylvania and Wallachia.

With the first paper mills – in Brașov, Cluj, Sibiu – the filigree was introduced (or the water mark), which had already been extremely spread in Europe since the 14th c., in a great variety of forms and images. Usually, these were applied in order to indicate the origin of the paper and to avoid counterfeiting. Today, the filigree is an important source of information and data about the year and place of the paper manufacturing, and with some acceptable error, the printing year. The most used for the water marks are of heraldic or religious inspiration, with vegetable, animal or anthropomorphous motifs.

In Wallachia, a decisive role in printing and spreading belonged to *the ruler of the principality*, patronizing the laic typographies, and *the church* when the office was meant to print religious books. In the 17th c., a special role was played by *itinerant book traders*, the later booksellers. The public library came into being by donations, such as the *princely*

donations (offered by the princes of Wallachia and Moldavia), from which many towns and villages in Transylvania benefited. The books also reached the Romanian area through priests and merchants. In the 16th c. the connections of the inhabitants of German descent, the Magyars, and the Romanians in Transylvania with the great European centres and especially with the German towns, enabled the trade and cultural relations. The students at western Universities (Heidelberg, Wittenberg, Tübingen, Königsberg, Leipzig, Vienna, Krakow, Padova, Bologna, Pavia, Ferrara), representing both the noble class and the high-middle class, were one of the main ways through which the ideas of the Renaissance and the Reform were spread in Transylvania. The Transylvanian libraries in Târgu-Mureș, Alba-Iulia, Sibiu, Cluj, etc. have many books in their collections brought by these students, who studied abroad in the 16th c. At the same time, the nobles and the wealthy townspeople wanted to have their own libraries, so that, in the 16th c. out of the 150-200 million books edited in Europe, around 100,000 reached the Transylvanian area, suggesting a high interest in the humanistic values that the intellectuals from here might have had.

Book purchasing is connected to the evolution of the autochthonous schools, and the growing interest for studying at western universities. Up to the 14th c., the only high education institutions that accepted the young Transylvanian students, were those in Paris, Italy, then Prague, Vienna and Krakow. The number of Germans—“sasi”, Magyars and Romanians who studied in Occidental universities increased, in the following centuries.

In the 15th-17th c., the ornaments in printing were greatly due to manuscript painting, the miniatures, ornamented letters (zoomorphous, floral, anthropomorphous motifs), on the frontispieces, frames, etc. Within the Romanian area, the ornament and book illustration started with Macarie's printings; later on, in the 16th c. in Transylvania and Wallachia these are due to the apprentices who had worked in Venice, or in other places under the influence of the Italian art decoration (such as Serbia, Muntenegru, Poland) Božidar Vuković's Venetian Cyrillic printings are exceptions, that attracted most of the Transylvanian and Wallachian typographers, such as Coresi, in the printings in Targoviste or Brașov, or D. Liubavici, in the ornaments and frontispieces of the *Slavonian Book of Sermons* (1545) and the *Acts of the Apostles* (1547). The typography of Božidar Vuković, created in Venice, in 1518, printed a great number of books for the Slavs in the south of Europe. In the books printed in the first half of the 16th c., the xylography was included in the text in a single colour, and afterwards corrected by hand drawing.

The ownership marks of most books offer information about the printing time, the ornaments and their route since they were printed. At the same time, they are relevant for the direction followed by the 16th c. intellectuals in Transylvania. The numerous side notes or the *ex libris* and *supralibrosis* may provide important data about the successive owners of a book, used by princes, clergy or ecclesiastical institutions.

The creation of a Roman-Catholic diocese in Oradea is due to Ladislau I, while the Library of the Capite, including first liturgical books, was created and enriched by donations from bishops and clergy, who studied abroad. The Roman-Catholic Library came into being with the setting of the Jesuits in Cluj, in 1579, in the building of the Superior School, that houses a rich collection of literature, including the Catholic Mediaeval books, which were not accepted by the Protestant Church in Transylvania. In the 15th-16th c, the library of the Franciscan Monastery in Șumuleu-Ciuc was considered one of the richest monk libraries in Transylvania, having survived the Reform. The library has also preserved the works of some abolished monk orders, like the Dominican.

In Braşov, Honterius, together with Theobaldus Gryphius, founded a typography, and between 1538-1539, it printed 11 works. The whole number of printings was 37, among which an 1366 hexameter-verses *Rudimenta Cosmografia* (1541-1542), a similar edition being published in 1530 in Krakow. Between 1539-1557 (since the foundation of the typography and till the death of Valentine Wagner, Honterius's collaborator and successor) the number of printings was 53, of which 33 in Latin, 14 in Greek and 6 in German. Honterius indicated the year and publishing place, but did not mention his name as printer.

Coresi was one of the most talented typographers of his time, offering his services to the Saxon or Magyar rulers (Hans Benckner, the noble Forró Miklós, or the judge Lucas Hircher), the Romanian ones (voivodes Alexander, Mihnea and Petru Cercel), or the clergy (as was the case of the Metropolitan of Transylvania, Ghenadie). Coresi also created capital, straight, more elegant Cyrillic letters. The initials of the paragraphs were decorated with geometric and floral motifs, like the Italian printings.

Sibiu was among the first important centres in Transylvania in book printing and spreading. In fact, there was a cultural tradition that started in the 15th c. In 1330, the Dominican monks created here the first library of manuscripts. Later on, the social, political and religious conditions, gave way to the ideas of the Reform, by its cultural trends and found a fertile land in Sibiu (as in all Transylvanian towns, with a majority of Saxon population), mainly by means of the books printed in the great European offices, or those belonging to the autochthonous typographies meant for the Romanians within the inter-Carpathians areal, who had to choose between old traditions and new tendencies, which provided social and cultural emancipation. The image of Sibiu, as a cultural centre, has to be associated with that of a political, military and economic centre of the Saxon University. The outstanding names are: deacon Lorinţ, Albert and Rudolf Hoffhalter, who, after 1547, started to provide different types of letters, patterns for ornaments, frontispieces, columns, etc.

As V. Ecsedy Judit mentioned, the printing activity in Cluj may be divided into three periods, according to the workshops' owners, or to the changes in the art, physiognomy and spreading of books. The first period, between 1550-1574, is that of Jacobus Lucius' typography, the second of the printed works of Heltai Gáspár's widow (1575-1582), while the third belongs to Heltai Gáspár junior (1584-1600).

In Alba-Iulia the printing activity was connected to the church life. The activity of Lorinţ, developed within the process of Calvinization of the Romanians in Transylvania, by Gheorghe de Sangiorz and Pavel Tordasi, which explains the temporary character of the printing activity in Alba-Iulia. It is worth mentioning the privilege obtained by Lorinţ to print *Tetraevangheliarul* (*The Four Gospel*), which was mentioned at the end of the work.

Coresi's activity includes also the Sebeş stage, that of *Sbornicul slavonesc* (*Slavonian Sbornik*), in 1580 and the work of Filotei the monk (a collection of texts about the life of the saints), starting the printing of *Pripeale* (*Book of religious services*) in Transylvania.

In *Palia* (*The Genesis* and *The Exodus*) – printed in 1582, by Şerban Coresi – the history of the printing mentions the only book printed in Orăştie, in the 16th c., and one of the most important Romanian texts of that time.

In Abrud – a small mining place in Transylvania – is supposed to have existed a typography that worked in 1569. The information is given in a volume *in-4^o*, with the title *Comoedia Balassi Menyhárt árultásáról*, in fact a political pamphlet of the Unitarian superintendent Karadi Pal.

The Cluj-Napoca Library of the Romanian Academy possesses 177 original incunabula, that is, books printed in the second half of the 15th c., representing the image of the European Renaissance and a hallmark for all those who study the spreading of the Occidental books in the Romanian Provinces, in the 15th-16th c. and the following ones. The Library in Cluj-Napoca is on the second to the Bruckenthal Library in Sibiu, as far as the number of incunabula is concerned. They represent a special fund, and belonged mainly to the Library of The Catholic College in Cluj (108 books, 14 with ex-libris stamp), 25 belonged to the Library of the Protestant College in Cluj (some with ex-libris stamp), 18 to the Library of the Unitarian College in Cluj (some with ex-libris stamp), 13 to the Roman-Catholic Diocese in Satu-Mare, 8 to the Central Library in Blaj ("Timotei Cipariu" collection), one was purchased in 1951, whereas 4 are of unknown origin (most probably they belonged to the Catholic College).

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The book circulation in Transylvania in the 16th c. was the main way of spreading the new ideas of the Renaissance and Humanism, as well as of the religious trends connected to the Reform, the Lutheranism, the Calvinism, the Unitarianism. All these have generated the transfer of the Counterreformation on the Romanian soil and the answer of the Orthodox Church, confused by the unexpected, great changes. At this time in Transylvania, as everywhere else, the book represented both an aim in itself (by its artistic qualities, preparing the taste of the public for new and surprising changes) and propaganda or information means. The intellectuality in Europe could not stay away from the volcanic impulse of renewal of the social, political, and especially religious life. Both trade and autochthonous book production grew rapidly in the following two centuries. In the 17th c., a major role was played by *The Gospel with teaching* in 1641, the *Catechism* in 1642, *The Calvinist Catechism* in 1648, *The New Testament from Balgrad*, in 1648, *The Book of Psalms* in 1651, *The Golden Coffin* from Sebeș, in 1683, and *Chiriadromionul* of Mihail Istvanovici, in 1699.

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IULIAN BOLDEA

*Petru Maior University of Targu-Mures**E. M. Cioran. History, Exile and Melancholy*

Integration and alienation, identity and rupture, belonging to an original model and the continuous tendency of surpassing it, are some of the determinant peculiarities of Cioran's ideation, which is legitimized by assuming an identity both originating and intentional uprooting, by transgression of ethnic boundaries.

One of aporia becoming almost common place in the reception of Cioran's work is the relationship between integration and alienation, identity and rupture. The lonely and great skeptical of our time, Cioran expressed in his aphorisms the fundamental inability to attach to any strong national identity, in a disillusioned emotional projection, where the refusal of setting translates into a fundamental need to search for own roots, even if they often identify themselves with ontological nothingness: "When you think of other small countries, which have done nothing and indulge themselves in unconscious or empty, unjustified, pride then you can not withhold admiration for Romania's lucidity, which is not ashamed to mock itself, to reveal its nothingness with disdain, or to compromise itself in a dissolving skepticism." Very illustrative for the dialectic of identification and distancing from the image of his country, is the volume *Mon pays (My Country)*, bilingual edition appeared at Humanitas Publishing House, 1996. "Specialist of obsession", as he defines himself, Cioran testifies in *Mon pays*, the Romanian identity obsession, the passion that he felt at that time, for his own country, with its marginal destiny, with its historical geography damaged by the hostility of a timeless and metaphysical hybris: "I was far from turning thirty years, when I happened to make a passion for my country, desperate passion, aggressive, in which there is no escape and which harassed me for years to come. My country! I wanted at all costs to hold onto it - and there was nothing to cling to. I could not find any fact, nor the present or the past. Full of anger, I assigned a future to it, invented it, embellished it, without a moment of believing in it. I ended up by attacking it, the future, by hating it, I spit on my utopia. My loving and delirious hate was devoid of purpose, my country was turning into powder when meeting my gaze. "Attachment to his own country is, for Cioran, one of those paradoxical, contradictory and oxymoronic feelings in which love and hate, attraction and rejection overlap/intermingle up to becoming indistinct. His passion, often denigrating, has no purpose than assuming, by his own country, of a fate that would leave the shadow cone of the anonymity of history. Strength, vitality, grandeur are rather projections of historical legitimacy of his own nation: "I wanted it strong, without measure, crazy, like an evil force, a fatality that would have made the world tremble, and she was small, modest, devoid of attributes that make up a destiny. When I turned to her past, I discovered nothing but servitude, resignation and humility, and when I turned to the present, I faced the same defects, some mutilated, others remaining intact. I examined it ruthlessly and with such a frenzy to find *something else* in it, that this frenzy made me unhappy, so was *far-sighted*".

Between the visionary and transfiguring pride of the young philosopher and the mediocre destiny of the country he belongs to, the distance is considerable. In fact, Cioran does nothing but to outline, in his early books, an ideal image of Romania, a projection rather

ideal, a utopian geography, maintained and supported by its visionary zeal: "Then I came to understand, that my country does not stand up to my ego, that anyway, facing my requirements, it proved insignificant. Wasn't it then when I intended to write that I wanted to meet in her "France's destiny and China's population"? (...) Instead of directing my thoughts to a more consistent appearance, I was attached to my country, feeling that she would give me the pretext of endless torment, and that, as long as I dreamed of it, I would experience an inexhaustible source of suffering. I found a handy inexhaustible inferno, where my ego could reach exasperation *at my expense*. " The attachment for Romania is perceived as a gnoseologic punishment as a form of donquijotism and illusory prophetism. A country without destiny, Romania is no less a product of ideological consciousness that seeks its own legitimacy by assuming ontological indissoluble link with their country ("And this love became a punishment and a claim against my ferocious donchihotism. Talking endlessly about the fate of a country without fate: I became, in the pure sense of the word, a prophet in vain "). The philosopher's identity is linked to the exasperation of the matrix space that legitimizes his fervors and despairs. Referring, in *Mon pays*, to the *Transfiguration of Romania*, Cioran outlines his experiences and excessive obsessions with lucidity which the destiny of his own country has caused. "The thirst for unrelenting" that led to the philosopher's passionate passions, tortures and his vigils, which increasingly resemble, as stated, "someone else's", from the angle of the affective and temporal and emotional distancing, transpose Cioran in a space of rationality that discerns, in the past mirrors, the troubled face of the adolescent thirsty for the absolute and disgusted with certainty: "I wrote a book about my country that time: perhaps no one had attacked his country with similar violence. It was a madman's aberration. But, in my negation there was such a flame that now, after years, it's hard to believe that it was not a reversed love, an upside down idolatry. It was, that book, like an assassin's hymn, it was the theory spewing from the kidneys of a patriot without a country. Excessive pages, which allowed another country, my enemy, to use them in a campaign of slander, and maybe, of truth. I did not care! It was unrelenting thirst. And to a certain point, I was grateful to my country that gave me the opportunity to such great torment. I loved it because it could not meet my expectations. It was a good time: I believed in the reputation of unfortunate passions "

The identity aporias that reveal Cioran's writings do not have a fluctuating essence, being born of paradox undulations and baroque compositions of oxymoron. Love also implies hate or rebellion, as attachment has the necessary corollary right repulsion or passionate resentful involvement: "I exceedingly liked to be put to the test: and the ultimate test seemed to me to be born in my country. But the truth is that I needed tireless time of madness, the madness intertwined with action. I felt the need to destroy. I spent my days sprouting images of total destruction. "From the compensatory hatred for the minor destiny of the country where he was born, Cioran moves to self-hatred that transpires with deliberation in most of his aphorisms. His broken, illegitimate identity, is legitimized by this very fortuitous duality passion / detachment, giving originality to the entire work of Cioran's, as the revelations of exasperation and hatred are the binder of a resentful philosophy and, at the same time, a philosophy of lucid merciless: "It happened to me: I became the center of my hate. I hated my country, everyone and the whole universe: the only thing left to do was to hate myself: what, in fact, I did on the verge of despair". The need to configure an identity is legitimated, for the author of the *Transfiguration of Romania*, from the consciousness of a rupture, of a strong

identity frustration, identity and rupture are the terms of an ontological and gnoseologic equation inextricably linked to the paradoxes of a thought that is born of negation rather than affirmation, of nihilistic enthusiasm rather than metaphysical optimism.

