

**INTERCULTURAL LITERARY EXCHANGES BETWEEN ROMANIA AND CANADA
IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION**

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Abstract: This paper is an account of the intercultural literary exchanges between Romania and Canada which have been going on for more than one hundred years and have reached a new level in the age of globalisation. This owes to an increasing academic interest in Canadian Studies which led to the setting up of centers in major universities of the country and the establishment of undergraduate and master programmes on Canadian-related issues in the post-communist years. Furthermore, the first doctoral theses and academic papers on Canadian Studies are published during this period. The postmodern Canadian authors (Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje and Leonard Cohen) have been the most translated after 1989 and the critical pieces devoted to them mainly belong to Canadian Studies scholars that occasionally undertook translations from the writers that they discuss. The number of critical references exceeds by far the previous reception periods, i.e. over 100 articles on English Canadian authors came out in the important (on-line and printed) Romanian periodicals as compared to (about) 50 in the pre-communist and communist years. Last but not least, the post-communist years saw the rise of new media of reception, i.e. film adaptations of Canadian novels and the distribution of literature with daily papers at lower prices.

Keywords: *Canadian Studies, reception, post-communist Romania, criticism in periodicals, postmodern authors*

Introduction

The intercultural (literary) exchanges between Romania and Canada are almost one hundred years old since the first tracks of Canadian literature in Romania are recorded at the beginning of the 20th century. Thus, several Canadian poems came out in Romanian periodicals, namely W. H. Drummond's in *Convorbiri literare/ Literary Talks* in 1915 and Nicolae Iorga's translations of Canadian verse from "Standard", Montreal in *Drum Drept/ The Right Path* in 1918 and 1919, according to Lupu and Ștefănescu's *Bibliography of Romanian Literature and Its Relations with Foreign Literatures in Periodicals* (1997: 207). Literary exchanges between the two cultures can also be considered the excerpts from Mazo de la Roche's popular fiction for women in Romanian periodicals. In fact, this was the only Canadian author to have her novels translated during the pre-communist years (in the 1930s and 1940s by the controversial Jul Giurgea for Remus Cioflec Publishing House). Stephen Leacock, short story writer and humourist hailed as Canada's Mark Twain who had fragments of his work published by periodicals such as *Preocupări literare/ Literary Concerns*, *Adevărul literar și artistic/ The Literary and Artistic Truth*, *Gazeta de duminică/ The Sunday Gazette*, *Orizontul/ The Horizon*, was also a very popular figure in the literary exchanges between Romania and Canada in the first half of the 20th century.

During the communist period, the literary exchanges between the two countries become stronger; this owes to the number of translations which is higher than in the inter-war and World War Two years. Thus, progressive fiction was translated into Romanian so as to serve the interests of the totalitarian regime (e.g. the novels *Fatherless Sons* and *Tomorrow Is with Us* by the minor writer Dyson Carter) and canonical works (e.g. *Barometer Rising* by Hugh MacLennan, *They Shall Inherit the Earth* by Morley Callaghan, *The Tin Flute/ Bonheur d'occasion* by Gabrielle Roy or *The Edible Woman* by Margaret Atwood). The first poetry

anthologies are also introduced to the Romanian public during this period; this is the case of Ion Caraion's anthology of English Canadian poets and Alexandru Andrițoiu and Ursula Șchiopu's anthology of French Canadian poets. Moreover, it could be argued that the intercultural literary exchanges between Romania and Canada moved forward since Romanian critics, reviewers and translators were showing a keener interest in Canadian letters than before (as in the case of Mircea and Georgeta Pădureleanu who travelled to Toronto and interviewed Morley Callaghan for *România literară/ Literary Romania* in 1985).

After 1989, the intercultural literary exchanges between Romania and Canada are the strongest mainly because Canadian Studies Centers were founded in major universities of the country, undergraduate and master programmes on Canadian-related issues were established and the first doctoral theses and academic papers came out in the field. Furthermore, the increasing interest in Canadian Studies and Canadian literature shown in the level of translations from Canadian authors and the critical studies devoted to them testifies to the strengthening of the intercultural exchanges between the two countries. As a general remark, works that were unavailable during the communist years such as sensational novels for women and science fiction were first published after 1989: this is the case of the translations of a series of cheap sensational novels and William Gibson's SF novels. However, the new millennium witnessed the translation of many novels by important Canadian authors and a significant amount of criticism devoted to them (not only in periodicals, but also in academic writings where the major postmodern authors, i.e. Margaret Atwood, Leonard Cohen and Michael Ondaatje are usually discussed in individual chapters). Last but not least, the post-communist period has seen the rise of new media of reception under the shape of film adaptations of Canadian novels and the distribution of literature with daily papers at low prices.

