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LITTERARIA**

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MAGDALENA RĂDUȚĂ
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ARGUMENT

Dans la réflexion contemporaine sur l'auctorialité, les recherches sur la posture de l'écrivain occupent une place assez significative ; par leur effort d'inscrire la littérature dans la série des discours du social et sur le social, elles interrogent constamment les possibilités de réunir dans un seul regard analytique les mises-en-scène publiques et les mises-en-texte du créateur. Conceptuellement proche de la scénographie auctoriale¹, qui privilégie le regard sur les représentations génériques du créateur, et de l'ethos auctorial, autoreprésentation du créateur à travers l'effet textuel², la posture tente à saisir le positionnement – double et simultané – d'un auteur dans l'espace public et dans ses créations singulières, pour rendre visible l'(auto)construction d'une certaine *pensée-écrivain*.

Vu généralement comme l'articulation d'une conduite et d'un discours³, le concept de posture essaie de dépasser la séparation (y compris méthodologique) entre les dispositifs sociologiques du collectif et l'individualité créatrice. Son enjeu est de prendre en compte, simultanément, les manières d'un auteur de faire entendre sa voix singulière et les conditions sociales qui rendent cette voix intelligible. Historicisante, la posture réunit les positionnements auctoriaux d'une certaine époque, en dépassant les descriptions des caractéristiques sociales des auteurs dans le champ littéraire ; à l'aide des outils proches à l'analyse de discours, elle identifie des représentations du soi créateur dans les discours publics des auteurs et dans leurs textes littéraires, en cartographiant à travers cette identification toute une série d'instances de médiation propres au fait littéraire (de la spécificité du processus éditorial jusqu'aux formes du spectacle médiatique où l'écrivain se trouve inscrit).

S'interroger sur le trajet postural d'un écrivain donne l'occasion à suivre les possibilités d'une certaine forme d'existence réflexive du créateur littéraire dans un espace littéraire configuré historiquement. Se penser et se montrer en tant qu'écrivain – sur la scène publique, dans l'écriture intime et dans la fiction – c'est se construire et se légitimer sous le regard d'autrui, spectateur et lecteur également. Cette réflexivité composite et collaborative, va-et-vient entre le collectif et l'individuel, naît des répertoires posturaux divers : des anciens prototypes du poète révolté ou du bohème jusqu'aux figures contemporaines de l'écrivain chouchou des médias ou de son contraire, le reclus mal léché qui proclame néanmoins très vocalement la fierté de sa solitude vertueuse, les postures

¹ José-Luis Diaz, *L'Écrivain imaginaire. Scénographies auctoriales à l'époque romantique*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2007.

² Ruth Amossy, *La Présentation de soi. Ethos et identité verbale*, Paris, PUF, 2010.

³ Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*, Genève, Slatkine, 2007.

s'accumulent et se diversifient. L'analyse du trajet postural dévoile ses dimensions informatives et compréhensives : on y voit se décliner des stratégies littéraires, on essaie d'y questionner les éventuels virages dans les présentations publiques de soi, on s'interroge sur les mises à jour de certaines postures sélectionnées dans un répertoire propre au champ littéraire (trans)national ; et l'ensemble de ces actions et formes singulières en permanente relation avec le collectif de la vie littéraire compose une « description de l'auteur comme un *agir public* »⁴.

Ce que nous nous sommes proposés avec ce dossier thématique de la revue *Dacoromania litteraria*, c'est de cartographier – pour la première fois d'une manière systématique et à l'aide de l'instrument postural – l'espace littéraire roumain, et de dresser cette image tout en choisissant un moment significatif de son histoire récente : le changement de régime politique en décembre 1989 et les trois décennies qui lui ont suivi. Ce qu'a expérimenté l'écrivain roumain pendant le communisme a été surtout la mise en danger de sa présence dans l'espace public. Si cela ne l'a pas destiné entièrement à la solitude et à la claustration, au moins elle lui a conditionné de manière dramatique les apparitions sur la scène littéraire et le fonctionnement dans la communauté d'écrivains : aussi lui a-t-on éduqué des formes spécifiques d'attention (prudentes) au milieu social et professionnel. En effet, pour 40 ans, être écrivain en Roumanie n'a pas signifié beaucoup plus que l'articulation d'une identité textuelle avec quelques associations professionnelles autorisées. De ce point de vue, la Révolution du décembre 1989 a ouvert la voie pour une pluralité des manières d'être écrivain dans l'espace public. C'est seulement après 1990 que l'écrivain roumain réussit à reprendre son engagement politique, qu'il arrive à se réinventer une figure d'auteur et à se mobiliser pour des mises en scènes de soi, qu'il s'expose vraiment, à côté d'autres acteurs publics. Autrement dit, c'est justement le nouvel ordre social de la Roumanie d'après 1990 qui offre aux écrivains roumains la possibilité de médiatiser un ethos auctorial à travers d'autres pratiques que celles qui portent exclusivement sur la « scène » textuelle. Si notre projet avait été orienté dès le début vers les hypostases contemporaines de la posture de l'écrivain, on est amené à constater que cette analyse du champ littéraire des 30 dernières années littéraires en Roumanie ne pouvait pas se dispenser, en réalité, de la compréhension – préalable – de cette mise en perspective historique : les figures et les représentations publiques récentes des écrivains sous-tendent des filiations, des traditions locales. Elles sont produites non seulement par la reprise et la recomposition de quelques répertoires historiques, mais aussi en réponse à une frustration liée à l'impraticabilité d'une telle performance identitaire dans l'intervalle 1948–1989. C'est pourquoi nous avons décidé de reporter l'analyse exclusive de l'ultra-contemporain pour un projet complémentaire à ce dossier, et de discuter, ici, l'exemple de plusieurs écrivains

⁴ Jérôme Meizoz, *La littérature « en personne ». Scène médiatique et formes d'incarnation*, Genève, Slatkine, 2016.

dont les carrières littéraires ont subi, pour plus ou moins de temps, des contraintes totalitaires.

Trois portraits féminins sont réalisés dans la première section du numéro (*Postures féminines*), pour trois femmes-écrivaines de générations différentes : Nina Cassian, née en 1924, Mariana Marin, née en 1956, et Elena Vlădăreanu, née en 1981. Il s'agit de trois manières de représenter et d'incarner l'écrivain engagé qui impliquent, toutes les trois, une problématisation de la marginalité. Andrada Fătu-Tutoveanu, qui assume la réflexion sur Nina Cassian, concentre son analyse sur la mise en scène théâtrale de Nina Cassian, travaillant, avec les instruments de l'analyse filmique, sur le documentaire *Distanța între mine și mine* [*La distance entre moi et moi-même*] (2018), réalisé avec la participation de Nina Cassian, qui se confesse devant la caméra. C'est à l'âge de la senescence que cette femme extraordinaire, dont la conscience narcissique s'était bâtie sur le fond d'un fort complexe lié à sa laideur, trouvait sa pleine sérénité et, simultanément, l'énergie de refaire et de visualiser de manière rétrospective son parcours d'écrivain depuis son début en 1947 jusqu'aux années 2000 (elle allait mourir en 2014). Suite à cet effort de s'accepter dans ses difformités physiques et dans ses complicités avec le régime totalitaire, Nina Cassian arrive à définir une figure d'écrivain qui serait spécifique pour la Guerre Froide. Analysant la posture de Mariana Marin, poète qui fait partie d'une génération littéraire très productive dans la culture roumaine, formée autour d'un important cénacle bucarestois (Cenaclul de Luni), Ioana Hodărnaș propose une analyse comparée de l'image de la poète roumaine, mise en relation avec celle de Sylvia Plath et d'Anne Frank. On nous y fournit également l'esquisse d'un portrait photographique de Mariana Marin, rendu possible par les clichés photographiques réalisés par Tudor Jebeleanu, le photographe de la génération '80, qui consacre visuellement cette génération dans la figure de « poète *beat* ». Avec Elena Vlădăreanu, on tourne vers l'ultra-contemporain. Andreea Mîrț examine la conduite d'outsider d'Elena Vlădăreanu en tant que choix générationnel, mais singularise, en même temps, la poète dans le portrait militant d'une femme « amazone », qui porte à elle seule ses batailles (à travers le prix « Sofia Nădejde », accordé à la littérature écrite par des femmes, elle allait créer en 2018 sa propre institution littéraire) et qui refuse toute intégration.

Dans la deuxième section du numéro (*Engagements politiques*), Victor Cobuz revient sur Elena Vlădăreanu, pour, cette fois, une analyse posturale mise en relation avec celle de Teodora Coman, poète de la même génération littéraire. Les enjeux politiques de la figuration de soi en *écrivaine engagée* amène Cobuz à distinguer entre une position « forte » (Elena Vlădăreanu) et une position « faible » (Teodora Coman). Une reconstruction historique de ce que c'est la littérature engagée dans la culture roumaine sert ici comme arrière-plan (nécessaire) de la discussion, tout en constatant, déjà avant que le totalitarisme n'ait pas compromis cette formule littéraire, l'existence d'une certaine résistance par rapport à ce qui dépassait l'autonomie esthétique. Angelo Mitchievici consacre son essai à Adrian Păunescu, « poète de cour » de Nicolae Ceaușescu, et initiateur d'un cénacle

(*Flacăra*) qui, les années 1970, remplissait les stades dans le pays entier. C'était de la littérature mise en spectacle (la chorégraphie, la musique, le sport s'associant aux lectures de poésie) ; et en même temps c'était un spectacle-synthèse qui réunissait les thèmes nationalistes et la culture pop occidentale. Angelo Mitchievici suit les « rôles » que Păunescu avait assumés au four et à mesure (*poeta vates*, poète de cour, animateur, éducateur de la « génération en jean », poète-citoyen), dans le cadre d'un complexe processus de théâtralisation de soi. Analysant la production littéraire des années 1970 en Roumanie, époque qui nourrit la rêverie d'un « roman total », complètement émancipé du discours idéologique, Laura Pavel en déduit la posture d'un « écrivain total », ou d'un « fictionnaire » socialiste. Nourri par un bovarysme de compensation, cette posture serait rivale à celle du décideur politique, le centralisme autoritariste de la volonté politique se correspondant avec un centralisme de la volonté de pouvoir auctorial. Le dernier texte de cette section, assumé par Ioana Moroșan, analyse de manière comparative la figuration de soi auctoriale chez trois femmes-écrivains : Ioana Postelnicu, Cella Serghi et Lucia Demetrius. Ayant fait leur début en littérature dans l'entre-deux-guerres, dans le même cénacle bucarestois (*Sburătorul*), chacune de ces trois auteures accepte de s'affilier aux valeurs du socialisme. Cela ne veut pourtant pas dire qu'elles aient part de la même chance à la consécration, et ce sont les conditionnements et le hasard qui décident sur ces différences qui intéressent surtout Ioana Moroșan.

La troisième section constituée, de *Mythologies littéraires*, s'ouvre avec deux textes qui analysent la posture de Mircea Cărtărescu, le poète le plus important de la génération '80 en Roumanie. Si, identifiant des indices posturaux résistants, Magda Răduță observe chez Cărtărescu l'importance accordée à un *savoir-faire* spécifique et retrace sa figure de poète vers celle, historiquement datée, du poète-artisan, qui saisit son art comme un métier à part entier, Anca Socaci examine les interviews de Mircea Cărtărescu pour le public anglophone, afin d'esquisser une image distincte du poète en « humaniste déraciné ». Cela lui sert comme point de départ pour problématiser ce qui change, dans la figuration posturale, quand on « exporte » un écrivain national dans l'espace littéraire mondial. Une autre posture emblématique d'écrivain intéresse Ioana Onescu chez Alexandru Mușina (1954–2013) : celle du « génie balnéaire », à laquelle Mușina arrive vers la fin de sa vie, après avoir commencé sa carrière comme un « poète *beat* ». Alina Buzatu s'occupe de la posture du poète Gellu Naum (1915–2001), en partant du personnage-délégué qu'il construit sous le nom de « M. Naum » dans le roman *Zenobia*, pour montrer que le surréalisme, plus qu'une poétique, devient dans ce cas une manière d'être. S'appliquant, enfin, sur la communauté littéraire qui s'est constitué entre 1906 et 1940 à « Viața românească » (Iassy), Maricica Munteanu observe des conduites et des postures collectives qui se réalisent par la reprise et la généralisation dans le groupe des habitudes, des manies (l'hypochondrie, l'insomnie, le tabagisme) et des règles de vie (le principe de la délicatesse) de Garabet Ibrăileanu, le critique-amphitryon du groupe.

JÉRÔME MEIZOZ

POSTURE DE L'ÉCRIVAIN EN MANAGER¹

Le succès désarme. La récompense est punition.
Il n'y a pas d'artiste réconcilié.

Éric Chevillard

L'engouement d'un public français et international pour *La Vérité sur l'affaire Harry Quebert* (2012), deuxième roman d'un jeune Genevois, Joël Dicker, est bien connu. La presse a beaucoup commenté le succès viral de ce livre. Paru en co-édition franco-suisse, l'ouvrage s'est vendu à trois millions d'exemplaires, dans soixante pays et en quarante langues².

La Vérité sur l'affaire Harry Quebert

Les plus surprenants des best-sellers, remarque Eva Illouz, émanent d'auteurs quasi inconnus et accèdent rapidement « à des succès que même le programme informatique le plus ingénieux ne saurait pronostiquer »³. En 2005, une nouvelle de Joël Dicker, « Le Tigre », obtient le Prix international des jeunes auteurs (PIJA) et paraît à cette occasion dans une petite maison suisse, L'Hèbe. Le jeune écrivain, juriste de formation, fils d'un enseignant et d'une libraire, confie plus tard à la presse avoir écrit quatre romans refusés avant son premier opus *Les derniers jours de nos pères*, paru en co-édition franco-suisse au printemps 2012 (Prix des écrivains genevois 2010, sur manuscrit). Suit à l'automne de la même année *La Vérité sur l'affaire Harry Quebert*, dans une même co-édition et avec le retentissement que l'on sait : Prix Goncourt des Lycéens, Grand Prix du roman de l'Académie française, le roman fait partie de la dernière sélection du Prix Goncourt 2012. En septembre 2015 paraît un troisième roman, *Le livre des Baltimore*, mais la coédition franco-suisse a cédé le pas au seul éditeur parisien (De Fallois)⁴. Effet

¹ Extrait tiré – avec l'aimable autorisation de l'auteur et de l'éditeur – des chap. III, IV, V de Jérôme Meizoz, *Faire l'auteur en régime néo-libéral (Rudiments de marketing littéraire)*, Genève, Slatkine, 2020.

² Parmi ses écrits : *Le Tigre*, Fribourg, L'Hèbe, 2005, réédition illustrée chez De Fallois, 2019 ; *Les derniers jours de nos pères*, Paris/ Lausanne, De Fallois/ L'Âge d'homme, 2012 ; *La vérité sur l'affaire Harry Quebert*, De Fallois/ L'Âge d'homme, 2012 ; *Le livre des Baltimore*, Paris, De Fallois, 2015 ; *La disparition de Stephanie Mailer*, Paris, De Fallois, 2018 ; *L'Enigme de la chambre 622*, Paris, De Fallois, 2020.

³ Eva Illouz, *Hard romance. Cinquante nuances de Grey et nous*, Paris, Seuil, 2014, p. 26.

⁴ *Le livre des Baltimore* (2015) a fait l'objet d'une presse abondante mais dans l'ensemble plus sévère, notamment quant à sa qualité littéraire. Voir, par exemple, Éric Chevillard, « Le Club des Cinq en Amérique », *Le Monde*, 2 octobre 2015.

d'une géopolitique littéraire, encore centralisée et parisienne, mais aussi des logiques de diffusion et des difficultés de l'économie d'exportation en Suisse. Début 2018, enfin, *La Disparition de Stephanie Mailer* reproduit quasiment la structure syntaxique du titre à succès *La Vérité sur l'affaire Harry Quebert*. Similarité qui n'a rien d'étonnant, puisque le processus industriel est analogue. Et qui s'est avisé, d'ailleurs, que *La Vérité sur l'affaire Harry Quebert* évoquait déjà, en écho, une variante adulte d'Harry Potter ?

Nombreux sont les articles qui saluent, à parution, le succès international d'un « roman français », selon le mot de Marc Fumaroli, et s'empressent ainsi d'oublier la nationalité de l'auteur et la co-édition avec la Suisse. Ce concert mis à part, les critiques les plus récurrentes du roman mobilisent un argument commun : le succès de *La Vérité sur l'affaire Harry Quebert*, tiendrait moins à la qualité littéraire de l'ouvrage qu'à l'assimilation locale des techniques du roman américain, habileté des dialogues en moins. *Les Inrocks* commentent ainsi :

Mais la loi des prix est parfois impénétrable. Un parfait outsider, tel le Suisse Joël Dicker avec son insipide ersatz de polar américain, *La vérité sur l'affaire Harry Quebert*, peut ainsi rafler le Grand Prix du roman de l'Académie française et se retrouver en lice pour le Goncourt⁵.

Dans ce dossier de réception, une double dépendance est donc lisible : celle d'un auteur suisse à l'égard de l'édition parisienne et celle d'un romancier francophone à l'égard des modèles anglo-saxons.

Ce succès soudain a partie liée avec un circuit littéraire transnational dont l'accès passe par les éditeurs et prix parisiens, puis par les traductions (négociées souvent à la Foire de Francfort) et la presse internationale. Les journalistes ne se privent d'ailleurs pas de décrire le rôle de l'éditeur et les réseaux d'influence par lesquels, avant même sa parution en librairie, le roman accède à la première liste du jury Goncourt. On le devine dans tous ces propos : l'accès au statut de best-seller dépend d'une série de facteurs complexes dont le suffrage d'un large public n'est pas forcément le premier ni le plus décisif. Encore faut-il les conditions structurelles pour de tels événements éditoriaux.

Entretien au magazine économique Bilan

Quel discours le jeune auteur Dicker tient-il sur les mécanismes de ce succès, sur les dépendances qu'ils rendent visibles et sur sa conception du métier ? Examinons d'abord le reportage qu'un magazine économique suisse consacre aux ventes du roman. Le 19 septembre 2013, *Bilan* présente le phénomène littéraire du moment et questionne Joël Dicker :

⁵ Elisabeth Philippe, « Les prix littéraires ont-ils encore un sens ? », *Les Inrockuptibles*, 7 novembre 2012.

Les chiffres obtenus par *Bilan* sont inédits. Douze mois après sa parution, *La vérité sur l'affaire Harry Quebert* dépasse les 850 000 exemplaires vendus en français, les 330 000 en Italie et les 150 000 en Espagne. "Si on ajoute les livres étrangers, à l'heure actuelle, on en est certainement à 1,5 million", précise l'éditeur Bernard de Fallois, contacté par *Bilan*. "Parmi les grands succès que j'ai connus, aucun n'avait rencontré un tel engouement à l'étranger." *Entretien*.

– Joël Dicker, un million et demi d'exemplaires, ça donne le vertige ?

– Oui, ça donne le vertige. Mais j'ai toujours le nez sur l'étape d'après. Je pense que c'est très salubre quand on est encore jeune et que c'est la première fois – peut-être la dernière – qu'arrive un tel succès.

– Où sont vos prochaines promotions ?

– La Pologne pour sûr, la Tchéquie et la Hongrie peut-être... 32 langues font à peu près 45 pays. S'il faut passer quatre ou cinq jours, soit une semaine ouvrable, dans chaque pays, on passe une année sur la route. Cela fait un an que le livre est paru et j'ai envie de continuer mon travail. Le grand dilemme, c'est de réussir à dire non aux éditeurs étrangers et aux journalistes.

– Avez-vous retrouvé votre rythme d'écriture ?

– Oui, mais différemment. Des écrivains m'ont dit : ton statut a changé, tu dois faire de la promo et apprendre à écrire dans le train, dans l'avion, à gauche et à droite. J'ai réussi à prendre le pli, écrire en voyage ou à l'hôtel, me concentrer même sur un quart d'heure. J'ai des carnets dans lesquels j'écris, ce que je faisais moins avant parce que j'ai tendance à les perdre.

– Allez-vous aussi changer de mode de vie, vous installer ailleurs ?

– Je ressens plutôt le besoin de m'isoler. En ce moment, je vis un moment charnière. En France, la rentrée littéraire a finalement balayé *La Vérité*. Il n'est plus dans les quinze best-sellers pour la première fois depuis 49 semaines. Ça veut dire qu'enfin le vent a tourné et que je dois trouver le moyen d'avoir du temps pour moi, avec l'espoir de revenir avec un livre.

– Vous êtes devenu l'auteur suisse romand le plus vendu de tous les temps, notamment devant Jacques Chessex, Nicolas Bouvier, Ramuz... Vous arrive-t-il de vous dire "pourquoi moi" ?

– Ce qui relativise, c'est que je n'arrive pas à leur cheville : ils n'ont pas simplement écrit un livre qui a marché, mais ont bâti une œuvre. Le plus important pour moi, c'est de tenter de montrer que je peux aller plus loin.

– Avec le succès viennent des inconvénients, lequel est le plus insupportable ?

– C'est toujours dur de se plaindre du succès, puisque beaucoup de bonnes choses viennent avec ! Le fait que votre vie ne vous appartient plus. Vous allez boire un verre avec un ami, vous pensez lui parler de soucis personnels, et à la table d'à côté deux personnes vous abordent et vous savez qu'elles vous écoutent. Il faut donner ses propres limites.

– Vous êtes devenu une marque suisse, comme Federer ou l'EPFL. Vous sentez-vous spécifiquement Suisse ?

– Oui, je me sens spécifiquement Suisse, d'autant plus à l'étranger où je donne des conférences pour les représentations suisses. Tout d'un coup vient un attachement très fort : on fait partie d'une équipe qui promeut les valeurs de la Suisse à l'étranger.

– Du côté des États-Unis, où en est le projet d'adaptation au cinéma ?

– Il est en stand-by depuis trois ou quatre mois : la prochaine étape sera que le livre soit disponible en anglais pour que les réalisateurs intéressés puissent vraiment se prononcer. En Angleterre et en Australie, ce sera probablement en avril 2014. Pour le marché Canada-USA, on est en train de voir ce qui va se passer⁶.

Comment l'écrivain argumente-t-il ici ? Quelle image d'auteur donne-t-il dans ce magazine économique d'orientation libérale ? L'écrivain reconnaît qu'après l'énorme succès de son roman, son « statut » et son emploi du temps ont changé. Il accepte volontiers la part de « promo » à réaliser, avec les signatures, déplacements, etc., et parvient à mettre à profit les moindres espaces ou moments pour écrire (« même sur un quart d'heure »). S'il envisage son activité en termes de métier, elle ne renvoie plus à l'imagerie du bureau, de la machine à écrire et de la cigarette, mais à diverses activités de représentation dans l'interstice desquelles le geste d'écrire se fraye une place quasi secondaire. La périodicité du métier est dominée par les « 49 semaines » où le roman appartient à la liste des quinze best-sellers. La sortie de cette liste induit un retour au temps disponible pour écrire. Ce n'est pas l'écriture qui règle l'agenda, mais l'inverse. Précession, donc, de la temporalité économique sur celle de la création. En d'autres termes, l'auteur se résout à créer avec et pour le marché, au sein des opportunités proposées par celui-ci. Régime *professionnel* de l'activité littéraire courant parmi les auteurs qui, depuis le XIX^e siècle, ont prêté leur plume à des campagnes publicitaires. Voilà donc Dicker à l'opposé du régime *vocationnel* (romantique) qui affirme la nécessité intime et impérieuse d'écrire, surgie au sein de la méditation solitaire.

Dans un tel écosystème, l'écrivain ne se formalise pas que *Bilan* le considère comme une « marque » et revendique même ce statut⁷. Les processus économiques du livre ne sont pas occultés mais décrits de manière a-critique comme un environnement naturel. Joël Dicker se montre en effet très informé et actif quant à la promotion de son roman, notamment pour les traductions et adaptations au cinéma (*Pour le marché Canada-USA, on est en train de voir ce qui va se passer*). Impliqué et soucieux, il évoque la phase de commercialisation dans le langage du marketing. Une telle aisance et une telle préoccupation à l'égard du produit économique de la création n'a d'autre exemple, de nos jours, que parmi les stars de l'art contemporain, qu'a décrites Alain Quemin⁸. En effet, le paradigme contemporain inverse le rapport traditionnellement désintéressé du créateur

⁶ *Bilan*, 19 septembre 2013.