Considering that Cioran's work "shows a surprising consistency of themes and attitudes", Sorin Alexandrescu, in a chapter of *Looking back, modernity*, does nothing but to state the essential feature of the thinker: the constancy in scriptural reactions, the permanently renewed persistence to designate the same themes of meditation, the relevance of a style that is equal to itself, recurrent, refusing any avatar, a monadic style, and equally open to a plurality of readings. It is also known that Cioran's work is only a sum of parts, devoid of any willingness/will of construction, fragments "built" deliberately in this way, from the philosopher's repulsion to any system, to any ontological or epistemological authority, either manifested in the real world, or materialized in a world of ideas. The freedom of association, the very subtle taste for the paradox, the ideation deprived of morgue confer to Cioran's phrase its inner tension, its dynamism of living and utterance. One may also say that between Cioran's biography and writing there are numerous bridges, lineages, links, either subtle, implicit or more apparent. Hence, from this parallelism biography / writing results the thematic dichotomy that always pursued Cioran, history and utopia are dichotomous ambivalences that feed, with increased energy, the philosopher's substance/essence. Always ruined before a hysterical history, utopia is, gradually, acclaimed and denigrated. Its signs are rearranged, as history is ignored or rejected with hostility. The text itself turns into a confrontation setting, not deprived of pathos, between history and utopia, which is clearly expressed by Sorin Alexandrescu "Cioran's enunciation places, *here* and *there*, intermingle/weave/, but do not change their value: now Cioran sees Bucharest, from Paris, with a certain melancholy. The subject can be found *here* or *there*, always in a situation of inferiority towards the Other: any position of enunciation is probably doomed. Your regime destroyed Utopia, but it always lives for you, Cioran seems to say, because you, *there*, hope for the utopia of a better *here*, or, we know here in the West that utopia no longer exists in the world. History followed a different course than the one dreamed by Cioran in his youth and created a negative utopia, which destroyed the very idea of Utopia." Between the active involvement in history (and messianism) from *The Transfiguration of Romania* and the ignorance of history, it is circumscribed the destiny of the thinker, who will have to face two decisive options, which will permanently follow/profoundly mark him. A first option is that of the exile, this "non-place" as Sorin Alexandrescu defines it. A second choice is the setting into the canons of another language; the uprooting being followed by a fierce search for a new identity. Or perhaps are we dealing here with a camouflage maneuver, with a kind of pseudonym technique, subtly filtered in the linguistic strategies offered by the new idiom? Sorin Alexandrescu believes it is about the thinker's aggression against himself: "The choice of language as well as the place of enunciation are an act of violence directed by Cioran against himself. For the Scythian who he was, it was hard to come to terms with this refined idiom, the civilized who he became regrets the freshness of the lost idiom. The speech does not adhere to human beings, all accommodation is a loss. "Subjugated/enslaved" by the new language, the Scythian dies: and, with the language, the landscapes of childhood and the incendiary witticism of youth sink in the past, become memories."(...).

The consciousness of the exile, the consciousness of the marginal, is, in fact, thus dominated, decisively marked by the impact of the contradictory flow of melancholy, feeling that places the human being in a space - both ontological and scriptural - of an overwhelming

uncertainty, a fact noted by Sorin Alexandrescu "the operator of melancholy plays an important role in Cioran' thinking. I saw that all the positive terms considered defining for this thinking collapsed before they could establish a coherent universe of meaning. Melancholy, on the contrary, nestled in the negative, seems to be able to distinguish among the different *roles* that Cioran likes to play, all located in the social marginality and metaphysics, the *marginality* of the prophet, the failure, the exiled, the skeptic (*le douteur*), the role that Cioran assigns in *La chute dans le temps*.

As many psychoanalytic connotations as one may assign, the fact is that *melancholy* is the product of an assault on consciousness, trauma that will dwell in the abyssal self of the thinker and will mark his writing, destiny and how he will relate to the world or peers. The emblematic metaphor for this postulation of melancholy as the generating element of being and of Cioran's writing, it seems to Sorin Alexandrescu, the image of a "lonely man behind a window, motionlessly looking at the moving, elusive, ephemeral, world outside". It is the metaphor of the absolute solitude, the presence of the self in front of the otherness who he seeks to abolish by undefining, forgetting, by the dissolving exercise, this time, of the eye. Cioran's condition of marginal being, of being that vehemently denies any institutionalization, outlined by Sorin Alexandrescu in the study *Cioran the day after the revolution*, is, without doubt, one that implies a rejection of modernity. Cioran is a thinker against his age, an age of pluralisms and simulacra. It is clear that Cioran is aware of the relativity of his speech, oscillating between marginality and universality. From this angle, the comparison between Cioran and Diogenes, the cynic, is not unfounded. Both Cioran and Diogenes are beings that deny any social commitment, that stay in the social shadow, even if Diogenes, unlike Cioran, has spectacular gestures. Cioran is, one may say, an anti-modern by definition, that perceives the world of modernity as a world of devalued signs, of simulacra, of empty appearances, where the speeches, of a disconcerting plurality and overwhelming polisemantism, can not be heard, seen, understood. Hence Cioran's nihilistic vocation, his anti-modern radicalism which, however, does not propose a compensatory program, an explicit alternative, as Sorin Alexandrescu notes: "Both at the level of all his reflection themes and writing subjects, Cioran does not offer to such a despised modernity, any postmodern value, any affirmative alternative, based on a different social dynamic, but some clearly anti-modern values, inspired by an eternity without transcendence and by a wisdom in which faith has not ever been experienced".

A well represented category in the history of philosophy is that of the Aesop or resentful philosophers. The philosophy of Aesop's is the "resentful philosophy of the sick and ill formed in the history of philosophy," writes Gabriel Liiceanu in *Diary from Păltiniș*. Of those philosophers whose thinking was heavily influenced by disease, and body miseries and pettiness (Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Sartre, Jaspers). Not to mention Socrates, who also experienced numerous rebellions of the body. One of these great sick men, whose illnesses, humor and bad habits induced a very particular philosophy, is Cioran. How are body tribulations reflected in the pages of Cioran's aphoristic, which is the ratio between the wound and the letter, the relationship between ulceration and thought? What proportion is established between thought revelations and body avatars, between meditation elevation and fall into the abyss of corporality? Illness, suffering, pain, are, in fact, for Cioran, consciousness revelation, are catalysts of philosophical ideation. Cioran's "career of suffering", early begun, is part of a personality who deliberately puts ideas and ideals into psychosomatic disease. Marta Petreu

correctly outlines Cioran's career as a patient: "No job (except in 1936-1937, High School "Andrei Şaguna" Braşov), without a definitive profession, no income, no property, no nationality and no country, thus defined mainly by negation, Cioran was instead rich in malady symptoms and diseases. A career of suffering, in other words, a sick identity, used as an excuse for his humiliating - in his own eyes - inactivity. Similarly, not once did Cioran say he was free from any livresque influence and entirely shaped by his disturbed physiology and diseases." For Cioran, disease is not only organic mess or insidious deterioration of the body. It is rather a sign of spiritual awakening, revelation being the innermost core of it, the disease is not without a certain "spiritual fecundity", as the philosopher noted. And this understanding of the disease is present in the very first book, *On the verge of despair*, where Marta Petreu emphasizes, "the disease is present from beginning to end, the book is made up of the metaphysical discoveries which the young author made due to his disease. Suffering radically worked in himself, waking him from the organic sleep, from the beatific unconsciousness of the age and the charming naivety of health, to transpose himself in a state that flattered his pride: lucidity". Not only Cioran's inventory of diseases is worth of interest, but also, how these diseases, symptoms or suicidal tendencies have an impact on his philosophical ideas. The insinuating sliding from the area of organic disorder toward the perimeter of the concept *lived*, fervently assumed, is totally revealing to the destiny of the Romanian philosopher of French expression.

The disease that followed Cioran all his life and marked both his pace of life and creation, is, however, insomnia, illness resulting from an excess of lucidity and, like in a vicious circle, enormously amplifies this state of lucidity, pushing it to the limit of endurance. Sleep is equivalent to hope, while insomnia is prone to despair. Sleep is the state of the fundamental indivisibility of beings, insomnia, and pain in general, is a separation, a "principle of individuation", so if an essentially healthy body integrates the individual in the mechanism of its human life and nature, the disease is an element of exclusion from the territory of vitality, a man's way of separating from his own life, its own drastic individualization. Authentic, lively, revealing philosophy results, says Cioran bluntly, in *The heights of despair*, from the tragic agony of disease, from the rustling labyrinth of the body, as the spirit is nothing but the sublimated expression of a disorder, an imbalance or organ failure ("Everything deep in this world can arise only from disease"). From this accountability and illustration of the spiritual benefits of disease derives the philosopher's response to sentimentalists that disguise their authentic feelings, intense and deep emotions or replace them with parade sentimentality, aestheticism without foundation. That is why, what really matters for Cioran is the philosophical reflection, "organic and personal expression following the variations and fluctuations of nerve and organic mood", as the philosopher expresses. It is clear therefore that corporality avatars, the tribulations of the tormented body crushed by disease are, for the Romanian thinker, a gateway - marked by suffering, pain, and lucidity - to the revelations of metaphysics, as Marta Petreu noted: "For Cioran, diseases and pains become an instrument of revelation, namely the metaphysical revelation. Noting that the consequences of pain are greater than those of pleasure, Cioran names (disorderly, but under the stylistic disorder it is hidden a genuine rigor, shooting straight from the unalterable austerity of archetypes) "the consequences of pain" and disease. Moreover, Cioran states that there are hierarchies and degrees of disease, depending on their ability of spiritual revival, of revelation of metaphysical latency of human consciousness. On the other hand, the suffering caused by ecstasy (the approaches to mystical ecstasy are as obvious as disturbing) cause not only the

separation, individuation that pulls the man from his original paradise of indivisibility, but lead to the retrieval of the ultimate fund of experiences, one that reveals the essentiality of being, its origin and primacy. The gnoseologic benefits of suffering and disease therefore consist in the transgression of the rational limits and the assumption of a mystical condition, as Martha Petreu writes: "Suffering has activated in Cioran the archetypes of mystical living, with its complete expressions, with its chromatic, spatial and cognitive metaphors" . Individuation and indivisibility are, in fact, the fundamental terms of the metaphysical equation that illustrates Cioran's case, along with several other philosophical sounding words such as: heights, abysses, rising, falling, flying, diving, empty, full, etc.. The disease is, for Cioran, rather a tool to trigger a state of grace, self revelation and inner perfection than pure cell degradation. It is true, it is the state of grace of a religious being, but "without God", of a "mystic denied". In this way, the consciousness of his own body and illness that follow him led the philosopher to spiritual perfection, to an ecstasy not without mystical meanings. For Cioran, corporality depths were always a corollary of authentic reflection, disinhibition, put on page with perfect rigor and stylistic mastery of the sentence. Disease, "mystical vehicle" as characterized by Marta Petreu, may be reduced, eventually, to a gradual, imperceptible and inevitable near drawing to death, the "essential evil" of the human condition. Marta Petreu notes that "our non-birth nostalgia" the drawback "of having been born- and the accusation that the world is the product of" an evil demiurge " come, in his case, from this incurable disease: the mortality of the human being, the unbearable "feeling of dying." It's a "scandal", it is the scandal itself, that makes Cioran cry". The disease is thus to Cioran, a metaphysical way of singularization, a propensity to the horizon of solitude and nihilism. Viewed through the illness, suffering, which stimulated and configured the metaphysical enthusiasm, Cioran is the metaphysical exile par excellence. Attraction and repulsion of personal origins, this is the archetypal model that generates the semantic potentialities of Cioran's texts, in which the paradox, the irony with cynical reflections and existential seriousness are intertwined.

For Cioran, exile was, without doubt, to the same extent, inner tear and release, sanctuary and damnation, resignation and revolt towards an uprooted destiny. The lack of national determinants, which exile brings, the loss of identity that a stateless person feels are compensated in some way, by retrieving it into a space of universality, of generic humanity, free from the grip of national landmarks. Therefore, Cioran's exile gradually turns into an exile with metaphysical connotations, so that the terms *here or elsewhere* lose their strictly geographical determinations, gaining rather symbolic shapes, as Sorin Alexandrescu observes: "*The non belonging* could still express a social loneliness, the desire of an indefinable *elsewhere* makes us foresee new horizons and the metaphysical exile opens the way to ontological discussion. The path that leads from a concrete historical fact to metaphysical drama is long, the Romanian texts show that it was rigorously followed by Cioran. Living the *concrete experience* of the exile and constantly deepening it, he discovered in its depths the *metaphysical* meaning of the exile ". Melancholy is, as Sorin Alexandrescu noted, a recurrent topos in Cioran's philosophical fragments. This mood of undoubted ambiguity, with fluctuating contours is made of boredom in the absence of the beloved or a spiritual principle of completeness, of longing for something undefined and of propensity to an absolute, hardly glimpsed in *ură/ ugly* and *dor/homesick*. Integration and alienation, identity and rupture, belonging to an original model and the continuous tendency of surpassing it, are some of the determinant peculiarities of Cioran's ideation, which is legitimized by assuming an identity

both originating and intentional uprooting, by transgression of ethnic boundaries.

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Identities and Models in Romanian Criticism: a Historical, yet Biased, Perspective

The article "The Post-War Romanian Literature" seeks to clarify the main features of the Romanian post-war literature in terms of its relationship with the Communist authorities and their directives. Thus, one can distinguish between a type of literature that turns into propaganda and a type of literature that attempts to circumvent the political and preserve individual values such as: memory, personal histories, Self-culture. The article also drafts the biography of the Post-Communist Romanian literature, focusing on the deep felt need to reorganize its status, vision and themes.