1. Canadian Studies in the Intercultural Exchanges between Romania and Canada in Post-Communist Romania

1.1. Canadian Studies Centers

The post-communist period has been the most intense period for the translation and reception of Canadian literature. A cause for this phenomenon may be the high academic interest in Cultural Studies, in general and Canadian Studies, in particular. Thus, after the fall of the communist regime, centers of Canadian Studies were founded in most universities of the country. For instance, the Center for Canadian Studies (CSC) in Iași was the first one to be founded in Romania. Set up in 1990, the center is now directed by Corina Panaitescu, professor of French Language and Literature at "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași and is very active both in terms of research and the promotion of Canadian Studies in our country:

The Center for Canadian Studies has (...) an extremely active multidisciplinary research team (in literature, sociolinguistics, geography, etc.) of academics, researchers, MA students, and PhD candidates in Canadian Studies. The CSC members teach, publish articles in the field, participate to various scientific events held in the country and abroad, and meet every month for presentations and conferences organized by the Francophone Studies Research Group (Groupe de Recherches en Etudes Francophones (GREF)), the Quebec Studies Research Group (Groupe de Recherches en Etudes Québécoises (GREQ)), and the Departments of English and French Language and Literature of the Faculty of Letters. The results of the research carried out by the team have been published in studies and volumes that came out in the "Etudes canadiennes/ Canadian Studies" series at Demiurg Publishing House and at the Publishing House of "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iasi. (...) The CSC has become visible in time both at a national and international level also thanks to its strong links with the Canadian diplomatic institutions in Romania and the visits their representatives paid to Iasi (e. g. March 2006: the Ambassador of Canada in Romania, D. Pillarella; March 2007: the Counselor of the Embassy of Canada in Romania, Jean Therriault; October 2008 and May 2009: the Cultural Counselor of the

Embassy of Canada in Romania, Debra Price; November 2008: the Ambassador of Canada in Romania, Marta Moszczenska, etc.)¹. [S1]

The Centre for Canadian Studies in Bucharest was set up in 1996 “as a result of the collaboration among the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Journalism and Communication Studies, the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences (...). It has benefited from support from the Canadian government, in the form of a collection of books, and of fellowships for foreign academics invited to deliver talks, courses and lectures at the centre.” [S2] At present, the center is directed by Monica Bottez, a professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Bucharest and translator of English Canadian prose.

However, Baia Mare hosts the largest Canadian Studies center in Romania. The center was founded in 1998 by Ana Olos, a well-known specialist in Canadian Studies, professor of English Language and Literature who taught at the North University of Baia Mare. Part of the Faculty of Letters, the Canadian Studies centre and the discipline in question address Language and Literature students majoring in Romanian and having a minor in English or French and Applied Languages students (English and French or German). [S3]. The Centre and the North University of Baia Mare have also organized a series of international conferences on Canadian-related topics entitled ‘unconventional meetings of young Canadianists’; they have taken place every two years, since 2002 and cover large topics such as ‘Alterity and Identity in Modern Canadian Literature/ Alterité et identité dans la littérature canadienne moderne’ (2002), ‘Virtual Canada/ Le Canada Virtuel’ (2006) or ‘Metafictional Canada/ Le Canada Métafictionnel’ (2010).

As a general remark, the Centers of Canadian Studies focus on both English and French Canadian aspects as a result of the academic affiliation of the professors directing the centers. This is also shown by the number of books related to English or French Canadian topics (e.g. the library of the Center of Canadian and Quebec Studies in Cluj has over 800 books on French Canadian topics and approximately 200 volumes on English Canadian ones).

1.2. Academic Programmes

After the fall of the communist regime, the main universities of the country have started to develop undergraduate and MA programmes in Canadian Studies. At the same time, some universities simply include aspects of Canadian culture, civilization and literature in their Francophone or Anglophone programmes at either of these academic levels. Visiting lecturers were invited for conferences and courses at these universities to enhance the students’ interest; as a result, many students have started to write graduation, MA or PhD theses on Canadian topics.

The University of Bucharest was the first one in the country to set up a Master of Canadian Studies, in 1997. This academic programme aims at giving “a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspective of Canadian culture and society from a comparative viewpoint, focusing on the relations between Canada, Great Britain, USA and Romania.” [S4]

The North University of Baia Mare has had a Master in Canadian Studies since 2004, but has offered programmes in Canadian Studies at the undergraduate level since the beginning of the 1990s when such aspects were included in the syllabi of the students enrolled at the Faculty of Letters. The undergraduate programmes contain courses in Anglophone Canadian Studies, Études canadiennes francophones, Multiculturalism & Ethnic Identity and

¹All translations mine unless stated otherwise.

its French counterpart, Multiculturalisme et identité ethnique. The MA programme includes courses on Canadian Culture and Civilisation, Canadian Federalism and Democracy, Romanian Canadian Relations, Canadian Film, Canadian Literature in English, Littérature de la diaspora, or Canada and the Process of Globalization. This Master of Canadian Studies offers students “an interdisciplinary approach so as to achieve a greater understanding of Canada, its land, people and politics. During the two years of bilingual courses, students will explore Canada’s diversity through a wide range of disciplines.” [S3] Furthermore, the North University of Baia Mare holds a primary position in our country in terms of the number of students enrolled in Canadian Studies programmes as “the total number of undergraduate students – and, since 2004, master’s students – who have taken Canadian Studies, raised, in 2010, to a total of 1,004.” (*ibidem*)