⁷ Voir le chapitre « Soi-même comme une marque », *La Littérature « en personne ». Scène médiatique et formes d'incarnation*, Genève, Slatkine, 2016, pp. 75-76.

⁸ Alain Quemin, *Les stars de l'art contemporain. Notoriété et consécration artistiques dans les arts visuels*, Paris, CNRS, 2013 ; Nathalie Heinich, « Le romancier-à-succès », in *Être écrivain. Création et identité*, Paris, La Découverte, pp. 30-34 ; *De la visibilité. Excellence et singularité en régime médiatique*, Paris, Gallimard, 2012 ; Antoine Lilti, *Figures publiques. L'invention de la célébrité 1750–1850*, Paris, Fayard, 2014 ; Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Se faire un nom. Une anthropologie de la célébrité à la Renaissance*, Paris, Arkhé, 2019.

moderne à l'argent et, pour se différencier du modèle de l'artiste vocationnel, joue la provocation dans ce domaine. Pensons à Andy Warhol, et actuellement à Damien Hirst ou Jeff Koons, ancien trader devenu une grande fortune de l'art⁹.

Conformément aux traits de caractères associés aux Suisses protestants, Dicker a le triomphe modeste et réaffirme son image de fidélité et de fiabilité. L'assurance de son « attachement » fera d'ailleurs retour lors de la soirée promotionnelle pour Swiss. Ainsi, contrairement à d'autres écrivains romands reconnus en France, Dicker ne cherche pas à faire oublier sa nationalité, mais au contraire voue sa réussite au service des « valeurs suisses » associées à son image (précision, fiabilité, dynamisme). Ce faisant, il injecte en quelque sorte dans le champ littéraire français des valeurs « suisses » au service du marché, en plus des montres et du chocolat. En cela, Dicker se distingue radicalement d'auteurs reconnus en France comme C. F. Ramuz, Nicolas Bouvier ou Jacques Chessex qui, au contraire, ont régulièrement satirisé les valeurs helvétiques. Si les ventes de son roman dépassent celles de Ramuz, Bouvier ou Chessex, il dit n'en tirer aucune supériorité, bien au contraire. Un jugement aussi humble repose sur la prémisse selon laquelle un succès commercial n'équivaut nullement à « une œuvre ». C'est pourquoi le jeune auteur envisage son prochain livre comme une étape vers une reconnaissance d'un autre ordre que celle du seul marché, preuve à venir d'une valeur patrimoniale nouvelle, digne d'être considérée comme une « œuvre ». Comme dans le cas de Roger Federer au tennis, le rappel constant de l'humilité fait le lien entre un trait de personnalité et le sérieux discret de la « qualité suisse », label bien connu dans la sphère industrielle.

[...]

Le statut de best-seller n'est pas sans lien avec la promotion publicitaire. Or, que lit-on dans l'*Incipit* de *La Vérité sur l'affaire Harry Quebert* ? : « Tout le monde parlait du livre [de Marcus Goldman] ». Et plus loin, ceci : « Personne ne sait qu'il est écrivain. Ce sont les autres qui le lui disent » (p. 63). Autrement dit, les questions du succès du livre et de la reconnaissance consécutive de l'écrivain sont logées au cœur même de la fable : l'intrigue de *La Vérité sur l'affaire Harry Quebert* est en quelque sorte construite comme la prophétie auto-réalisatrice de son succès commercial. Le roman de Dicker confronte deux écrivains, Marcus Goldman, couronné de succès pour son premier livre mais désormais en panne d'idées, et son ancien professeur, Harry Quebert, auteur d'un best-seller intitulé *L'origine du mal*, soupçonné d'avoir assassiné une jeune fille de quinze ans dont il était épris. Comme le best-seller de Quebert, l'intrigue de Dicker raconte (en abyme) le processus de marketing qui la fait connaître. Le discours sur la littérature

⁹ Nathalie Heinich, *Le paradigme de l'art contemporain. Structures d'une révolution artistique*, Paris, Gallimard, 2014, pp. 78-79.

porté par le roman relève d'ailleurs d'un même imaginaire du succès : mystique de l'inspiration ; aura érotique de l'écrivain ; célébration des pouvoirs de la littérature et des bienfaits de celle-ci dans les vies ordinaires. Version également pieuse et assez voisine dans *La Vie secrète des écrivains* (2019) de Guillaume Musso, qui met en scène un jeune auteur souvent refusé par les éditeurs, « ces gestionnaires de la littérature qui lisent les textes à travers le prisme d'un tableau Excel », et son admiration pour un aîné intègre, Nathan Fawles, retiré du monde après avoir renoncé à la littérature (ce personnage est un agrégat de Philip Roth, Elena Ferrante et Thomas Pynchon, tous rétifs à l'exigence médiatique)¹⁰.

Dans ces deux cas, les valeurs de gratuité, centrales dans une conception autonomiste de la littérature, deviennent celles-là mêmes au nom desquelles justifier la grande production ! Dans le monde de la *com'*, on n'est pas à un paradoxe près. Et cette profession de foi bénigne en la littérature permet aussi d'assurer la jonction entre l'enthousiasme d'un Marc Fumaroli de l'Académie française et celui des lecteurs les plus ordinaires. Une fois posé comme un interprétant universel de la vie humaine, le roman mérite d'être vendu en grandes quantités, sans être soupçonnable d'obéir aux seuls intérêts du commerce. La littérature comme réparation du monde, comme lieu du *care* et de l'attention à l'autre, n'est-ce pas là un des clichés indiscutés de notre époque ?

Synthèse

Le formidable écho de *La Vérité sur l'affaire Harry Quebert* a fait de Joël Dicker une célébrité incarnant plusieurs idéaux : jeunesse, *sex appeal*, créativité, succès, liberté. À une échelle plus locale, sans doute, les campagnes publicitaires du chanteur pop Bastian Baker reposent sur les mêmes attendus. Tous deux sollicités par la compagnie aérienne Swiss, Dicker et Baker ont sociologiquement en commun d'être de jeunes hommes présentant bien et prêts à produire pour le marché, selon ses contraintes, explicites ou intériorisées. Leur discours ne réfère pas à une nécessité créatrice par défi esthétique (art pour l'art, Flaubert), par souci de la vie publique (de Zola à Sartre) ou par émulation vis-à-vis des pairs littéraires (Bourdieu). Dans l'environnement médiatique de la littérature, l'écrivain doit pouvoir tenir un discours adapté aux circonstances : en l'occurrence, dans le cosmos de l'entreprise privée, une *parole de vendeur*. Ou du moins une parole sur la littérature qui la rende en partie compatible avec le régime marchand, sans lui porter atteinte en tant que pratique culturelle démocratique.

C'est dire si la réflexion sur le best-seller gagne à tenir ensemble au moins trois problèmes : celui de la montée en singularité des artistes, celui des logiques spécifiques du champ littéraire et enfin celui du modèle économique qui régit la chaîne du livre. En l'occurrence, la singularité de Joël Dicker s'élabore à travers la

¹⁰ Pierre Mondot, « Mussologie », *Le Matricule des anges*, mai 2019, p. 50.

promotion médiatique de l'auteur sur fond d'un cosmos marchand présenté comme bénéfique et pacifié, en étroite affinité avec le secteur le plus commercial du champ littéraire. Dans un tel univers de production, même le style, pourtant critère suprême invoqué par la « grande » littérature, s'avère mobilisable comme marqueur commercial. La griffe auctoriale que constitue le style sert à singulariser le nom d'auteur dans un contexte commercial visant la labellisation. En effet, en quelques décennies, la littérature a passé d'un régime de la signature à un régime de la marque, ce qu'illustre bien l'image de Michel Houellebecq dans l'univers médiatique contemporain.

Un tel phénomène de librairie permet d'observer un écosystème littéraire multiple : primat de la vidéosphère, viralité des réseaux sociaux et impact du *storytelling*, crise de la librairie, recul de la critique littéraire et *peopolisation* de la presse, entrecroisement des demandes commerciales avec celles de la création, et enfin assimilation des artistes aux *stars*¹¹. Il ne suffit donc pas de décrire le best-seller comme un produit paramétré, car un tel objet ne parvient au succès commercial qu'à travers un mode complexe de circulation. Et dans ce parcours sont décisifs les discours qui l'accompagnent, tant de l'auteur que des divers médiateurs.

La demande médiatique qui a suivi le phénomène éditorial de *La Vérité sur l'affaire Harry Quebert* a placé le jeune auteur en situation de justifier, d'expliquer et de commenter sa pratique et ses croyances littéraires. Ceci d'autant plus que la réception des romans de Dicker laisse entrevoir un désaccord inconfortable sur la valeur de ses écrits. Liée, comme celle de Georges Simenon dans les années 1950, aux chiffres de ventes et à la visibilité médiatique, celle-ci apparaît comme fortement dépendante de l'univers économique, qu'il soit médiatique ou industriel. Or, dans les mondes de l'art, comme l'a montré Nathalie Heinich, coexistent plusieurs étalons de mesure de l'importance d'un créateur. Cette pluralité des grandeurs maintient des situations d'ambivalence, par exemple lorsque la grandeur économique n'est pas ajustée à la notoriété ou au talent¹². Dans un cas, le talent n'est pas sanctionné par les ventes ou les prix (les poètes maudits) ni par aucun effet de renom (les écrivains méconnus). Dans le cas inverse, c'est le succès commercial ou la notoriété publique qui sont frappés du soupçon d'être sans rapport avec le talent (de Guillaume Musso à Paulo Coelho). Si les formes de reconnaissance comme la gloire, la célébrité ou l'argent font problème, c'est qu'elles prennent le pas sur la valeur littéraire proprement dite, désormais reléguée au second plan, derrière la vie publique de l'écrivain :

D'où l'ambivalence de bien des écrivains à l'égard du succès : ambivalence bien réelle, qu'il serait simpliste de réduire à l'hypocrisie. Car accorder trop de poids à la

¹¹ Edgar Morin, *Les Stars*, Paris, Seuil, 1957.

¹² Nathalie Heinich, *L'épreuve de la grandeur. Prix littéraires et reconnaissance*, Paris, La Découverte, 1999, p. 255.

reconnaissance à court terme conférée par le prix serait trahir une méconnaissance des vraies valeurs littéraires ; mais mépriser totalement le crédit public dont on bénéficie équivaudrait à se priver soi-même du plaisir d'être reconnu¹³.

Cette situation est un produit historique. Le champ littéraire moderne s'est structuré, depuis Flaubert au moins, à partir de deux antinomies croisées : d'une part, celle entre le monde de l'*inspiration* (talent) et celui du *renom* (gloire et célébrité¹⁴) ; de l'autre, l'opposition entre le *succès* commercial et le *prestige* symbolique, en tant que valeur reconnue par les pairs.

Alors que le secteur le plus autonome du champ littéraire privilégie l'œuvre à la personne et le long terme au court terme, l'auteur de best-sellers y occupe une place inconfortable : d'une part, sa popularité auprès des lecteurs apparaît comme l'inverse du renom sur la longue durée (la postérité conférée par l'histoire littéraire, les œuvres complètes, thèses et biographies) et d'autre part, le chiffre élevé des ventes reste sans commune mesure avec le prestige et la rareté que valorisent les spécialistes. Ainsi, le best-seller pâtit d'une faible reconnaissance littéraire parce qu'il relève, avec d'autres types d'ouvrages (« érotiques », « policiers » ou « romans-à-l'eau-de-rose »), d'une

production répondant à la demande préexistante d'un lectorat peu sélectionné, et correspondant chez l'auteur à des motivations extérieures à la création – recherche du succès financier, satisfaction des besoins de divertissement du public ou souci de démocratiser l'accès à la lecture¹⁵.

La discordance entre les formes de reconnaissance hétéronomes (argent, visibilité, popularité, etc.) et les formes plus autonomes, précise Heinich, « engendre de multiples dénonciations, suspicions et ragots, dont une fréquentation même superficielle de ce milieu indique qu'ils en sont une caractéristique majeure »¹⁶.

La réussite littéraire plonge donc son bénéficiaire dans une situation paradoxale « où il lui faut, pour se montrer digne de la dignité qui lui est faite, se montrer capable de la dénoncer au nom des valeurs supérieures auxquelles il aspire [...] »¹⁷.

Face à ces doubles contraintes, Dicker arbore une posture modeste, souvent mobilisée par des vedettes helvétiques (ou plus généralement des espaces périphériques aux grandes nations littéraires). Loin de dénoncer les logiques du succès économique, il contribue à les naturaliser, en les présentant comme l'évidence du marché littéraire. Sur ce point, l'intrigue de *La Vérité sur l'affaire Harry Quebert* et les commentaires à propos du succès du roman se rejoignent,

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 256.

¹⁴ Luc Boltanski, Laurent Thévenot, *De la justification. Les économies de la grandeur*, Paris, Gallimard, 1991.

¹⁵ Nathalie Heinich, *Être écrivain. Création et identité*, p. 30.

¹⁶ Nathalie Heinich, *L'épreuve de la grandeur*, p. 259.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 261.

éclairant l'assertion d'Eva Illouz selon qui le best-seller constitue « une sorte de baromètre des normes et des idéaux d'une société » capable de produire chez ses lecteurs une forte « résonance culturelle »¹⁸.

Mais Joël Dicker se garde bien de se laisser réduire à cette dimension : la promotion de son livre ne se fait pas au service de son seul intérêt, mais en vue de « défendre la littérature ». Dans un tel propos, l'argument humaniste d'illustration de la culture se voit transformé en slogan publicitaire. Quand la popularité permet à l'écrivain de faire lire des gens qui ne lisent pas (« *Commencez par faire lire les gens et revenez me voir ensuite !* ») et de favoriser l'unité de la communauté (« *Ce qui est beau dans un livre, c'est que ça rassemble* »), ces justifications atténuent subtilement le caractère marchand de la situation, au profit de valeurs plus nobles et relevant de l'intérêt général...

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¹⁸ Eva Illouz, *Hard romance*, p. 8 et 42.

ANDRADA FĂTU-TUTOVEANU

**THE ELECTRIC MIRROR. MEMORY, SELF-FICTION,
POSTURES AND POSES.
*THE DISTANCE BETWEEN ME AND ME (2018)***

Introduction. Performing the Self. Literary Postures behind the (Iron) Curtain

The life-writing accounts published since 1990 (and particularly, in the case of women writers, since 2000) that cover, in the form of memoirs, diaries, correspondence (and less in that of biofiction or autofiction), experiences in Cold War Romania reveal extremely interesting phenomena regarding the figure of the writer both historically but also as “parallel lives” or (his/her)stories¹. In the politically redesigned post-war Romanian culture, the writers that previously functioned on their own or in relatively small literary circles became a central category, organised in massive institutional structures, controlled, punished or rewarded according to the political and no longer aesthetic relevance of their work:

Within the redesigned post-war Romanian cultural and social system, intellectuals represented a vital segment. ... Thus, a major marginalised category consisted of those who were not accepted by the new regime due to their social origin and/or previous activities. Those who were later ‘excommunicated’, following some ‘deviations’, were added to this segment. The opposed category, the “engaged” intellectuals, benefitted ... from numerous social and financial advantages or “privileges”, which led to the formula the “priviligentsia”, used by Antohi (2005) and Macrea-Toma (2009)².

Thus, a new elite emerged, shaped from two categories of writers: those already famous that had to be persuaded by the regime to “join in”³ and young authors, fabricated by the regime (through projects such as the “Mihai Eminescu” School of Literature). Both the category of the “engaged” writer and their writings were fabricated, constructed, while institutionally they were

a sort of paid clerks or ‘workers with the mind’ forced to respect plans, official documents, and attend meetings. These meetings were typical institutional events serving for performances of faithfulness (actually of conventionalism and

¹ The concept of *herstory* has made history itself, if we are allowed a pun, since the 1970s second-wave feminism, having been revisited frequently and criticised as well as reinforced, especially on spaces outside the Western world, such as post-communist Eastern Europe.

² Andrada Fătu-Tutoveanu, *Personal Narratives of Romanian Women during the Cold War (1945–1989): Varieties of the Autobiographical Genre*, New York, Edwin Mellen Press, 2015, p. 61.

³ Malte Rolf, “A Hall of Mirrors: Sovietizing Culture under Stalinism”, *Slavic Review*, 68, 2009, 3, p. 628.

simulacrum) or for demonstrations of power and scapegoat rituals, re-enacting or re-staging at local level the ones already organised in Moscow (Cordoş 2012, 69)⁴.

Illustrative for the implementation of the Marxist-Leninist paradigm, the involvement of women writers in the process was essential, although the figure of the “woman writer” underwent a major shift in the mid-1960s from the militant, “engaged writer” towards more individualised, even rebellious figures in the 1960s and 1970s (and culminating with the 1980s, the so-called the Eighties Generation “optzeciști”), a sort of *hippie/beat* public figure. The politically controlled media recorded and reflected these changes which also affected the women writers (“as a professional category related to the above mentioned intelligentsia and as a minority that was necessary in order to legitimise the success of the ideological emancipation paradigm”⁵).

Postures and Memory. Rehearsals and Setting Readjustments

In previous research dedicated to Romanian women’s life-writing during the Cold War⁶, Nina Cassian’s multi-layered diary (started in the late 1940s but revisited and annotated successively in the 1970s and 1980s)⁷ illustrated “the engaged writer” in a series of parallel lives or voices in the volume. It was the emergent class after the fall of the Iron Curtain and youth like Nina Cassian, with some former underground Communist activity, became essential propaganda tools. Nina Cassian’s case is perhaps the most relevant from this point of view because not only did she return successively to her diary⁸ (*Memoria ca zestre [Memory as Dowry]*) after different political shifts taking place in the country but she was also given the change of revisiting at an older age her performances on television, recorded in different moments of her career, and analyse these visual *personae*. The diary is a genre that, in itself, and like life-writing in many cases, “cannot avoid fiction”⁹, whether intended for publication or not: “The written representation is always constructed, partial, mediated, even, to an extent, fictional”¹⁰. This process of diary writing involves building a self-narrative which is paralleled by a self-fiction (“the obvious voluptuousness of creating a convenient

⁴ Andrada Fătu-Tutoveanu, *Personal Narratives*, p. 62.

⁵ Andrada Fătu-Tutoveanu, *Building Socialism, Constructing People: Identity Patterns and Stereotypes in Late 1940s and 1950s Romanian Cultural Press*, Newcastle-upon-Thyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014, p. X.

⁶ Andrada Fătu-Tutoveanu, *Personal Narratives*.

⁷ Nina Cassian, *Memoria ca zestre [Memory as Dowry]*, I–III, București, Editura Institutului Cultural Român, 2003–2005.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ Liana Cozea, *Confesiuni ale eului feminin [Confessions of the Female Ego]*, Pitești, Paralela 45, 2005.

¹⁰ Rebecca Steinitz, “Writing Diaries, Reading Diaries: The Mechanics of Memory”, *The Communication Review*, 2, 1997, 1, p. 55.

fiction about herself”¹¹. It also involves the biased perspective and the tendency to beautify the facts, conflicts, or perceive them subjectively”¹². In Cassian’s case we encounter an emphatic story of a fascinating, yet inflated self, “a fictionalised autobiography”¹³, as Laura Pavel writes, or at least exaggerated for dramatic effect.

Cassian added a first layer of comments in 1975, and a second one in the mid-1980s. By then, she was already in the US, and therefore writing with no self-censorship like, she says, happened in the 1970s. However, the diary was started in the late 1940s and spanned over the 1950s. A significant mentioned that has to be done here is that Cassian, who left to the US with a fellowship, decided to remain there and seek asylum. This decision was triggered by a friend’s arrestment (the famous case of engineer G. Ursu, who died in prison) and the confiscation of the latter’s diary, in which Cassian felt there might have been information incriminating or endangering her.

Returning to her own diary, Cassian’s strategy concerning the diary was to maintain the previous notes, however “spontaneous, childish and unselective” she found them decades later when revisiting them but replace “the emotional impetus ... by the intelligent comment on them”¹⁴ in order to give substance, as well as add facts that would perhaps interest literary historians and audiences¹⁵:

My hope is that this “document” will be revealing (especially for the years of the ‘obsessive decade’ [the first decade of the Cold War] but also for those before and after. And if the biographical details will accompany [...] my bibliography [...] it means I fulfil my conscious duty in exposing them¹⁶.

The mentioned specificity of the personal account is that of a multi-layered work, in which a new diary of the diary is overlapped decades later (as mentioned, in the 1970s and the again in the 1980s) with explanatory purposes. The author adds “stories” with both the meaning of narrative and levels or the projections of the self, which she keeps believing insufficiently explained. Cassian herself speaks of *revealing* “in what I would call an *exhibitionist* manner” of her superior being, possessing many gifts but also self-perceived as underdeveloped, incapable of

¹¹ Laura Pavel, “Cazul ‘Ninicuța’ – estetica realismului socialist și politica ‘amorului’” [“The ‘Ninicuța’ Case: The Aesthetics of Socialist Realism and The Politics of Love”], in Gheorghe Perian (ed.), *Studii de literatură română recentă, II. Contribuții la istoria realismului socialist* [*Studies of Recent Romanian Literature. II. Contributions to the History of Socialist Realism*], Cluj-Napoca, Limes, 2017, p. 98.

¹² Andrada Fătu-Tutoveanu, *Personal Narratives*, p. 4.

¹³ Laura Pavel, “Cazul ‘Ninicuța’”, p. 98.

¹⁴ Alex. Ștefănescu, “La o nouă lectură: Nina Cassian” [“A New Reading: Nina Cassian”], *România literară*, 2003, 13, www.romlit.ro. Accessed on November 2021.

¹⁵ Andrada Fătu-Tutoveanu, *Personal Narratives*, p. 75.

¹⁶ Nina Cassian, *Memoria ca zestre*, p. 42. Unless otherwise stated, the quotations are translated into English by the author of this paper.

growing up or becoming mature¹⁷ (which, she explains elsewhere, made her a good author for children – not in a motherly but in a playful way).

The need to expose, to explain, to reveal “to the world” is explicit in these successive comments and additions to the original text (left unchanged yet explained, like an intangible old picture). The author explains:

Without altering (just reducing) the existing notes, I felt the imperious need of some comments that would surpass the fragile contour of “personal experience” and which, although not being able to cover the entire “context”, would explain somehow my attitude, my behaviour, my enthusiasm, my revolt, my perplexity [...] when the absence of lucidity would not have had an excuse anymore¹⁸.

This concern for offering explanations or motivations through the multiple metatexts to an implied audience reinforce, if necessary, the intention to publish the diary, despite being perhaps the most private type of life-writing. Cassian’s actions seem in general to happen “in public”, due to some special awareness towards the public figure of the writer. After adding a first layer of comments and annotations in the mid-1970s on the diary written in the 1940s–1950s, a third layer was added to the text after her move to the United States in the mid-1980s. The author later explained that, aware of the danger of political surveillance or house searches, the previous comments had been written with a sort of “self-censorship” and encoding of her language. Thus, a third layer was added, a “comment to the comment”, “like in a corridor with parallel mirrors, infinitely multiplying myself, in an exhausting exercise”¹⁹.

Cassian builds, therefore, in her diary these galleries of mirrors in which to narcissistically contemplate her different auctorial postures, a situation that was clearly staged and exploited to the full later in the documentary. This tendency towards narcissism (visible in the pride or sad contemplation of her younger self in the film) has been emphasised more than once in relation to the author. “Narcissistic by definition, the woman diarist finds in the private diary... the propitious space for the endeavour to acquire a proper sense of identity, representation and evaluation of self, as well as a sense of the latter’s continuity or discontinuity”²⁰. Alex Ștefănescu emphasised Cassian’s narcissism but also her lucidity when referring to the diary, while Laura Pavel argues that Cassian “reveals herself with a kind of acute narcissistic exaltation, staged with intelligence and sense of humour [emphasis added]”²¹. The setting for this gallery of theatrical characters is the diary, which instead of manifesting as an intimate, private space of reflection becomes a display case filled with mirrors and personal artefacts placed

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

²⁰ Liliana Cozea, *Confesiuni*, p. 9.