Pendant le régime communiste, institué en Roumanie en 1947 sous la forme d'une république de démocratie populaire (à la place d'une monarchie constitutionnelle), la littérature a été considérée, d'après le modèle soviétique, une forme de l'idéologie et un moyen de propagande qui se subordonne au politique. En ce sens, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej dit dans un discours de 1961 : « Étant un genre de la création artistique, la littérature est, en même temps, un domaine de l'idéologie, et même un des plus importants, grâce à la grande puissance d'influence qu'elle possède. Notre littérature est appelée à avoir un rôle d'autant plus actif dans la formation de la conscience socialiste, dans l'anéantissement des influences de l'idéologie, de la morale, des habitudes héritées de l'ancienne société »¹. Dans les soi-disant *Thèses de juillet* (deux discours prononcés au cours de l'été 1971 et par lesquels, après une période de libéralisation relative, il se produit un retour vers la doctrine jdanovienne et staliniste sur la littérature), Nicolae Ceaușescu dit d'un ton ferme : « L'art doit servir à un seul but : à l'éducation socialiste, communiste »². Une année plus tard (comme, d'ailleurs, dans tous les discours qui vont suivre), dans un discours prononcé à la Conférence Nationale des Écrivains, le chef de l'Etat souligne le rôle magnifique de l'écrivain : « Quel but plus élevé, quelle mission plus noble peuvent avoir les hommes de la plume que ceux de mettre leurs talent, fantaisie et inspiration au service de la création de l'homme nouveau de l'époque du socialisme et du communisme ! ». En revanche, sont critiqués les écrivains insensibles à cette cause grandiose et qui cherchent leurs sujets « dans des événements insignifiants, banals des existences consommées au bord de la société, dans des cafés, dans l'atmosphère de la vie de boulevard », aussi bien que ceux qui deviennent « les prisonniers de leur propre imagination malade, qui ne peut donner naissance qu'à une littérature stérile, languissante, dépourvue de force émotionnelle, d'audience auprès du grand public, qui n'est pas utile à l'homme, à son bien-être ou à ses bonheur et élévation spirituelle »³.

¹ Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, *Cuvîntare rostită la Conferința organizației de partid a orașului București*, 15 februarie 1961, București, Editura Politică, 1964, p.21.

² Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Expunere la Consfătuirea de lucru a activului de partid din domeniul ideologiei și al activității politice și cultural-educative*, raport republicat în „Vatra”, anul XXIX, nr. 8, august 2001, pp.42-44.

³ Nicolae Ceaușescu, *Cuvîntarea la Conferința Națională a Scriitorilor din Republica Socialistă România*, în „Viața românească”, anul XXV, nr. 5, mai, 1972, pp.6-9.

Une partie des écrivains assument ces directives politiques et ce sont eux qui réalisent en Roumanie la *littérature de propagande*, une littérature officielle. Présence constante pendant le régime communiste, elle connaît des étapes différentes. Elle est souveraine de 1947 à 1964, dans ce qui est appelé (selon une terminologie politique) une étape *de gel* ; elle est plus faible pendant la période 1965-1971, qui est une période d'autonomisation de la littérature, pendant laquelle Nicolae Ceaușescu, le nouveau chef du Parti, s'est trop peu intéressé à régler la vie littéraire. Par contre, elle revêt de nouvelles formes après 1971, quand la littérature de propagande se manifeste surtout par la participation au culte de la personnalité, dans la presse et dans des volumes publiés en honneur du président. Mais pas seulement. Il se développe de plus en plus pendant cette période (qui dure, dans des formes de plus en plus dégradées, jusqu'à la chute du régime, en 1989) un langage hypocrite, qui fonctionne à l'échelle nationale. On retrouve ainsi, dans l'œuvre d'un même écrivain, l'optimisme officiel pratiqué dans la presse (surtout à l'approche des dates importantes du calendrier officiel) et une inquiétude présente dans ses volumes personnels, notamment dans ses ouvrages fictionnels.

A l'exception de la première période d'après l'institution du régime communiste (en particulier les années '50), dans les périodes qui ont suivi, pendant lesquelles la littérature s'est efforcée de maintenir une certaine autonomie par rapport au Pouvoir, celle-ci a essayé de se soustraire au triomphalisme spécifique de l'homme nouveau et de parler le langage beaucoup plus riche de l'homme de toujours. Dans un article paru après 1990, Ana Blandiana avoue le dilemme qu'elle a vécu pendant la période totalitaire : « si ce n'est pas par hasard plus honnête de ne pas du tout publier, même les pages les plus héroïques, dans les conditions dans lesquelles nous publions. Nous écrivions des œuvres courageuses, publiées par des rédacteurs, à leur tour, courageux, et nous nous sentions coupables même pour notre courage, parce que nous n'étions pas sûrs que ce courage ne serait pas manipulé et utilisé comme un argument pour démontrer une liberté d'expression qui au fond n'existait pas et qui pouvait être seulement de temps en temps réalisée par le risque des individualités séparées et des solidarités tacites, à la suite des luttes épuisantes et prolongées ». Pourtant, elle a assumé le risque de renoncer au silence pour rester « toujours à côté des candidats à la défaite »⁴.

Cette manière d'assumer le rôle peut être trouvé non pas seulement dans les pages publiées dans le postcommunisme, mais aussi dans quelques professions de croyance parues à l'époque. Constamment, Marin Preda considère que l'écrivain doit « donner voix à l'inquiétude morale des masses » et rester du côté non pas de l'Histoire (l'un des grands principes souverains de l'idéologie communiste), mais de l'individu, en se demandant, par ses écrits, « quel est le destin de chaque homme séparément, en sachant que l'homme n'a qu'une seule vie à vivre, tandis que l'histoire est lente et impassible »⁵. En se situant du côté de la marche obstinée des gens ordinaires (et non pas du côté de la marche enthousiasmée des grands gens des prescriptions officielles), les écrivains parlent dans leurs œuvres non pas d'un passé glorieux, mais d'une mémoire outragée, non pas d'un présent héroïque, mais d'un présent inquiétant. Malgré tout cela, Ion D. Sîrbu (l'un des rares écrivains qui a écrit quelques livres destinés au tiroir) s'adresse à un ami dans une lettre de 1987 : « Mais, il y a, chez nous, une énorme inflation de souffrance, une souffrance jamais articulée ou racontée, nous n'avons

⁴ Ana Blandiana, *Spaima de literatură*, București, Editura Humanitas, 2006, p. 114.

⁵ Marin Preda, *Imposibila înțoarcere*, București, Cartea Românească, 1971, p. 43 și p. 24.

pas le droit de traverser la vie comme des esclaves sans confession. Toute la littérature que j'ai écrite tout au long de ces années pourrait s'inscrire dans la formule de Panait Istrati, [...] c'est-à-dire : *Les confessions des vaincus !* »⁶.

Il y a ainsi dans la Roumanie d'après guerre, à côté de la littérature de propagande, *une littérature alternative*, appelée par certains commentateurs *littérature de la résistance*, une littérature qui a soutenu d'autres valeurs et d'autres sujets que ceux de la littérature officielle, et qui, par conséquent, a offert la chance d'une résistance contre celle-ci. Ainsi, dans un article de 1990, Ioana Em. Petrescu considère que la littérature de la résistance englobe « les livres, peu nombreux, parus à grande peine, toujours ajournés, souvent mutilés, mais jamais pervertis dans leur vérité, lourde et proclamée dans une époque où le verbe „professionnaliser” est apparu comme synonyme avec une accusation politique. Quoi d'autre sinon une admirable „littérature de la résistance” signifient non pas seulement le roman politique des 15 dernières années, mais aussi les écrits de Constantin Noica et de son école, l'acte culturel fondamental de récupération – soit-elle tardive – de la philosophie grecque, la série „Orientalia”, les essais d'Anton Dumitriu, la dramatique histoire du servage de l'académicien David Prodan ou, à l'autre pôle des âges, l'explosion des années '80 ? La culture roumaine majeure, authentique, a survécu quand même, je veux dire, d'une manière dont elle n'a pas été capable de survivre dans les décennies 5-6. Et, fait extrêmement important, son public a survécu aussi »⁷. À son tour, Mircea Iorgulescu considère que la littérature participe plutôt à une *culture tolérée* : « il y a en Roumanie, outre la culture officielle, une culture tolérée aussi. Elle n'est pas une culture parallèle ; elle n'est pas ni une culture alternative ; elle est une culture autonome, une autonomie bien sûr limitée, dont l'existence est formellement acceptée par le pouvoir, mais aussi progressivement limitée. Cette culture tolérée prolonge les élans démocrates et libertaires de la fin des années '60, mais par une métamorphose qui à long terme conduit à l'asphyxie. [...] Puissante tout au long des années '70 et même au début des années '80, aujourd'hui cette culture tolérée a l'air de se suffoquer. Son existence en Roumanie n'a pas rendu possible l'apparition d'une littérature et d'une culture de type „samizdat”, mais depuis quelques années, une fois avec la dégradation accélérée du système, le degré de tolérance a beaucoup baissé, et une des explications de l'augmentation du nombre des écrivains qui ont pris position par rapport à la politique du régime est la suivante : la limitation drastique de l'autonomie dont ils s'étaient réjouis. Des revues supprimées, des revues dont le tirage est interdit à la diffusion et brûlé, des livres en cours d'impression qui ont été retirés et fondus, toutes ces mesures qui ont été menées les dernières années contre la culture tolérée montrent que le pouvoir tend maintenant de l'annuler, qu'il n'est plus disposé à l'accepter »⁸.

Cette littérature a joué un rôle très important dans le totalitarisme. L'importance et le mécanisme de la lecture sont expliqués aussi par un théoricien de la relecture ; émigré de Roumanie dans les années '70, Matei Călinescu note dans son autobiographie : « Lire dans un

⁶ Ion D. Sîrbu, *Scrisori către bunul Dumnezeu*, édition par Ion Vartic, Cluj, Editura Biblioteca Apostrof, 1998, p. 166.

⁷ Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Literatura „rezistenței”*, în „Tribuna”, serie nouă, anul II, nr. 2, 11 ianuarie 1990, pp. 1 și 2.

⁸ Mircea Iorgulescu, *România – ultima banchiză*, în „Contrapunct”, nr. 15, 13 aprilie 1990.

monde totalitaire est presque identique à lire dans la prison – quand les gardiens vous le permettent. La lecture qui en résulte est en même temps rigoureuse, attentive (les livres dignes d’être lus, relativement peu nombreux, sont soumis à une lecture profonde, intensive) et projective – dans le sens que le lecteur projette dans le texte ses propres aspirations secrètes, ses désirs, pensées, théories. L’intérêt pour ce type de lecture dérive de la tension entre l’attention et la projection, entre le respect pour la lettre et la tendance de voir dans le texte une expression allégorique du drame du lecteur»⁹.

Qu’est-ce que la littérature a réussi à faire pendant toute cette période ? Elle a réussi à remplir, même si partiellement, *une fonction de mémoire communautaire* dans un régime caractérisé – selon le politologue Vladimir Tismăneanu – par « amnésie et viol psychique »¹⁰. C’est justement pour cela, observe Marin Preda : « Qu’on demande souvent à l’écrivain roumain de faire un travail d’archiviste, un travail de sociologue, de politologue, d’historien, avant de passer à la rédaction d’un livre sur des sujets d’histoire contemporaine »¹¹. Sur la base de cette fonction, aussi bien que du rôle assumé (d’une manière atypique) par la littérature, par la fiction, de dévoiler la vérité communautaire, il s’est développé toute une orientation de la prose littéraire : *la prose de l’obsédante décennie*, développée notamment dans le roman. Constamment placées dans les années ’50 (*l’obsédante décennie*), des mondes rongés par le mensonge, la haine, la culpabilité ont été construites. S’inscrivent ici – comme sommets esthétiques – les romans de Marin Preda (*Moromeții*, II; *Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni*), Dumitru Radu Popescu (en particulier le cycle *F* duquel font partie les romans *F*, *Vînătoare regală*, *O bere pentru calul meu*), Bujor Nedelcovici (la trilogie *Somnul vameșului*), Augustin Buzura (*Fețele tăcerii*, *Orgolii*), Constantin Țoiu (*Galeria cu viță sălbatică*). Cette orientation a été aussi appelée à l’époque une orientation du roman politique, précisément parce qu’elle indiquait une problématique du pouvoir politique, de son rapport abusif avec l’individu.

Une autre fonction assumée par la littérature a été de préserver une *culture du moi* dans une société qui se propose la dissolution de l’individualité et son absorption dans un *nous* exprimé seulement par le truchement de l’idéologie officielle. Selon Herta Müller, les livres – lus sans cesse et assidûment discutés avec les amis – « t’aidaient à ne pas rester muet devant toi-même. Changer, les livres ne pouvaient rien changer, ils décrivaient seulement comment c’est l’homme quand il n’y a aucun bonheur possible. Ne serait-ce que ça, et ça fait beaucoup quand même – je n’ai jamais demandé d’avantage d’un livre »¹². Dans la période des années ’50, la soi-disant poésie intimiste, des émotions individuelles, est condamnée et interdite. Un écrivain comme Radu Cosașu exécute, dans ces années-là, par conviction, cette exigence. Mais plus tard, la récupération de son intériorité qui à cette époque-là « n’avait pas de biographie, de racine, de culture, d’intimité » se produit dans un des plus intéressants écrits autobiographiques : *Supraviețuiri* (vol. I-VI, 1973-1989). Il est noté ici le processus douloureux, passé par des doutes, trahisons, défaites, de naissance d’un *moi*. Il se développe, dans la littérature, une intéressante prose psychologique, qui cherche à investiguer les

⁹ Matei Călinescu, Ion Vianu, *Amintiri în dialog*, Iași, Polirom, 1998, pp.305-306.

¹⁰ Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Arheologia terorii*, București, Editura ALLFA, p. 51.

¹¹ Marin Preda, *Creație și morală*, édition par V. Crăciun et C. Popescu, București, Cartea Românească, 1989, pp. 519-520.

¹² Herta Müller, *Regele se-nclină și ucide*, traductions et notes par Alexandru Al. Șahighian, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2005, p. 193.

psychologies des vaincus, de l'abysse intérieur, qui cherche à parler d'inadaptation et d'échec. Le représentant le plus important de cette orientation est Nicolae Breban, dans des romans tels *În absența stăpînitorilor*, *Îngerul de gips*, *Bunavestire*. Un rôle très important dans cette culture du moi este joué par *la poésie*. Elle réussit à exprimer les sujets de la sensibilité contemporaine : la solitude, l'aliénation, la scission, aussi bien qu'une riche thématique religieuse, officiellement interdite aussi dans un régime déclaré (et militant) athée.

Une autre fonction assumée par la littérature est de consigner (en particulier dans les années '80) la réalité immédiate, le fait banal, car – selon Gabriela Adameșteanu – « A cette époque-là, le quotidien était déjà entré dans la zone interdite. La façon dont on vivait alors, au niveau „ du détail”, aujourd'hui ressemble à un document »¹³. Elle l'écrit elle-même dans un roman exceptionnel, *Dimineața pierdută*, tout comme la littérature du quotidien est un vrai programme littéraire de la génération des années '80 (Mircea Cărtărescu, Gh. Crăciun, Al. Vlad, Ioan Groșan, Mircea Nedelciu, Adina Kenereș, Al. Mușina). Cette réalité devenue subversive à cause du gri (mais aussi de la famine et du froid) qui l'éloignait de plus en plus du rose des documents officiels est présente aussi dans *la littérature souterraine*, respectivement dans les journaux et les lettres qui paraîtront seulement après 1989, en esquisant l'image d'une Roumanie exaspérée, au seuil de l'Apocalypse. Il s'agit des écrits dus à Mircea Zăciu (*Jurnal*), Victor Felea (*Jurnalul unui poet leneș*), Livius Ciocârlie (*Paradisul derizoriu*), Florența Albu (*Zidul martor*), Tia Șerbănescu (*Femeia din fotografie*), Liviu Antonesei (*Jurnal din anii ciumei: 1987-1989*), Liviu Ioan Stoiciu (*Jurnal stoic din anul revoluției*), Ion D. Sîrbu (*Scrisori către bunul Dumnezeu*), Stelian Tănase (*Acasă se vorbește în șoaptă*) etc. Pour se faire une idée de cette fin des années '80, voilà ce qui était consigné dans ces écrits personnels. Stelian Tănase : « Une respiration dans un espace sans dimensions, mais non pas une vie. Seulement une respiration. Seulement le bruit truqué d'une respiration. Une fin sans fin du monde »¹⁴. Tia Șerbănescu se place là aussi : « C'est une chose faite, on n'a aucun moyen de salut, la fin du monde nous trouve plus prêts, plus aptes pour elle que jamais. On n'est que des larves paresseuses ; on a renoncé à réfléchir, on a renoncé à discerner »¹⁵. Effrayée par « les pogromes roumains contre les Roumains », arrivée au bout de ses forces intérieures, Florența Albu écrit : « Dans la réalité historique donnée – un seul courant s'unit : l'apocalyptique »¹⁶.