The West University of Timișoara also has a Master in Canadian Studies since 2004, which “aims at giving a detailed interdisciplinary approach to the Canadian historical, geopolitical and sociocultural space”. [S5]

“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi and “Babeș Bolyai” University of Cluj are among the main universities of the country that only include aspects of Canadian Studies in their academic programmes. The country reports submitted by Romania to the Central European Association of Canadian Studies (CEACS) since 2004 mention several PhD candidates, MA and undergraduate students that devoted their dissertations to Canadian Studies or attended courses in the field. The PhD candidates in question have approached topics such as contemporary Canadian short-fiction, French varieties in Newfoundland or the works of the French Canadian author Réjean Ducharme. Moreover, within the Master of Francophone Studies, 20 students attended the courses on French Varieties in Canada, 40 students the course of sociolinguistics (containing aspects of the Canadian French) taught by professor Maria Pavel and 30 students attended the English counterpart of this course taught by professor Rodica Albu [S6].

The “Babeș Bolyai” University of Cluj hosts a Master of Francophone Literature which includes a course devoted to the French Canadian Literature of Quebec taught by professor Maria-Voichița Sasu. Along the years, her students elaborated dissertations on French Canadian topics such as *Le roman québécois: l'identité dans l'écriture féminine*, *L'univers poétique de Sergio Kokis*, *L'imaginaire noir d'une romatique: Anne Hébert*, *Mythe et religion dans l'oeuvre romanesque d'Hubert Aquin*, *Folie et aliénation dans les oeuvres de Michel Tremblay*, *Les visages des femmes dans les romans d'Anne Hébert*, *Les métaphores de la mort dans l'univers romanesque d'Anne Hébert*, *Hubert Aquin – romancier et artiste* (2002) [S7].

1.3. Academic Writings on Canadian Studies

After 1989, Romanian scholars got involved in international projects related to Canada or took part in national and international conferences disseminating the results of their research in the field. The conference proceedings bring together contributions by specialists from all over the world. Examples of such contributions include the annual proceedings of the conference on Francophone Studies (with a section of Canadian Studies since 2004) organized each March at “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, or the conference proceedings of the ‘unconventional meetings’ of young canadianists held in Baia Mare. Some Romanian Canadianists also hold positions in boards of Canadian associations or organizations (e.g. professor Rodica Albu is part of the Advisory Board of CEACS). Also, the first doctoral theses and academic papers in Canadian studies are now published, as well as the works of renowned specialists such as Margareta Petruț’s *Romanul canadian postbelic între tradiție și*

postmodernism/ The Postwar Canadian Novel from Tradition to Postmodernism, Monica Bottez's *Infinite Horizons: Canadian Fiction in English*, Ana Olos's *Timothy Findley. The Writer and His Recent Work* and *The Postmodern Canadian Novel. Perspectives on Four Major Writers*, Maria-Voichița Sasu's *Lectures québécoises*, Elena-Brândușa Steiciuc's *Pour introduire à la littérature québécoise*, Florin Irimia's *The Postmodern Canadian Novel. Perspectives on Four Major Writers*.

An important characteristic of post-communist Romania is the participation of universities in funded research projects on Canadian Studies. Instances of such projects are the two dictionaries of English and French Canadian authors that came out at 'Demiurg' Publishing House. *Canada anglofonă. Vol. I: A-B/ Anglophone Canada. Vol. I: A-B* coordinated by Carmen Ciobanu and *Canada francofonă. Vol. I: A-B/ Francophone Canada. Vol. I: A-B* coordinated by Corina Dimitriu-Panaiteescu both came out in 2007. They were compiled within the Center for Canadian Studies in Iași and aim at giving a complete vision on the English and French Canadian literature and culture so as to reveal to the Romanian public the diversity, variety and originality of this young literature and the emergence of a new field of research, i.e. Canadian Studies which is rather recent in Romania in terms of academic concerns. The purpose of these dictionaries is to become valuable instruments for the study of Canadian authors in an era when, despite an increasing academic interest in Canadian Studies, reference works such as dictionaries are almost absent (Panaiteescu, 2007: 6, *passim*). In compiling the dictionary of English Canadian authors, Ciobanu (2007: 5) actually complains about the narrow delimitation of cultural, literary and linguistic barriers which are specific to Canadian bilingualism. As a result, a writer may be claimed and received by both Anglophone and Francophone cultures, thus complicating the selection process for a dictionary. Margareta Petruț's dictionary is the only complete reference on Canadian authors available so far in Romania. The Romanian Canadianist argues that such works are necessary as most sources on Canadian literature available in Romanian libraries do not go beyond the 1980s (2006: 5). In her work, she included more than three hundred authors belonging to this "new literature", along with an appendix of the Governor General's Award winners, the most important literary prize in Canada.