²¹ Laura Pavel, “Cazul ‘Ninicuța’”, p. 98.

in plain sight. The life-writing documents (here the diary, together with interviews or speeches of the writer) participate in this staging, or, in Jérôme Meizoz's words, production and control of their image in an age dominated by the "performance and image marketing [in which] any person thrown into the public space is pressed to build and manage the image he or she projects"²².

This staging mentioned above can be related with the concepts of "auctorial scenography" or "mise en spectacle" about which José-Luis Diaz speaks when mentioning the staging of different auctorial postures: those of "imagining oneself as writer", "inventing oneself as writer", "naming oneself writer", "posing as writer"²³:

The auctorial identity, defined in terms of representation [...] has therefore for me a double usage: discursive but also existential (and thus in the same time biographic and social). Between these two poles, the body that I call "imaginary", but that we could just as well call – and that I also call "representative" or even "spectacular", or better still "scenographic" – is there to make the connection²⁴.

Nina Cassian is a master in exhibiting in this theatrical manner the character she is so narcissistically fascinated with, even when she speaks of her "ugliness". A plastic artist herself, she renders her literary and existential posture – in Laura Pavel's words – like in a painting with thick, dramatic or dramatized lines²⁵. Both the title of the diary and some poems (such as *Orgoliu [Pride]*) make reference to what she possesses (and exhibits) as to some riches (or dowry, again, not one of many but as a goddess or diva). She chooses to exhibit, place this in plain sight, contradicting the doubts in the mentioned poem about keeping these riches for herself: "There is no time for me to give everyone proof/ of my great, amazing virtues [...] The time is quick. I still have here and there a precious gift to give/And search for recipients under the stars./ I might search in vain/And get buried, like the pharaohs, with my riches"²⁶.

Woman in Front of a Mirror. Posture but not Imposture

The diary mentioned above was therefore not a private document but the setting for a gallery of theatrical selves exposed and explained to the audiences²⁷.

²² Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*, Genève, Slatkine, 2007, p. 15.

²³ José-Luis Diaz, "De l'écrivain au traducteur imaginaires. Entretien avec José-Luis Diaz au sujet de sa théorie de l'auteur", propos recueillis par Karen Vandemeulebroucke & Elien Declercq, *Interférences littéraires/Littéraire interferences*, 2012, 9, pp. 212-213.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ Laura Pavel, „Cazul 'Ninicuța'”, p. 100.

²⁶ "N-am timp să dau tuturor o dovadă/ a marilor, uimitoarelor mele virtuți. [...] Timpul e iute, mai am câte un dar de preț/ Și caut destinatari sub stele./ S-ar putea să-i caut în zadar/ Și-am să mă-ngrop ca faraonii cu bogățiile mele”.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

Cassian's main character (assuming this theatrical language), that of the Writer (creative, intense, sometimes problematic) does not eventually or simply fit in the patterns, despite her genuine (even "mystical", as she calls it) political belief in Communism. Both her diary and the 2018 documentary directed by Dana Bunescu and Mona Nicoara, *The Distance between Me and Me*, reveal that she surpasses the role she embodies (the "engaged writer") and that she tries to convincingly play, enjoying the theatrical representation.

The documentary premiered in Romania at the *Les Films de Cannes à Bucarest* festival and won an audience award, while its first international projection was in January 2019 at the *Trieste Film Festival*. A very thorough and insightful review by Iulia Popovici²⁸ noticed that its reception was polarised between those emphasising the poet's privileges and those captivated by her originality, lack of conformism, what was considered an early feminist activism etc²⁹.

The narrative of the documentary is based on the look into what I call the electric mirror: the elderly Nina Cassian, in her New York apartment (accompanied sometimes by her husband, Maurice Edwards) comments on video archive material that is heterogeneous, not dated or chronologically organised but rather a collection of diverse materials (like in a box with memorabilia) that one comes across by accident and revisits them with curiosity and nostalgia. The "memorabilia" here contains fragments of interviews, of propaganda films, of music written by her and performed in these films, as well as poems recited by Cassian or other performers, excerpts of news reels and a visit to a factory³⁰ of several writers and a dialogue with the workers, moderated by Adrian Păunescu, (anticipating a bit his famous performances in the *Flacăra* large-scale events). It is the perhaps most interesting footage in the documentary because we can see the poet performing her literary persona in a staged, very stereotypical dialogue in which she stands out through brilliance and charisma. The convention is, therefore, similar to the approach in the diary: a dialogue with her younger persona, commenting with curiosity, tenderness, irony or sadness her performances (not actions, but the image she projects in the materials). The interviewer is there, naturally, the editing eliminated Mona Nicoară's questions and image, providing only the pretext or context for this dialogue with herself. A dialogue that, as Ionuț Mareș emphasises, either complements or contradicts official memory, that of the archives, complementing or undermining each other but it is never redundant³¹.

²⁸ Iulia Popovici, „Distanțele dintre noi și noi. Și Nina Cassian” [“The Distances Between Us and Us. And Nina Cassian”], *Observator cultural*, 2019, 963, <https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/distanțele-dintre-noi-si-noi-si-nina-cassian/>. Accessed on November 2021.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ IMGB (Întreprinderea de Mașini Grele).

³¹ Ionuț Mareș, “Distanța dintre mine și mine. Nina” [“The Distance Between Me and Me. Nina”], *Ziarul Metropolis*, 2019, <https://www.ziarulmetropolis.ro/distanța-dintre-mine-si-mine-nina/> (Accessed on November 2021): “However, Mona Nicoară and Dana Bunescu take a step further.

The use of this mixed archive footage reminds the viewer (as others have also noticed) of another documentary, largely distributed and currently available on Netflix, *Ceaușescu's Autobiography*. This documentary, based on a collection of official footage, news reels or propaganda films does not contain Ceaușescu's own comments, an impossible thing to do due to the circumstances of his death, but it is nonetheless autobiographical through the fact that all the footage had his official approval. It is a life how "the regime publicly preserved it"³², to use Iulia Popovici's words on the documentary on Cassian, with the difference that Cassian also revisits this official recording of her life and can make annotations and add a new dimension and, why not, the charismatic persona of her older self.

Despite her talents in diverse genres (from explicit political activism to children's literature) and arts (drawing, music, reciting/performing), the main *role* of her life, so to speak, is the essential *posture of the Writer* (understood as "persona... and 'literary identity' constructed by the author him/herself" externally and internally³³, through both behaviour and discourse³⁴). As the diary and even more so the collection of interviews and other footage in the documentary, Nina Cassian's literary *persona* perfectly embodies Meizoz's vision about literary posture and writer's image as "publically promoted and negotiated by means of discourse (stylistic choices, culture, moral physiognomy), on the one hand, and by means of non-verbal elements (looks, gestures, behaviour, habits), on the other hand (Meizoz 2007)"³⁵. She excitingly plays the part of the engaged citizen-Writer ("écrivain citoyen"³⁶) but her vibrant personality and creativity surpass it and she projects a whole gallery of literary *personae*, whose public image is projected via portraits and self-portraits (visual-recordings, photographs and paintings/drawings but also discursive). These reveal that she does not conveniently fit a monotonous

They suggest an elaborated editing in which Nina Cassian's personal memory enters a dialogue, sometimes completing and other times contradicting official memory, the latter as present in the archives. The archives [used] are rather diverse as well, from photographs from her secret police file, literary interviews and readings recorded for television to fragments of news programs and propaganda documentaries produced by the Sahia film studio based on her texts or using her musical compositions. But the two perspectives never become redundant: they either complete or undermine each other... Sometimes this dialogue between the personal memory and official archives is direct, resulting from the *mise-en-scène* designed by Mona Nicoară and Dana Bunescu, like in the emotional scenes in which Nina Cassian is shown video or audio recordings with herself from a few decades before. The spontaneity of her reactions – which vary from the natural impulse of nostalgia to playful self-irony that suggest a full reconciliation with herself – is disarming. As well as the entire film".

³² Iulia Popovici, „Distanțele” [“The Distances”], <https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/distantele-dintre-noi-si-noi-si-nina-cassian/>. Accessed on November 2021.

³³ Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires*, pp. 18-21.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

³⁵ Maricica Munteanu, “The Bodily Community. The Gesture and the Rhythm as Manners of the Living-together in the Memoirs of *Viața Românească* Cenacle”, *Swedish Journal of Romanian Studies*, 2, 2019, 1, p. 14.

³⁶ Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires*, p. 25.

and stereotypical script. Thus, even in a highly rigid context (the footage in the 2018 documentary that reveal a “scene” of the Writers’ dialogue with the workers in an elaborated propaganda setting of a factory) her character transgresses the script. The Poet called to “explain” literature and the message of contemporary literature appears on screen as a goddess-like figure, a diva wearing a pearl choker (in itself a symbol of female power or associated with powerful female figures, from Ancient Egypt to Anne Boleyn or emancipated women in the 1940s).

Despite the official intention and effort of projecting the literary image as part of the community, very relevant for the construction of a literary posture in general which is most visible in the factory scene in which a collective character (the Writers) are supposed to establish a dialogue with another one (the Workers as Readers), Cassian stands out as a sort of undisputable star from the very pen name³⁷ that has an interesting sound and spelling, as in the Hollywood style of renaming actors. The contrast between this brilliant, sophisticated woman and the stereotypical questions being asked is intentional:

the editing choices from the documentary by Mona Nicoară and Dana Bunescu lean towards recontextualising Nina Cassian’s publicly creative life in a recurrently activated contrast/opposition with the representative worker, invariably suspected of being ridiculous through language, artistic ambitious or simple cinematic representation³⁸.

This depiction of Cassian in the documentary as a star has been noticed more than once and was also supported by a sort of cult surrounding her charismatic person, even after her “Golden Age”. Cristina Stănculescu³⁹ talks about going to the seaside at 2 Mai, the iconic place of Nina Cassian’s holidays, hearing, decades later about her legend: “they would say ‘here is where Nina Cassian used to party’, ‘here is where she used to eat’ with a sort of religious feeling. I [...] wished I could have spent at least an evening in her company”⁴⁰. This star or legend quality is also explored in the documentary. As Andrei Gorzo argued, “the main principle based on which Nina Cassian is treated by the authors of the documentary is that of the *star-system*: she is isolated from common people [...] partly taken out the literary world of which she was part of, a world with its institutions, hierarchies and privileges and – in fact it is only here on the screen, a *one-woman show*”⁴¹.

³⁷ Real name: Renée Annie Cassian-Mătășaru.

³⁸ Iulia Popovici, “Distanțele”.

³⁹ Cristina, Stănculescu, “*Distanța dintre mine și mine*, filmul cu Nina Cassian mi-a adus aminte de mine și de distanțele mele” [“*The Distance between Me and Me*, the film with Nina Cassian reminded me of myself and my distances”], <https://cristinastanculescu.ro/experienta/distanta-dintre-mine-si-mine-filmul-cu-nina-cassian-mi-a-adus-aminte-de-mine-si-alte-distante/>. Accessed on November 2021.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ Andrei Gorzo, “Pentru *Scena9*, despre filmele *Distanța dintre mine și mine*, *Caisă și Să nu ucizi*” [“For *Scena9*, about the films *The Distance between Me and Me*, *Peach and Do Shall Not Kill*”],

As both the footage from the Cold War Romania television used in the documentary and the diary (we call it so although it has a genuine structure) reveal, Cassian liked to try different roles, costumes or settings to see where her (literally) unusual profile would fit and the performance amuses her, as the film manages to capture. As Iulia Popovici emphasises, the video archives of the Romanian television or film studio have been insufficiently explored and made public (with certain exceptions of New Year's Eve sketches, comedy or historical film and not much else). Thus, she argues, these archives, especially in the segment not related to entertainment remain still

unexplored and unfamiliar to the majority of the audiences and the effect of “real life” they produce when watched is that of fascination (for the past elements preserved on the reel – urban landscapes, fashion, hairdressing, interiors, details... that once fixed [by the camera] are untouched by time⁴²).

This is even more fascinating when centred on this charismatic female figure and her numerous *personae*, roles and costumes. Besides some contextual explanations (the most relevant of which remains the emphasis on the fact that she had made not an ethical compromise only aesthetical with the regime), the documentary is not politicised (having been called ambiguous from this point of view⁴³) or not particularly focused on the ethical issues but, as emphasised before, on this *one-woman show*.

Conclusions

Departing from previous research on women's life-writing, particularly Nina Cassian's multi-layered (constructed and deconstructed in several phases) diary, the current paper has focused on the complex manner in which literary postures are performed and discussed by the protagonist herself in the 2018 documentary directed by Dana Bunescu and Mona Nicoara. *The Distance Between Me and Me* reinforces, with cinematic tools, the literary postures constructed externally and internally, in Meizoz's words, through appearance, behaviour, public image (via the media also present heavily in the archive footage in the documentary) and discourse. Having in the centre the posture of the Engaged (Woman) Writer in Communist Romania, the documentary, based on a self-contemplation and dialogue of the elderly Nina with her younger *personae*, reveals an interesting, dynamic gallery of numerous postures, in specific, yet compelling theatrical

2019, <https://andreigorzoblog.wordpress.com/2019/04/02/pentru-scena9-despre-filmele-distanta-dintre-mine-si-mine-caisa-si-sa-nu-ucizi/>. Accessed on November 2021.

⁴² Iulia Popovici, “Distanțele” [“Distances”], *Observator cultural*, 2019, 963, <https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/distantele-dintre-noi-si-noi-si-nina-cassian/>. Accessed on November 2021.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

settings (such as the factory). These multiple postures (from children's literature writer and storyteller to the author reflecting on the contemporary writers' reception or the female condition in literature, all depicted through a star-system approach) make Nina Cassian an extremely relevant case for an inquiry on literary postures in Cold War Romania.

The writer was, perhaps, in top five public literary figures of the time (with Marin Preda, Eugen Barbu in the 1950s and the emergent Adrian Păunescu in the 1960s) and the first woman to be this visible and significant to embody the Writer figure (followed later by the younger Ana Blandiana). The theatrical performance takes place at a double level: the postures on the screen and the reactions and dialogue of the aged protagonist with her *persona* on the screen. The paper has aimed to discuss the manner in which diverse scenographies and numerous postures are re-enacted in this genuine formula, reflecting its relevance for Romanian Cold War writer figure.

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THE ELECTRIC MIRROR. MEMORY, SELF-FICTION, POSTURES AND
 POSES. *THE DISTANCE BETWEEN ME AND ME* (2018)
 (Abstract)

Based on previous research on women's life-writing, including Nina Cassian's multilayered (constructed and deconstructed) diary, the current paper focuses on the complex manner in which literary postures are performed and discussed by the protagonist herself in the 2018 documentary directed by Dana Bunescu and Mona Nicoara. *The Distance between Me and Me* reinforces, with cinematic tools, the literary postures of the Engaged Writer in Cold War Romania, among many other postures (from children's literature writer and storyteller to the author reflecting on the contemporary writers' reception or the female condition in literature). The theatrical performance takes place at a double level: the postures on the screen and the reactions and dialogue of the aged protagonist with her *persona* on the screen. The paper discusses the manner in which diverse scenographies and numerous postures are re-enacted in this genuine formula, reflecting its relevance for Romanian Cold War writer figure.

Keywords: life-writing, Cold War, Romanian literature, women writers, postures, Nina Cassian.

OGLINDA ELECTRICĂ. MEMORIE, AUTOFICȚIUNE, POSTURI ȘI POZE.
NINA CASSIAN: *DISTANȚA DINTRE MINE ȘI MINE*
(Rezumat)

Pornind de la o cercetare anterioară și un volum (2015) vizând literatura autobiografică feminină, lucrarea de față este interesată de modul în care posturile literare sunt performate și discutate de protagonista însăși în documentarul regizat de Dana Bunescu și Mona Nicoară în 2018. *Distanța dintre mine și mine* reia, cu instrumente cinematografice, posturile literare ale “scriitorului angajat/scriitoarei angajate” din perioada comunistă, alături de alte posturi pe care le abordează Cassian (scriitoarea pentru copii, de pildă, sau scriitoarea care problematizează condiția femeii în literatura contemporană). Punerea în scenă după modele teatrale ia loc pe două paliere: posturile de pe ecran și reacțiile și dialogul protagonistei aflate la senectute cu personajul de pe ecran. Studiul discută maniera în care diferitele scenografii și numeroasele posturi literare sunt repuse în scenă în această formulă inedită, reflectând asupra relevanței lor pentru o figură de scriitor din perioada Războiului Rece.

Cuvinte-cheie: scriere autobiografică, literatura română, Războiul Rece, femei scriitoare, posturi, Nina Cassian.

MARIANA MARIN – LE BIOGRAPHISME FÉROCE

Si la posturalité d'un écrivain, à suivre Jérôme Meizoz, est, d'un côté, une construction de soi assumée, et, de l'autre côté, un processus interactif de reconstitution de l'image de soi à travers la négociation constante entre l'image offerte de l'auteur au public, mais aussi les interventions des médiateurs, plus exactement le public qui récupère et modifie une telle structure, alors le cas de Mariana Marin peut devenir symptomatique pour le mirage créé autour d'une telle figure auctoriale.

La posture que Mariana Marin adopte et que nous nous proposons d'analyser dans cet article doit être comprise dans le contexte de toute une génération, celle des années 1980, une génération effervescente, productive et homogène. L'attitude posturale *anti-establishment* que Mariana Marin adopte doit être vue et extraite, avant tout, du contexte d'une posturalité collective. Sur la génération des années 1980, avec son noyau constitué autour du volume *Cinci* [Cinq], plusieurs étiquettes valorisantes avaient été collées. D'une part, comme le fait remarquer Anca Ursa¹, on a parlé d'une génération *hi tech* qui a réussi à modifier la littérature roumaine des dernières décennies, ou, en revanche, on a parlé d'un groupe mineur, et sectaire. Cependant, la figure de Mariana Marin deviendra, à partir des années quatre-vingt, représentative pour l'expression du minorât et pour une certaine position éthique et sociale de l'écrivain.

Analysant la posture de Mariana Marin, notre démonstration s'articulera autour de deux directions formulées par Jérôme Meizoz, dans *Modern posterities of posture*². Nous nous intéresserons, dans un premier temps, à la construction du discours de Mariana Marin ou, plus précisément, de cette « image textuelle fournie par l'énonciateur »³, qui se réalise par la médiation des deux autres modèles féminins ; il s'agit de Sylvia Plath ou Anne Frank dont les discours se construisent sur le même besoin de dynamiter la figure féminine ordinaire/ ou sur la juxtaposition des territoires antinomiques. Dans un second temps, nous analyserons quelques portraits photographiques de Mariana Marin, à partir des observations

¹ Anca Ursa, « Generația '80 în poezie » [« La poésie de la génération '80 »], *Vatra*, 2016, 8, <https://revistavatra.org/2016/11/08/anca-ursa-generatia-80-in-poezie/>. Consulté le 15 juin 2020.

² Jérôme Meizoz, *Modern Posterities of Posture*. Jean Jacques Rousseau, unpublished article, based on a paper delivered during the seminar *Early Modern French* (under responsibility of Alain Viala), Oxford, January 31, 2008. https://www.academia.edu/15683492/MODERN_POSTERITIES_OF_POSTURE. Consulté le 17 juin 2020.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 85.

faites par J. Meizoz quant au comportement non verbal de l'écrivain (*non-verbal behaviour*) et au processus de consécration de la figure auctoriale.

L'(auto)mutilation et le « jeu » de la naïveté

En évoquant ce qu'Alain Viala appelle *ethos*, comme manière générale d'être d'un écrivain, la phrase qui pourrait résumer, dans le cas de Mariana Marin, sa posture et son rapport au monde hors de la figure individuelle serait : « Il y a ici une façon d'être minoritaire/ même quand/ tu vis dans la majorité la plus sombre »⁴ ; car elle exprime une manière singulière d'être au monde, une appropriation de la figuration *anti-establishment* et une manière de vivre qui s'oppose au credo majoritaire. En effet, c'est un mouvement de retirement, par rapport au monde, que Mariana Marin adopte, un retirement qui érode sa propre figure et qui se réalise sous la forme d'une *automutilation*. La figure ou l'*ethos* proposé par Mariana Marin est celui de l'artiste déchiré, mutilé dans sa propre foi poétique, capturé dans son propre bio graphisme. C'est un refus équivalent à l'intransigeance ; qui plus est, elle utilise l'instrument de discréditer le mal dans le monde à partir d'une position apparemment fragile, minoritaire, mais le geste ne se transforme pas en une action de grande force éthique, pour sauver le monde, mais il est retourné vers sa propre individualité, dans une tentative d'évasion, de se libérer de sa biographie ressentie comme une férocité (« [de la réalité]/ que tu aimes tant,/ sur laquelle tu écris,/ à la guérison de laquelle tu veux participer,/ mais que tu ne peux plus supporter/ comme ils te l'ont refilée »)⁵.

Une fois fixée cette représentation en image de soi, Mariana Marin retrouve des référents multiples, car elle la ressent comme une image d'« emprunt » ; toutefois, l'aspect peut-être le plus important de cet emprunt d'image et de structure auctoriale est lié au fait qu'il s'agit d'une posture féminine, par excellence. Lorsqu'on parle cependant de féminité, on ne se rapporte pas à un côté féministe de l'écrivaine, mais à une figure de la féminité qui explore la réalité à travers une grille éthique forte et ferme. Comme l'affirme Jérôme Meizoz, la posturalité ne peut pas exister sans un rapport avec une autre image d'auteur, établie en modèle et dont l'écrivain en question utilise les attributs. Dans le cas de Mariana Marin, cette posture de support vise un profil féminin fort, qui a marqué tout le vingtième siècle pour la littérature de référence.

⁴ Mariana Marin, *Mutilarea artistului la tinerețe [La mutilation de l'artiste à la jeunesse]*, București, Muzeul Literaturii Române, 1999, p. 31 : « Există aici un fel de a fi minoritar/ chiar și atunci/ când trăiești în cea mai neagră majoritate ». La traduction des citations nous appartient, sauf mention explicite du traducteur.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 31 : « [realității]/ pe care atât o iubesti,/ despre care scrii,/ la vindecarea căreia vrei să participi,/ dar pe care n-o mai suporti/ așa cum îți este băgată pe gât ».

Ainsi, à l'instar de Sylvia Plath, Mariana Marin construit dans son discours l'image de la femme en tant que victime de la société, soumise à un rôle prédéterminé dans la réalité quotidienne, une réalité qui subjugué la femme sur un plan second de l'existence. Mais, si pour Sylvia Plath ce type de victimisation est resté valable, chez Mariana Marin on retrouve une amplification de l'enfermement dans la féminité à cause de l'emprisonnement dans une réalité totalitaire, celle communiste. La censure imposée en permanence façonne la figure mutilée de l'auteure. Par ailleurs, chez Mariana Marin et Sylvia Plath, la féminité fonctionne comme un fond sur lequel la posture hypersensible et vulnérable se construit et peut mettre en œuvre son discours de type confession : « Les deux poètes vivent chacune dans des mondes où les cloches de verre sont impossibles à briser, impossibles à remplacer, et la seule vraie lutte est dans la poésie »⁶. La réalité qui envahit l'être, qui entre avec force dans le climat personnel, bien qu'elle soit reconnue comme atroce, déstabilisante, comme un souffle qui fait mal, n'est jamais bannie de l'hypostase personnelle. L'« atelier » dans lequel la *persona* de Mariana Marin est (re)créé est sans cesse englouti par l'obscurité, par la souffrance généralisée et, en même temps, par l'abandon, mais c'est cet espace même qui est souhaité et recherché par l'artiste, afin de prendre le pouls de la société. Le spasme paroxystique que le réel produit dans le corps de l'artiste n'est plus que le symbole d'une supériorité souhaitée, d'une compréhension, d'une connaissance de soi. La douleur produite par l'acceptation de la réalité représente chez Mariana Marin une sorte d'affirmation d'un mode singulier d'existence au monde : l'existence par le geste (auto)mutilant, (auto)flagellant.