La position et le prestige de l'écrivain dans le régime communiste disparaissent après 1989. Selon le critique Al. Cistelean : « Bien sûr, il n'est ni agréable ni facile pour un écrivain qui a vécu le vertige de son propre classicisme de devoir maintenant ne pas confirmer qu'il est un „classique”, mais, par contre, de confirmer qu'il est un écrivain »¹⁷. Un autre critique, Dan C. Mihăilescu, croit (en 1990) que « la littérature, notre paradis artificiel par lequel on a traversé autant de saisons en enfer, sera submergée ». L'explication du critique mérite d'être retenue : « Après avoir consommé cette première étape de notre convalescence,

¹³ Gabriela Adameșteanu, postface à *Întîlnirea*, Iași, Polirom, 2003, p. 306.

¹⁴ Stelian Tănase, *Acasă se vorbește în șoaptă. Dosar & Jurnal din anii tîrzii ai dictaturii*, București, Editura Compania, 2002, p. 90.

¹⁵ Tia Șerbănescu, *Femeia din fotografie. Jurnal 1987-1989*, București, Compania, 2000, p. 179.

¹⁶ Florența Albu, *Zidul martor (Pagini de jurnal), 1970-1990*, București, Cartea Românească, 1994, p. 358.

¹⁷ Al. Cistelean, «Istoria a provocat un fel de repelență generală a scriitorimii noastre», în «Familia», nr.10-11, octombrie-noiembrie 1994, p.33.

le monde voudra deux chose simultanément : comprendre (c'est-à-dire se rappeler) et oublier (c'est-à-dire guérir complètement). [...] Il y aura une faim terrible pour des témoignages, pour le document nu, pour des statistiques, photographies, mémoires, enquêtes »¹⁸. La littérature accuse donc, dans le postcommunisme, une crise qui a deux aspects : institutionnel (la littérature doit créer et soutenir ses propres institutions) et scriptural : quelques-uns des sujets, aussi bien que la conception d'avant 1989 deviennent inactuels, inintéressants. Il apparaît, en échange, de nouveaux phénomènes : *la réintégration dans la littérature de Roumanie (avec droit de circulation et de discussion publique) des écrivains exilés ; la publication des œuvres autobiographiques, d'un genre littéraire qui comprend les mémoires historiques de récupération d'un passé interdit qui a dans son centre l'expérience de la prison*. Bien des écrivains de première importance de la vie littéraire d'avant 1989 entrent dans un cône d'ombre, n'écrivent plus (pour longtemps) de littérature, entrent dans la politique ou dans le journalisme. Ils s'intéressent surtout aux publications périodiques, afin de donner une réponse immédiate à la réalité kaléidoscopique et, à coup sûr, accaparante, sinon séduisante. Par contre, la réponse artistique apparaît plus difficilement. Les écrivains ont attendu (tout comme, peut-être, leurs lecteurs) que ce monde s'éclaircisse, ne serait-ce que dans son désordre et cauchemar, de sorte qu'un retour intéressant de ces écrivains ne se produit que vers la fin de années '90. Toujours à cette époque-là on peut parler d'une stabilité du système éditorial, par le bon fonctionnement des maisons d'édition telles Polirom, Humanitas, Paralela 45 etc.

Une partie de l'imaginaire de ces prosateurs qui proviennent des générations et poétiques différentes présente certaines ressemblances, participe à un phénomène littéraire que j'appellerais *la détabouisation de la Roumanie*. Dans les pages des auteurs tels Gabriela Adameșteanu, Dumitru Țepeneag, Adrian Oțoiu, Petru Cimpoeșu, Dan Lungu, Petre Barbu, Bogdan Suceavă, Radu Pavel Gheo ou Florina Ilis est présentée une Roumanie de nos jours, déboussolée, terrifiante, souvent insupportable. Par le destin des personnages, les livres de ces écrivains réinventent narrativement un pays, en le débarrassant des clichés et des tabous, en le rendant – ce qui est de la compétence de l'art – sinon supportable, alors intelligible et accessible. En se confrontant avec les thèmes les plus graves de la vie communautaire (la migration, le manque de chance et d'avenir, la crise de la famille, le désespoir et la folie), en mettant en mouvement l'acuité et la profondeur de l'art, mais aussi la force propre à l'épique, ces écrivains lancent des représentations communautaires troublantes, en proposant des réponses substantielles, non ignorables à la question obsédante de la société roumaine de nos jours : qui sommes-nous ?

Après 2000, on parle de plus en plus souvent de l'apparition d'une nouvelle génération littéraire, qui a d'autres thèmes et d'autres préoccupations. Sous un nom commun, des auteurs différents sont groupés entre eux. Certains d'entre eux continuent d'être (tout comme les cinéastes de la nouvelle vague – Cristian Mungiu, Corneliu Porumboiu – qui ont vers les 40 ans) des artistes de la mémoire, soit qu'il s'agisse d'une mémoire personnelle ou d'une mémoire communautaire. Pour eux, le passage d'un monde à l'autre, de la dictature au postcommunisme, est fondamental et ils mettent leur propre art au service de cette investigation. C'est le cas de certains auteurs tels Florina Ilis, Bogdan Suceavă, Filip Florian,

¹⁸ Dan C. Mihăilescu, *Legea pieței, nu?*, în "22", nr.11, 30 martie 1990, p.4.

Dan Lungu, Lucian Dan Teodorovici, Doina Ioanid, Ioana Nicolae. Pourtant, d'autres écrivains, plus jeunes de quelques années, ne ressentent plus ce trauma communautaire comme étant le leur. Je ne dirais pas que c'est une génération sans mémoire, mais plutôt une génération contre cette mémoire confuse et, pour elle, oppressive. Les écrivains des années 2000 refusent le thème de l'obsédant communisme et proposent leur propre authenticité et leurs propres thèmes : le voyage, la corporalité, la sexualité, l'inadaptation de type underground. Qu'ils font cela parfois avec des moyens de l'anti-littérature, c'est un phénomène lui-même bien connu dans la littérature. Ce qui me paraît intéressant c'est que, plusieurs fois, cette attitude anti- (anti-culture, anti-bibliothèque) utilise les formes du livresque. Tout comme je dirais qu'on assiste à un passage d'une marginalité des inadaptés esthètes (qui se retrouvaient dans la littérature des générations antérieures) à un underground véritable, social, une périphérie des déclassés. En vue de la nouvelle authenticité, la littérature (ré)essaie des alliances nouvelles et intéressantes : avec le reportage, le langage des groupes musicaux, la sociologie etc. Parmi eux, je retiendrais : Cecilia Ștefănescu, Ana-Maria Sandu, Alexandru Vaculovski, Adrian Schiop, Ioana Bradea, Ionuț Chiva, Dan Sociu, Liviu Bîrsan etc.

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DORIN ȘTEFĂNESCU*Petru Maior University of Targu-Mures****Centre et concentration. L'actualité d'une théorie romantique***

The interpretation points out the actuality of Ion Heliade Rădulescu's theory about the centre and the concentration, as an expression of the philosophy of identity. Developed in his theoretical works such as The Equilibrium between Antithesis or The Universal Critical History, the doctrine distinguishes between 'centralization' (action that postulates the primacy of an autarchic centre, characteristic for the simple or despotic unity), 'decentralization' (implying the absence of the centre or its subordination to the elements of the system, synonymous with dissolution or anarchy) and 'concentration' (the true union or the composed unity around a centre that establishes with the elements of the system relations of harmony and liberty). Connected with this theory, Heliade also discusses the distinction between a partial center, a general center and a universal center, all of them integrated in an ideal theocentric world.

Chez l'écrivain et le philosophe romantique Ion Heliade Rădulescu (1802-1872), dans ses grandes œuvres théoriques *L'Équilibre entre les antithèses* et *L'Histoire critique universelle*, les principes opposés qui ne s'écartent pas de l'ordre originelle de la nature se trouvent dans un rapport de corrélation. N'affectant pas l'équilibre d'une nature créée harmoniquement, ils forment les soi-disant *dualités naturelles*, les seules vraies parce que les seules créatrices : « les seules comme on voit à la création destinées par l'amour divin et universel à créer, à produire dans l'infini et dans l'éternité », elles supposent « deux termes corrélatifs, parallèles, sympathiques et harmonieux ».¹ Formée d'un terme actif et d'un terme passif, cette unité composée (ou union) se caractérise par un équilibre dont l'instabilité découle du refus même de l'immobilité et de la valorisation absolue du devenir universel. Si « l'emblème de la véritable Justice a toujours été la balance, et la balance n'est qu'équilibre », il faut aussitôt ajouter que l'état d'équilibre n'implique pas une structure statique, mais une structure dynamique, dans un permanent mouvement : « Quand une fois l'équilibre se rompt, quand une balance en équilibre se meut par une force quelconque et qu'une partie se met à descendre, l'équilibre ne s'établit pas d'un seul coup. L'autre partie tire en bas poussée par la même force, et ainsi, tantôt en haut, tantôt en bas, ce n'est qu'après plusieurs balancements ou agitations que l'équilibre se rétablit ».² Le rapport entre l'équilibre et le balancement se fonde sur celui entre l'actif et le passif, sur la tension ontologique entre deux valeurs hiérarchisées, dont l'actif représente « le premier pas », c'est-à-dire il a un rôle prééminent, instaurateur *de facto* de l'équilibre, à l'encontre du passif qui l'accepte. De sorte que l'égalité des termes n'exclut pas mais, par contre, implique la supériorité de l'un par rapport à l'autre : « l'homme spirituel est l'égal de l'homme physique, mais supérieur ».³ Aspect qui confère à l'équilibre entre les antithèses un dynamisme créateur, le balancement continu entre des contraires corrélatifs étant un processus qui réitère l'équilibre même de la vie, de sa fragile victoire sur

¹ *Equilibrul între antiteze sau Spiritul și materia [L'Équilibre entre les antithèses ou l'Esprit et la matière]*, București, 1859-1869, p. 11. Dorénavant : EA.

² *Ibidem*, p. 303.

³ *Historia critică universală [L'Histoire critique universelle]*, t. I, București, 1892, p. 42. Dorénavant : HCU.

la mort.

Même si, selon l'affirmation d'Eugen Simion, « Héliade veut vite dépasser les antithèses, arriver à l'équilibre », ⁴ la dialectique héliadesque ne confond aucunement les deux principes naturels. Malgré leur connaturalité, ils gardent leurs attributs spécifiques, sans s'entremêler, et sans conduire non plus vers la postulation d'une imaginaire entremise. « Quelqu'un – avoue Héliade – peut confondre nos doctrines avec celles appelées de *juste-milieu* (...). Cette espèce de bâtard issu de leur nature est condamné depuis toujours à ne rien produire », de sorte que « dans tous les principes opposés, les champs seront distingués ». ⁵ Le mélange des principes ou le compromis du juste-milieu, la compromettante équidistance envers deux extrêmes opposées ruinent l'équilibre, soit parce qu'ils le réduisent à un état de confusion ou d'indistinction entre les termes, soit parce qu'ils le glacent dans l'immobilité. La voie du juste-milieu (*juste* seulement parce qu'elle passe, géométriquement, exactement à travers le milieu) n'est pas créatrice ; elle ne fait que maintenir dans un équilibre stérile des principes qu'elle considère dans leur hypostase statique. Or en distinguant les champs, Héliade prévient une entremise forcée et, en même temps, il les situe dans l'horizon du « résultat » qu'ils créent et où ils parachèvent leur mission : « Il n'y a aucun objet soit matériel soit idéal, qui n'ait son couple, son parallèle, son corrélatif, son sympathique, de nature différente, mais son accomplissement. Chaque objet, ou il est actif et doit avoir son passif, ou il est passif et doit avoir son actif. Tous sont prédestinés par l'union de l'actif et du passif de produire un effet, c'est-à-dire un troisième objet, et celui-ci est plus parfait que les précédents ». ⁶ On observe qu'en premier lieu les principes opposés sont complémentaires bien que de nature différente. Ce n'est pas une négation de la connaturalité, tel qu'il semble à première vue, car dans les deux principes agit une même nature dans des manières ou selon des manifestations différentes. La différence (explicable par l'actif de l'un et le passif de l'autre) ne se résout pas en in-différence, mais en complémentarité. En deuxième lieu, l'union entre l'actif et le passif ne suppose pas une fusion par absorption, une dissolution réciproque, mais une recherche de l'autre avec lequel s'assembler. La différence constitutive s'ouvre ici vers l'altérité totalisante. En troisième lieu, la création suppose un terme nouveau, supérieur à ceux qui l'ont fait naître. Ce n'est que *le résultat* créé qui offre une solution à la tension entre l'actif et le passif, en instaurant le véritable équilibre dont la nature est triadique. ⁷ Ce n'est qu'en vertu de ce bien qui réalise l'équilibre *naturel* que « le temps et l'espace – l'Esprit et la Matière – (...), en un mot l'Actif et le Passif sont des antithèses ou des antinomies qui forment des dyades ou des dualités sympathiques, corrélatives, parallèles, très proches l'une de l'autre de sorte qu'un terme suppose l'autre, l'un complète l'autre ; entre eux il n'y a pas de lutte mais des noces ». ⁸

Les noces entre les principes corrélatifs doivent être vues comme rapprochement et achèvement réciproques ; loin de s'annuler, ils coexistent dans la réalisation d'un équilibre fondé sur la paix et l'harmonie : « L'Esprit et la Matière sont deux êtres éternels, infinis, coexistants, parallèles, sympathiques, qui (...) ne peuvent jamais se trouver en lutte, jamais ils ne peuvent s'aiguiller ou s'annuler l'un l'autre » ; c'est pourquoi, dit Héliade, « le principe de

⁴ Eugen Simion, *Dimineața poezilor* [L'aube des poètes], Bucarest, Cartea Românească, 1980, p. 79.

⁵ EA, pp. 2, 3. La distinction des champs se réalise « par la connaissance claire de chacun des termes des dualités » (HCU, t. I, p. 9).