2. English Canadian Fiction in the Intercultural Exchanges between Romania and Canada after 1989

2.1. Postmodern Canadian Authors

The post-communist period is characterized by massive outstanding translations from Canadian postmodernism (Margaret Atwood, Leonard Cohen, Michael Ondaatje), but also from popular fiction. Several publishing houses published part of Margaret Atwood's work in prose and many of her novels came out in the series "Leda Masters" at 'Corint' Publishing House which owns the copyright of Atwood's works (*Oryx and Crake*, *The Blind Assassin/ Asasinul orb*, *Cat's Eye/ Ochi de pisică*, *The Robber Bride/ Mireasa hoțomană*, *Lady Oracle/ Femeia Oracol*, *Alias Grace*). Michael Ondaatje is the second most translated Canadian postmodernist author (*The English Patient/ Pacientul englez*, *Anil's Ghost/ Obsesia lui Anil*, *In the Skin of a Lion/ În pielea unui leu*, *Divisadero*, *The Cat's Table/ Masa pisicii*), followed by Leonard Cohen (with his two novels *Beautiful Losers* rendered as *Frumoșii învinși* and *The Favourite Game* as *Joaca preferată*, and poetry, *The Book of Longing/ Cartea Aleanului*).

Moreover, two of Margaret Atwood's novels have been republished during this period. The first is *The Handmaid's Tale* which came out as *Galaad 2195(Gilead 2195)* at 'Univers' Publishing House in 1995, probably because the editor believed that such a title would be found more attractive by science fiction readers than its literal translation. However, the novel

was republished in the “Leda Masters” series with a literally translated title (*Povestirea cameristei*) in 2006. The second novel is *The Edible Woman* which was first published as *O femeie obișnuită* (*An Ordinary Woman*) in 1989, just before the fall of the communist regime. This title was perhaps changed because a literal translation might have appeared as too shocking to the censors of the time. As in the previous case, the 2008 Romanian edition of the novel published by ‘Corint’ Publishing House preserves the original title in translation, i.e. *Femeia comestibilă*. Both translations were performed by Translation Studies scholars, namely Monica Bottez and Margareta Petruț.

The translations are outstanding, being signed by professionals (Monica Bottez, Margareta Petruț, Virgil Stanciu, Florin Irimia, Gabriela Nedelea, Lidia Grădinaru). Only ‘Tritonic’ published Atwood’s *Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing* as *Negocierea cu moartea: un scriitor despre scriitură*, very poorly translated by Gianina Chirazi. In fact, Romanian critics complain about the quality of the translation arguing that there are mistakes so obvious that even a Romanian reader who does not speak English could spot them. Thus, in *România literară/ Literary Romania*, the writer and critic Radu Ciobanu (2007: S8) claims that anyone could seize Romanian inappropriacies, confusions, obscurities, and aberrations (such as ‘decadă’ for ‘deceniu’, ‘esteticism’ for ‘estetism’, ‘pre-rafaelic’ for ‘prerafaelit’, ‘instituție’ for ‘sistem’ as in “să submineze instituția” – probably ‘establishment’ in English. Pleonastic or simply clumsy structures that are against the spirit of the Romanian language are also employed: ‘întoarce înapoi’, ‘a lectura’, ‘a servi’ (e.g.: “îmi serveam pachetul cu mâncare la prânz”, “într-o pânză de Caravaggio, apostolul Matei își scrie Evanghelia cu... stiloul”). In certain passages, the translator is obscure, not for the purpose of preserving Atwood’s style but because of her unprofessionalism: “Am descoperit că era mult mai ușor decât crezusem să pătrunzi în lumea magică a mușuroiului de furnici - locul unde oamenii, alții decât cei la care tu te gândești că erau scriitori și pot accepta aceasta ca un lucru de dorit”. The Romanian critic believes that some of Chirazi’s sentences show more than the lack of vocabulary and style in the target language (e.g.: “Iris Murdoch abia se lansase și era considerat suficient de ciudat ca să devină interesant.”).

In his article *Cînd tălmăcirea devine răstălmăcire* (*When Translation Becomes Mistranslation*), Florin Irimia (2007: S9) shares Ciobanu’s opinion on the translation carried out by Gianina Chirazi. The scholar feels particularly vexed as he devoted a chapter of his PhD thesis to the Canadian author, wrote many studies about her, not to mention the books reviewed. He feels that *Negocierea cu moartea. Un scriitor despre scriitură* sounds inappropriate in Romanian even from the title. As far as content is concerned, Chirazi makes unpardonable mistakes for a translator since she renders ‘scholars’ by ‘școlari’ instead of using appropriate structures such as ‘profesori universitari’ or ‘membri ai comunității academice’; similar examples of mistranslation would include the rendering of ‘unsuspecting’ by ‘nebănuț’ instead of the more suitable ‘naiv’ or ‘inocent’; ‘compulsive’ (logorrhea) becomes ‘obligatorie’ in Chirazi’s target text instead of ‘incontrolabilă’ and ‘de nestăpânit’. Irimia further argues that the translator seems obviously overwhelmed by the complexity of her enterprise if we were to judge by the quantity and the quality of her mistakes in translation. Moreover, since the reception of a foreign author greatly depends on the translator’s work, Irimia strongly supports basic translation principles in a translator: mastery of the source and the target language along with literary talent and intuition to render properly the author’s work in the target culture.