En même temps, en accord avec la misère de l'espace dans lequel vit l'artiste, il y a aussi (avec un paradoxe dans les termes) une « infusion » de minimisation. La réduction à l'essentiel, sur le fond du grotesque existentiel, du carnavalesque présumé par les formes de vie, est l'élément dont se nourrissent tant l'image de l'artiste que sa survie. Au milieu d'un espace réductionniste (allusion à la réalité qui rend l'être inapproprié, qui le prive de ses besoins), l'artiste-mutilé est capable d'atteindre l'accomplissement suprême, un entendement et une science quasi démiurgique (comme le suppose Mariana Marin) : « Ici, dans les ateliers,/ entre des centaines de mâts/ pensants/ il y aura désormais/ un lit, une table et du papier/ qui ne fait que brûler dans les mains, Monsieur le stimable ! Parce que, voilà, vous le savez maintenant : Tout est arrivé avant »⁷. La référence intertextuelle que l'on retrouve à ce stade est celle de la figure d'Anne Frank, celle qui vit à la lisière du supportable et qui se légitime par sa propre écriture.

⁶ Cristina Pipoș, *Poezia confesiunii la Sylvia Plath și la Mariana Marin [La Poésie de la confession chez Sylvia Plath et Mariana Marin]*, București, Muzeul Literaturii Române, 2014, p. 148.

⁷ Mariana Marin, *Atelierele (1980–1984) [Les Ateliers (1980–1984)]*, București, Cartea Românească, 1990, p. 105 : « Aici, în ateliere,/ între sute de catarge/ gânditoare/ vor exista de acum/ un pat, o masă și hârtia/ care tocmai îți arde în mâini, onorabile! Pentru că iată, acum știi și tu: Totul s-a mai întâmplat! ».

En fait, Mariana Marin trouve sa légitimité selon le modèle énoncé plus haut, car la crise se résout soit en postulant et en dénudant une existence terrifiante, soit en se réfugiant au plus profond de l'écriture (deux actions qui deviennent d'ailleurs complémentaires à partir d'un certain moment) : la posture volontairement déchirée s'oppose à l'image d'un être *en papier*, fragile en réalité, mais d'une grande emprise dans son imaginaire et dans sa réflexion (« Mais ce texte/ qui va sécher sur mes mains ? »⁸, « Le sage regarda alors à gauche, puis à droite/ et coula tranquillement dans sa propre ombre/ comme un texte profond dans le profond »⁹). Ce qu'il est important de noter c'est que la posture se forge à partir de l'intérieur du texte, elle n'est pas une attitude qui se construit indépendamment du texte, mais elle s'imprime et construit l'être de l'intérieur, l'exercice de Mariana Marin s'apparentant ainsi au modèle postural d'Anne Frank. Toutes les deux dépassent le but initial de leur écriture et deviennent des *personas* scripturaux (qu'il s'agisse de la poésie ou du journal), car les deux modèles féminins prennent conscience de ce que l'écriture contient : une information sur les atrocités externes qui décomposent l'être (mutilant donc), mais aussi la reconnaissance d'un certain destin, révélé au sein de la posture auto-construite (l'exercice de l'individualité jusqu'à l'*automutilation* par la réflexivité, de la « maltraitance » par l'*autointrospection*) : « Tout d'abord, je dois garder ma sécurité extérieure, personne ne doit savoir qu'*en moi* (n.n.) la guerre hante toujours. Une guerre entre le désir et la raison. Jusqu'à présent, cette dernière a gagné, mais le premier ne s'avérera-t-il pas le plus fort ? Parfois j'en ai peur, d'autres fois j'en ai envie ! »¹⁰.

En même temps, le choix d'une figure périphérique se retrouve également dans les fragments autobiographiques d'Anne Frank que Mariana Marin veut corroborer à son propre modèle, un « sismographe de type moral », comme elle l'appelle. Le volume *Aripa secretă [L'aile secrète]* contient la référence explicite à la figure d'Anne Frank dans le sens d'un même désir de survie, cette fois-ci, dans l'étouffante existence communiste quotidienne. Ce n'est pas un simple hasard la superposition de la posture assumée par Mariana Marin avec celle d'Anne Frank, puisque cette dernière ne devient jamais écrivaine et ne survit pas aux atrocités de son temps ; de la même manière, Mariana Marin n'adopte pas une figure sociale ou politique jusqu'au bout, son discours ne trahit pas un être engagé, fortement dissident, mais il représente plutôt un besoin personnel de cacher le mal autour de sa propre individualité :

Parce que je me demande encore aujourd'hui [continue-t-elle], comme quand j'avais moi-même 15 ans et que je lisais le journal d'Anne Frank pour la première fois : que se serait-il passé si Anne Frank était devenue écrivaine, comme elle le

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 76 : « Dar textul acesta/ care mi se va usca pe mâini ? ».

⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 76-77 : « Înțeleptul a privit atunci la stânga, apoi la dreapta/ și s-a scurs liniștit în propria sa umbră/ aidoma unui text adânc în adânc ».

¹⁰ Anna Frank, *Jurnalul (12 iunie 1942 – 1 august 1944) [Journal (12 juin 1942 – 1 août 1944)]*. Traduction du néerlandais et notes de Gheorghe Nicolaescu, București, Humanitas, 2011, p. 255.

voulait ? Quels étaient les sujets dont elle se sentait proche, quel genre d'expression ses pensées reflétaient-elles ? Que signifierait pour elle plus tard l'expérience des deux années passées dans l'aile secrète d'un immeuble à Amsterdam, loin de la folie à visage humain qui régnait sur le monde ? »¹¹.

Le rapport de Mariana Marin à la figure d'Anne Frank nous conduit à l'investigation d'une veine théorique importante. Il s'agit du concept d'*écrivain imaginaire*, proposé et expliqué par José-Luis Diaz dans un dialogue de la revue *Interférences littéraires* (2012). « On peut aussi 's'imaginer écrivain', 's'inventer écrivain', se 'dire écrivain', se 'poser écrivain' en référence à des styles de vie qui n'engagent que peu le discours au sens propre »¹². Vivre en réclusion, dans le cas d'Anne Frank, rend possible l'invention de soi et, en plus, l'invention de soi à partir d'une position auctoriale. Le journal qu'elle compose est aussi bien une discoursivisation de soi qu'une auto-projection. De même, Mariana Marin adopte une attitude similaire en poésie. Elle imagine la position d'*outsider*, elle se projette comme un *exilé involontaire*. L'espace de retrait est souvent représenté comme un espace abandonné. Dans *Atelierele [Les Ateliers]*, l'« artiste » se retire dans un lieu peu accueillant, et l'action de quitter le monde se passe selon un « scénario » que, avec un concept emprunté à Diaz, on pourrait nommer « scénographie auctoriale » : « Dans les ateliers il fera désormais nuit/ L'artiste se retirera dans son recoin/ envahie par des herbes et des oiseaux/ qui ont abandonné leur proie après leur premier vol [...]/ Tout est arrivé avant !/ Et la singerie derrière le miroirs pourris ;/ et le problème de la fenêtre qui ne veut pas s'ouvrir ; et le grondement ;/ et le rictus »¹³. Cette mise en scène sert à la fois à l'auto-construction de l'auteur et à la reconnaissance, au marquage dans le texte de certaines propriétés, comme décryptage du projet sémantique :

Les scénographies auctoriales fonctionnent au niveau de la prise d'identité d'auteur, mais servent aussi au marquage du texte, et permettent sa reconnaissance : car la lecture est aussi décryptage d'un projet sémantico-pragmatique, qui ne peut s'empêcher de faire confluer sur l'auteur et son « langage auctorial » pas mal de son activité. Elles sont des attitudes, des postures, des prises de rôle imaginaires (entendons « en représentation mentale », mais aussi en termes de mise en spectacle

¹¹ Cezar Gheorghe, « *Atelierele Marianeii Marin* » [« *Les Ateliers de Mariana Marin* »], *Observator cultural*, 2016, 809, <https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/atelierele-marianei-marin/>. Consulté le 17 juin 2020.

¹² Karen Vandemeulebroucke, Elien Declercq, « De l'écrivain au traducteur imaginaires. Entretien avec José-Luis Diaz au sujet de sa théorie de l'auteur », *Interférences littéraires*, novembre 2012, 9, pp. 211-227.

¹³ Mariana Marin, *Atelierele (1980–1984)*, pp. 104-105 : « în atelier va fi de acum întuneric/ Artistul se va retrage în cotlonul său/ năpădit de buruieni și păsări/ care și-au abandonat prada după primul lor zbor [...] Totul s-a mai întâmplat!/ Și scâlâmbăiala în spatele oglinzilor putrede;/ și problema ferestrei care nu vrea să se deschidă; și huruitul;/ și rânjetul ».

de soi), mais impliquent aussi, de manière nécessaire et intimement liée, des scénographies d'énonciation et des dispositifs d'adresse¹⁴.

En fait, Mariana Marin met en œuvre un discours qui trahit une posturalité presque excédentaire à elle-même, mais qui survit finalement à travers cette singularité et cette non-intervention acharnée. Le discours qu'elle s'approprie toujours est celui d'une instance féminine qui exige son statut de retirée, de désengagée et qui souffre lorsqu'elle est forcée de ne plus appartenir qu'à son propre monde. L'*ethos* de Mariana Marin se réclame de la survivance dans la solitude du poème, du langage créé pour soi-même et qui, paradoxalement, s'épanouit dans l'amertume ; c'est donc une sorte d'auto-flagellation de l'image de soi à travers l'investissement de manière significative de la vie à la limite de la tristesse, à la limite de l'endurance ou de la résistance face à son propre biographisme (« Je regrette les poèmes pour lesquels moi seule/ j'étais l'univers/ je poursuivais mon rampement quotidien/ le poil du chien/ [...] le scarabée de mon cœur, les sabliers de mon esprit, l'amertume/ et peut-être que j'étais heureuse »).¹⁵

Plus que l'autoflagellation, il convient de noter la tendance permanente à adopter la position mineure, en diminuant systématiquement sa figure. Cela crée l'impression d'une autodestruction, d'une rupture, voire d'un anéantissement de sa propre personne. L'imaginaire de la mort prématurée et le fond de la maladie reviennent de manière obsessionnelle : « La réalité d'une vieillesse précoce/ s'infiltré dans les arômes du thé du matin/ et déserte sénilement les jours sans poésie »¹⁶. Ici, par exemple, la posture adoptée par le moi poétique est la seule hypostase capable de survivre à la temporalité. Le salut se trouve de nouveau dans la poésie. Ailleurs, l'imaginaire de la mort lente que traverse le moi poétique est soutenu par un lexique organique, biologique : « regarde, combien beau est mon sang qui coule/ regarde, comme ma mort est lente et propre ».¹⁷

Il est intéressant que la « poète du tiroir » vienne pourtant à la surface pour figurer, à partir d'une position mineure, un discours percutant, avec des valences subversives, signe que cette cruauté imaginée en référence à la première personne est juste l'une des méthodes de résistance, et, en aucun cas, l'abdication à la vie. Par exemple, les paroles : « Parce que voici, j'ai dû apprendre/ en plein fin du siècle/ comment devenir un poète du tiroir,/ un ' poète impubliable ' – c'est ainsi qu'aurait syllabé/ appuyé et liquéfié, l'éditeur des temps nouveaux »¹⁸.

¹⁴ Karen Vandemeulebroucke, Elien Declercq, « De l'écrivain au traducteur imaginaires », pp. 214-215.

¹⁵ Mariana Marin, *Mutilarea artistului la tinerețe*, p. 34 : « Mi-e dor de poemele căroră doar eu însămi/ le eram universul./ îmi urmăream târșăitul zilnic,/ firișorul de păr câinesc/ [...] scarabeul din inimă, clepsidrele minții, amarul/ și poate-poate eram fericită ».

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 21 : « Realitatea unei bătrâneți precoce/ se strecoară în aromele ceaiului matinal/ și pustiește senil zilele fără poezie ».

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 26 : « uite, ce frumos îmi curge sângele/ uite, ce curată e moartea mea lentă ».

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 21 : « Pentru că, iată, a trebuit să învăț/ în plin sfârșit de secol/ cum se devine o poetă de sertar,/ o ' poetă nepublicabilă ' – parcă așa silabisea/ apăsât și apos editorul vremurilor noi ».

D'un point de vue sociologique, l'image d'un auteur est (aussi) le produit de divers médiateurs. Pour la figure d'auteur de Mariana Marin, il s'agit non seulement d'une construction fortement auto-confessionnelle qui se révèle au lecteur à travers le discours, mais aussi de plusieurs portraits photographiques, qui offrent une certaine perspective de réception et de compréhension de la posturalité en cause. Ce qui produit de tels clichés photographiques, c'est en fait de diriger l'attention du récepteur vers la valorisation d'un mythe construit autour d'une image soi-disant tutélaire, représentative de la génération des années 1980.

Nous avons vu que Mariana Marin « joue » constamment ses hypostases, imaginant des scénographies possibles. Par exemple, dans un poème intitulé *M.M.*, cet imaginaire d'une biographie insolite devient visible, ainsi que l'état d'existence exceptionnel. Ici, la « naïve » analyse son destin en renvoyant à l'image de la sainte (à partir de ce point, il devient évidente l'appropriation ultérieure de la position de martyre que la poète même adopte) : « Les lignes dans ma paume gauche/ sont étonnamment similaires à celles de ma paume droite./ Je ne sais pas ce que cela signifie pour les quiromants. C'est comme si j'étais venue au monde en priant »¹⁹. Elle semble imaginer un destin qui lui échappe et qui évolue de manière autonome, presque à la dérive. Cependant, le lexique la trahit, et, à travers le syntagme « c'est comme si », on arrive à percevoir son intention de construire cette image « pure », épargnée par les facteurs qui dépassent la sphère du divin.

De même, dans les séquences où la poète justifie ses amours, le moi se retire, ne reconnaît aucun contrôle qu'il pourrait exercer sur l'autre, la naïveté est aussi prise dans le scénario érotique : « Je ne te juge pas/ tu te fais toi seule cette impression/ que les chaînes que tu portes/ ont été fermées par moi/ avec les nuits où nous nous sommes aimés [...] Et le troupeau de chèvres de ton esprit/ n'a pas été pâture par moi,/ c'est pas moi qui a remonté le mur de nouveau/ après qu'il s'était effondré/ Et je ne te juge pas »²⁰. Le recyclage des images va dans le même sens, de l'absence de culpabilité à la fois pour son propre être et dans les interactions avec l'Autre (ici, dans un scénario érotique).

Dans un poème déjà évoqué, *Naiva închipuită* [*La Naïve imaginaire*], le masque est bien visible. Le titre lui-même renvoie à la « scénographie » que compose la poète : « Mes robes lourdes avaient un sens,/ ma main gauche aimait ta main droite,/ à une époque je portais des boucles d'oreilles/ et je t'attendais prête comme une mariée »²¹. La naïveté absolue est soulignée par l'image de la mariée,

¹⁹ Mariana Marin, *Aripa secretă : versuri* [*L'Aile secrète : Vers*], București, Cartea Românească, 1986, p. 56 : « Liniile din palma mea stângă/ seamănă uimitor cu cele din palma mea dreaptă./ Nu știu ce înseamnă pentru chiromanți asta. E ca și cum aș fi venit pe lume în rugăciune ».

²⁰ Mariana Marin, *Mutilarea artistului la tinerețe*, p. 36 : « Eu nu te judec/ și doar ți se pare/ că lanțurile pe care le porți/ au fost închise de mine/ cu nopțile în care ne-am iubit [...] Iar turma de capre a minții tale/ n-a fost păscută de mine,/ nu eu am înălțat din nou zidul/ după ce s-a surpat/ Și nu te judec ».

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 26 : « Rochiile mele grele aveau un înțeles./ mâna mea stângă iubea mâna ta dreaptă,/ într-o vreme îmi puneam cercei/ și te așteptam pregătită ca o mireasă ».

de celle qui attend un avenir inconnu, mais dont elle a l'intuition à travers des projections personnelles. Ce n'est pas par hasard que la posture de la mariée est anticipée par la neige, représentée par une belle image olfactive : « à un certain moment je sentais aussi la neige »²².

La figuration des mains y est également pertinente, la main gauche est celle avec laquelle elle entre dans le scénario érotique, c'est donc une suspension délibérée de la force, du contrôle (qui aurait été attribuée à la main droite). Cette idée de soumission et de survie est explicitée dans les vers suivants, lorsque le moi féminin est celui qui (par son état de pureté) survit à l'état de délire, de confusion : « Mon beau cerveau/ survivait à ta folie du soir »²³. De plus, l'hypostase de la mariée se transforme en hypostase de l'ange, de l'archange (signe qu'on adopte la même position de la sainte, de l'être détaché du mondain) : « Même toute la famille part à la chasse aux chèvres/ pour que tu regardes l'ange de près »²⁴. La capacité d'entrer en relation avec des êtres en miniature (les fourmis) ou de projeter une guérison, un sauvetage à grande échelle sont autant d'attributs d'une position complètement opposée par rapport à la posture (auto)mutilante d'autres poèmes. Il y a autant des scénarios existentiels qu'il y a des « êtres » imaginables : « à un certain moment nous avons tous les deux des langues mortes/ mais nous parlions aux fourmis, /nous levions le cerf-volant/ et guérissions toutes les blessures de Castille./On se précipitait avec de petites fleurs, des fraises du haut/en langues vivantes »²⁵.

Cette posture est également réalisée par la théâtralisation dans des cadres photographiques. La plupart des clichés photographiques pris par un Tudor Jebeleanu font de Mariana Marin une figure capturée dans une temporalité de jeunesse qui fonctionne presque comme une sorte de *captatio benevolentiae* pour profiter de la posturalité. Les clichés photographiques sont en fait des autoportraits. En d'autres termes, elles sont appelées représentations paratopiques, étant des constructions qui passent par la presse et parviennent ainsi au lecteur. C'est aussi une scénographie auctoriale (selon les mots de Diaz) mise en œuvre, que la poète met également en scène, impliquant Tudor Jebeleanu. En plus de l'auto-mise en scène, il y avait les images de groupe qui avaient accompagné *Cinci* et *Aur cu diamante* [*Or avec des diamants*].

L'image peut-être la plus représentative de cette série (voir annexe-photo 1) est celle montrant Mariana Marin jeune, la tête penchée vers ce qui semble être un doigt piqué, tandis que toute sa figure est transfigurée par la douleur. Ce n'est pas un hasard si la photo accompagne le poème *Ultimul poem de dragoste în grădina*

²² *Ibidem* : « într-o vreme și eu miroseam a zăpadă ».

²³ *Ibidem* : « Creierul meu frumos/ supraviețuia nebuniei tale de seară ».

²⁴ *Ibidem* : « Până și familia toată pleca la vânatoare de capre/ pentru ca tu să privești îngerul de aproape ».

²⁵ *Ibidem* : « într-o vreme noi doi aveam limbile moarte/ dar vorbeam cu furnicile./ înălțam zmeul/ și vindecam rănilor Castaliei toate./ Dam buzna cu floricele, căpșuni din țării/ în limbile vii ».

de trandafir [*Le dernier poème d'amour dans le jardin à roses*]²⁶, étant donc une manière de créer l'image presque auto-flagellante de l'artiste, coïncée dans la brutalité de la réalité et des mensonges sur la liberté dont il s'approprie, mais c'est aussi une image soigneusement construite sur la beauté de la révolte. Ce portrait photographique renforce la gravité avec laquelle est regardé le doigt piqué, comme si ce geste entraînait des répercussions non seulement sur le biologique (la blessure produite), mais aussi sur le mental, comme un geste de mise en suspens de l'écriture. La lecture de l'image nous amène à la suggestion de la suspension de l'état de normalité, mais, surtout, elle évoque une suspension de l'acte de l'écriture. En fait, la clé ici réside précisément dans la mise en scène de la gravité et de la cruauté de l'acte d'annulation de la posture recherchée, celle d'écrivain, de poète.

Au-delà des images de jeunesse, il y a une autre image de Mariana Marin, à la maturité (voir annexe-photo 3), qui la montre barricadée dans une construction de briques, tout au milieu. C'est sans doute l'image la plus appropriée pour suggérer la posture de l'artiste retirée, mais qui, néanmoins, reste au cœur des événements sociaux et politiques ; elle y est présente, sans participer à cette réalité, qu'elle démarque comme une réalité autonome et exclusive. La position accroupie, la tête entre les mains, dénote la même – paradoxale – urgence de l'évasion. Les mains sont en position de prière et transmettent une piété ou une résignation spirituelle de celle qui joint ses mains dans un geste rappelant l'image de l'archange.

Le poète maudit – le devenir martyr

En ce qui concerne la construction d'un mythe lié à la mort prématurée de Mariana Marin, il est à noter que nombre de ses contemporains continuent à endosser, à travers leur discours, une aura de poète maudit, une image qui se construit aussi pendant et après la mort de l'écrivain. Nora Iuga forge indirectement une telle image en exploitant la jeunesse de l'écrivaine, l'être volubile qui vit avec le danger imminent de la réalité communiste, comme une sorte de dépouillement de soi, d'érosion assumée par les actes de la vie quotidienne. Mircea Cărtărescu, quant à lui, ne retient qu'une effigie, s'appuyant sur l'image de la solitude et de l'étrangeté qui marque le vécu de la poésie par Mariana Marin. De même, Antoaneta Ralian reprend l'image du poète romantique en référence à la figure de Mariana Marin, la capturant dans une hypostase d'innocence, d'apparente naïveté et, en même temps, d'existence menée par le *laisser-faire*²⁷ :

²⁶ Mariana Marin, « Remember Mariana Marin. *Ultimul poem de dragoste în grădina de trandafir* » [« Remember Mariana Marin. *Le dernier poème d'amour dans le jardin à roses* »], *Observator cultural*, 2016, 809, <https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/ultimul-poem-de-dragoste-in-gradina-de-trandafir/>. Consulté le 15 juin 2020.

²⁷ „In memoriam Mariana Marin”, *Observator cultural*, 2003, 64, <https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/in-memoriam-mariana-marin-2/>. Consulté le 16 juin 2020.

Les enquêtes interminables de la Securitate, vivant avec la lame à la gorge, et les visites nocturnes des miliciens – c'était devenu une sorte de chasse acculé de tous côtés... et, pendant tout ce temps, il écrivait poème après poème, comme s'il était encore écorché d'une nouvelle cicatrice d'une vieille blessure [...] Madi, celle qui n'a su mentir ni dans la vie ni dans la littérature, comme la plupart d'entre nous mentent. Propre et bon, enthousiaste et téméraire. Madi, que nous aimions tous et pour qui, cependant, nous n'avons pas fait assez pour la sauver du monde et d'elle-même. [...] Innocente, d'une innocence et d'une pureté qui frisaient parfois la naïveté. Et dévouée, une dévotion totale, chaleureuse et tendre, dans tout ce qu'elle faisait. [...] Pourquoi les poètes meurent-ils si jeunes ? Y a-t-il un besoin de poésie là-haut ?²⁸.

L'hypothèse du martyr évolue également du fait de la construction que Mariana Marin recherche dans plusieurs clichés photographiques. Par exemple, (voir annexe-photo 2) on voit Mariana Marin dans ce qu'on a tendance à croire être son image la plus clichée, dépeinte presque comme une martyre de la génération, celle qui prend ses distances à travers une féminité assumée. Ici, l'attention de la caméra pour les yeux semble vouloir transmettre cette voix de la singularité, de l'unicité de son statut de confession et qui, d'ailleurs, par la fragilité du cadrage peut être évoquée dans la construction du mythe de l'artiste mort prématuré, comme moyen de sacrifice. La douceur avec laquelle elle regarde la caméra, la position inclinée de la tête mène à la figuration de la poète en hypostase « naïve » et « sainte », que nous avons aussi retrouvée dans plusieurs de ses poèmes.