⁶ HCU, t. I, p. 36.

⁷ « De l'Actif et du Passif il en sort le Résultat » (EA, p. 269). Même s'il parle du « pouvoir égal et invincible de ces deux principes » (*ibidem*, p. 32), Héliade précise : « l'homme spirituel est l'égal de l'homme physique mais supérieur ; l'homme moral qui achève la trinité vaut mieux que l'un et que l'autre » (HCU, t. I, p. 42).

⁸ EA, p. 269. Voir aussi HCU, t. I, pp. 30, 50.

nos doctrines est la paix et l'harmonie entre les éléments ».⁹ La paix et l'harmonie ou la sympathie sont les expressions de l'équilibre entre les contraires, de l'élévation des parties au niveau d'un tout supérieur. Se proposant d'« annoncer la paix entre les éléments, l'équilibre des antithèses », Héliade ne comprend pas la paix éternelle de la mort, l'arrêt de tout dans l'immobilité absolue mais, par contre, la paix prêchée par la Parole de la vie, la seule véritablement éternelle puisque la seule prédestinée depuis la Création du monde, « la paix de la vie et non pas celle des tombes, la paix de la Justice, qui elle seule est durable ».¹⁰ Apaisant les contraires, la paix les harmonise en associant l'un avec l'autre ; c'est un équilibre par compensation, car toutes les propriétés de l'esprit et de la matière, corrélatives dans leur essence, « sont des compensations dans l'équilibre universel ».¹¹ L'excès de l'actif est compensé par son union avec le passif et inversement, de sorte que l'équilibre est *un état actif* de l'ensemble, où chaque partie se trouve en harmonie avec les autres et toutes en harmonie avec l'ensemble. Conformément à la thèse du « premier pas », l'équilibre entre l'esprit et la matière est imposé par le principe actif de la dyade. Si « équilibre ne veut dire que balance juste, justice »,¹² le modèle selon lequel il se réalise met en harmonie les deux principes de l'existence, mais il reste – dans son essence – de nature spirituelle.

L'équilibre exprimé par la paix, l'harmonie et la sympathie entre les principes antithétiques, principes disposés dans une dualité où leur connaturalité est créatrice, se présente comme la suite naturelle de l'attraction universelle. Les termes antithétiques s'attirent en vertu de leur connaturalité organique, en transformant leur substance selon la loi de la compensation. Le grand mouvement par lequel toutes les forces universelles s'attirent l'une vers l'autre anime la structure de la création divine, établie *ab origine*. « Après l'attraction universelle – écrit Héliade – par répulsion se forment les embryons de sphères, des satellites, ensuite des planètes, puis des soleils, (...) de plus en plus parfaits, jusqu'à la perfection infinie et absolue ».¹³ Doublée par la répulsion, l'attraction constitue l'acte fondamental de la dialectique cosmogonique, processus de création qui implique deux forces convergentes qui réalisent l'ordre de l'univers, « l'équilibre entre la force centripète et la force centrifuge ».¹⁴ Le grand mouvement d'attraction-répulsion ou centripète-centrifuge représente la dynamique par laquelle tout ce qui existe gravite autour d'un centre infini et absolu, « la grande concentration » qui assure à l'univers un équilibre en éternelle formation et reformation.

Le thème du *centre* est largement répandu dans la pensée romantique, expression plus ou moins voilée de la philosophie de l'identité. Le centre de l'être, comme celui de l'univers, est le lieu privilégié de l'union avec les énergies cosmiques, lieu mystique qui rassemble en soi, en les harmonisant, toutes les forces antagoniques qu'il absorbe et transforme d'une manière créatrice.¹⁵ Mais Héliade propose une ingénieuse théorie de la *concentration* (ou de la

⁹ HCU, t. I, pp. 13-14 ; *Descrierea Europei după tractatul din Paris, 14 mai 1856* [La description de l'Europe après le traité de Paris, le 14 mai 1856], p. 106.

¹⁰ EA, pp. 19, 12.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 273.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 311.

¹³ HCU, t. I, p. 72. À propos de l'influence de Fourier sur la mécanique céleste newtonienne, chez Héliade, voir Radu Tomoiagă, *Ion Eliade Rădulescu. Ideologia social-politică și filosofică* [L'Idéologie sociale, politique et philosophique], Bucarest, Editura Științifică, 1971, p. 143.

¹⁴ EA, p. 335.

¹⁵ Pour Troxler par exemple (*Métaphysique*, 1828), « le centre vivant de l'existence » est « le monde de tous les mondes », « la profondeur la plus profonde ». Parce que « rien n'est en repos, tout est devenir, se transforme

concentration), termes qu'il distingue nettement de ceux d'« encentration » (centralisation) et de « décentration » (décentralisation). *L'encentration* (la centralisation) postule la primauté hiérarchique du centre par rapport aux parties dispersées. Encentrer ou centraliser suppose absorber ou annuler tout ce qui se trouve dans la sphère d'attraction d'un centre autarchique, le seul investi avec une valeur ontologique : « Centraliser ou ramener au centre toutes les parties (...) serait comme si on réduisait tout dans un point » ; « la centralisation est s'efforcer afin de ramener tout au centre, dans un seul point (...) ». La centralisation est une lutte pour tout détruire, et se détruire à la fin soi-même » ; « L'esprit centralisateur est l'esprit de l'unité, l'esprit de la centralisation ou du despotisme ».¹⁶ Héliade rejette ce qu'il appelle l'unité simple avec seulement l'un des termes marqué de positivité, et dont il ne peut naître qu'une dualité monstrueuse ou chimérique.¹⁷ À l'encontre de l'encentration ou de la centralisation, *la décentration* (la décentralisation) signifie dissolution, l'absence du centre (ou sa pulvérisation dans les éléments), acte qui déforme le système, en le ramenant à l'état informe du chaos ou de l'anarchie. Mais c'est justement cette déconstruction qui pourrait rendre possible la reconstruction, la reformation de l'univers : « à partir de l'encentration, qui s'identifie au rien, on ne pourrait rien créer, tandis qu'à partir de la décentration ou de la dissolution des atomes on pourrait peut-être recréer le monde sous d'autres formes ».¹⁸ Si la centralisation résout tout au rien d'un seul terme qui, à la fin, s'anéantit lui-même, la décentralisation n'annule pas toute création, mais – sans la transformer encore en acte – représente une possibilité créatrice, toujours actualisable. Elle se situe entre la monade dogmatique (autarchique) de l'unité et la liberté de l'union. Quant à *la concentration* (*concentration*), elle représente l'union véritable de la dualité naturelle, où le centre, bien qu'il soit supérieur ontologiquement à l'élément antithétique (puisque'il est « le premier pas » dans cette relation dyadique), entretient avec celui-ci un rapport sympathique, de connaturalité qui assure l'harmonie de l'ensemble : « Rien n'est ni encentré, ni décentré dans l'univers, mais tout est concentré » ; et cela en vertu d'une sorte d'*Aufhebung* hégélienne : « concentrer, c'est-à-dire faire exister, conserver et faire progresser ».¹⁹

Significative est en ce sens la distinction qu'Héliade fait – dans le sillage de l'opposition fondamentale entre l'encentration et la concentration – entre *le centre général* et *le centre universel*. « Le système de l'unité, le système de l'encentration est identique au pharaonisme », « un centre général qui absorbe tous les centres partiels » ; tandis que dans le système de l'union toutes les choses « gravitent autour d'un centre universel ».²⁰ Le centre général est le point qui focalise tous les éléments d'une unité simple qu'il se subordonne ; le centre universel réalise l'union en équilibre et harmonie. Mais d'autre part, chaque système a « son centre propre et partiel », intégré dans un centre général qui, à son tour, avec d'autres

et se meut harmonieusement », ajoute Fr. Schlegel dans les *Fragments* publiés dans les pages de l'*Athenäum*, « l'homme ne peut exister sans un centre vivant » ; « un homme véritable est celui qui est arrivé jusqu'au centre de l'humanité » ; « nous connaissons l'homme quand nous connaissons le centre de la terre ».

¹⁶ EA, pp. 241, 353, 355. La théorie de la concentration ou de la centralisation est exposée par Héliade dans deux chapitres de *L'Équilibre... : Ni l'encentration, ni la décentration, mais la concentration* (pp. 325-335) et *Ni la centralisation, ni la décentralisation, mais la concentration* (pp. 352-356).

¹⁷ La dualité « monstrueuse », formée de deux termes positifs, représente une structure diamétrale et symétrique ; la dualité « chimérique », formée de deux termes dont l'un positif (existant) et l'autre négatif (inexistant), représente une structure concentrique et asymétrique. Bien qu'elles soient de nature sensiblement différente, les deux sont destructives et non créatrices, s'anéantissent elles-mêmes en se réduisant à des monades.

¹⁸ EA, p. 326.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 326, 353.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 327, 328, 326.

centres généraux qui comprennent des centres partiels, participe au système le plus englobant, dont le centre est universel. Voilà cette disposition hiérarchique des centres sur trois niveaux, où chaque centre supérieur se subordonne le centre immédiatement inférieur, en réalisant ensemble – par l’acte de la grande concentration – le système de l’harmonie cosmique : « Chaque atome a son centre, et plusieurs atomes concentrés dans un centre général forment un tout. Ainsi tout ce qui est animal, végétal et minéral sur la Terre gravite autour de cette sphère et forme une planète avec son satellite la Lune ; et ainsi toutes les planètes avec leurs satellites gravitent autour d’un autre centre plus général qui est le Soleil et forment le système solaire ; et c’est de la même façon peut-être que plusieurs soleils, avec les planètes et les satellites des planètes gravitent ou se concentrent autour d’un centre universel, et c’est ainsi que l’univers se conserve, dure et progresse. La loi de la concentration est universelle, immuable, éternelle, c’est la loi de la vie ».²¹ L’univers qui *tient* est concentré ou centralisé ; non seulement qu’il dure, en s’éternisant par l’équilibre instauré, mais il est animé par la loi de la conservation et du progrès, qui est la loi même du devenir de la vie. Aspect qui souligne – au-delà des implications cosmogoniques – la dimension européenne de la pensée d’Héliade, l’une des plus généreuse de l’époque (à côté de celle d’un Victor Hugo), par l’idée d’une Europe commune. Les aspirations paneuropéennes, en rejetant l’unité simple à l’image d’une centralisation autoritaire, non créatrice parce que monadique dans son essence, s’expriment dans la vision de l’unité composée (l’union) qui, conservant la liberté des termes d’une dualité naturelle, assure la création d’un troisième terme, et donc l’ouverture dans une triade. Une union ethnique trinitaire, disposée en triangle, conformément aux trois grandes familles de peuples établies, selon le critère linguistique, dans un espace harmonieux communautaire.

« Nous allons combattre *l’encentration* et la *décentration* et soutenir la *concentration* »,²² affirme Héliade dans le sens de la théorie de la concentration exposée plus haut. Rien n’est ni encentré ni décentré dans la nature, mais tout gravite librement autour d’un centre universel. C’est justement « le système de Dieu par lequel l’univers tient », un système « concentratif ou fédératif », par lequel Héliade entend surtout « l’esprit fédératif, ou centralisateur de l’Église Orientale »,²³ conformément à l’idéal chrétien primitif. La loi de la concentration est la loi même de la vie, parce qu’elle est impliquée dans la création divine de la vie ; Héliade rapporte sa démarche théorique à l’autorité incontestable de la Création biblique ; le monde a été créé concentré, ce qui veut dire que depuis son commencement il se tient et se soutient

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 378.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 241.

²³ *Ibidem*, pp. 326, 355. Théorie qui comporte des implications politiques car, en proposant la centralisation fédérative, Héliade pense à une organisation dans « de petits États confédérés selon le modèle de l’Église » (*ibidem*, p. 355) ; ceux « sortis du sein de la nature », comme les Barbares, ne peuvent pas se centraliser, mais « ils commencèrent à se centraliser, à se confédérer » (*ibidem*). C’est en même temps un passage de l’homme ancien à l’homme nouveau, car « les peuples de la nature changèrent plus facilement ou plus rapidement en l’Homme Nouveau » (*ibidem*). De sorte que la voie proposée est « la démocratie fédérative », « instituée par Jésus selon les lois de Moïse » (*ibidem*, p. 372). Concernant l’originalité d’Héliade dans l’application de la théorie de la concentration à la vie sociale et les possibles influences venues de Pierre Leroux, voir G. D. Scraha, *Ion Heliade-Rădulescu. Începuturile filosofiei și sociologiei românești* [Les commencements de la philosophie et de la sociologie roumaines], Bucarest, 1921, p. 136. Quant au « conservatisme progressiste » et à la proposition d’un système fédératif comme solution au « problème oriental », voir Mircea Muthu, *Balkanismul literar românesc* [Le balkanisme littéraire roumain], t. I, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 2002, pp. 82-86.

seulement parce qu'il se conserve – et progresse – dans l'orbite du centre divin créateur, manifestant à tous les niveaux son caractère *théocentrique* : « Avant la création les éléments étaient en confusion, en mélange, dans le chaos, c'était la dissolution. La création a commencé avec la centralisation, et là où la centralisation cesse, la vie cesse elle-même, et c'est la mort qui commence ».²⁴ Mais la loi de la vie est justement la loi de la nature, ce qui confère à la concentration le caractère de légalité immuable et éternelle. Si le monde est concentré ou centralisé originellement en vertu de sa création, c'est que ce principe législatif de tout l'univers exprime la nature divine elle-même semée dans la nature humaine, le signe par lequel le centre universel communique avec le centre partiel (« le cœur ») de chaque homme, car l'homme est « considéré comme un centre » : « La loi de la centralisation étant la loi de la nature, immuable et éternelle, elle est par conséquent inscrite aussi au cœur de chaque homme ».²⁵

²⁴ EA, p. 353.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 353, 21. Chez Novalis, dans *Les disciples à Saïs*, l'impulsion secrète de l'âme « s'élargit concentriquement à partir d'un noyau infini et profond ».

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Stănescu's Essay: A Palimpsest of Cultural Identity

Our point of view about the essay is somehow far from the opinions until now, namely: we think that the essay is a distinct genre, always with an esthetic message, having a discursive architecture, a genre inside the "literature of frontier". Being of a major importance for literary culture, the essay should be regarded as a palimpsest of human values.

Why Stănescu's essay and not his poetry? From the interpretative retrospective and analysis on Stănescu's work one can notice that the essayistic discourse was only tangentially reached by the critics, and it was seen as a (more or less) poetic 'adtext' or some other times it is omitted from the poetic 'calculus' of the poetry reader. We want to reestablish the value of a controversial genre, as well as the importance of poetic essays in the unitary understanding of artistic work, rebuilding the whole.

For the beginning we underline the fact that the essay faithfully registers the aesthetic seisms, defining itself as pure and essential form of the discourse.

The strength of the essayistic genre resides in information about 'paternity and diachrony' [Tiutiucă, 1979: 24-35], a history of the 'state of essay' from 1580, first edition of Montaigne's *Essays* until the 20th century, to Emerson, Unamuno, P. Valéry. But the sources of the essay are found in antiquity: Plato's *Dialogues*, Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, Seneca's *Lucilius' Letters*, Augustine's *Confessions*, didactic texts in that literature.