2.2. Other Authors Translated during the Post-communist Period

Apart from the postmodern Canadian authors mentioned above, translations from various Canadian authors (novelists, poets and critics) have been published (approx. 54 titles between 1989-2011: novels, children's books, criticism – Frye and Hutcheon, short stories collections and poetry). Interestingly enough, a series of translations that came out during the inter-war and WWII years were republished in the early 1990's. This is the case of Jul Giurgea's translations of Mazo de la Roche's first novels of the *Jalna* series reedited by Venus Publishing House. Despite their low quality, these old translations were probably preferred to new ones because they did not incur any additional costs. Some of the novels in the same series that came out during the communist period have also been republished. Moreover, the post-communist period of reception introduces new genres to the Romanian public such as Canadian romance fiction, popular medicine, esotericism or homeopathy. It was argued that this was something specific to countries from the former communist block and cultural and economic reasons were given for this phenomenon (cf. Jeanrenaud, 2006: 180-181).

One of the most translated Canadian authors in the last decades has been the science fiction writer William Gibson. His success could be related to the preference of publishing houses for new genres that boosted after the fall of the communist regime. Four of Gibson's novels have, so far, been translated, including his masterpiece, *Neuromancer/ Neuromantul, Virtual Light/ Lumina virtuală, Chrome, Count Zero/ Conte Zero*. The author is renowned for having introduced the cyberpunk genre in literature. Equally translated during this period is Douglas Coupland, a novelist best-known for his masterpiece *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture* (1991) in which he coined the term "Generation X". His works, *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture/ Generatia X: povești pentru cultura de accelerație, All Families Are Psychotic/ Toate familiile sunt psihotice, Miss Wyoming* and *Girlfriend in a Coma/ Tânără în comă* came out at Humanitas Publishing House ("Humanitas Fiction" collection).

The Romanian public has also been introduced to Canadian war novels (Rohmer's *Rommel and Patton* and *Massacre 747*), famous classics (Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*), Japanese-born writers (Kerri Sakamoto's *The Electrical Field*), authors of bestsellers (Andrew Davidson, Jack Whyte, Linwood Barclay) fantasy writers (Richard Scott Bakker, Tanya Huff, and Kelley Armstrong) and children's books (Vicki Blum, Matthew Skelton, J. Fitzgerald McCurdy, and Kenneth Oppel) However, important literary figures such as Margaret Laurence, Timothy Findley or Joe Kogawa, to name only a few, have remained untranslated to this day.

2.3. New Media of Reception. Novels and Their Film Adaptations

In the post-communist period, new media emerged contributing to the diversification and refinement of the reception process: novels started to be distributed with daily newspapers at lower prices (e.g. *Cotidianul/ The Daily Newspaper*) and the general public became acquainted with renowned international writers by means of the film adaptations of their works. This is the case of Michael Ondaatje's *English Patient* and of other contemporary English novelists who were introduced to the Romanian public via the film adaptation of their works. Romanian critics argue that if it had not been for these film adaptations, we would not have become familiar with works that had been awarded international prizes such as Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*, Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain* or Ian McEwan's *Atonement* (cf. Florin Irimia 2004: S 10). This claim is made not only in Romanian periodicals, but also in the paratexts of Ondaatje's works translated into Romanian (e.g. Maria-Sabina Draga's afterword to *Anil's Ghost*):

“Michael Ondaatje – Canadian writer from Sri Lanka is known to the readers all over the world (including the Romanian readers thanks to a recent translation) by his novel, *The English Patient*, Booker Prize, 1992 or rather by its film adaptation signed by Anthony Minghella. The celebrity of the film truly surpasses that of the book (...) the characters created by Ondaatje in his book may forever be associated with Kirstin Scott Thomas, Juliette Binoche and Ralph Fiennes.” (2002: 321)