En fait, ce qu'il faut en retenir, c'est que si le mythe romantique du poète maudit fonctionne assez bien pour Mariana Marin, c'est aussi parce qu'il y est alimenté de manière consciente. Même dans les clichés qui apparaissent à l'époque, qui illustre la génération iconique, la poète adopte toujours une position passive, retirée, inactive, qui mime un mur de défense face au monde extérieur (nous faisons référence ici à la position de ses mains croisées). Au-delà de l'illusion d'une mort prématurée de l'être angélique, naïf et affecté par la vie oppressante, une tout autre image de la poète demeure. Sur la photo 4 (voir l'annexe), qui, cette fois, n'est plus une mise en scène, toute l'aura mythologique s'évanouit, car il ne s'agit plus d'une jeune femme, imaginée comme un être fragile, volatile, mais, cette fois, d'une femme d'un certain âge, qui a dépassé les mirages de la jeunesse, une femme touchée par l'écoulement du temps, qui est assez loin d'une apparence excentrique. Mariana Marin c'est, ici, la femme ordinaire, avec une allure qui rappelle le milieu communiste ou, plus tard, cette période d'après 89 qu'on appelle « de transition » dans laquelle elle arrive vraiment

²⁸ *Ibidem* : « interminabilele anchete de la Securitate, trăind cu tăişul la beregată, și vizitele nocturne ale milițienilor – ajunsese un fel de vânat încolțit din toate părțile... și, în tot acest timp, scria poezie după poezie, de parcă și-ar mai fi jupuit o coajă nouă de pe o rană veche. [...] Madi, cea care n-a știut să mintă nici în viață, nici în literatură, cum mințim cei mai mulți dintre noi. Curată și bună, entuziastă și nesăbuită. Madi, pe care am iubit-o cu toții și pentru care totuși n-am făcut nici unul destul ca s-o salvăm de lume și de ea însăși. [...] Inocență, de o inocență și o puritate ce frizau, uneori, naivitatea. Și dăruită, o dăruire totală, caldă și tandră, în tot ce făcea. [...] De ce oare mor poeții atât de tineri ? Să fie nevoie de poezie pe acolo, pe sus ? »

à vivre : une image appauvrie de tous les attributs d'exceptionnalité qui avaient constitué auparavant la scénographie auctoriale. Cette dernière photo c'est, en même temps, une monstration de la différence – importante – qu'on doit faire, dans l'analyse de la posture de l'écrivain, entre un simple instantané (qui peut contenir peu d'information posturale ou une information aléatoire) et un vrai portrait photographique.

Outre les discours des amis du Cenaclul de Luni [Le Cénacle de Lundi] ou les clichés photographiques qui alimentent la mythisation de la figure d'écrivain de Mariana Marin, il y a une autre direction moins évocatrice qui mérite d'être mentionnée : elle vise à capturer la figure de Mariana Marin dans une hypostase liée à la politique historique et idéologique des dernières années du régime communiste. Cosmin Ciotloș remarquait à juste titre les caractéristiques de ce type de fixation de l'image de la poète dans une effigie qui ne lui est pas fidèle jusqu'au bout, non pas parce qu'elle n'exposerait pas une vérité, mais parce qu'elle se moule trop sur l'aspect *biographique* au détriment d'une restitution critique. À partir de là, il est facile de remarquer qu'une telle direction présente toutes les prémisses d'une autre mythologisation de la poète. Les gloses sur une prétendue révélation du système communiste à partir des poèmes aux visions néo-expressionnistes accentuées de Mariana Marin débouchent vers la fixation de la poète dans une image de victime du sordide moment historique.

Ainsi, la mémoire collective ne récupère Mariana Marin que par référence au macrocontexte, la tentation étant de ne pas valoriser, en effet, la posturalité même que la poète construit à travers la conscience de l'acte. Certes, les événements sociaux se reflètent dans son écriture, mais le discours critique actuel se contente trop de commenter ici l'image de la *victime*, plus que Mariana Marin elle-même ne l'avait pas été. Selon les termes de Ciotloș, dans son étude consacrée aux poètes des années 80, Cenaclul de Luni²⁹, on observe la dénonciation de telles particularités des textes dédiés à la mémoire de Mariana Marin : « Le péché capital de toutes ces approches n'est pas d'être fausses. Elles sont, sans aucun doute, vraies. C'est juste que la vérité qu'elles développent est *biographique* plutôt que, pour ainsi dire, *critique*. Pour eux, la poésie n'est que le prétexte commode pour gloser à la lisière d'une conscience »³⁰.

En fait, ce type de mémoire a tous les attributs de la figure du poète romantique maudit, en tant qu'instance biographique soumise à son époque. Il s'agit de l'image du génie soumis au temps historique, qui revient également dans le cas de la figure de la poète Mariana Marin et qui représente un exemple très concluant de préservation de clichés qui n'opèrent plus en termes de récupération esthétique, mais en termes d'un portrait délibéré d'une certaine posture :

²⁹ Cosmin Ciotloș, *Cenaclul de Luni. Viața și opera [Le Cénacle de Lundi. La vie et l'œuvre]*, București, Pandora M, 2021.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 177.

D'une manière ou d'une autre, tout cela réverbérait dans la poésie de Mariana Marin (des échecs existentiels). Comment les autres défaites, personnelles ou médicales, survenues même après 1990, se réverbèrent-elles ? Mais lire *Un război de o sută de ani* [Une guerre de cent ans] ou le groupage de *Cinci, La întretăierea drumurilor comerciale* [Au carrefour de grands routes commerciales] ou l'un des autres jusqu'à *Mutilarea artistului la tinerețe* [La Mutilation de l'artiste à la jeunesse], comme des réactions immédiates à l'« assaut implacable de l'histoire », sonne plutôt comme du journalisme (pas nécessairement culturel). Probablement surpris par la franchise du message, les critiques ont oublié de descendre dans les sous-sols de l'écriture de Mariana Marin, s'intéressant, par exemple, à sa stylistique, au moins aussi innovante³¹.

Par exemple, Nicolae Coande, poète et publiciste, fondateur de la revue *SpectActor* à Craiova, tombe dans le piège de récupérer Mariana Marin comme une poète de la tragédie existentielle. Dans un article de la revue *Poesis International*, Coande note que :

Mariana Marin est la poète tragique, inévitable victime de sa propre façon d'aimer le monde (on doit remarquer le retour insistant à l'image du poète maudit, sur une veine romantique), qui a redéfini *le portrait de l'artiste dans sa jeunesse*, dans une élégie publiée dans le volume *Mutilarea artistului la tinerețe*, son avant-dernier volume publié en 1999³².

Cette combustion intérieure de l'être que le critique imagine est le résultat même d'une construction identitaire. Mariana Marin adopte une posture soigneusement construite et polie tout au long de ses recueils jusqu'à la confusion ultime : dans quelle mesure pourrait-on parler du reflet du biographique dans l'esthétique et à quel point la fiction représente sciemment le biographique ? Il y a une constante dans l'écriture de Mariana Marin qui induit une apparence de diminution de sa propre figure. Il s'agit en fait d'un fantasme autour d'un abandon de son temps, de l'existence, d'une extraction jouée du réel.

Après tout, le retrait du monde et le refus du conformisme semblent être les deux directions sur lesquelles se fonde une telle posture qui survit pour les autres poètes des années 1980 comme une sorte de mythologie féminine. L'image de Mariana Marin devient fortement mythifiée au sein de la génération des années 80, sa mort prématurée étant vue comme un signe du sacrifice de l'existence dans la contre-réalité. Il y a une sorte d'épuisement dans la figure de l'écrivaine qui fait subsister dès le plus jeune âge le mythe de l'autoconsommation. Par conséquent, la mémoire collective préserve l'image de la jeune Mariana Marin, d'où le recyclage des mêmes cadres photographiques que nous avons présentés précédemment.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 178.

³² Nicolae Coande, « Mariana Marin – o viziune de la ' Marginea Zonei ' » [« Mariana Marin – une vision par ' Le Bord de la Zone ' »], *Poesis International*, 2021, 28, <https://poesisinternational.com/mariana-marin/>. Consulté le 20 août 2021.

Reste, comme dans le cas d'Anne Frank dont l'attitude posturale est également adoptée par Mariana Marin, le refus du compromis qui entraînerait des conséquences personnelles.

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ANNEXE-PHOTO

*Photo 1.**Photo 2.*



Photo 3.



Photo 4.

MARIANA MARIN – THE FEROCIOUS BIOGRAPHY (Abstract)

This article aims to articulate an analysis of the figure of the poet Mariana Marin from the angle of the new postural theories, formulated by Jérôme Meizoz. If the image of Mariana Marin became an expression of the minority, of the marginal, starting with the 1980s, this is due, first of all, to a social mythology that was built around her, but also due to the overbidding of an ethical direction in her poetry. Thus, the article proposes two possible models that Mariana Marin internalized in the construction of the auctorial posture, namely Sylvia Plath and Anna Frank. Moreover, another dimension of our article investigates the behavioral portraits made by Tudor Jebeleanu, leading, willingly or not, to the strengthening of a certain direction of interpreting the figure of Mariana Marin. The intention of this paper is to propose alternatives to the way in which Mariana Marin's poetry has been read in the last decades and to try a detachment, in the critical reception, from the recurring image of the victim of the external world.

Keywords: Mariana Marin, auctorial posture, self-mutilation, the damned poet, naivety, social mythology.

MARIANA MARIN – BIOGRAFISMUL FEROCO (Rezumat)

Articolul de față urmărește să articuleze o analiză a figurii de poet a Marianeii Marin din unghiul noilor teorii posturale, formulate de un Jérôme Meizoz. Dacă imaginea Marianeii Marin a devenit o expresie a minoratului, a marginalului, odată cu deceniul anilor 1980, acest lucru se datorează, în primul rând, unei mitologii sociale ce s-a construit în jurul său, dar și datorită supralicitării unei direcții etice în poezia sa. Astfel, articolul propune două posibile modele pe care Mariana Marin le-a interiorizat în construcția imaginii auctoriale, Sylvia Plath și Anna Frank. De asemenea, o altă dimensiune a lucrării noastre investighează câteva portrete fotografice pe care Tudor Jebeleanu le-a construit, conducând, voit sau nu, la întărirea unei anume direcții de receptare a figurii Marianeii Marin. Intenția acestei lucrări este de a propune alternative la modalitatea în care poezia Marianeii Marin a fost citită în ultimele decenii și de a încerca o desprindere, în receptarea critică, de imaginea recurentă de victimă a lumii exterioare.

Cuvinte-cheie: Mariana Marin, postură auctorială, automutilare, poetul damnat, naivitate, mitologie socială.

ANDREEA MÎRȚ

UNE « AMAZONE » DANS LE CHAMP LITTÉRAIRE ROUMAIN : POSTURE ET SCÉNOGRAPHIE AUCTORIALE CHEZ ELENA VLĂDĂREANU

Sur la scène littéraire roumaine, Elena Vlădăreanu est l'un des noms les plus importants et les plus visibles : au début, elle a été connue comme la poète des années 2000 et, plus récemment, comme l'initiatrice des Prix Sofia Nădejde. Si au début de sa carrière « artistique », son nom était généralement associé avec la génération et le champ littéraire des années 2000, elle représente désormais un véritable « porte-parole » d'une autre communauté littéraire (et sociale), celle de la littérature écrite par des femmes. C'est pourquoi l'évolution littéraire d'Elena Vlădăreanu est symptomatique pour la posture qu'elle s'est construite au fil du temps.

L'image publique d'Elena Vlădăreanu a des coordonnées générales qui définissent son statut, sa position et la voix qu'elle assume lorsqu'elle ne s'exprime pas à travers la création littéraire. Selon Jérôme Meizoz, « la ' posture ' désigne la présentation de soi de l'écrivain, en tant que rôle dans des situations littéraires publiques. Elle suppose de concevoir l'activité littéraire comme une performance scénique régie par des codes incorporés »¹. Ainsi, à partir des considérations du Meizoz, cet article suivra le parcours d'Elena Vlădăreanu dans la sphère publique, autant que la manière dans laquelle elle définit son besoin d'appartenance à un groupe (littéraire, mais pas seulement), mais aussi la façon dont elle manifeste son esprit militant et, finalement, le rapport qu'elle développe entre corporéité et texte.

L'adhésion/ l'impossibilité d'adhérer à la vie de groupe

Elena Vlădăreanu a été formée et a fait ses débuts littéraires dans les années 2000, étant toujours reconnue comme membre de cette génération qui a « fracturé » et dynamisé le champ littéraire de la Roumanie d'après décembre 1989 (le nom d'un mouvement important de cette génération est « le fracturisme »). C'est pourquoi, il n'est pas rare que son nom soit associé aux cercles littéraires les plus actifs de l'époque. En observant la manière dans laquelle la poète s'implique dans l'espace public et sa manière de se rapporter à ce que c'est une communauté littéraire, on peut déduire quelques coordonnées posturales qui reviennent tout au

¹ Jérôme Meizoz, « Cendrars, Houellebecq : Portrait photographique et présentation de soi », *CONTEXTES* [en ligne], 2014, 14, <http://journals.openedition.org/contextes/5908>. Consulté le 10 juin 2021.

long de sa carrière littéraire. D'une part, le besoin d'être quasi omniprésente dans tout ce qui touche à la jeune littérature ou à la nouvelle génération est prouvé par la liste des cénacles qu'elle fréquente, répertoriée dans un questionnaire mené par un cristian, en 2009 :

Cénacles fréquentés : Litere, Nora Iuga, Marin Mincu (c'est à dire Euridice).

Lectures dans les cénacles, les clubs : « J'ai lu dans les cénacles mentionnés ci-dessus et dans le Club A et Lăptărie et au Lycée Mihai Eminescu et au cénacle de littérature de Medgidia, quand j'étais au gymnase »².

D'autre part, le ton ironique, la distance prise, prouvent qu'Elena Vlădăreanu ne se sent pas appartenir pleinement à ces groupes. Elle se projette dans la position d'une marginale, qui n'a pas la force de s'imposer, mais qui ressent la nécessité de faire partie des groupes. Bien qu'elle n'occupe pas une place centrale (c'est-à-dire une position de pouvoir), sa volonté exige qu'elle soit là, dans cet espace, où se rassemblent plusieurs voix qui prennent « le pouls » de la réalité et la transfigurent en littérature. Même dans l'ombre, la jeune poète prend part à l'action, elle ne manque de nulle part, elle ne râte rien, sans pourtant appartenir réellement à aucun groupe, comme elle le déclare dans une autre interview qu'elle accorde à un cristian, une année plus tard :

un cristian : 1. Tu as officiellement fait tes débuts dans l'environnement aigre-doux du paysage éditorial institutionnalisé : une sélection de poèmes dans la revue *Metafora* de Constanța (2000), une anthologie (*Poezia taberei*, 2000), et un baptême du feu avec un ISBN livré par la poste, avec *Paginile* en 2001. À 21 ans, tu étais pratiquement une jeune auteure qui avait traversé les quatre instances suprêmes de l'époque : cénacle(s), stages créatifs, expérience éditoriale et cartes de presse, auxquels j'ajoute l'espace underground. Est-ce que tu n'avais pas brûlé les étapes, en fait ?

Elena Vlădăreanu : Je ne sais pas. Il est assez difficile de porter un regard lointain et parfait sur le passé, sur ces années-là. **D'autant plus que j'étais à l'extérieur à l'époque.** Qu'est-ce que je suis maintenant, mais comment j'étais alors... Je ne savais pas si ce que je faisais était bien ou pas, si ce que j'écrivais avait une valeur ou pas. Le fait que tu m'as proposé, à ce moment-là, de publier mon bouquin signifiait presque plus qu'une confirmation officielle. Je n'ai pas l'intention de te flatter, mais au final tu étais le cerveau du cénacle des lettres, j'avais le *feeling* que si je recevais le baptême underground ça irait³. (n.s.)

² Questionnaire publié sur la plateforme *biblioteca de poezie*, coordonné par un cristian, 2009, <https://bibliotecadepoezie.wordpress.com/2009/11/15/elena-vladareanu-un-cestionar-i/>. Consulté le 10 avril 2021.

³ Interview avec un cristian, publié sur un blog littéraire, 2010, <https://miculfiriadi.wordpress.com/2010/01/23/interviu-cu-elena-vladareanu-in-curand-pe-hartie/>. Consulté le 10 avril 2021. La traduction des citations nous appartient, sauf mention explicite du traducteur.

En effet, la posture du non-intégré, toujours laissé de côté, apparaît de manière récurrente dans la poésie d'Elena Vlădăreanu. La marginalité et la non-intégration deviennent, au four et à mesure, les repères d'une poésie confessionnelle, biographique, qui a le courage de s'attaquer aux tabous de la vie quotidienne. Le début « non officiel », avec le petit volume de vers *din confesiunile distinsei doamne m. [des confessions de la distinguée madame m.]*, édité par un cristian (Cristian Cosma), montre déjà du titre l'aversion face aux stéréotypes féminins. La voix d'Elena Vlădăreanu surmonte le cliché, elle se situe en dehors des étiquettes associées, en général, à la posture de la féminité. Elle ne veut pas être une « poète de salon », mais, comme ses confrères de la génération, elle veut parler de la vraie vie, de son quotidien désolé, dans une manière qui abandonne les inhibitions :

3. frigiderul e gol. mama mi-a trimis de acasă/ două legături de ștevie săpun de rufe și pâine./ în frigider e un singur borcan/ pe care e lipită cartea de vizită a distinsei doamne m./ un borcan cu o bucată de placentă păstrată/ de la nașterea lui mon frere a aflat mama/ că placenta e bună să scapi de cancer că și/ peste sânii mei o să-și treacă mâna/ distinsa doamnă m. în fiecare vineri dinții/ tăi îmi aștern pe sâni mii de vinețele/ asta mă face deosebit de senzuală/ o senzualitate stranie tocmai pe gustul distinsei doamne m.⁴

Si au départ la position marginale s'exprime à travers une voix confessionnelle, personnelle, à partir d'un certain point, la voix devient ensuite *sociale* : le changement se produit au fur et à mesure que la place d'Elena Vlădăreanu devient de plus en plus visible dans la sphère publique. Elle continue à s'attaquer à des domaines tabous de la vie quotidienne, mais dans une perspective plus politique. Par exemple, *minunata lume Disney [le merveilleux monde Disney]*, le volume de poèmes publié en 2019, ravive l'enfance, avec tous ses traumatismes et ses inégalités. Il y a donc un glissement de la thématique de la corporéité *personnelle*, (auto)biographique vers une corporéité *collective*, sociale, d'une classe entière. L'enjeu n'est plus profondément biographique – l'enfance devient le prétexte parfait pour déconstruire le mythe de l'innocence, pour montrer combien les hiérarchies sociales, déjà stabilisées dans le micro-univers de l'enfance, peuvent être cruelles et perverses :

atunci probabil făcusem eu ceva/ meritam/ eram plină de coșuri și de teamă/ mă miroseau/ mă înconjurau ca o haită/ mă îmbrăcam cu rochii făcute de maică-mea/ când toate fetele de la turci cu blugi cu trei numere mai mici/ tricouri mulate mocasini/ mai eram și olimpică pe deasupra exact asta îmi lipsea/ și ochelari băga-mi-aș/ nu ieșeam în pauze doar veneam și plecam/ scurgându-mă pe lângă pereți⁵.

⁴ Elena Vlădăreanu, *din confesiunile distinsei doamne m. [des confessions de la distinguée madame m.]*, București, Colecția Carmen, 2001, p. 4.

⁵ Elena Vlădăreanu, *minunata lume Disney [le merveilleux monde Disney]*, București, Nemira, 2019, pp. 19-20.

Comme le « sujet » poétique de ce poème, Elena Vlădăreanu n'a pas une reconnaissance totale (de son point de vue), comme membre du groupe et c'est pourquoi elle commence à attester sa situation de marginalité de manière très récurrente. Le positionnement périphérique donne la possibilité d'avoir une vision plus éloignée d'une perspective d'ensemble sur le *centre*, contre ce centre, elle se révoltera. Une sorte de « condition » de la non-appartenance se développe de cette manière dans la poétique d'Elena Vlădăreanu. Mais la recherche d'un « nous », d'une *communauté* à laquelle appartenir, qui puisse la représenter, qui soit fidèle à son *credo* personnel, reste constante.

Analysant les dynamiques et les différents types d'interaction dans le cadre d'un groupe littéraire, David Vrydaghs distingue deux modes d'« appartenance » :

Ce projet impliquait tout d'abord de distinguer, dans le cadre de l'étude sociologique des groupes littéraires, cette problématique de l'adhésion de celle de l'affiliation. Cette dernière, fréquemment abordée par les travaux sociologiques consacrés aux collectifs littéraires et artistiques, est généralement centrée sur les motifs poussant des écrivains à rejoindre effectivement un groupe formé, quand la première citée interroge plus précisément le rapport des écrivains aux valeurs sur lesquelles se fonde le groupe qu'ils rejoignent ou admirent. Il s'agit bien de deux problématiques distinctes : quand l'affiliation ne fait aucun doute, l'adhésion peut toujours être feinte, partielle etc.⁶.

Pour que « l'adhésion » à un cercle soit complète, David Vrydaghs énumère comme conditions essentielles l'existence d'interactions et d'expériences de sociabilité entre les membres (afin de former une *ai-aesthesis*, c'est-à-dire une « manière de sentir et de percevoir »), les conditions pratiques (spatiales, temporelles, économiques) de l'expérience littéraire effective et la formation d'une conduite du groupe⁷. Le même auteur note que, pour les membres du groupe, « leurs formes et leurs lieux d'exercice ne constituent pas seulement un *décor* mais une condition de l'élaboration intellectuelle et littéraire »⁸ (n.s.). Dans le cas d'Elena Vlădăreanu, les réponses évasives et sarcastiques montrent que la sociabilité littéraire n'a pas fonctionné. D'une part, la poète ne se sent pas proche émotionnellement des écrivains qui fréquentaient régulièrement le cénacle Euridice. Le but de son « affiliation » à ce cercle, comme aux autres, reste purement *esthétique*, sans jamais être *éthique*. D'autre part, il y a la conscience de l'artifice, du fait que tout groupe littéraire représente, en réalité, une construction, une structure de forme, qui n'arrive pas à s'associer un vrai contenu. Elena Vlădăreanu évoque la même perception du cénacle comme « décoration », même des années plus tard :

⁶ David Vrydaghs, « Quand un conflit esthétique est aussi un combat des corps », *COntEXTES* [en ligne], 2015, <https://journals.openedition.org/contextes/6017>. Consulté le 10 juin 2021.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

Puis, les choses ont changé... C'était différent pour moi parce que j'étais aussi à Bucarest, et quand j'y étais arrivée, il y avait un cénacle à la Faculté des lettres, Cărtărescu n'était plus présent, il était parti avec une bourse, si je ne me trompe pas... et le cénacle était dirigé par Marius Ianuș. J'y suis allée, j'étais en quelque sorte avec eux, mais c'était étrange pour moi parce que je ne me suis jamais *sentie avec eux*, je n'ai jamais été intégrée, mais c'était par ma faute, surtout parce que moi, je n'allais pas bien. Mais, ce cénacle, il était vraiment très important, mais il y en avait également d'autres cénacles à l'époque. Il y avait celui de la Faculté des lettres, en même temps il y avait un cénacle à l'Union des écrivains, dirigée initialement par Nora Iuga, qui a formé plusieurs écrivains, à l'exception des écrivains furieux de la Faculté des Lettres, avec qui j'avais certaines affinités, mais je suis passée par curiosité là aussi. Puis il y avait le Cénacle de Marin Mincu, le Cénacle Euridice, qui, je pense aussi, a fait beaucoup pour notre génération, car Marin Mincu avait cette obsession, d'avoir une génération... c'est ce qu'il m'a toujours transmis. En fait, même la génération 2000, elle lui appartient, il écrivait l'année MM, il l'écrivait en latin, il ne l'a jamais dit, mais je l'ai toujours ressenti comme *la génération Marin Mincu*. Il est parti beaucoup trop vite de ce monde et je ne pense pas qu'il ait apprécié assez les fruits de son invention, car *c'était une invention* et comme toute invention, il y avait en elle quelque chose d'artificiel. Certes, la génération 2000 est bonne pour les historiens littéraires, comme on le formule souvent pour faire référence aux années 2000... Mais sinon, c'est une simple construction, on s'est tous séparés, chacun a suivi son chemin⁹ (n.s.).

La posture marginale reste une marque distinctive et accompagnera les gestes et les actions d'Elena Vlădăreanu dans les autres domaines où elle travaillera. Une sorte de complexe d'infériorité se manifeste et se formule dans des situations et des moments distincts. Tout d'abord, Elena Vlădăreanu sent qu'elle n'appartient pas au « monde » littéraire, comme elle l'affirme explicitement dans un poème de son premier volume :

eu nu sunt și nici nu voi fi/ vreodată o scriitoare. pe mine mă influențează tot ce/ se scrie, mai puțin tot cese trăiește. textele mele/ se zbat între propriile mele obsesii, între amintirile/ altuia sau ale celuiilalt și niște tipare copiate/ de la alții, de la altele. mă bucur că am putea să/ (mă) recunosc : o plagiatoare. numai că tot ce iau/ pliez pe trăirea mea, din moment ce trăiesc un text/ în timp ce-l citesc, mi se pare că se poate de firesc ca/ acest text, ca tiparul lui să se integreze structurii/ mele¹⁰.