We stop at three aspects of the essay's etymons: (1) meanings in the 15th century, used by Montaigne's contemporaries, at the publication of his *Essais*: *gustus* (root *gust* = to try; *coup d'essai* or *apprentissage* or *expérience*; (2) Montaigne's meanings seen in his work [Eseuri, 1984]¹: (a) *exam, test, trial* [I, XXV]; *experience* [II, XXXVII]; *taste, sample, specimen* [III, XIII]; *first try, attempt, exercise, apprenticeship* [III, IX]; cinetic meaning: *effort* [I, L]; *weirdness, novelty* [II, VIII]. And finally, (3), the etymologic meaning: Fr. *essais* from the Lat. *exagium*, which properly means *weighing*, and figuratively: *precise exam*.

Functionally the essay² is announced through the meaning *experience* (*essays or experiences of life*), contextually presenting either 'the of course' of the *attempt*, or that of *learning as a cognitive acquisition, a new gnosis or perception on reality*.

As aesthetic function, the essay knows a structural variety: from Bacon's conventional or *moral* essay to periodic (journalistic) essay, illuminist essay [Voltaire], the aesthetic one³

¹ Michel de Montaigne, *Eseuri*, Trad. de Mariella Seulescu; prefață și note de Ludwig Grunbeerg, Ed. Minerva, București, 1984. v. cap. I, L: *Despre Democrit și Heraclit*.

² In Romanian inter-war journalism where the term essay appears for the first time, there was an oscilation between the French neologism: *essai* (Perpessicus), *eseu* (Călinescu), *esseu* or *eseu* (Eliade, Ionescu, Camil Petrescu), and the English neologism *essay* (Zarifopol). Most of Romanian writers, critics and essayists make their option for the form adapted to the norms of Romanian language, namely *eseu* (Vianu, Lovinescu, Streinu, Nichita Stănescu, Marin Sorescu).

³ In our opinion the conjunct use of the terms *eseu* and *esthetic* is a pleonasm: any essay catches the esthetics of a literary, scientific etc. object.

[Locke], the American essay (of manners, philosophic-speculative), the German essay of the 'monologue' type [Goethe] or 'Bildungs' essay [scientific pattern in Lessing's *Laokoon*, where there is a classification of arts in spatial and temporal arts], the Italian conventional essay, the Spanish essay of passion with neo-humanistic or metaphysical tendencies [Unamuno, Eugenio d'Ors, Ortega Y Gasset, 1982], coming back to the aesthetic essay [Valéry, 1929].

The *conventional essay (moral or ethic)* is dominant. What does the convention consist of? And what is the essence of the essay?

'The specific difference' inside the essayistic genre proves to be the method of transgressing the real. Because it is the configuration of the matrix of any essayistic discourse, imposing itself as the main principle of ideas, the ethic sustains the unity of the genre and its definition as an independent genre. The ethics gives the inner law of the essayistic discourse, legible as a tripartite structure of enunciation, modality, argumentation: *Ideea de frumos este o idee profund morală și tot în acest sens putem considera zona estetică o culminație a zonei etice*"[s.n.] [Stănescu, 1990 - *FP/ Nevoia de artă*: 61] – an order in the chaos of ideas, an adjuvant of reason, added by us. By means of ethics, the essay is pulled out of the accusation of a meaningless writing.

On the contrary: under the incidence of the reading, the apparent emptiness of the texture registers an infinity of meanings 'hungry' for embodiment; thus we discuss about the *essay as a 'acategorical art'* [Borbely, 1995: 6].

The preference of the essayistic genre for lyric is explained through the liberty of the ideas which refuse limitation, constraint to a definition. There are vague ideas of logic, because they are made lyrical, they assume the role of the subject-creator; they are generous in the construction of the labyrinth. Furthermore: they seduce the reader too. In Stănescu's essay *Scrisori de dragoste sau înserare de seară*, Ioachim, the one who is carrying the stick and the book as divine marks, addresses the collocutor: *Toma, eu ard ca să-ți dau foc! (Toma, I am burning in order to set you on fire!)* This is really a very pleasant and exciting calling for catharsis: the two actants' purification by means of art (creator and reader), actants engaged in the work – creation and understanding.

The essay is the text-discourse that does not betray the emittent (the subject). The essayistic discourse becomes existence: it is the actant's way of action. Finally, we admit that the essay is the living document signed with your own being. As a speech it is a *hemolexia*; as writing it is *hemography* [acc. to Stănescu]. **The essay is an aesthetic palimpsest.** It is obvious that "[...] *eseul se dovedește a fi arta specifică [...] solitarilor. Pornește de la ecuația renascentistă a lui „uomo singolare”, transsubstanțiind-o mai departe peste secole.*" [Borbely, 1995: 6] (*the essay proves to be the art of [...] the recluses. It starts from the rinasciment equation of uomo singolare, transsubstantializing it further on over the centuries*).

The first type of essay is represented by Don Juan, the character who aesthetically built his existence. But let's not forget Ulysses! The essay means placing between Ulysses and Don Quixote, an adventure of language. Therefore the essayistic genre illustrates human transformation, culture transformation [acc. to Vlad, 1970]. We are aware of the fact that the essay is an authentic writing, a chameleonic discourse in competition to the subject-author's existence.

Being authentic, the essay is enlisted in the theory of literary genres as a document, once it belongs to a lucid spirit who reveals the consciousness of the époque in which the work is written, indirectly as a part of the culture [acc. to the “morphologic interpretation of cultures”, through Noica’s metaphilosophical discourse [*Modelul cultural european*, Humanitas, 1993.]

The passion of real, the pleading for the truth of life as a mainspring of essayistic discourse represent the intuitive retort of art given to reflection, a naturalist and impressionist mechanism. The prejudice is wiped by authenticity, the metaphysical speculation gives up facing the physical reality (an aesthetic attitude present in Stănescu’s discourse, poetic and essayistic as well). *Mirarea* (the wonder) is the state of grace that generously opens the essayistic composition: “*Mirarea poate fi declarată starea de grație a afirmației, nunta afirmației [...] Actul cunoașterii se schimbă din mirare în posesiune, din posesiune în nostalgie, din nostalgie în precept.*” [Stănescu, 1985, *Antimetafizica*: 91; 112]

The wonder is conditioned by the unpredictable as an element of aesthetic tension. Out of the pertinent observation of combining the knowledge and the wonder, it appeared a theory of art as a wonder [acc. to Blaga]: living the novelty, the pure sensation, the artist will give another reality to the metaphysical imaginary, a reality based on the values of reason and on the values of sensitivity: anti-metaphysics frequently understood as rediscovery of myth, *Force de frappe* – a title of the essayistic grouping *Răzgândiri* [*Secolul XX*, 1985; 2003/ V] – the dislocation of textual meaning as a synaesthesia primary nucleus. In the rediscovered anti-metaphysical reality, myth defined as “tragic knowledge” [acc. to Nietzsche] represents the basis of an existential project with consequences in building up a different distortion.

Leading to essence and mystery, myth mediates the way of rendering conscious the human boundaries: Faust, Prometheus, Orpheus and Sisyphus are avatars of humanity. In here the **Faustian project** chosen by the neo-modern writer (N. Stănescu) finds its purpose. The biographic truths dully written, with the diligence of a scribe in a file of existences, like the medieval chronicler, meet a new route: from metaphysical and mimetic to psychological. Subjective discourse, more than any other fragment, the essay underlines the traces of the subject-author, it reveals the intention and the effort of the work in the process of creation. You can feel its perspiration on your forehead. You have the privilege of shadow ... or even of the guardian angel. Moved, as a reader you feel the creator: one moment you are him. The aesthetic experience is more rapid and with more impact over the reader, because at the level of the discourse, the empiric ego⁴ specific to any subjective literature (journal, memoirs) is interrogated by the essayistic ego⁵, very much alike, but never mistaken by the poetic ego. Hence we notice the poets’ option for the essay, resembling an active creative ... break.

The essayist is temperamental, a feature asked by his reader. Once the essayistic ego reaches self consciousness, it becomes one with the universe; it participates in its existence, together with its faithful reader whom he cannot forget. It is that kind of reunion like that between Gilgamesh and Enkidu.

⁴ The empiric ego refers to the statute of derived ego, the one who has fallen out of the “common” family of humanity.

⁵ The essayistic ego integrates in the artistic ego: the authentic hypostasis, the profile of creative personality.

The essayistic pages appear to be autobiographical. But it is not an autobiography lived sentimentally, but intellectually, it is the creator's real biography. Differently from the (discontinuous, episodic) lyric ego, the essayistic tries to reach the spirit of the epic: **the encyclopedic ego**, continuous knowledge specific to "Martians", Nichita Stănescu wrote. And the gain is obvious: it drops out the frames of the intimacy, it is open to cultural values of all times, the masks that it adopts assuring it spiritual immunity, and last but not least it has intimacy with the collective ego, whose voice is easily posed. The observation becomes pertinent by means of the first person in the case of essayistic person as a sign of intimacy and of epic privilege as well; hence the essayist's statute of narrator-creator.

The frequently used technique of writing the essayistic discourse is the monologue. Of intellectual nature, the essay does not ask for initiation, but for solidity of knowledge in order to suggest, once entered the game, many strategies as possible solutions, without assigning them as laws. The state of the essay is given by the liberty of the spirit.

The stylistic constants of the essayistic discourse are seen under the power of the critic spirit that raises questions over the truth. The aesthetics of essayistic voluptuousness is stimulated by the balance between certainty and skepticism; they are attitudes manifested from irony to hedonism lived the ethic plan. The rhetoric of essayistic discourse catalogues the charge, the paradox, the game as ambiguity, the irony, the contradiction seen at the level of antinomy (the game of antinomies or antagonistic), and the figures of construction and of thinking with dynamic consequences on the essay.

The artistic language will gradually give up metaphor. The artist's option will be the metonymy, the "Gordian knowledge" of paradox. *"Dacă aş avea de ales între un adevăr şi un paradox, mărturisesc Eliade, aş alege paradoxul. Adevărurile se schimbă, dar paradoxul e de o astfel de natură încât rămâne întotdeauna plin, real şi justificat."* (if I have to choose between the truth and the paradox, says Eliade, I would choose the paradox. The truths change, but the paradox is of such type that it always remains full, real and justified) [s.n.][Eliade, 1991: 68]

As a modality of presentation, the essay revolts against rhetoric, but especially against the systemic. Far from being hazardous, the essay tolerantly unifies the provocative real of the objects inside the adventure of language. We mention the fact that the finality of the essayistic discourse becomes a "knot of light", as the poet would say, the categorial knot of the good.

As we have already underlined, the self consciousness has the precedence over the essayistic subject, no matter who is he. It is also known that art does not imply only knowledge, but also a surplus of consciousness – self knowledge, hence the union between the esthetic and the ethic; and also the subordination of aesthetics to ethics. The poet concludes: *"Aesthetics is ethic"*.

Some critics pleaded for the composite genre as a didactic genre, literature that comprises: proverbs, sayings, wise saws, anecdotes, fables, skits, epigrams, didactic poems. We think this is superficial. The confusion is made due to the moral value absolutely contained in all these texts, and obviously in the essays as well. But things are not as simple as they seem to be. It is true that the essay is composite, as we have said before, but it is **not** a heteroclit genre. And we can bring arguments, such as the statute of the essay as a matrix or witness of authentic experiences that (sincerely) give the creator's effort in writing his work. We underline: the essay is not a didactic genre.

In the rhetoric of the essay we can see influences from critics and journalism. From the chronicle, the serial, the reportage, the inquiry, the interview, the montage, types of the publicistic, the essay borrows the formula of writing literary journal, but without becoming “literature of popularization”, mass-media. From the critics it keeps the spirit and less the critical reason which is replaced by a philosophy of taste: namely the esthetic pleasure. Thus the essay will establish its esthetic discourse. Or better to say: aesthetics “speaks” about beauty only in the essayistic discourse. It is true that through its statute of science of arts, aesthetics calls on critical reason, but every time it appeals to esthetic tension, it requires the essay, a literary genre adequate to the discourse that “launches” the judgments of value over the object of all the arts, the universal beauty.

The essay is similar to the seismograph that registers the most intense creative mobility. How can you explain the dynamic phenomenon of ideas if not by the essayist’s adventurous spirit? His acquaintance with the experiment or the trial, a method compromised by naturalism, will give coherence and individuality to discourse; hence some artists’ option for literature or art as an experiment.

Even if the statute of a distinct literary genre is to be disputed, the essay will survive as long as the human being exists, manifesting his existential needs.

Once the essay astonished a relatively great number of scholars of that time, philosophers, writers, estheticians, it means that it has a special feature; it has its own ontos. We agree to W.V. Ruttkovski’s classification [acc. to Tiutiucă, 1979: 163]. Referring to the concept of “literature”, there are three conceptual spheres covered, namely: “the basis of literature”, an exterior sphere that comprises the publicistic, the essayistic and the rhetoric writings; the intermediary sphere, materialized in belletristic and the inner sphere: poetry. Through the option for the real, “the basis of literature” later identified in a syntagm frequently used in literary theory, “literature of frontier”, is in a dialectic relation with belletristic and especially with poetry.

Furthermore: we limit the area of “semantic field” of “frontier genre”: without forcing it, we put essay close to poetry. Unlike the epic or the dramatic, when the foreground is asked by fiction, “the tide of ideas” reestablishes the cosmic rhythms according to the poetic thought, new to reason: we refer to *dianoia*, a term belonging to Plato and borrowed by N. Frye to name the “theme”: “[Când cititorul se va întreba:] <<Care este semnificația acestei povestiri?>> Întrebarea se referă de această dată la *dianoia*, demonstrând că elementul revelației este prezent nu numai în cazul intrigii, ci și în tematică.” (What is the meaning of this story? The question refers to *dianoia* this time, proving that the element of revelation is present not only in the case of the intrigue, but also in the theme)[1972: 444]

Once the accent is moved from the fiction to the theme, the *mythos* receives narrative meaning. No matter the typologies, the criteria, the theme, it is obvious that *the essay is an esthetic discourse, and the esthetic keeps its ethic matrix, its original nature, by the values for which it pleads.*

For instance, let’s discuss about one classification: B. Berger [acc. to Tiutiucă, 1979: 172-173], a modern German theoretician decides upon the form as a criterion, bringing in the next classification: (a) mainly *descriptive and instructive* essay that uses the rhetoric inventory peculiar to epic and didactic discourse; (b) mainly *critical* essay, with the science as source,

being intellectually and culturally motivated; (c) mainly *meditative-considerate* essay, of philosophic origin, attitudinally calling on distance, austerity; (d) mainly *ironic* essay, of the same semantic field as the pamphlet. On a close look, anybody can see that in here the formal criterion is not the real participant in differentiation, but the essayist's attitude.