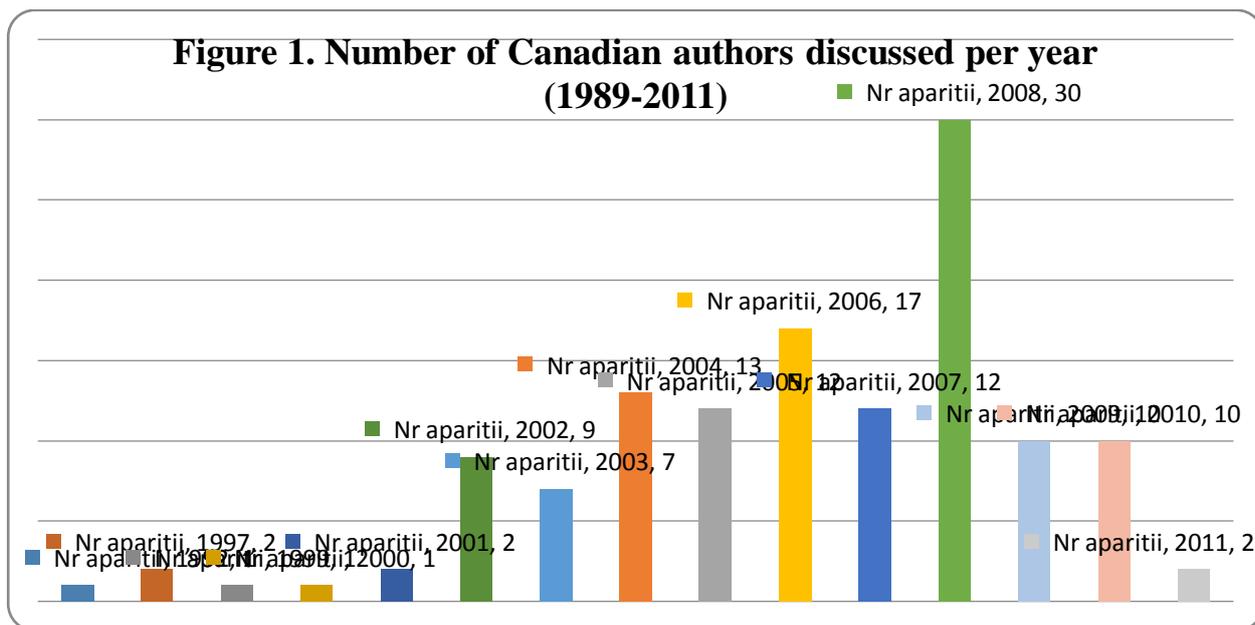
Other film adaptations that may be less known to the Romanian public since, in some cases, the original novel was not even translated into Romanian, include: Lucy Maud Montgomery’s *Anne of Avonlea*, adapted for television in 1975 and 1989, Margaret Laurence’s *The Stone Angel*, adapted in 2007, Timothy Findley’s *The Last of the Crazy People* rendered as *Le dernier des fous* in 2006 or *The Piano Man’s Daughter* in 2003. In fact, Ana Olos who has done extensive research on Timothy Findley feels that the Romanian public became acquainted with the Canadian author via the film adaptation on HBO, after his death:

“The English language often makes us forget the identity of a series of cinema or TV productions although TV series like “The Road to Avonlea” made us recently become familiar with Canadian actors less known than Christopher Plummer. Yet, probably only few of the people who have watched *The Piano Man’s Daughter* on HBO know anything about Timothy Findley, the author of the novel on which the script is based and even fewer know why it has been scheduled now. Kevin Sullivan’s film (starring Christian Campbelle and Isabelle Fink) that barely succeeds in adapting a large and complicated psychological novel, although the characters’ lines preserve the poetry in Findley’s writing, is meant to be an homage to its recently passed away author.” (2002: 13)

Finally, there are no records in Romanian criticism that other film adaptations (of translated novels) could be more familiar to the Romanian public than the ones mentioned above. Such instances are the following: *Anne of Green Gables* (1985, based on a novel by Lucy Maud Montgomery), *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1990, after a novel by Margaret Atwood), *Grey Owl* (1999, a biographical film on the writer), *The Robber Bride* (2007, after a novel by Margaret Atwood), *Fugitive pieces* (2007, based on a novel by Anne Michaels).

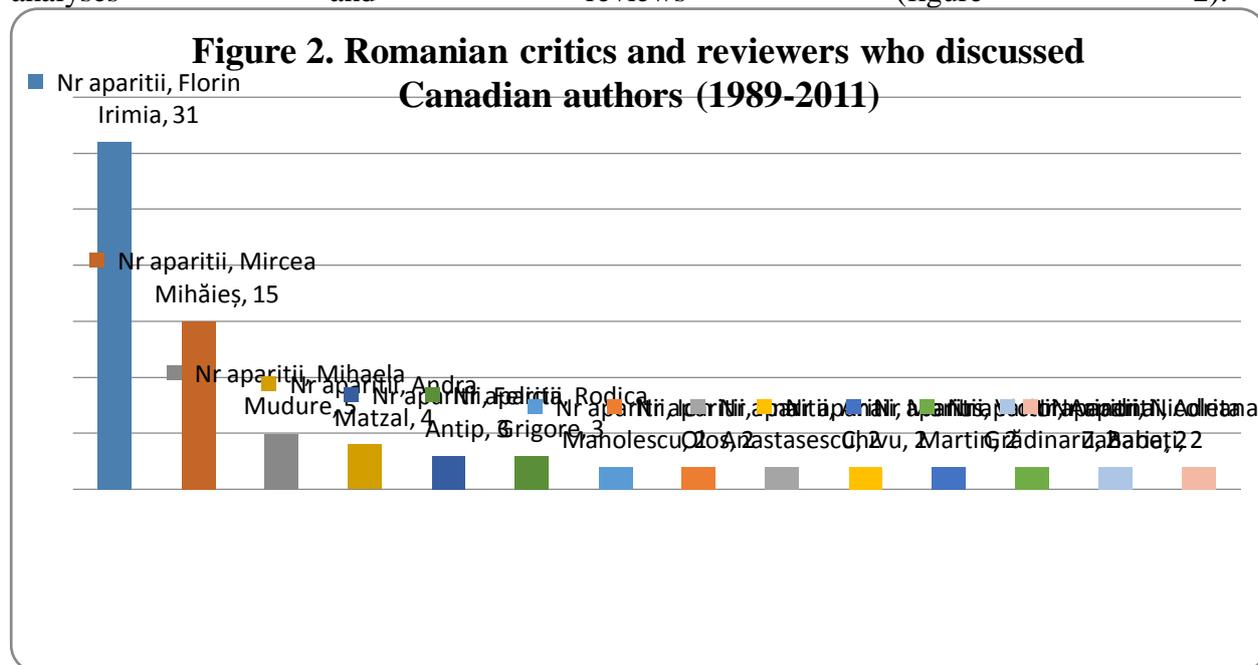
2.4. Critical Studies on English Canadian Literature in Post-communist Periodicals