Le ton qu'elle adopte montre déjà quelle solution elle applique, comme geste de compensation à la « non-intégration » : elle veut choquer les autres. Chaque fois qu'elle a le sentiment de ne pas appartenir à un *establishment* (ou lorsqu'elle ne veut pas y appartenir), elle essaie de déconstruire un certain point de résistance, comme, par exemple, la relation « sacrée » qu'un poète entretient avec sa propre création et sa vocation. Ensuite, il y a une autre chose à laquelle elle se réfère

⁹ Elena Vlădăreanu et Svetlana Cârsteian en dialogue avec Vasile Ernu, *Literatura la zi*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wMyvbZ1Mx4>. Consulté le 10 juin 2021.

¹⁰ Elena Vlădăreanu, *Pagini [Pages]*, București, Vinea, 2003, p. 33.

lorsqu'elle formule sa marginalité et sa condition de femme. Elle parvient à y trouver une cause de son « insuffisance », qu'elle utilisera de manière constructive, même si, au départ, elle se contente de la dénoncer :

da, marius, marioneta voastră, a/ tuturor masculilor, dar asta era în capul tău, odată/ și odată tot o să mă enervez eu și o să vă bag în pizda/ mă-tii pe toți, că dacă vreți toți să vă culcați cu/ mine, eu trebuie să accept cuminte, să mimez orgasme/ numai așa, să vă simțiți voi bine, că nu poți înțelege/ nici acum de ce în seara aia g. a ținut cu tot/ dinadinsul, te-a împins pe un scaun, îl priveai/ îngrozită, îți simțeai ochii mari, lucizi, ah, cât de/ lucizi, arzându-l în întuneric, și el insistând să-ți/ bage o chestie lungă și subțire în gură, deși tu/ întorceai capul într-o parte și-n alta, nu mai aveai/ puterea decât să bâigui un nu slab, după care nu mai/ așteptai decât să se plictisească el, dar el nu s-a plictisit, a ejaculat spermă albă în întuneric, pe/ mocheta nemăturată din birou, după care s-a /îmbrăcat tăcut, calm, avea un pulover uriaș, ca o/ fantomă, el însuși arăta ca o fantomă¹¹.

Le langage qu'elle adopte est, lui aussi, celui d'un *outsider*, qui s'attaque aux tabous (même en littérature). Dans les livres suivants, le militantisme féministe restera constant, marquant l'une des zones de confort de cette poésie. La révolte et la fronde féministes naissent du cœur des groupes et des cercles fréquentés : il n'est pas rare qu'Elena Vlădăreanu « accuse » les écrivains de sa génération de discrimination, de misogynie, montrant qu'en effet, peu importe à quel point ils ont changé le champ littéraire, ils n'ont fait que garder la position de domination par rapport aux autres. Dans un poème publié dans le livre *bani. muncă. timp liber* [*argent. travail. temps libre*], est évoqué avec ironie le geste « masculin » d'un poète des années 2000 :

Într-o zi, un poet s-a dezbrăcat în timp ce-și citea textele./ Gestul lui a devenit viral./ Pentru câteva ore, cuvântul preferat a fost :/ ștro-me-leag./ Ștro-me-leag!/ Să silabisim împreună : ștro-me-leag!/ alături de *naked poetry*./ Un bărbat alb, tânăr, frumos, heterosexual. Artist pur sânge./ Dar dacă:/ Femeie nu chiar atât de tânără, burtă, sâni lăsați, celulită/ doi copii atârnați de ea/ etc./ etc./ practicând *naked poetry* ?/ Pe bune ?// Mie îmi plac hainele colorate, artiștii se îmbracă în negru. All black. Eu nu fumez, artiștii fumează. Nu mă droghez, nu beau. Artiștii... în fine.// Mi-am propus să slăbesc. Scos dulciuri, grăsimi, început înot, alergat în parc.// Dacă aş încerca și o rinoplastie ?// Cumpărat o orteză, spate drept, umeri drepți./ Schimbat radical garderoba/ Scot un corb./ O operație de micșorare a sânilor./ Artiștii sunt androgini, pe mine scrie mare REPRODUCERE./ Salvarea speciei./ Gospodină./ Mamă./ Mică, șolduri mari, pulpe, colăcei, sâni, umeri lăsați.// Artiștii nu se reproduc./ Manole zboară de pe acoperiș, nevastă-sa-i zidită de vie, niciun urmaș¹².

Si dans les premiers volumes de poésie le discours est confessionnel, dans les derniers livres et pièces de théâtre, le discours prend la forme d'un manifeste : de

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 110.

¹² Elena Vlădăreanu, *bani. muncă. timp liber* [*argent. travail. temps libre*], București, Nemira, 2007, pp. 29-31.

l'individualité surexposée, l'exacerbation du moi dès le départ, Elena Vlădăreanu passe à une voix collective qui demande une autre place dans la sphère publique.

La vocation de la marginalité : la révolte vengeresse

Selon Jérôme Meizoz, il y a une différence considérable entre *scénographie auctoriale* et *posture* :

[...] les notions de scénographie et de posture visent des niveaux différents : la scénographie est un fait générique et collectif, propre, par exemple, à telle école ou mouvement. La posture, quant à elle, désigne la singularisation d'un positionnement auctorial : une tentative de se présenter comme unique, hors de toute appartenance¹³.

Dans le cas d'Elena Vlădăreanu, une scénographie construite autour de la *figure révoltée* attire toute la génération poétique des années 2000 : le fracturisme, mais ensuite d'autres directions poétiques qui ont dynamisé le champ littéraire roumain, attaquant les domaines les plus tabous de la littérature. Elena Vlădăreanu se conforme à cet enjeu générationniste, même si elle le fait de manière implicite. Elle se considère comme une marginale sur la scène littéraire, mais toute la génération semblait provenir d'un milieu *underground* : ce sont des inadaptes, et des non acceptés par *establishment* (soit-il littéraire ou social). En ce sens, la poète ne trouve qu'une *niche* à travers laquelle elle pourrait mettre en évidence sa propre insuffisance dans ce champ. C'est le moment où sa vocation de la marginalité commence à être assumée, non pas comme une condition inférieure obligée, mais comme instrument pour dynamiser un certain *establishment*. La niche est évidemment représentée par la direction féministe, militante. Le courage, l'esprit d'initiative, la fronde qu'elle continuera d'entretenir et l'appétence qu'elle a pour dénoncer les « jeux » de pouvoir misogynes et discriminatoires des milieux littéraires traversés lui confèrent un autre rôle, non seulement au niveau littéraire, mais aussi social.

Elena Vlădăreanu devient de cette manière une sorte d'« amazone » dans le champ littéraire roumain : l'esprit guerrier, le besoin d'indépendance, la force avec laquelle elle dénonce et attaque les inégalités sociales montrent que son ancienne voix d'« enfant révolté » a enfin trouvé sa place. À ce moment-là, elle se rend compte que le langage est sa propre arme, une sorte d'instrument de pouvoir, qu'elle utilise même lorsqu'elle travaille en collaboration avec d'autres. Elle est active non seulement sur le plan poétique, mais aussi théâtrale. Elle met en scène des pièces dans lesquelles elle collabore avec son mari, l'artiste Robert Bălan. Dans un reportage dans lequel les deux discutent du fonctionnement du travail collaboratif dans le contexte intime de la famille, Elena Vlădăreanu insiste surtout

¹³ Jérôme Meizoz, « La Littérature ' en personne '. Scène médiatique et formes d'incarnation », Genève-Paris, Slatkine [en ligne], 2016, https://www.fabula.org/atelier.php?Exposition_de_1%27auteur. Consulté le 10 juin 2021.

sur sa manière de travailler *indépendamment*, même lorsqu'elle se trouve dans des structures collectives :

Ce que disent deux artistes, c'est qu'ils sont venus de manière organique pour produire ensemble. Les textes d'Elena sont de toute façon « assez performatifs », même en poésie. Ils sont complétés par Robert. Elle écrit, il dramatise. « Pour moi, le texte est très important, la partie linguistique », explique Elena. « Je ne vois pas d'action, je ne comprends pas les choses théâtrales. Ensuite, il m'est très difficile de voir d'en haut. Je travaille par des petits morceaux, je construis détail après détail. Lui, il parvient à voir la grande image, l'ensemble. C'est pourquoi nous avons des disputes entre nous ». Ils continuent en ce qui concerne le thème : « notre signature est exactement cette chose personnelle ». Je vois, cependant, cela différemment avec l'exposition des choses intimes. « Je suis beaucoup moins sensible à elles », dit Elena. « Je me suis toujours exposée et je n'ai eu aucun problème avec ça. Robert est beaucoup plus attentif à combien, comment et à ce que nous pouvons utiliser ». « Mes one man show sont autobiographiques, mais contrôlés », dit-il. « Je ne vais pas vous parler des sujets tabous pour moi »... Cette partie de la recherche nous représente tous les deux. Nous sommes en quelque sorte dans un laboratoire continu dans lequel nous expérimentons¹⁴.

Le même esprit « amazonien » devient reconnaissable dans les volumes de poésie, où le thème de la féminité est corrélé à d'autres aspects de la vie. D'une part, il n'y a plus une séparation aussi forte entre le public et le privé. De nombreux aspects intimes de la vie quotidienne sont exposés et instrumentalisés dans un discours sur les limites de la féminité. L'espace public se confond avec l'espace privé, surtout quand Elena Vlădăreanu s'interroge sur ce que signifie la position d'« écrivain » lorsqu'elle est placée dans l'ombre par celle de « mère », d'« épouse » etc. :

Spune-mi Doamna Supă/ Spune-mi Doamna Spală Vasele/ Spune-mi Doamna
Întinde rufe/ Spune-mi Doamna Imediat/ Spune-mi Doamna Noi când mai facem
sex? Oare sunt atât de urâtă ?/ Spune-mi Doamna Timp de calitate, Țâțicu și
Binedispusă/ Spune-mi Doamna Câștigă bani, muncește, muncește/ Spune-mi
Doamna Oare eu o să mai scriu ceva vreodată, oare eu o să mai am timp ?/ Spune-mi
Doamna Nu mai pot!¹⁵.

À ce type d'interrogation et d'affirmation implicite de la fragilité, Elena Vlădăreanu réagit en dynamitant le champ social, bien trop enraciné dans des structures patriarcales. Elle prend la position d'une *guerrière*, prête à utiliser tous ses armes et à ne pas abandonner même lorsque la bataille semble vaine. Dans le volume *spațiu privat [espace privé]*, paru en 2009, elle continue de dynamiter et de déconstruire certains stéréotypes, mettant en avant des sujets et des

¹⁴ Elena & Robert, *artistes et parents, sur le travail ensemble*, reportage réalisé par Ionuț Dulămiță, publié sur le platform *Scena9*, 4 juin 2018, <https://www.scena9.ro/article/elena-robert-artisti-si-parinti-despre-munca-impreuna>. Consulté le 10 juin 2021

¹⁵ Elena Vlădăreanu, *Non stress test*, București, Casa de pariuri literare, 2016, p. 12.

thèmes trop peu fréquentés jusque-là dans la littérature roumaine contemporaine, comme dans ce poème *Orgasm* [*Orgasme*] :

problema obținerii unui orgasm e la fel e generală/ precum criza economică/ – Un preludiu insuficient de lung/ – ca și cum ai fi ultima găină/ – limba degetele/ ce vor femeile cu adevărat în pat:/ – Șmecherii/ – Un somn bun/ la sfârșitul zilei dacă vrei să ai un orgasm cea mai potrivită persoană pentru asta ești tu însuși. e mult mai simplu s-o faci singur. ca și cum ai bea o cană de ceai. cea mai bună metodă să scapi de stres:/ « sunt la computer am mult de lucru nu se mai termină mă opresc mă masturbez. am un orgasm oau! înapoi la treabă »/ Activează prin apel gratuit *427#/ – pentru că majoritatea bărbaților sunt inutili/ – pentru că sunt mai rezistente/ – pentru că așa este mai plăcut și nu au perioada refractară¹⁶.

D'autre part, le discours sur son propre corps, sur la maternité, sur le travail, sur le statut de l'écrivain dans un monde majoritairement masculin a des enjeux non seulement *personnels*, mais aussi *politiques*, affirmés, par exemple, en *Europa. Zece cântece funerare* [*L'Europe. Dix chants funèbres*], publié en 2005. Ici, l'image de la masculinité dominante et en décomposition se superpose au paysage désolé de la Roumanie d'immédiatement après la Révolution de 1989, jusqu'à ce que ces images soient confondues les unes avec les autres :

e ceva din mine/ în fiecare câine flămând și hăituit/ e ceva din mine/ în bărbații beți și plini de vomă/ în bravii bărbați ai poporului nostru/ mirosind cu toții a urină putreziciune și teamă/ sunt eu și numele meu/ e românia. [...] tu plimbi pe străzile unui/ oraș din centrul europeii/ lașitatea și lipsa mea de speranță¹⁷.

On peut dire que le discours dirigé contre le mythe de l'Europe, l'attention portée aux cruelles réalités politiques des années 1990 et du début des années 2000 sont, elles aussi, des marques générationnelles. Mais Elena Vlădăreanu en prend toujours du recul : elle voit les choses dans une perspective marginale qu'elle assume personnellement et pleinement et qui l'aide à affirmer le plus explicitement possible sa propre *niche* poétique. Cela réaffirme encore une fois sa position d'« amazone ». Son champ de bataille n'était pas tout à fait le même que celui de ses pairs : qui plus est, sa révolte est le plus souvent dirigée contre eux. Choquer avec un discours sur la corporalité n'est pas, pour elle, un simple plaisir, une gratuité discursive, mais au contraire, cela dénote une féminité frustrée, mise sous la pression dans l'espace public. Les images créées, parfois grotesques évoquent non seulement sa force et sa gratitude vengeresse, mais aussi le besoin d'une place stable, de l'adéquation :

în dimineața când a murit mamaia/ m-am masturbat până când dintre picioarele mele/ a fășnit sângele. fierbinte și negru/ sexul meu se zbătea ca o găină tăiată/ mama

¹⁶ Elena Vlădăreanu, *spațiu privat. A handbook* [espace privé. A handbook]. Avec 33 de illustrations de Dan Perjovschi, București, Cartea Românească, 2009, p. 19.

¹⁷ Elena Vlădăreanu, *istoria recentă* [l'histoire récente], dans *Europa. Zece cântece funerare* [*L'Europe. Dix chants funèbres*]. Édition revue, commentée et ajoutée, București, Tracus Arte, 2018, p. 11.

strânse prin casă/ începeau să vină vecinii/ tataia stătea pe un scaun cu mâinile pe/ genunchi / și parcă nu era el./ la adventiști nu se cade să plângi/când moare cineva. că « așa a vrut dumnezeu »/ mai bine se cântă. mai bine se predică despre frumusețea/ lumii de dincolo. despre a doua moarte care ne va/ strânge pe toți la dreapta tatălui. Toți suntem frați și surori/ ne rugăm împreună și dumnezeu coboară/ între noi „pace domnului”/ mamaia era în sicriu acoperită cu o pânză albă/ era iulie cald și muște. nu voiam/ să miroasă. dacă nu e pus când/ trebuie formolul strică mortul¹⁸.

De la voix confessionnelle à la porte-parole féministe : la révolte fondatrice

On peut clairement observer l'évolution d'une image publique spécifique. Si au début des années 2000, les étiquettes étaient posées, en ce qui la concerne, sans qu'Elena Vlădăreanu les confirme, ces dernières années, elle embrasse de manière consciente et explicite *la vocation de la marginalité*. La posture assumée en tant que telle est, cette fois, minutieusement orchestrée. En définissant en 2009 l'image de l'auteur, dans *Argumentation et Analyse du Discours*, Ruth Amossy considère que celle-ci a une double nature :

D'où la tentative de reprendre possession de ce qui se dit de lui pour infléchir son image dans le sens désiré, selon le courant dans lequel il se range (un surréaliste n'aspire pas à la même image qu'un représentant du Nouveau roman) ou la place qu'il aspire à tenir (chef de file, ou dissident, par exemple). Pour ce faire, l'écrivain choisit souvent des genres qui lui permettent de profiler une image d'auteur qui n'est ni celle que forgent ses commentateurs, ni celle qu'induisent les lecteurs de ses romans ou de ses poèmes. Il y fait entendre une autre voix que celle qui vibre dans son œuvre, et tente de lui conférer une place, parfois déterminante, dans le kaléidoscope d'images qui se construisent autour de son nom¹⁹.

Ainsi, dans le kaléidoscope postural d'Elena Vlădăreanu, une autre « voix » apparaît, celle du citoyen actif, à l'esprit d'initiative, qui s'implique dans la vie de la communauté. La révolte vengeresse, qui dynamite et épate se transcrit comme une révolte fondatrice. En ce sens, Elena Vlădăreanu initie en 2018 les Prix Sofia Nădejde, le premier prix de littérature roumaine consacré exclusivement aux femmes :

Nous sommes partis de cette idée et nous sommes arrivés à une journée dédiée à la littérature écrite par des femmes, quand nous avons aussi des rencontres avec des étudiants, avec des professeurs, quand on a aussi prévu des lectures, comme lors d'un microfestival, et quand surtout, on veut récompenser la valeur. Cette initiative s'explique par le contexte de la vie littéraire des deux dernières années, quand les relations entre les écrivains semblaient plus déséquilibrées que jamais. [...] Comme il

¹⁸ Elena Vlădăreanu, *A treia scrisoare către Nikos [La troisième lettre à Nikos]*, dans *Europa. Zece cântece funerare*, p. 22.

¹⁹ Ruth Amossy, « La double nature de l'image d'auteur », dans *Argumentation et Analyse du Discours* [en ligne], 2009, 3, <http://journals.openedition.org/aad/662>. Consulté le 10 juin 2021.

s'agit de la première initiative de ce genre dans l'espace culturel roumain, j'ai grand espoir que des livres fabuleux seront ainsi mis à l'honneur, une grande littérature, qui n'a pas le soutien des grandes maisons d'édition, et que l'on peut découvrir et apprécier. Je pense aussi que, symboliquement, il n'y a pas un meilleur moment que cette année-ci pour parler de la différence, d'accepter la différence, de valoriser la différence. [...] C'est scandaleux qu'on ait parlé si peu cette année de l'importance des femmes roumaines dans les sciences et les arts tout au long de ce siècle²⁰.

On le voit, Elena Vlădăreanu garde sa lucidité pour critiquer le système littéraire, dénonçant les relations déséquilibrées entre écrivains. Cependant, en initiant ces prix, le sentiment d'injustice, « l'agonie » accumulée est dirigée dans un sens constructif. La position d'« amazone », de *leader* d'un mouvement qui lui soit propre, fait que son engagement social s'harmonise avec le discours déconstruit dans sa pratique littéraire. Si en poésie elle dénonce les discriminations, les déséquilibres, en organisant ce prix elle « se venge » de toutes les injustices et retourne la pièce en faveur des marginalisés.

À première vue, la création d'un prix peut être un geste paradoxal dans le cas d'Elena Vlădăreanu. Dans les années de ses débuts, l'esprit de la fronde s'est également manifesté, chez elle, par le refus de certains prix. D'ailleurs, même en lançant les prix Sofia Nădejde, elle ne renonce pas complètement à l'idée que les prix ne sont pas toujours, pour la consécration littéraire, les plus pertinents et les plus nécessaires :

C'est vrai, peut-être, que les prix importent peu, les prix ne font pas une bonne littérature, les prix appartiennent à toutes sortes de dynamiques, plus ou moins compréhensibles pour quelqu'un qui n'est pas dans la vie littéraire²¹.

Si dans les premières interviews, Elena Vlădăreanu manifeste un certain genre d'individualisme, dans l'interview citée elle parle au nom d'une *communauté* – de la *voix confessionnelle*, elle devient le *porte-parole d'un certain groupe* – les femmes écrivaines. En fait, les prix créés par une voix collective ne sont pas paradoxales si elles sont considérés d'un point de vue postural : « l'enfant indigné » ne reste pas dans l'ombre, elle trouve sa propre place, où elle peut partager ses valeurs, ses opinions, ses attitudes, sans être dominée par les autres. Elena Vlădăreanu n'accepte pas l'idée d'être incluse dans un groupe initié et dirigé par d'autres (comme elle n'accepte aucun modèle), elle ne se soumet pas à un « nous » que quelqu'un d'autre impose. Comme une « amazone », elle reste indépendante, elle retient et catalyse l'énergie vengeresse et défend de toutes ses armes la communauté, le groupe, la famille sociale dans laquelle elle se reconnaît et qu'elle construit sans cesse. Ce « nous » qu'elle énonce est, cette fois, assumé

²⁰ Interview publié sur la plateforme *Scena9*, 26 novembre 2018, <https://www.scena9.ro/article/premiile-sofia-nadejde-pentru-literatura-scrisa-de-femei>. Consulté le 10 juin 2021.

²¹ Interview publié sur *Bookhub*, le 27 novembre 2018, <https://bookhub.ro/premiile-sofia-nadejde-pentru-literatura-scrisa-de-femei-editia-i/>. Consulté le 10 juin 2021.

parce que c'est elle-même qui l'invente : avec les règles et les conventions reprises d'un (autre) groupe social.

Cependant, la place centrale qu'Elena Vlădăreanu commence à occuper une fois avec les Prix Sofia Nădejde n'est pas dans l'*establishment* social et culturel. Les prix des femmes écrivaines, l'activisme et le militantisme restent dans une zone souterraine de l'espace culturel roumain. En d'autres termes, Elena Vlădăreanu crée sa propre institution à travers laquelle elle représente sa communauté, seulement que toutes les actions qu'elle fait sont visibles dans le même groupe « progressiste » dans le champ littéraire et culturel. Mais, être marginal, dans l'*underground*, n'est pas une position qu'elle veut surmonter : au contraire, cela devient le prétexte parfait pour continuer à attaquer, à partir de positions marginales, les points de résistance de la société roumaine. C'est d'ailleurs la raison pour laquelle la posture qu'elle a construite laisse voir certaines lignes de continuité avec la posture de Sofia Nădejde, choisie comme symbole de ce nouveau mouvement. Considérée comme l'auteur du premier roman féministe de la littérature roumaine, Sofia Nădejde avait joué un rôle assez important sur la scène sociale du XIX^e siècle, s'impliquant, à partir de positions marxistes, pour dénoncer les réalités discriminatoires et patriarcales de cette époque. Elena Vlădăreanu ne voit pas forcément en elle un modèle littéraire, mais elle voit, certes, un modèle d'action sociale :

Je ne sais pas comment nous sommes arrivés à Sofia Nădejde. Nous avons vraiment aimé son nom, d'abord parce qu'il était porteur d'espoir, de sagesse et correspondait au message que je voulais faire passer. Deuxièmement, elle est une figure importante dans l'histoire des femmes en Roumanie. En lisant sur elle, nous avons pensé qu'il était important qu'elle soit très active, qu'elle soit engagée dans toutes sortes de débats et apporte des arguments très pertinents, très cohérents. Elle invoquait toujours des théories, des idées, qui étaient, à l'époque, discutées et valables dans les débats européens. Maintenant, bien sûr, si tu lis attentivement ses textes, beaucoup d'entre eux échouent, il y a souvent une partie qui ne lui convient pas. D'une part, elle défend l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes, pose la question de la vie des femmes aussi bien en milieu urbain que rural, comment élever un enfant etc. En même temps, sa pensée a un côté assez problématique : on peut y retrouver du racisme et bien d'autres sujets discutables dans ses textes. C'est bien de les voir aussi. De la même manière que vous contextualisez le travail de Céline (avec ce « mais », au-delà de l'ouvrage précieux), c'est pareil dans le cas de Sofia Nădejde. Mais elle a fait beaucoup pour ce que c'est la position et le rôle des femmes dans la société roumaine. Imaginons qu'à ce moment-là, elle se posait la question, dans les publications de l'époque, combien de femmes de l'espace roumain allaient à l'école, combien terminaient l'école et allaient à l'université ? Ou combien savaient lire ou écrire ? Très, très peu. Je pense cependant que Sofia Nădejde était un modèle et nous devrions mieux la connaître. Non seulement elle, mais aussi d'autres femmes qui

ont été et sont importantes pour l'histoire de l'évolution du rôle des femmes dans la société roumaine²².