The essay is only one, but attitudinally it can manifest in a variety. Actually the attitude refers both to the author of the original work of the subject which becomes the theme of the essay, and to the essayist, whose discourse depends on the value of the essay: the esthetic value. Therefore, in order for the essay to have a life, there is a need for compatibility of knowledge and method: the subject that incites the essayist's thought, the "antigenre" needs to be given an "antibody". We have thus reached the delicate term of "antigenre" given to the essay. We reject this because the truth is exactly upside down, if we follow the path of science: namely "antigenre" identifies with the phenomenon or the subject that incites the interest in esthetic approach, and "antibody" would be the equivalent of the essay. Is there urgency in naming "n" terms for the evidence of essayistic genre?

We plead for the esthetic nature of essay, no matter the theme. The esthetic man does not live in an imaginary that can be (de)constructed, neither accessible to any ... terrestrial individual; in the existential route, he rests in a *mundus imaginalis*, he can "fly" in the territory between worlds – *inter mundi*.

The essay is generous with all the problems of mankind, permanently changing "the reference system" or the criterion, as the poet gives arguments for changing the theme and of course, the structure: "*Cititorule, închei aici, alunecându-mi gândul într-un cu totul și cu totul alt sistem de referință...*" [1985, in *Secolul XX, Răzgândiri*: 189]

... And the reader, Toma or any other disciple intensively lives the master's existence: "you – you are him", as Eminescu would say [*Înger de pază*]

Our point of view about the essay is somehow far from the opinions until now, namely: we think that the essay is a distinct genre, always with an esthetic message, having a discursive architecture, a genre inside the "literature of frontier". Of a major importance for culture **the essay is a palimpsest of human values**. "The substance of the essay" is the proof of the classic ideal towards the man accedes: a document of man's special nature in cosmos.

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Identity and Coherence in the Structure of Postmodernism

The paper explores how Virgil Nemoianu cuts the dispute with the the extra-aesthetic invasions of literature and the assaults on the canon, considering that great literature is not imposed by ideological norms and dogmas, canonical authors being, on the contrary, authentic, those who do not meet the rules, be them ethical or political, of any age. Or, in the terms of Romanian literary critic Titu Maiorescu, Aesthetics cannot be "held" to assert the claims of the "ethical". An analysis of major attacks on canonical culture describes conflicting polarities – of East-West, male-female type all invalid, in Nemoianu's view, since they descend from the dialectics of "suspicion and hatred" derived from Marxism. The purpose of canon analysis is thus an analogy between the "fundamental values of humanity" in the swirls of Postmodernism and the "functions of literature". The canon and literature contain in their core the same Brownian motion that encompasses the entire Postmodern reality but at the same time, fail to maintain consistency and "indisputable harmony". This while Literature remains a mediator that tempers the "convulsions in its environment", "mirroring and opposing them simultaneously".

The last book published by Virgil Nemoianu [1], *Postmodernism & Cultural Identities. Conflicts and Coexistence*, is a plea for defining persuasive solutions of consistency, stability and identity in the fragmented, random and relativized structure of postmodernism. An impressive intellectual odyssey, accurately mapping the agitated substance of the turbulent modern world, is run through a series of revealing immersion into the deep relief of Western cultural discourse. Counting on comparative and socio-cultural criticism, replacing the diachronic analysis with synchrony, the critic identifies a sort of unfailable algorithm of continuity and order, of fundamental stability, the recurrence and resistance of which in previous eras (transgressing moments of crisis) is systematically demonstrated. The author predicts a paradox: the existence of spaces of identity and coherence in the core of the postmodern paradigm whose plurality, diversity and unpredictability would be unthinkable without them. The book assumes the nature of intellectual, cultural, personal stability of these spaces, metaphorically calling them "islands" or "philosophical gardens". "Fortresses" in which identity can survive the assault of the contemporary world, and that the author proposes as solutions for a full reconsideration of postmodernism. They are made, in Nemoianu's model, of the "walls" of humanist sciences (occupying a privileged place are Aesthetics and literature), while their core is the religious, whose archetypal feature assures communication between the epochs of history.

Because Nemoianu Virgil's approach is one of cultural philosophy, Part I of the book, devoted to *General Cultural Value*) tries to determine the place and role of culture in the present day. The author wonders, from the very beginning, if major explanations that provide systematic perspective on the historical evolution of human culture can be applicable in an era seemingly dominated by anarchy, when mankind entered the post-history and history, as understood in the classical sense, allegedly disappeared. In Nemoianu's perspective, in this ongoing hazard surviving fragments are continuing to work consistently, "parts" of various

kinds that are integrated in the multiplicity and variety defining postmodernism. Their lack would compromise, as the critic points out, the random principle of the whole system, which would become uniform, fixed, predictable, ie its own opposite. That's why Nemoianu concludes: "*continuity and identity are not only designed in a postmodern existence but they are absolutely necessary its survival*" [2]. Once the thesis of continuity fragments is argued, it remains to determine their nature and Nemoianu immediately identifies two such "terra firma", two islands whose fertility and stability is undeniable: *the religious* and the *aesthetic*. None of them lacked from the foundation of any society or culture, recording diverse and contradictory metamorphoses, even substitutions by secular ideologies. The argument of an end of history argument is then removed by globalization, and it had, after Nemoianu, a genuine substance, indicating a quantitative rather than a qualitative development. The underlying idea of the book is that postmodernity is neither the end of history, nor that of humanity. Rather, it is just a new historical stage, bringing with it new challenges. Therefore, a process of cultural philosophy applied to postmodernism has its legitimacy and may prove fruitful.

A discussion of the "substance of Postmodernism" (*Does Postmodernism Have Substance?*) reviews nine key points of Postmodernism. As most are already known and have attracted some convincing theorizing in recent years, the most interesting are the nuances the author proposed. Thus, Nemoianu speaks of the *communicational-mobilo-centric world, post-industrial society, transfer from Gutenberg-type representations to the visual, virtual reality and computer interaction, changing of gender relations, tensions between globalism and multiculturalism, the changing of global policy scenarios, the rise of relativism and scelticism, substituting innocence and spontaneity, self-analysis and the exacerbated consciousness of the self, ironic and parodic revitalization and investigation of the past and memory*, as opposed to the *permanence of religiosity, a new Stylistics* (the southern hemisphere characterized by syncretism, pantheism and light mysticism).

The next chapter dedicated to *conservatism as a branch of liberalism*, ends with a series of nuanced conclusions, reflecting on analogies with the resistance factors of Western culture when it was threatened in the early nineteenth century, factors that are currently tested. The informational "Avalanche" spoken about feverishly today was perceived similarly and thought to have the same effect, leading, as the author notes, to the "*psychological anguish, very real trepidations, distortions, and A Whole range of old and new types of violence*" [3], while "*the same consciousness of change mobilized that sociopolitical and intellectual forces that wanted to withstand accelerated evolutions and to tame tornado-like, destructive, developments*" [4]. What eventually prevailed was dialogue, the harmonious reconciliation of tradition and innovation accomplished, believes Nemoianu, especially through the contribution of what he calls "*genuine and articulate conservatism*" [5], configured as a partner for dialogue with liberalism and utopias of the time. Of course, in this model are to be found solutions to "tame" cultural radicalisms of any crisis, including the one in the present or that created the Red East European totalitarianism.

1. Canon as "island of coherence". A walk through the "inner garden"

The second part of the book is devoted to *General Literary Valu*, the foray into literature being an exploration of postmodernist symptoms, and of the reaction mechanisms of literature

to external pressures. As custodian of social memory and preserving cultural traditions, literature is the victim of numerous attacks aimed at the continuity and identity of a culture. It is also the best medium of understanding and the reflection of multiculturalism. The Particular points of discontinuity, the seemingly irreconcilable and destructive conflicts destructive, are especially interestin in the kind of comparative analysis proposed by Virgil Nemoianu. He looks at times that were "apocalyptic", like the sequence Classicism - Romanticism in European 18th and 19th centuries, the proposals to replace a set of values with another that was considered modern. The Proposed analogy works if, for the end of the twentieth century we attribute the posture of the Classics to "*canonical Eurocentric culture*" and that of "Romantics" to "*more popular forms of literature, consumer literature, marginalized forms of narrative (often authored by women), past or present extra-European literatures, and so on*"[6]. For Nemoianu it is undisputed that, although currently these two cultural forces seem totally irreconcilable, the future will bring the necessary harmonization of positions. Otherwise, the land would be flooded by exclusive rigid literary ideologies, doctrines and counterfeit perfect doctrines, signs of a cultural disease that culture as system instinctively avoids and becomes immune to. A suggestive anatomical analogy of genuine literature vs. ideological literature is presented by the author as the first denunciation of the invasion by ideology in Postmodern Aesthetics: „*the heart may be said to be healthy when it displays tiny chaotic variations in its beat: perfect order, by contrast, raises the suspicion of an approaching heart attack. This, in my oppinion, is a very apt emblem for the distinction between the ltierary and the ideological*" [7].

The capital section of the book is devoted to the concept of literary canon - *Literary and Social Value Options* - in the functioning of which Nemoianu reveals a principle of coherence and stability of authentic values, independently of the extra-Aesthetic nature of different pressures of the age. This principle of resistance is essentially functional in all sustainable fragmentsm in all "islands". This survival of the authenticity of a culture transcends any dismantling challenge. Moreover, the text of this chapter, which appears to be the best written in the entire book (also the often memorable phrases and images are superior to other parts of the book) is at the conjunction of the Nemoianu's teaching areas of expertise: cultural philosophy, comparative literature and literary criticism.

The concept of canon is preferred because it satisfies innercommunicating nature of the two "islands of stability" the landscape of which is charted by the book: it is a literary concept derived from religion. In this respect, Nemoianu immediately notices the differences: two canons, the religious and the literary, are radically different in nature and implications. An example of virtual substitution with an alternative Christian official canon by the young radical Marcion of Sinope (first century AD), which brings the Christian community in Rome the proposal to replace Scripture passages from the Gospels, is sufficiently relevant to convince. If the long-term effects of this success were overwhelming and could change the cultural landscape of the Western world, changes in the literary canon just bring disputes surrounding nuances, color, says Nemoianu, to a literature that was moving anyway. In addition, the victory of one or another of the parties (the victory of the 1659-1700 classics from the famous quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns) were irrelevant, because the canons always suffered renewals, updates with the purpose of enriching the cultural experience of the new.

A fine distinction, operated from the very beginning in this text, is that between the canon and the curriculum. The curriculum is the teaching version of the canon, one that supports the

most dramatic and visible operations, a selection of the taste and trends of an era. The author gives several examples as teaching canons of the past - from the Middle Ages to the canon of Romanian Communist Proletcultism - showing the facility by which the curricula is the manipulation of different orders. What remains essential is that it reflects a *"forma mentis of a given epoch"*, namely *"the prevailing prejudices and sensibilities, writing styles and Aesthetic tastes"* [8]. On the other hand, the canon is composed of masterpieces of every age, authentic works, the Aesthetic criterion being illustrated at the maximum, resulting in a unique expression of Aesthetic value. Canonical works are long lasting, unshakable in structure and offer a potentially inexhaustible canon and updateable meanings at different times. Nemoianu offers 5 basic elements of canonical works, emphasizing that they are selected through a process that is ultimately unpredictable and chaotic, natural, although it is *"set by a number of parameters"*. Thus, we speak about *the preference of most of the public, multiplicity of meanings, live interaction and compatibility of values and discourses with various fields, ability to establish durability and Aesthetic transcendence* and, finally, *the ability to mediate between high culture and commercial consumption*.

The most interesting feature of the literary canon lies in its very paradoxical structure. Although it is virtually immune to external pressures that are not critical to its anatomy, the canon goes, however, through continuous internal changes. Resetting, resizing, changing of order, all are taking place in their own pace and according to a logic that can only be speculated from the outside. But still, despite this inner dynamic, the canon's center is constantly absolutely stable. This means, says Nemoianu, that a certain set of personalities - Homer, Aeschylus, Dante, Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Goethe and Kafka are immutable, ensuring consistency and homogeneity of the axiological mechanism which is at the core of Postmodernism. The canon is thus probably the most convincing of models, the "island of coherence" that the book describes, and not incidentally the text referring to it is placed right in the core of the book. In fact, the canon offers the most revealing allegory of the resistance of identity and coherence, of the survival of values inspite any external aggression. Virgil Nemoianu exemplifies Dostoevsky's transition to index during Stalinism and shows how, after 1956, after 20 years of prohibition, the author of *Brothers Karamazov* kept firm position in the Western canon. Political aggression did nothing else than to strengthen the public perception of literary value. Another example is the canon of Communism in Romanian literature, replacing genuine canonical authors, like Blaga or Eminescu, with writers who were convenient to the political line of the party (examples include S. Bodnărescu and A. Toma). With a plastical expression of Nemoianu, *"As soon as the artificial barriers were removed, the canon snapped elastically back into position – indeed the authors earmarked for elimination may be said to have gained in authority"* [9].

The dispute with the extra-aesthetic invasions of literature and the assaults on the canon is categorically cut by Nemoianu: great literature is not imposed by ideological norms and dogmas, canonical authors are, on the contrary, authentical, those who do not meet the rules, be them ethical or political, of any age. Or, in the terms of Romanian literary critic Titu Maiorescu, Aesthetics can not be "held" to assert the claims of the "ethical". An analysis of major attacks on canonical culture describes conflicting polarities – of East-West type, male-female, all invalid, in Nemoianu's view, by their descent from the dialectics of *"suspicion and hatred"* derived from Marxism.

The purpose of canon analysis is thus an analogy between the *"fundamental values*

of humanity" in the swirls of Postmodernism and the "functions of literature." The canon and literature contain in their core the same Brownian motion that encompasses the entire Postmodern reality but at the same time, fail to maintain consistency and "indisputable harmony". This while Literature remains a mediator that tempers the "convulsions in its environment", "mirroring and opposing them simultaneously".

Finally, the *Epilogue* of the book is a space of subjectivity where Virgil Nemoianu exposes both the nostalgia and innocence. The text "*The philosophical garden*", a subjective version of defining and preserving individual identity in contemporaneity, is a confession of disarming sincerity of the author's personal solution of spiritual continuity through culture. A summary of an intellectual initiation diary, containing the fascinations and revelations of the years of youth, as well as warm evocations of a vanished cultural world - the Sibiu Literary Circle. A statement here seems absolutely remarkable "*The 50s were then, and remained until now, a kind of Political Golden Age for me.*" However, this assertion proves, in fact, the function of 'inner fortification' of the "philosophical garden". From its shelter, away from the absurdity of new impulse proletcultism, yes, it is possible that the 50s have been the years of discovery of the American politics, the European Christian Democrats or of Pope Pius XII. The personal example, which Virgil Nemoianu uses generously, is what authenticates the subjective existential themes discussed and sets the book in a decisive and persuasive militant strategy.