As far as literary criticism is concerned, the number of critical references (volumes, articles, prefaces, notes, and, above all, reviews) exceeds by far the previous periods and comparisons between figures are quite impressive. According to the corpus of such paratexts that we have compiled, over 100 articles on English Canadian authors came out in the important (on-line and printed) Romanian periodicals (see figure 1) between 1989 and 2011, as compared to (about) 50 in the pre-communist and communist years.

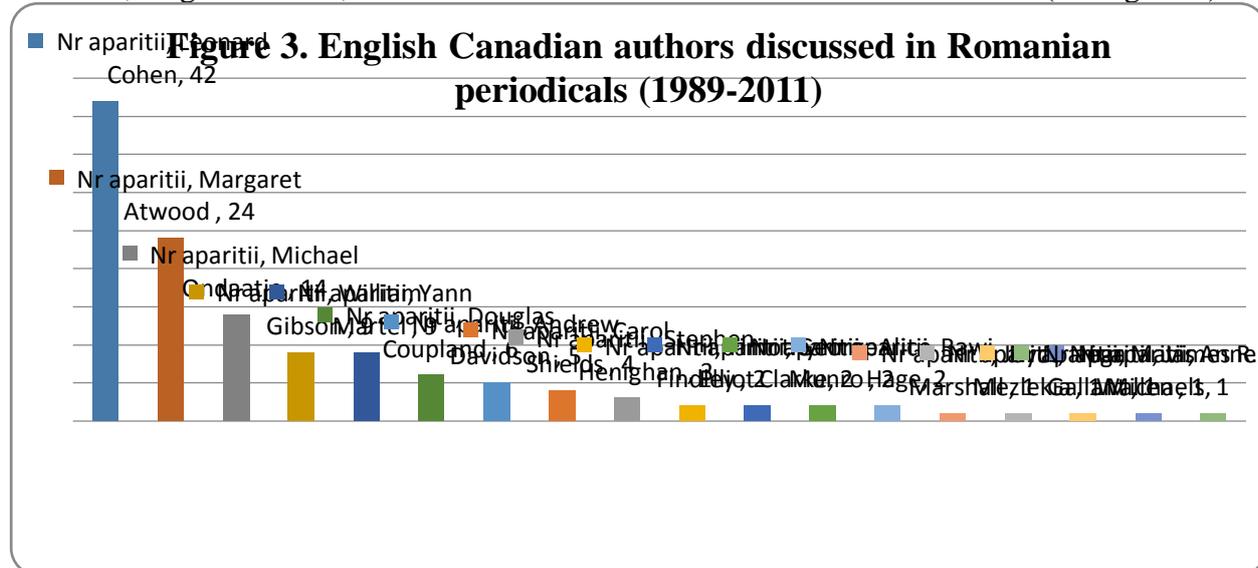


The critical studies focus on postmodern authors who tend to be the canonical figures of the day, although other poets and writers are also present in the critics' investigations. The authors of critical studies are mainly scholars of Canadian Studies that have published in this field and/or have translated some of the literary works. Besides their academic papers and books, a number of such scholars have constantly signed prefaces and detailed reviews of the translated Canadian literature, thus truly promoting it not only among specialists, but also among a larger audience. Florin Irimia, for instance, the young scholar from the University of Iași who devoted his doctoral thesis to the postmodern Canadian novel, has also translated some of Margaret Atwood's novels (*Oryx and Crake*, *Alias Grace*), prefaced many translations of Canadian novels, Atwood included (e.g. prefaces to *Cat's Eye*, *The Blind Assassin*, *Oryx and Crake*, *Lady Oracle*) and published (between 2000 and 2009) about 30 articles and reviews on English Canadian authors in widely read (on-line) cultural publications such as *Observator cultural/ The Cultural Observer*. Most of these articles are devoted to Margaret Atwood whom he also met and interviewed, to Leonard Cohen, as well as to other writers (Michael Ondaatje, Yann Martel, Timothy Findley, etc.). Similarly, Mircea Mihăieș, a professor at the University of Timisoara, published a long series of articles on Cohen (in 2005), which he then gathered in a volume, *Viața, patimile și cântecele lui Leonard Cohen (The Life, Passions and Songs of Leonard Cohen)* (Iasi: Polirom, 2005). He also prefaced all Cohen's translated books (*Beautiful Losers*, *The Favorite Game*, *The Book of Longing*). Michael Ondaatje and William Gibson are also frequently present in the critics'

analyses and reviews (figure 2).