Sofia Nădejde était, à son tour, une « amazone » pour le monde dans lequel elle vivait. Elena Vlădăreanu semble lui succéder précisément dans cette position dénonciatrice et fondatrice. L'écrivaine du XIX^e siècle était active à plusieurs niveaux (journalisme, théâtre, littérature) et prenait position dans l'espace public. Elena Vlădăreanu a la même énergie et la même fluidité pour passer d'un milieu à un autre, du poète au dramaturge, du journaliste à animatrice culturelle, précisément parce qu'elle n'oublie pas sa mission de mettre en lumière cette communauté de femmes écrivaines. L'orchestration et le dévouement avec lesquels elle coordonne tant de projets ne reste pas sans effet : Elena Vlădăreanu a non seulement court-circuité le champ littéraire roumain à travers ses écrits, mais, en plus, a apporté plus de visibilité sociale aux femmes écrivaines. Ces dernières années, les débats sur ce sujet se multiplient, de nouvelles initiatives et projets féministes apparaissent, même la figure de Sofia Nădejde, longtemps laissée dans les tiroirs du XIX^e siècle redevient beaucoup plus présente : ses volumes sont réédités, et ses écrits sont de plus en plus discutés. Certaines de ces choses sont dues à l'évolution du contexte social, politique et culturel, mais Elena Vlădăreanu et son activité restent un point nodal important dans le domaine culturel contemporain.

Conclusion

Poète des années 2000, dramaturge, promoteur culturel, journaliste, initiateur des Prix Sofia Nădejde – Elena Vlădăreanu est l'une des écrivaines les plus dynamiques dans le champ littéraire roumain, qui est arrivé à construire ses propres enjeux par rapport aux groupes (majoritairement masculins) dans lesquels elle avait « démarré ». Elle s'est toujours positionnée avec véhémence par rapport à certaines structures, et ces dernières années, sa fronde et sa colère se sont orientées, une fois avec l'invention, avec le Prix Sofia Nădejde, d'une institution littéraire, vers un geste « fondateur », constructif, mais qui conserve le même idéal de dynamisation du champ littéraire, artistique, social. La posture de « marginale » qui se transfigure dans celle de l'« amazone » devient une figure incontournable de sa communauté sociale est visible dans toutes les actions et initiatives qu'elle prend. À chaque fois qu'Elena Vlădăreanu écrit, prend position, élève la voix, initie un projet, elle le fait pour combler une lacune – chacun de ses projets devient un geste réparateur, compensatoire (non sans esprit de revanche). Toute la

²² Interview « Premiile Sofia Nădejde: un dialog cu Elena Vlădăreanu » [« Les Prix Sofia Nădejde : entretien avec Elena Vlădăreanu »], réalisé par Teona Farnatu, publié dans *Echinox*, 13 octobre 2020, <https://revistaechinox.ro/2020/10/premiile-sofia-nadejde-2020-un-dialog-cu-elena-vladareanu/>. Consulté le 10 juin 2021.

performance artistique et sociale d'Elena Vlădăreanu répond à ses besoins de « forteresse », mais surtout à certains besoins existentiels et personnels pour valider une certaine communauté, celle des femmes écrivaines.

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AN “AMAZON” IN THE ROMANIAN LITERARY FIELD: POSTURE AND AUTHORIAL SCENOGRAPHY IN ELENA VLĂDĂREANU’S WORK

(Abstract)

The recent years have been marked by numerous discussions on literary postures within the socio-literary field. Starting from the theories proposed by Jérôme Meizoz, the article aims to explore the application of posture studies in the Romanian literary field and proposes a case study on Elena Vlădăreanu’s work. Following the direction in studies about authorial scenography, the work analyzes the poet’s relationship with different literary groups active since the early 2000s, the position of marginality produced in both public and poetic discourse, the body theme in her poetry, the foundation of the “Sofia Nădejde” Literary Prizes for women’s literature and their place in Elena Vlădăreanu’s postural profile. The paper focuses on some of the most important public positions and volumes published by the author to show the relevance of a position of “amazon” in the Romanian literary field. Finally, the article emphasizes the role of the poet in creating a community and making women writers more visible.

Keywords: posture, literary scenography, Elena Vlădăreanu, Romanian poetry, women writers.

O „AMAZOANĂ” ÎN CÂMPUL LITERAR ROMÂNESC: POSTURĂ ȘI SCENOGRAFIE AUCTORIALĂ LA ELENA VLĂDĂREANU

(Rezumat)

În ultimii ani, discuțiile despre postură au devenit din ce în ce mai prezente în câmpul sociologiei literare. Plecând de la teoriile lui Jérôme Meizoz, articolul are ca miză explorarea aplicabilității studiilor posturale în câmpul literar românesc și propunerea unui studiu de caz asupra Elenei Vlădăreanu. Răspunzând direcției de cercetare din zona scenografiei literare, lucrarea analizează raportul poetei față de diferite grupări literare de la începutul anilor 2000, construirea posturii marginalității atât în discursul public, cât și în cel poetic, tema corporalității în poezie, instituirea premiilor „Sofia Nădejde” pentru literatură scrisă de femei și locul lor în profilul postural al Elenei Vlădăreanu. Articolul focalizează asupra câtorva din cele mai importante poziționări publice și volume publicate de autoare, cu scopul de a arăta relevanța unei posturi de „amazoane” în câmpul literar românesc. În final, se evidențiază rolul poetei în crearea unei comunități și conferirea unei mai mari vizibilități scriitoarelor femei.

Cuvinte-cheie: postură, scenografie literară, Elena Vlădăreanu, poezie românească, scriitoare.

VICTOR COBUZ

THE COMMITTED WRITER POSTURE: TEODORA COMAN & ELENA VLĂDĂREANU

Engaged Literature in the Romanian Literary Field

“Romanian literature deeply dislikes – *et pour cause!* – writing with a political thesis”¹ is the observation with which Rita Chirian opens her review of Ruxandra Cesereanu’s book of poetry, *Scrisoare către un prieten și înapoi către țara mea* [*A Letter to a Friend and Back to My Country*], one of the most politically marked books of the last years in Romanian literature. This statement is downright symptomatic of the way in which engaged literature is perceived in the current Romanian literary field. Indeed, Romanian writers avoid or do not sincerely believe in “writing with a political thesis”, but to say that there is an irreconcilable rift between them and the engaged literature would be a great mistake.

The explanation “*et pour cause*” is relevant from several points of view. In addition to the obvious purpose of taking the place of a longer explanation that cannot be detailed in a simple book review, this expression refers to the best known cause of this attitude towards engaged literature: the communist experience. Of course, the communist regime systematically cancelled the autonomy of the Romanian literary field, subjecting it to its ideological interests, but the dismissal of engaged literature by the Romanian writers cannot be understood only by referencing the way in which political art and social criticism in literature were discredited in the four decades of Romanian communism.

The ill-fated reputation of engaged literature in Romanian culture has multiple causes and – along with the collective trauma of communism – the most important is the supremacy of the ideology of aesthetic autonomy in the emergence of the Romanian literary field, which translates – at least theoretically – into the categorical rejection of any interference of the extra-literary in the production and reception of the literary work. The reasons why the aesthetic canon of Romanian literature lasted for 150 years have been discussed in great detail, but we must also take into account that “there is a correlation between the success of the principle of aesthetic autonomy and the series of political and institutional coercions that accompanied it throughout Romanian history”². Those who could have countered the supremacy of the aesthetic criterion posed a danger not only to the literary field, which was in a continuous process of becoming autonomous, but also to the

¹ Rita Chirian, “Roșu, galben și dezastru” [“Red, Yellow and Disaster”], *Poesis*, 2018, 2, p. 73. Unless otherwise stated, the quotations are translated into English by the author of this paper.

² Mihai Iovănel, *Ideologiile literaturii în postcomunismul românesc* [*The Ideologies of Literature in Romanian Post-communism*], București, Muzeul Literaturii Române, 2017, p. 93.

political *status quo* of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The fact that the heteronomous camp had leaders like Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea (Marxist critique) and Nicolae Iorga (ethnicist critique) tells us a lot about the political stakes of the old confrontation between “art for art’s sake” and “art with a thesis”.

The Romanian literary studies of the last decades that have focused on engaged art are mostly about the political dimension of the historical avant-garde or about socialist realism. However, Romanian engaged literature has a tradition that is not limited to these two moments, its episodes being determined by the multiple and rapid changes that the Romanian society has gone through in the last two centuries. The examples at the beginning of the paragraph are cases in which militant writers have pushed forward a left-wing agenda, but there are also many right-wing engaged writers in Romanian literature. Nineteenth-century nationalism, the fascism of the Interwar Young Generation with all its avatars, and the anti-communism of the 1990s and 2000s produced a literature that served these ideological interests. However, many of these examples are not perceived today as advocating one cause or another. As Vasile Mihalache points out, the great fiction of the Romanian literary field is that only certain texts are ideological, especially “the writings of the left; the ones of the right must suggest a clear fascist penchant in order to be seen as such, and sometimes not even then do they achieve that effect”³. This situation is not so difficult to understand “since the literary field and the teaching of literature in schools and universities are both creations of nationalism and the nation-state”⁴. We could add to this explanation the fact that some of the writers who noticed the closeness between the principle of aesthetic autonomy and the dominant ideology of that precise moment have hidden their political options behind aestheticism.

One must not forget that adherence to the principle of aesthetic autonomy can be a political act in itself. This fact is most visible in the case of the new generation of critics and writers who appeared in Romania in the early 1960s – also recruiting writers from previous generations. In his famous essay “Despre estetismul socialist” [“On Socialist Aestheticism”], Mircea Martin has pointed out that when it comes to “a totalitarian ideology, then the political non-engagement of aestheticism becomes in the context [...] a political attitude”⁵. The “autonomous” group during the communist regime seems to follow Theodor Adorno’s plea for

³ Vasile Mihalache, “Împotriva suprematismului estetic. O perspectivă postumanistă” [“Against the Supremacy of the Aesthetic. A Posthumanist Perspective”], https://posthum.ro/blog/vasile-mihalache-impotriva-suprematismului-estetic/#_ftn4. Accessed on May 4, 2021.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ Mircea Martin, “Despre estetismul socialist” [“On Socialist Aestheticism”], *România literară*, 2004, 23, p. 19.

aesthetic art, according to which art “criticizes society by merely existing”⁶ or that, “much more importantly, art becomes social by its opposition to society, and it occupies this position only as autonomous art”⁷.

Unfortunately, the ideology of aesthetic autonomy prevented a nuanced and non-biased reception of Romanian literary writings with a political stake. Moreover, the fact that many opportunistic writers strived for economic capital or for access to power positions in the literary field has significantly affected the credibility of engaged literature in the Romanian literary field. Mihail Sadoveanu’s case is probably the most notorious one, as he obtained even political positions after the 1946 general election, but there are many more examples of Romanian writers that collaborated with the various regimes that succeeded each other over the last century for the multiple benefits that resulted from this type of alliance.

We must take into account, however, the fact that for most of its history, modern Romanian culture has been literature-centric, with literature and literary criticism reflecting the dominant ideologies of each period. Thus, a set of expectations was created that the literary *doxa* be formulated in terms of the writer’s position in relation to the political elements of public life, putting extra pressure on writers who wanted to legitimize themselves in the literary field.

However, something has changed in the last decade and “writing with a political thesis” is not avoided by Romanian writers to the same extent as before. There are two causes for this, one specific to the literary field and the other to the political one. First of all, the young generation of critics asserting themselves since the 2000s have strongly challenged the supremacy of aesthetic autonomy in the study of literature. This has contributed to the emergence of a series of works that capitalize on many aspects of literary production that autonomous critics consider to be minor and too irrelevant. Also, the increased attention paid to the political character of literature counteracts the old stigma that engaged literature used to carry. This was the convenient critical and theoretical framework in which a literature with civic and political stakes could materialize, in conjunction with the articulation of a so-called “civil society”. From the anti-austerity protests of 2012 and those against mining in Roșia Montană in 2013, to the anti-corruption and post-Colectiv and anti-government protests after the Social Democratic Party won the parliamentary elections at the end of 2016, all these street movements needed an artistic identity that would represent their ideology. Hence the publishing of an anthology like *Resist! Poetry* (2017), which attests to a reconsideration of engaged literature in the Romanian literary mainstream.

⁶ Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*. Edited by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann. Translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor, New York, Continuum Publishing, 1997, p. 225.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

Engaged Literature and the Posture of the Committed Writer

This introduction was necessary because it provided us with a context to understand contemporary Romanian engaged literature. Moreover, this presentation brought us closer to an important premise of our article: there is no innocent art, and every literary work encodes the social and political positions of their author. If we accept all of these considerations, then we can see how the literary text is a central element in the construction of the committed writer posture.

In this paper we will try to analyze the relationship between the writer's *posture* and his or hers *poetics* – in the sense that the two can reflect and even shape each other. In this regard, engaged literature is the most suitable object of such an inquiry because it is the literary form in which posture and poetics seem to be closely linked. We also believe that the theory of literary postures can help us reach a better understanding of the engaged literature and the situation of the committed writer.

In *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*, Jérôme Meizoz defines the authorial posture as “‘l'identité littéraire' construite par l'auteur lui-même, et souvent relayée par les médias qui la donnent à lire au public...”⁸ and as “la manière singulière d'occuper une 'position' dans le champ littéraire”⁹. However, Jérôme Meizoz is quite cautious when he discusses the question of whether any mark of the writer's posture can be identified in the literary text. Of course, he is more concerned with prose than poetry and it is hard to disagree with him on this matter. But poetry is a literary genre in which the author does not hide so much behind some characters or behind a narrator as he/she does in fiction. In other words, poetry is a form of literature that places great emphasis on authenticity, and its communicative dimension requires a more “direct” relationship with the reader.

Jérôme Meizoz does include some French poets in his exploration of literary postures, but he is not so much interested in their poetry. As he declares from the start, the main media that convey the posture of an author are his or her interviews, public speeches, diaries and autobiographies. Even so, Meizoz acknowledges that there is a connection between poetics and posture. Throughout the book, he makes a considerable amount of references to this relationship between an author's writing and the way he performs in the public sphere. Perhaps the clearest exposition of this two-way relationship is the following:

Pour moi, cette notion a une double dimension, en prise sur l'histoire et le langage : simultanément elle se donne comme une *conduite* et un *discours*. C'est d'une part la présentation de soi, les conduites publiques en situation littéraire (prix, discours, banquets, entretiens en public etc.) ; d'autre part, l'image de soi donnée dans

⁸ Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*, Genève, Slatkine, 2007, p. 18.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

et par le discours, ce que la rhétorique nomme l'*ethos*. En parlant de « posture » d'auteur, on veut décrire relationnellement des effets de texte et des conduites sociales. Autrement dit, sur un plan méthodologique, cette notion articule la rhétorique et la sociologie. En effet, elle ne considère pas l'interne textuel sans son pendant externe et vice-versa ; enfin, loin de traiter le discours littéraire comme un document et de l'ancrer dans un fait formel pour sans spécificité, elle permet en déployer les effets dans la communication. Par exemple, celui de donner le ton : la construction de l'orateur dans son discours, son répertoire et ses dispositifs historiques¹⁰.

As we can see, in the first part of the quoted paragraph, Meizoz goes into detail on what the components of literary posture are. Besides the author's public behaviour, posture is made up of the *discourse* of the writer. More exactly, posture is the result of the interplay between the text and the author's demeanour in society. According to this logic, despite the distance a writer takes from his narrators and his characters, the text itself reveals enough about his social existence.

In another chapter, Jérôme Meizoz discusses Blaise Cendrars's novel *Bourlinguer* and claims that:

Dans « Venise », la posture et la poétique apparaissent solidaires, la conception de la littérature y étant inséparable d'une certaine façon d'assumer l'auctorialité. Elle a pour enjeu d'articuler, dans l'analyse, l'interne et l'externe textuel (la figuration linguistique de l'instance auctoriale et l'auteur biographique), trop souvent dissociés aussi bien par les approches formalistes que par les lectures historiennes¹¹.

It is not hard to see how important the text is in the construction of a literary posture, because "l'œuvre constitue aussi une image de soi proposée au public"¹². Vice versa, posture is an element that shapes the literary text, as Meizoz shows in the example above. Therefore, by analysing the literary posture of an author we can also study "à la fois sa 'stratégie' dans le champ et ses options formelles, à savoir sa poétique propre"¹³.

This insight into Jérôme Meizoz's theory of literary posture proves that the literary work can be taken into consideration when this concept is studied, and that the public image which an author constructs for himself has implications for his writings. We must not understand these conclusions as a return to a biographical criticism already rejected by the Russian formalism and its succeeding schools of literary theory. One of the greatest achievements of Meizoz's theory is that it gives us a middle way between the linguistic and the sociological approaches to literature.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 21-22.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 124.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 18.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

But what about poetry? When we ask ourselves if this literary genre is able to contribute to the construction of the committed writer posture, we actually run into a tradition that has excluded poetry from this equation for a long time. We are referring here, of course, to Jean-Paul Sartre and his famous essay *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* in which the French philosopher has theorized the literary engagement. For Sartre, the poet is not fit to commit his literature to a cause, because “poets are men who refuse to utilise language”¹⁴. In other words, poetry has a particular way of expressing itself, it bends the language so much that it makes it unrecognizable or, more exactly, ineffective in a process like engaging literature in a political or civic cause. Sure enough, there are many examples that contradict Sartre’s supposition, but this fact did not stop the diffusion of this attitude. Unfortunately, this topic was overshadowed by the general problem of engaged literature and the debate that started with Jean-Paul Sartre’s articles – it would really not be incorrect to say that this debate concluded with the denunciation of this type of literature.

In *Pour une poétique de l'évènement* (1979), Predrag Matvejević presents the two main and opposite conceptions on engaged poetry in the twentieth century that stem out of the discussions like the one mentioned above. The first one categorically rejects this type of poetry and portrays the poet as an individual who, by committing to a cause, sells himself and his art. Moreover, “even admitting that the *committed* poet may be *disinterested*, he still remains, according to this conception, tributary to his *engagement* by the very fact that his desire for social efficiency leads him to aesthetic conformity”¹⁵. Simply put, even if the committed author is sincere in his adherence to a cause, his or her writings are aesthetically “compromised”. On the other hand, “by refusing to engage, poetry also refuses to act and, as a result, to exist: thus, it becomes useless due to its own inefficiency”¹⁶. Predrag Matvejević rejects both opinions, but he does not try to “resolve” this antagonism. In his book, Matvejević exposes at large the complicated history of literary engagement and its public perception. He is aware that a solution to this problem is a chimera. Instead, Matvejević tries to shed some light on the intricate nature and evolution of the concept of committed writing. This is just one example of an echo of Sartre’s theory of *littérature engagée*, a rather moderate one if we may add, that tries to see beyond this antinomy – in the first part of this paper, we came across the case of Theodor Adorno’s position that criticizes Jean-Paul Sartre’s whole construct in an attempt to support autonomous art.

The discussion about Jean-Paul Sartre was inevitable since he is one of those authors who established this type of posture – if not *the one* who did it. Despite the

¹⁴ Jean-Paul Sartre, “*What Is Literature?*” and *Other Essays*. Translated by Bernard Fretchman et al. Introduction by Steven Ungar, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1988, p. 18.

¹⁵ Predrag Matvejević, *Poetica evenimentului. Poezie și angajare* [*The Poetics of the Event. Poetry and Commitment*]. Translation and comments by Luminița Beiu-Paladi. Preface by Marcel Duță, București, Univers, 1980, p. 108.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

controversy around Sartre's own commitment, the posture that he constructed remains a reference point to other writers that have been interested in committing their writing to a political or civic cause and to the scholars that want to analyze this postural network. To Sartre's virtual disagreement, in the following paragraphs we propose a brief but informative look at two different cases of committed writer posture in the Romanian contemporary literary field.

Teodora Coman & Elena Vlădăreanu: Two Models of the Committed Writer Posture

We have chosen two Romanian poets to illustrate the ways in which an author can construct a committed writer posture. There are two main reasons behind our decision to talk about Teodora Coman and Elena Vlădăreanu. As shown above, the Romanian political field had its periods when one ideology or political belief was dominant and this fact was visible especially in the literary field, where the main actors and institutions oscillated between opposing and/or following the political efforts to control this ideology. In post-communism, despite unequal power relations, many more voices from the political spectrum can be heard than before. There we have our first reason of choosing these two poets. Elena Vlădăreanu, with her themes ranging from feminism to the condition of the writer in capitalism, is generally perceived as a Left-wing author, while Teodora Coman with her involvement in the anti-government/anti-corruption protests within the "Vă vedem" ["We see you"] street movement from Sibiu can be categorized at least as a Center-Right protester and, of course, writer. This labeling is rather approximate, but it is useful to our discussion and we believe that it will not be contradicted by their interviews. It is important to note that neither of them has unequivocally affirmed their adherence to an ideology, and that their loyalty seems to be lying more with the social and political causes they believe in. This is important in their process of constructing a committed writer posture, but let's not get ahead of ourselves.

As the reader can see, we tried to bring in a little diversity from the political spectrum, but this was not the decisive reason in opting for these two poets. What is more important is that the two authors have assembled two types of committed writer posture, not necessarily opposite, but with significant differences, as well as commonalities. Therefore, Elena Vlădăreanu has a *hard* committed writer posture, while Teodora Coman has a *soft* one. What is the criterion by which this differentiation was made? It is not political; their beliefs and allegiances are not so relevant here. As simple as it may sound, the *hard/soft* labels indicate how *strong* the posture is. Keep in mind that the strength of these postures can be measured in relation to a model of a fully committed writer posture – like Sartre's, although he is not the only major example here. We don't intend to relate the two postures that we discuss with such reference points, not because we don't believe in the utility of such a process, but because the contexts are so different, and we might need more space to discuss all these particular situations. It is more practical to compare these postures with each other, in their specific context. Accordingly, Teodora Coman

has a “weaker” posture than Elena Vlădăreanu, but not a less effective one. The strength of their postures should not be measured in terms of efficiency or of productivity. It is more a matter of internal strategies and of invested resources in the construction of the committed writer posture.

The consistency with which they maintain their posture is one of the most visible elements by which we can differentiate between the two poets. Teodora Coman’s posture depicts her as a writer who is “forced” by a specific situation to commit her writings to a cause. By this logic, she is a poet who descends into the public arena and fights for “what is right” with a sense of urgency and the awareness of a social crisis. It is not a systematic engagement, but an *occasional* one. We don’t mean that her commitment is also an opportunistic one, we do not comment on its sincerity, but on its degree of “premeditation”. Teodora Coman’s posture portrays her as a poet that has not prepared in advance to be politically engaged. In an interview, she is asked how much she was influenced by the social and political space at the time in writing *soft guerrilla*. She answers:

The socio-political space has changed me a lot in the last two years: there has been a parallel calendar from Colectiv onwards. I entered the third year A.D., that is, after Colectiv. I used to be a simple house animal, concerned only with my own comfort, or a houseplant, thanks to the light absorbed through the window. But the toxic politics has penetrated even this space, my seemingly secure habitat, and I have joined the civic movement “We see you” from Sibiu, together with principled people and wonderful friends of all ages¹⁷.

Metonymically, Teodora Coman’s path from an apolitical stance to energetic involvement in civic movements represents the political “awakening” of the Romanian urban middle class – and highly educated, to complete the social portrait of this group. As we have seen in the first part of this paper, the amplification of this social class’s civic consciousness has led to a more political literature and Teodora Coman’s example is evocative of that. As she stated in the same interview, in her first two books of poetry, “the socio-political dimension appears anaemic (in the first, absolutely not at all!)”¹⁸ and only with the third one she starts to observe how the external socio-political environment has affected her.