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[8] V. Nemoianu, *op. cit.*, p 173

[9] V. Nemoianu, *op. cit.*, p 182

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BOOK REVIEWS by Iulian Boldea/ Eugeniu Nistor/ Dumitru-Mircea Buda

Ștefan Borbély, *The Diaphanous Existence* / *Existența diafană* (Editura Ideea Europeană, 2011)

In Ștefan Borbély's books (*Thomas, the magister's garden, Xenogrames, The dream of the wolf from the steppe, Constructive oppositions, From Heracles to Eulenspiegel, The heroic in the literature, Mircea Eliade's fantastic prose. The Gnostic complex, The circle of grace, Matei Călinescu – monographic, Thomas Mann and other essays, A book a week, Starting from Nietzsche*) there is, despite the thematic diversity of the comparative excursions, a set of affinities, of relationships and of analogies which are meant to express the individuality of the writer. Either it analyses the relationship between Freud and Jung, the topos of the insulated in Thomas Mann, *The wolf from the steppe* belonging to H. Hesse, perceived from the angle of initiated scenarios, the germinate forces from Rilke's *Elegies*, or they approach some concepts of an ample intellectual opening (the idea of Mitteleuropa, ecumenism, New-Age, etc.) or the theme of the heroic, the author manages to delimit and radiography the major significances of the topos and of the literary forms, through the capitalization of an impressing bibliography. Ștefan Borbély's collections of literary chronicles are both supple, as a critical diction, subtle as a hermeneutical speech, explanatory and interpretative, as a way of work and the constructive enthusiasm, as well as the empathic resort, represent the two resources for Ștefan Borbély's writing, that his books emphasize. An applied and methodical spirit, the author betrays, in his serial pages, also the scholarship, an uninstructed scholarship, lacking boldness.

The diaphanous existence (The European Idea Publishing House, 2011) can be regarded as radiography of an entire literary decade (2000-2010), through commenting some of the most important publishing appearances from this period. Here can be found critical texts consecrated to reference names of Romanian contemporary literature (Marin Sorescu, Mircea Zăciu, Nicolae Breban, Marin Mincu, Livius Ciocârlie, Adrian Marino, Horia-Roman Patapievici, Mircea Cărtărescu, Paul Cornea, Dan C. Mihăilescu), but also comments of books belonging to becoming authors (Adrian Dohotaru, Cătălin și Roxana Ghiță, Adriana Teodorescu, Florina Codreanu, Ioana Macrea-Toma, Constantina Raveca Buleu). We can also state the fact that the author has a visible predilection for those books which enlist in the sphere of history and syntax of the mentalities or in the perimeter of the cultural studies. Ștefan Borbély's interpretations from this volume are characterised by analytical firmness, through conceptual opening and precision of the nuance, qualities which allow the author to circumscribe ideas and literary forms, to reveal artistic structures or to fixate the cultural symptoms. What are revealing for the critic's analytical availabilities are, for example, the texts dedicated to Adrian Marino's journal (*The life of a lonely man*), those dedicated to Marin Mincu's experimental attitude or of the Romanian literary modernity in Paul Cornea's vision.

In the preamble of his book, Ștefan Borbély offers several clarifying explanations regarding the title: „the diaphanous existence represents both a personal program and a finality, and an exorcism: of reaching, through the serial, continuous writing, above the filth we are leaving in, beyond the promiscuous present the majority of the books we have to read, needs to conquer”. A considerate observer of the literary mundane, with a sure aesthetic sense, but also with a playful spirit which transpires beyond the procedural gravity, Ștefan Borbély records, within the

Romanian editorial perimeter the existence of two tendencies: an ideology one, either explicit or implicit, „decanted from the imperative of the confrontation with a reality – that of the post-war Romania – which torments us even when we want to turn our back on it” and another one materialised in the existence of „a feeling of the existential «late» of the ending, as well as the fatigue of the 20 years after December 1989, these would gather in a collective suicidal thrill, thematically related to the dominant apocalypse from other spaces of culture”. It is not a chance that the author considers the actual stage of the Romanian literature characterises itself by a state of „resented, anti-vital tiredness, consonant with the social and political lethargy around”. The fact that his own book enlists in this conceptual sphere of the „tiredness” (being considered by the author himself „the indirect form of a participating melancholy”) is not by chance at all. Being significantly argued upon, articulated by an assumed rigour of interdisciplinary and of an ample conceptual horizon, the critic discourse is as unostentatious as firm in options and judgments.

The books commented upon in this volume (*The origins of the Romanian romanticism*, Paul Cornea’s book reprinted in 2008, *The Romanian literary balcanism*, by Mircea Muthu, *The secret history of the Romanian literature*, by Cornel Ungureanu, *The Romanian literature in post-ceausism*, by Dan C. Mihăilescu, *About ideas and blockages*, by de H.-R. Patapievic, *The illusions of Romanian literature*, by Eugen Negrici, *The betrayal of criticism*, by Nicolae Breban, *Matein investigations*, by Ion Vianu) are valued both by emphasising their theoretical characteristics and by extracting subterranean significances of the text, or through the excursion inside the historical context. Equally exciting are the chronicles of several books of authors belonging to the cultural space from Cluj, like Ion Pop, Ion Vartic, Irina Petraş, Aurel Sasu, Mircea Petean, Radu Mareş, Mihai Dragolea, Cornel Robu, etc. In a register of the admiring affinities are written the critical texts consecrated to Paul Cornea, Marin Mincu, Adrian Marino or Mircea Horia Simionescu. Still, we have to state the fact that it is about an admiration from where the fastidious pose does not miss, the attention to detail or the tonality of the analysed texts. Characterised by a „critical, loose and substantial freedom”, and through „an energetic, clear and cursive style, of an experienced swordsman’s elegance” (Adrian Marino), Ştefan Borbély is, as it was stated by the same hermeneut of the literary ideas, a follower of the idea’s critic, way which is found not only within his comparative studies, but also in the literary chronicle, of a distinct conceptual pose, where, starting from several cases or concrete literary forms, the author accedes to the idea tic layer of the book as a whole, proving extreme caution in the nuances of the text and making, in the same time, the necessary connections, between the works, the literary époques or the creation styles, in a way which refuses any constraint, any interpretative abuse, any axiological relaxation, still without avoiding a vague, playful sense, a certain premeditated posture, a certain sense, inconspicuous, of the paradox.

Iulian BOLDEA

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Daniela Gîfu, *Symbolic Violence in Electoral Speech / Violența simbolică în discursul electoral*, Editura Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj Napoca, 2011

From the start, let us notice that the entire content from the volume *Symbolic Violence in Electoral Discourse* by Daniela Gifu (Editura Casa Cărții de Știință, Cluj Napoca, 2011) is built by an interdisciplinary approach, where the effort and the spirit of synthesis is used to build up a skeleton of new theoretical constructions, employing concepts and knowledge from a vast circle of Humanities such as: Politics, Sociology, Philosophy, Rhetoric, Theory of communications, Semiotics, Linguistics, etc. It is a modern approach of this phenomenon of communications, putting together, techniques and strategy of discursiveness used throughout history, starting from ancient Greeks up to present, when schools and models of American communication, like The School from Paolo Alto and the new inventions on European Rhetoric within The School of Brussels and the μ Group are recognized.

Explaining the expression *symbolic violence* on a social background, and especially on the electoral background, the author uses the writings of Pierre de Bourdieu, from which she tries to use the definition of this as "imposing form", then she stops on hermeneutic essays of philosopher Paul Ricoeur, on which the meaning of this expression is that of "manipulating action" and eventually she dwells on this complex hue.

In the first part of the book, the author is making clear the basic notions of discursive manifestation. Able to see that written press is like a mirror for society, the author considers that today's society is a live factor of changes, using for this a quote of Hyppolyte Taine, which considered it as a "corridor in which the wind of history is passing". From this perspective, an analysis of the entire discourse is performed, putting the accent on text structure and on journalistic style, suggesting that both have a degree of subjectivism. Next, political discourse is analyzed, also through the lenses of Political science, Rhetorics and symbolic configuration, the last one used when the political discourse is becoming a discourse of power. A vivid description of written press is made, highlighting its features and making a description of its typology.

Discussing the specific problems of modern discourse, the author finds out that everything is discourse and discursiveness, starting from private life and up to the academic speech: science became an rigorous discourse; art – a figurative and pathetic discourse; Philosophy – an analysis of discourse. Most of the people only give attention to what they say, but they neglect the form they are using to express what they want to say. These forms of communication are explained in relation to the ideal communication situation which German philosopher Jürgen Habermas used. In this particular section are summarized some forms of discursive translation, when the postmodern society uses more and more Semiotics and Linguistics, the author referring to Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of signs and to the Logics of language imposed by Ludwig Wittgenstein. With these the politician may gain legitimacy, authority and prestige. Daniela Gifu states that the political life is structured in language facts – political discourses, political ideas, symbols - all of these being meant to persuade, to start passions, to convince someone into doing something. An entire form of language is being sketched with the precision of one who is a specialist in communication. In the final part the author shows a series of examples of political discourse, proven to be *active presence* in the pages of written press, or as slogan or figure of speech, the latter coming from the sphere of Rhetorics.

The second part of the book tries to highlight the discursive strategies used in Politics and the author also highlights a phenomenon which is part of the Romanian politics: the use of too many American terms in the discourse and also that the fact that Politics has become a public practice, when actually it should be subordinated to the public space. The model of persuasion specific to Aristotle's *Rhetorics* and to the *New Rhetorics is used*, the last one discovered by Chaïm Perelman and his assistant Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca. Daniela Grifu lists three types of logical methods: positive, negative and neutral. Another series of arguments is formed by those based on *acts, examples, authority* and *various analogies*. The use of sophisms, of sentences with aporetic content with good examples is treated with maximum of exigency, as the author analyzes numerous lines of paralogisms, lines which I would risk calling "a negative Decalogue".

In the third part the main keys of information in Politics are presented, and the mechanisms through which act upon human sensibility are explained— the social is seen from a psychological perspective, especially when modalities and techniques that are not so plausible are employed, like gossip or disinformation. But we are warned that everything becomes more dangerous when the events are opened up to a psychological key and the politic event "evolves" from dark to darker, the social scene being brought face to face with numerous manipulation methods used by the politic scene: from false surveys and the creation of a better image for a politician to a cunning change of public interest through festive vote

The fourth part of the book is strictly technical, built upon the way in which a discourse should be constructed, the author referring to ancient lessons of about Oratory, on the heritage left to humanity by Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian, in which their work scheme is very functional and easy: *introduction*, continuing with the *discourse* (narration of the acts, their confirmation or (neglection) and in the end the *peroration* (a summary of the acts, pathetic presentation of them and conclusion). The changes that occur in modern political discourse eventually highlight the pragmatic side of their development and the need for more persuasion, as in the case of the Ancients, aiming to make the political discourse a symbolic manifestation of power, building an entire "route" to persuade the public, with an energy well organized in "three-strokes" of action or in three facets, as the author calls them, the descriptive, evolutive and the prescriptive.

In the fifth part, the author performs an analysis of the content of written press, by using the American methods of Harold D. Lasswell and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, who initiated their work during the war at Princeton University, beginning from the panic that was installed among more than a million citizens, who after hearing on the radio *The War of the Worlds* by science-fiction author H. G. Wells, on the 30th October 1938, in which martians invaded the Earth, thought that the invasion is real, so they ran from their houses and cities. Although not thoroughly described, elements used to impress the public, like the *bandwagon effect*, are described - according to Lazarsfeld those who vote are always tempted to be on the side of the winner; *the theory of the silence spiral* (Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann): those who share the dominant point of view, are not reluctant in sharing, but those who have different points of view keep the silence just because they are frightened by those with the dominant point of view, and the *magic bullet theory* (Lasswell) according to which humans are conducted by instincts so every human being acts in the same way.

Finally, the author performs a strict analysis of the 2009 presidential elections from Romania, based on data collected from the press and with a graphical representation generated with LIWC-2007 software, which lead to a final rezolution: the description of the way in which these discursive methods are used in the sphere of Politics in order to determine the final results, and these results may affect intention, opinions and even feelings.

On the whole, although it appears to be too dense, Daniela Grifu's book keeps the original track, giving numerous informations, some of them new even to those who are familiar with the theme of communication and public space – a field that has not been well researched yet.

Eugeniu NISTOR

Cornel Ungureanu, *The Secret History of Romanian Literature / Istoria secretă a literaturii române*, Editura Aula, Braşov, 2007

One of Cornel Ungureanu's experimental books is written on a mysterious Poetics of criticism and secret cultural code, presumably able to open doors through unseen fields of cultural history. *Istoria secretă a literaturii române / The Secret History of Romanian Literature* is a direct application that sets in practice the matrix-concept of his critical system, while at the same time remaining faithful to his logics of revision, revisitation or upgrade of some hypothesis, methods and previous results. A sort of upgrade which also works autoreferentially – since the book becomes a hypertext of some previous texts, in which the demonstration makes direct or indirect reference to texts written before. This kind of recontextualization has high implications on the text used for *Istoria secreta...* and on the book itself, which becomes the last version of the concept used for the first time. Actually, the analogy used between the geography of literature and a secret history was previewed some five years earlier, in the first volume of Cornel Ungureanu's *Geografia literară / The Literary Geography*.

In an article that has some interesting suggestions concerning Cornel Ungureanu's book, Bianca Burţa-Cernat notices that *Istoria secretă a literaturii române* works as a 'preface' to a 'propedeutic' for a larger project of the author. It is interesting that although it is the last from the series, at the moment when the article was written (2008, March), the *Istoria secretă...* is perceived as an introduction. Furthermore, it is seen as a Propedeutics of some previous books which are upgraded.

Beyond the 'disclosures' intended to be made - most of them inciting - *Istoria secretă...* manages to bring into a central position writers which were marginalized or their works have never been officially recorded (like the avant-garde writer Ionathan X. Uranus, Vasile Lovinescu or Mircea Streinul). These are writers who can win an identitary quest that attempts to rebuild a plausible literary history, starting from regaining the original contexts of these works. A regaining which turns, with every book written by Cornel Ungureanu, into a larger range of methods used but also into a larger range of cultural information.

The great achievement of this book lies in its ability to perceive the history of Romanian literature in a new way, attempting to fit into a Postmodernist concept. The same Bianca-

Burța Cernat says that with Manolescu's *Istoria critică...* / *The Critical History...* a concept of making literary history ends and this book is a new way to make literary history, a way that will eventually become the only one correct. Partially, the change of concepts is authentic: from that of a history built upon a canonical modernity, of an immutable system of value judgments, with official verdicts dictated by a Critic; however, Cornel Ungureanu suggests an alternative, if not the contrary: a history of revealing cutout, a subjective approach. For an enclosure to the esthetic canon all that is necessary is the absolute opening to alternative and plurality provided by literary geography, the main concept in the new cultural history.

And the goal of this open project of Cornel Ungureanu may be seen in the very structure of his book. The demonstrations skim over long circular hikes, painting orbits around some productive hypotheses; finally there is an irradiative center of the entire work of the writer, a set of theses on a sort of philosophy of culture and identity, understood as a network of influences of multiple identities, and the book perpetually remakes this centre, as in a nostalgic trance, a reincarnation of original ideas in a utopian search of their best versions. The result is an unfinished series of explorations on a historical site seen as an ensemble which makes a matrix assimilable to a grand hypertext

Dumitru-Mircea BUDA