Interestingly enough, in the first decade after the fall of the communist regime, only 4 articles on Canadian authors were published in periodicals, the rest of more than 100 coming out after 2000, despite the fact that ten Canadian novels were translated between 1989 and 2000. Thus, if the four articles were devoted to reputed Canadian authors such as William Gibson and Michael Ondaatje, other less known writers such as Trevor Ferguson, Peter Such, Richard Rohmer or Moyra Tarling came unnoticed. The most discussed Canadian authors are the postmodern ones (Atwood, Cohen, Ondaatje). They are followed by the SF cyberpunk writer William Gibson, the Booker Prize winner Yann Martel, the Generation-X novelist Douglas Coupland, the bestselling author Andrew Davidson, Carol Shields and Stephen Henighan. Even less mentioned are Timothy Findley, Alice Munro, Rawi Hage and the poet George Elliot Clarke with only two articles. James R. Wallen, Anne Michaels, Joyce Marshall, Nega Mezlekia, and Mavis Gallant are discussed in one article each (see figure 3).



Generally speaking, most of the articles on English Canadian authors are published by *Observator cultural/ The Cultural Observer*. Moreover, periodicals that published short critical studies on Canadian works during the previous periods have continued to do so after the fall of the communist regime. This is the case of *Adevărul literar și artistic/ The Literary and Artistic Truth* and *Convorbiri literare/ Literary Talks* which have discussed Canadian authors or published fragments of translations since the inter-war years and *România literară/ Literary Romania* which also devoted articles to Canadian authors in the communist period.

For instance, the articles on Margaret Atwood in post-communist periodicals are mainly dealing with her prose. Only 3 of the 24 articles regarding her focus on other topics (non-fiction, poetry and the Edinburgh International Book Festival in 2007). The Romanian reviewers generally practice an academic criticism with postmodern and feminist influences. They also draw on the discipline of Cultural Studies (Florin Irimia) sometimes making impressionistic or psychological allegations (Mihaela Mudure). Most of the articles are published in *Observator cultural/ The Cultural Observer* and come as reviews of the original work or its translation. Only two critical pieces can be regarded as translation criticism (namely Radu Ciobanu's *Disecând "Actul Scrierii"/ Dissecting "The Act of Writing"* in *România Literară/ Literary Romania* and Florin Irimia's reply in *Observator cultural/ The Cultural Observer*). In discussing Atwood, Romanian critics frequently resort to international criticism. For instance, Florin Irimia finds support in Linda Hutcheon's views on the Canadian postmodern, and in Coral Ann Howells or John Moss (2008: 30); in her discussion of Atwood's short fiction, Mudure cites Freud and Lacan to support her psychological assumptions and Nan Bowman Abinski for the distinction between utopia and dystopia (2002: S11). Comparisons of the Canadian author and her novels to other literary figures are also made: Olivotto's article is an attempt to identify common patterns for Richardson's *Clarissa* (and the Lovelace syndrome) and Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (2003: S12); Snowman/Jimmy in *Oryx and Crake* is compared by Irimia to Robinson Crusoe and the novel to *Brave New World*, *1984*, *Fahrenheit 451* and *A Clockwork Orange*, all dystopias by male authors (2003: S13).

The interpretations given by Romanian rewriters range from biographical (as practiced by the authors of *Cotidianul/ The Daily Newspaper*), impressionistic and narrative (in reviews summarizing the plot of the novels), to more elaborate postmodern ones (e.g.: Florin Irimia's samples of academic criticism). Sometimes critical interpretations take a psychological and psychoanalytical turn, with mythological influences (as in Mihaela Mudure's case). Numerous parallels with foreign and Romanian authors and their works are made and international authors are quoted to support domestic views, thus testifying to the Romanian critics' keen awareness of Canadian letters.

Conclusions

In this paper we overviewed the key factors in the intercultural literary exchanges between Romania and Canada in the age of globalisation. In spite of the fact that literary exchanges between the two countries started almost a century ago, after 1989 we can speak of highly dynamic rapports between the two countries which have not come to an end. Thus, we have shown how major Romanian universities (in Iași, Bucharest, Cluj and other cities) set up Canadian Studies centers and how academic programmes on Canadian-related issues sprang in the post-communist years. Moreover, we gave instances of doctoral theses and academic papers on Canadian Studies that came out in the age of globalisation. The post-communist period also witnessed the rise of new media of reception, i.e. film adaptations of Canadian novels which have otherwise remained unknown to the Romanian public (*cf.* Sabina-Marian

Dragnea, Ana Olos) and the distribution of literature with newspapers at lower prices (as in the case of *Cotidianul/ The Daily Paper*). As shown, the postmodern Canadian authors (Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje and Leonard Cohen) have been the most translated and discussed ones during the post-communist years, the interpretations ranging from impressionistic to psychoanalytical ones. According to our statistics, there are more than 100 critical references on English Canadian authors between 1989 and 2011, some of the most active critics also being Romanian Canadianists and translators of Canadian prose (e.g. Florin Irimia).

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the strategic grant POSDRU/159/1.5/S/140863, Project ID 140863 (2014), co-financed by the European Social Fund within the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013.

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