So how does Teodora Coman construct this *soft* and *occasional* posture of a committed writer? First, obviously by participating in the protests. In her words:

Ciprian Mihali is right when he says that you don’t learn civic attitude and behaviour either at school or on TV, but only there, in the street, so to get out of your tight circle and to feel yourself flanked by others in solidarity is an overwhelming

¹⁷ “Spațiul social-politic m-a schimbat foarte mult în ultimii doi ani” [“The socio-political space has changed me a lot in the last two years”], interview with Teodora Coman by Andra Rotaru. <https://blog.goethe.de/dlite/archives/609-Spaiul-social-politic-m-a-schimbat-foarte-mult-in-ultimii-doi-ani.html>. Accessed on September 14, 2021.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

experience, especially in silence, as we do it. [...] I also opened my eyes and ears to reality and I learned to put this damn self aside, to subordinate it to an urgent cause, to accept the truth of its beneficial relativization¹⁹.

The physical presence “in the streets”, at a protest, is a fundamental strategy in the construction of the committed writer posture, especially when it’s related to some specific civic movements. More so today, when the writers can benefit from the latest technological advancements, with their presence in the middle of the protestors proved by the many pictures, videos and interviews taken on the spot. In this regard, Teodora Coman’s posture is part of a collective posture that has emerged as a result of this series of protests. Other instances of this collective posture is Radu Vancu’s and Ruxandra Cesereanu’s own postures as committed writers engaged in “We see you” and “#Resist” anti-governmental protests between 2017 and 2019. They were among the most vocal writers involved in these movements and their engagement is supported by all the “evidence” available on social media and in online magazines.

But the simple presence at the protests only makes you a protester. Obviously, to be a committed writer, you must write. This type of posture requires a body of work committed to the cause that the author fights for, from articles and essays to diaries and fiction/poetry. Radu Vancu and Ruxandra Cesereanu have published their fair share of non-fiction texts, but the volumes that really made their postures as committed writers are their diaries: *De la Golan la #resist. Jurnal civic, 2017–2019* [*From Golan to #resist. Civic Journal, 2017–2019*] (2020) by Ruxandra Cesereanu and *Răul. Jurnal, 2016–2020* [*The Evil. Journal, 2016–2020*] (2021) by Radu Vancu. Teodora Coman did not keep a journal, but she wrote some poems that directly address the problems that led to these protests. Asked what the inspiration is behind her third book of poetry *soft guerrilla* (2019), Teodora Coman claims that:

The idea came from the civic experience with the group “We see you” from Sibiu, not before these events, as it usually happens. I did not intend to give a literary character to this protest, for fear that I might fall into the temptation of social narcissism, but look, I still woke up writing, aware of this danger of self-heroicization that lurked everywhere. I recorded some type of diary of less noble states (anger, resignation, doubt, fear, scepticism), but with the gratitude that I can verbalize an experience that no longer belonged to me, that I can melt myself in the plural of «we» or «they», people of all ages with whom I learned in the street what civicism is²⁰.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ “Interviu. Teodora Coman, profesoara și poeta din Sibiu: ‘Am consemnat un fel de jurnal al stărilor mai puțin nobile’” [“Interview. Teodora Coman, teacher and poet from Sibiu: ‘I kept some type of diary of less noble states’”], by Denisa Laicaauf, *Turnul sfatului*, 2019, <https://www.turnulsfatului.ro/2019/12/28/interviu-teodora-coman-profesoara-si-poeta-din-sibiu-bdquo-am-consemnat-un-fel-de-jurnal-al-starilor-mai-putin-nobile-rdquo-160827>. Accessed on September 10, 2021.

In conclusion, *soft guerilla* is a diary composed of poems that captures the anger, revolt, hope and hopelessness of this important experience. Teodora Coman's posture is complete only after this book of poetry is published. Here we can see the connection between the poetics of the author and his or her posture. As Teodora Coman said, *soft guerilla* is a product of the protests, an artistic presentation of a civic experience that made her write a type of poetry that she did not even intend to write in the past. The construction of the committed writer posture is realized with this specific type of poetics. In a not so complicated paradox, this posture determines and is determined by the author's migration from one type of poetics to another. Therefore, her posture as a committed writer is backed up by a book of poetry that articulates the ideology of the movement, and the poetry itself is justified by the necessities of the protests. In other words, posture and poetics reinforce each other.

The conclusion that we have reached with the exposition of Teodora Coman's posture is also valid in the case of Elena Vlădăreanu. What is different though is the posture itself and the ways in which is constructed. If Teodora Coman's posture is the result of the combination between physical presence at the protests and a book of engaged poetry, Elena Vlădăreanu has carefully built her posture as an engaged author brick by brick, speech by speech. Every volume, every interview, every public debate, every cultural project that she organized contributes to this powerful image of a writer involved in the cultural and social issues of the community she belongs to. This is why Elena Vlădăreanu's posture can be labelled as *hard*, because it is systematically created over the last two decades, while Teodora Coman's posture is "occasional".

If we look at Elena Vlădăreanu's cultural activity and her trajectory in the literary field, we can better understand her posture as a committed writer. Elena Vlădăreanu's debut is related to the rise of the 2000 generation and its struggle to enter the literary field and to legitimize itself. Since her early beginnings as a poet, Elena Vlădăreanu was politically conscious in her writings and she did not avoid a debate with political stakes. Indeed, the social climate of this generation has encouraged her to construct such a posture. In Mihnea Bălici's words, "fracturism promotes a certain social, political and cultural commitment, the artistic act being only a platform for this collective *ethos*"²¹. Even so, Elena Vlădăreanu's commitment was firmer and more concise than some of her colleagues and, as an argument in support of this idea, we recall the fact that she is one of the few – if not the only one – poets of this generation who have persisted in this direction and who have maintained a committed writer posture in the years since their debut.

At this point, we must take into account that the accumulation of political capital is a strategy by which these writers tried to gain symbolic capital in the

²¹ Mihnea Bălici, "Fracturismul în câmpul literar românesc" ["Fracturism in the Romanian Literary Field"], *Transilvania*, 2021, 5, p. 5.

literary field. As Pierre Bourdieu had theorized, these “new heretical entrants [...] can usually only succeed in imposing recognition of their products by virtue of external changes”²² and “the most decisive of these changes are the political ruptures, such as revolutionary crises, which change the power relations at the heart of the field”²³. Of course, the 2000 generation did not really intend to organize a revolution, but the logic behind the process that Bourdieu described applies to the case of the young writers at the turn of the millennium. In this line, Vlădăreanu’s committed writer posture can be seen as a way in which she had gained political capital that she converted then in a literary one. With Teodora Coman is a little bit too early to tell, but we can say that her posture helps her in becoming more visible in the literary and social fields – and, to some extent, to gain a little bit more economic capital than before, but this assumption needs some concrete data to be supported.

Elena Vlădăreanu has a *hard* committed writer posture because all of her literary and cultural endeavours have a political dimension – from her early literary experience within the 2000 generation, to establishing the “Sofia Nădejde” Awards for Literature Written by Women, from the feminism of her first books to the exploration of the social status and the material conditions of the writer. Elena Vlădăreanu’s socio-cultural activity marks her posture as a committed writer and makes it a reference point for those who want to draw a similar public image about themselves. More than all of these, what gives strength to Elena Vlădăreanu’s posture as a committed writer is her outlook on the relationship between art and politics. Asked in an interview if she believes in a political imperative of literature, the poet states that:

Yes, it is essential to me that not only literature, but art should be political. I’m not interested in evasionism right now, but it’s possible that in a short while, when all art is political, being an evasionist may become truly political. I find it essential to be against the system, no matter what system that is; if you can undermine it, do it; for me it is essential that art should not be good, predictable, settled, it should not continue, it should create vanishing points, disturb, question and constantly question. To be a constant experiment, a continuous search. Not to be there for the sake of prizes, I must say that, but to get prizes that can reward it when necessary²⁴.

This answer can be read as a manifesto for Elena Vlădăreanu’s poetics and literary politics. This view is the most clearly expressed in her 2017 book of poetry *bani. muncă. timp liber* [money. work. leisure]. Even though all of her books

²² Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art. Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. Translated by Susan Emanuel, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1995, p. 253.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ “Mi se pare esențial să fii împotriva sistemului” [“I find it essential to be against the system”], interview with Elena Vlădăreanu by Matei Martin, *Dilema veche*, 2018, 772, <https://dilemaveche.ro/sectiune/la-zi-in-cultura/articol/mi-se-pare-esential-sa-fii-impotriva-sistemului-interviu-cu-scriitoarea-elena-vladareanu>. Accessed September 10, 2021.

contribute to the creation of her posture as a committed writer, this volume in particular is the one that strengthens that posture and reveals the link that her posture establishes with her poetics. The poetry in *bani. muncă. timp liber* [money. work. leisure] contains all of the major themes that Elena Vlădăreanu has visited in her literary career. But more than that, this book brings to the attention of the general public the problems surrounding the author's condition in late capitalism.

It is hard to unfold the relationship between Elena Vlădăreanu's posture and her poetics. With *bani. muncă. timp liber* we are the closest to the essence of this relationship, but the overview given here would inevitably be limited. However, we can draw some conclusions on this subject. Elena Vlădăreanu's writing – and we refer here to her literature and journalism alike – positions itself in the direction of some left-wing writers that are trying to cultivate “a certain didacticism, alternative journalism, the desire to present a realistic version or to drop a pamphlet without overstylizing it”²⁵. Her themes and styles can also be understood through the posture she has carefully built over the last two decades. Authenticity is one of the key terms that Elena Vlădăreanu relies on, in the second sense (“aesthetic”) that Meizoz mentions when he talks about the proletarian postures, as opposed to the “artistic”, a way of writing or a tone opposing aesthetics/aestheticism. Of course, Elena Vlădăreanu does not intend to build a proletarian posture, but she shares this posture with that of Henry Poulaille, as in the example given by Jérôme Meizoz, in the “fidelity to spoken language”²⁶ that can offer that “tone” of opposing bourgeois aesthetics or, in our Romanian and extremely contemporary case, of arguing against the hyper-expressiveness and rhetoric of the right-wing discourse.

Conclusion

It is worth noticing that neither Elena Vlădăreanu, nor Teodora Coman talk about themselves as committed poets. Besides the stigma around this concept, we think that these writers know that this idea is very hard to grasp and mirrors a rather volatile social position. In their interviews, they use modesty as a strategy of avoiding to fully assume this posture of a committed writer. Nevertheless, they are two of the most prominent committed poets of the last five years and their example was – we hope – the right pretext to start a debate about the importance of committing one's art to a political or civic belief in contemporary Romanian literary field. As we have seen, Jérôme Meizoz's theory of literary postures has offered us a complex insight into the complex relationship between an author's social existence and his/her poetics. More so, this concept proves to be a very useful tool in analysing the premises of engaged literature. We can only hope that

²⁵ Costi Rogozanu, *Epoca de mijloc [The Middle Epoch]*, Cluj-Napoca, Tact, 2019, p. 7.

²⁶ Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires*, p. 76.

more scholars will take into consideration this theory, and that more writers will think differently and more understandingly about committed literature.

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THE COMMITTED WRITER POSTURE: TEODORA COMAN & ELENA
VLĂDĂREANU

(Abstract)

This paper aims to explore the way in which the literary posture of a writer and his or hers poetics reflect and influence each other. To analyze the possibilities of this relation I chose to look upon the case of the engaged literature, a type of writing in which the link between the text and the context is obvious. The engaged literature carries with it a stigma in the Romanian literary field of which historical and social causes I exhibit in the first part of the paper. This excursus through the history of Romanian culture reveals that not only the communist experience compromised the engaged literature, but there is also a certain resistance inherent to the Romanian literary field to anything that could affect the so-called *aesthetic autonomy*, one of the guiding principles of the Romanian literature of the last century and a half. A change is taking place in the last two decades, with the development of the material conditions conducive to the emergence of an urban middle class that can artistically articulate its political ideology. In the last part of the paper I bring into discussion two contemporary poets who are known for their strongly politically marked volumes of poetry, Teodora Coman and Elena Vlădăreanu. There are two reasons for choosing these two poets. On the one hand, Teodora Coman and Elena Vlădăreanu present two different types of a committed writer's posture, which I differentiated as a *soft* one and a *hard* one. On the other hand, through these two poets I managed to bring together themes of both the left and the right from Romania in recent years.

Keywords: literary posture, engaged literature, ideology, romanian literature, poetry.

POSTURA SCRITORULUI ANGAJAT: TEODORA COMAN & ELENA
VLĂDĂREANU

(Rezumat)

Articolul își propune să exploreze modul în care postura literară a unui scriitor și poetica sa se reflectă și se influențează reciproc. Pentru a analiza posibilitățile acestei relații am ales să ne oprim asupra cazului literaturii angajate, un tip de scriere în care legătura dintre text și context este evidentă. Literatura angajată poartă cu sine un stigmat în câmpul literar românesc ale cărui cauze istorice și sociale le-am expus în prima parte a lucrării. Acest excurs prin istoria culturii române ne relevă faptul că nu doar experiența comunistă a compromis literatura angajată, ci că există și o anumită rezistență inerentă câmpului literar românesc față de orice ar putea afecta așa-numita *autonomie estetică*, unul dintre principiile directoare ale literaturii române din ultimul secol și jumătate. O schimbare are loc în ultimele două decenii, odată cu dezvoltarea condițiilor materiale propice apariției unei clase de mijloc urbane care să poată să-și articuleze artistic ideologia politică. În ultima parte a lucrării am adus în discuție două poete contemporane care sunt cunoscute pentru volume de poezie puternic marcate politic, Teodora Coman și Elena Vlădăreanu. Două au fost motivele pentru alegerea acestor două poete. Pe de-o parte, Teodora Coman și Elena Vlădăreanu prezintă două tipuri diferite de posturi ale scriitorului angajat pe care eu le-am diferențiat ca fiind una *slabă* și una *tare*. Pe de altă parte, prin cele două poete am reușit să aduc împreună tematici atât ale stângii, cât și ale dreptei din România ultimilor ani.

Cuvinte-cheie: postură literară, literatură angajată, ideologie, literatură română, poezie.

ANGELO MITCHIEVICI

ADRIAN PĂUNESCU – POSTURAL POLYPHONIES IN *THE GOLDEN AGE*

Adrian Păunescu between Posture and Imposture: Constitutive Ambiguities

A reassessment of the work of Adrian Păunescu nowadays is inextricably linked to the socio-cultural phenomenon the poet fostered by means of the Flacăra [Flame] Cenacle. The Flacăra Cenacle forged a unique synthesis between mass culture – a socialist *pop culture* – and high culture, through the inclusion, in the artists' repertoire, of texts by canonical Romanian poets such as Mihai Eminescu, George Bacovia, Nichita Stănescu, Marin Sorescu, Ioan Alexandru and others, as well as of world literature such as poems by Serghei Esenin.

The Flacăra Cenacle was founded in September 1973 at the initiative of Adrian Păunescu; its last show took place on 12 June 1985. As the poet confessed, the enterprise took off with as few as 60 spectators in the auditorium of the “Ion Creangă” Theatre in Bucharest. Yet, the very ascension of Adrian Păunescu had started earlier, and it is fraught with ambivalence, in that his literary position was buttressed by his allegiance to the Romanian Communist Party: as early as 1967 the poet became the secretary of the Communist Youth Union of the Writers' Union. He was also, at the time, the deputy editor-in-chief of two of the most prominent literary magazines, the *România literară* [Literary Romania] and *Luceafărul* [The Evening Star]. 1973 turned out to be the poet's *annus mirabilis*: Adrian Păunescu was appointed editor-in-chief of the *Flacăra* magazine on 1 February; subsequently (in February) he founded the cenacle of the same name. Although in 1976 the Flacăra Cenacle would be assimilated into the nationwide *Cântarea României* [Praise Song to Romania] festivities in praise of Nicolae Ceaușescu, Adrian Păunescu never lost control of its organisation.

However, both the founding and the disbanding of the Cenacle followed the decisions of the uppermost political echelons. From 1979, Adrian Păunescu also received weekly airtime as the “Radiocenaclul Flacăra – Valori ale muzicii tinere” [“Flacăra Radio-Cenacle – Young Promising Talents of Music”] where he promoted the Cenacle and young talented folk singers. From being a journalist and editor-in-chief, as well as a poet, Adrian Păunescu gradually also became a culture animator, as well as a propagandist. It is one of the many cases when Păunescu merged vastly different public roles. In fact, he emphatically stated as much during one of his shows:

If on the Iza Valley, in a Maramureș peasant household, they are aware of Tatiana Filipoiu, it means that our *propaganda* with the Flacăra Cenacle has achieved its goal. Otherwise, everything else is just words. What's the point of sending a message if it fails to be received? *Propaganda* is precisely sending and

receiving. [...] *Propaganda* entails competence, and the competence of a propagandist is the very human soul¹.

The final sentence falls within the ambit of Stalin's reflection concerning the role Stalin entrusted to writers/ artists, assigned to be "engineers of the human soul". Overtly assuming a propagandist role – as befits an activist, if not a creator – becomes, through the ambiguity it fosters between cultural propaganda qua popularization of young talented artists and political propaganda, one of the poet's strategies of "humanizing" the process of re-stalinization of Romanian society by Nicolae Ceaușescu, begun with the July 1971 Theses, or the "taming of socialist Romania" (Paul Cernat's phrase in the essay "Îmblânzitorul României socialiste" ["The Tamer of Socialist Romania"]², and implicitly of the "bluejeans generation", with its aspirations for freedom. The taming also addresses an unpopular terminology, worn-out ideological clichés now recycled in poetic idiom. Thus, Adrian Păunescu converts the role of the agitprop activist, of the political activist, into that of the man of culture, of the revolutionary poet who conveys the message in a different form. Păunescu fashions for himself an apparently paradoxical image: that of the contestatory voice against Ceaușescu's bureaucracy, though issued by a follower of the politics of the new secretary general. He thus engages himself in spectacular acrobatics, the strenuous art of the reconciliation of opposites – which he assumes as part and parcel of his personality, as the autoscopic poem *Un prim romantic* [*A First Romantic*] insightfully puts it: "Contrasts anyway suit me only too well/ Plus and minus alike deep in my soul dwell"³.

In the preface to *Cartea cărților de poezie* [*The Book of Poetry Books*], 1999, signed by his son Andrei Păunescu – written in compliance with his father's wishes and perhaps penned by the poet himself – we witness an attempt at portraying a tolerated subversive figure. The poet's avowed and quite opportune antisovietism, contemporaneous with Nicolae Ceaușescu's public disassociation from the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia by the troops of the Warsaw Pact led by the Soviet Union, is conveyed the poem *Soartă* [*Fate*], which emblemizes the

¹ Unless mentioned otherwise, the quotations come from the 1983 documentary film *Cenacul Flacăra – Te salut generație în blugi* [*The Flacăra Cenacle – Hail to You, Bluejeans Generation*] by Cornel Diaconu, banned at the time despite the ideological conformity of its director. Diaconu also directed *Salutări de la Agigea* [*Greetings from Agigea*], 1984, one of the emblematic films of the Golden Age, which praised one of Nicolae Ceaușescu's "works", the Danube-Black Sea Canal. The documentary is available on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pIjrjn54Oh0&ab_channel=AndreiP%C4%83unescu. Accessed November 10, 2021.

² Paul Cernat, "Îmblânzitorul României socialiste" ["The Tamer of Socialist Romania"], in Paul Cernat, Ion Manolescu, Angelo Mitchievici, Ioan Stanomir, *Explorări în comunismul românesc* [*Explorations of Romanian Communism*], I, Iași, Polirom, 2004, pp. 341-381.

³ Adrian Păunescu, *Un prim romantic* [*A First Romantic*], in *Cartea cărților de poezie* [*The Book of Poetry Books*], București, Editura Păunescu, Fundația Iubirea, Fundația Constantin, 1999, p. 347: "Contrastele și așa îmi vin prea bine,/ Și plus și minus zac mereu în mine". Unless otherwise stated, the quotations are translated into English by the author of this paper.

transmogrification of a political topic into a poetic one and is moreover a definitive expression of both his poetics and the literary posture Adrian Păunescu adopted. Many of his poems evoke the real, translate an event, engage in a dialogue with the present couched in terms of the poet's "encounter with History", which projects the present moment onto the background of a glorious national history, with its representative figures, or even of world history. In fact, virtually all of his *political* statements and attitudes as articulated in his editorials were subsequently translated into poetic idiom, transmogrified into poetic attitudes, or rather into attitudes staged poetically. His 1970s anti-Sovietism – aligned to the party line – was but an aspect of the literary posture of a writer devoted to the national cause, a patriot. This way, Adrian Păunescu constructed for himself a singularity akin to that of Mihai Eminescu, thus obliquely insinuating himself in a major role such as the one assigned to the 19th-century romantic poet – that of the "national poet"⁴ – by the 20th-century critic George Călinescu, yet also offering a romantic pose. It was not, however, the pose of a belated, nostalgic post-romanticism, but of a revolutionary romanticism, foundational of a new age: "Not the last romantic in an age/ When all is waning, with no aspirations,/ But when rottenness gives way,/ A first romantic in a new age"⁵.

Thus, the poet of the new age took up the xenophobic nationalism of Eminescu not only through poems dedicated to the latter such as *Dor de Eminescu* [*Missing Eminescu*], which became a musical hit, or through the evocation of one of the latter's banned poems, *Doină* – which may have led to the banning of *Istoria unei secunde* [*The History of a Second*] in 1971 –, but also through poems concerned with Bukovina and Bessarabia. This divided self – that of the impenitent, outspoken critic of the manifold failures of the communist regime, yet also that of the grandiloquent worshipper of the dictatorial Ceaușescu couple – contributed to the self-fashioning of Adrian Păunescu's literary posture. The poet thus became a master of *public relations* at the time, a genuine mediation institution whose self-assumed task was to effect a rapprochement between politically ostracized, even banned, writers and artists, and the dictator and prominent activists and members of the ruling committee of the Romanian Communist Party, such as Cornel Burtică or the chief censor Dumitru Popescu, as well as high Securitate officers and apparatchiki from a vast entourage of "acquaintances". It is worth mentioning, though, that the criticism levelled at party bureaucracy – which pitted rigid Dej-era communists against revolutionary, initiative-driven Ceaușescu-era communists, as in the emblematic 1971 film *Puterea și adevărul* [*The Power and the Truth*] by Manole Marcus – was one sanctioned by the regime. Nonetheless, the polemical message of Adrian Păunescu's poems, emphasised in his interpretation on the stage

⁴ George Călinescu, *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent* [*The History of Romanian Literature from the Origins to the Present*], București, Minerva, 1988.

⁵ Adrian Păunescu, *Un prim romantic*, p. 347: "Nu ultimul romantic dintr-o eră/ Când toate amurgesc și rar mai speră,/ Ci când putreziciunea pe din două,/ Un prim romantic într-o eră nouă".

of the Flacăra Cenacle, often rippled beyond the approved “pedagogical” framework. The poet provided, through the Flacăra Cenacle, an outlet for venting ever-greater frustrations seething in the Romanian society of the 1980s due to fast pauperization and ever-increasing shortages. Furthermore, the cenacle leader knew how to deflect the people’s opprobrium away from Ceaușescu towards an anonymous stereotyped scapegoat, the incompetent party activist: “Let’s make sure the seed falls on rich soil. This on condition we don’t meet daily a stupid-head who, though not even aware of the subject-verb agreement, presumes to teach us how to be human, how to stand straight, how to turn to the left or right. One cannot teach others unless one truly believes what one says”⁶. A poem such as *Analfabeților* [*To the Illiterate*], published in 1980, illustrates such overt pseudo-dissidence – “I’ve warned you I get terribly pissed off/ If you’re infringing my liberty in the least bit”⁷ – yet also openly announces the genuine power wielded by the poet who “denounces” propagandistic falsifications in the economy and in official culture: “And the world cannot be conquered/ by blowing up figures and miming tumultuousness”⁸. The poet vacillates, as reflected in his adoption of a literary posture, between being the regime’s terribilistic *enfant gâté*, all whims and regrets, and being the mouthpiece of “the many disempowered”.

Unsurprisingly, Cornel Diaconu, a devotee of the regime, shot the documentary *Cenacul Flacăra – Te salut generație în blugi* [*The Flacăra Cenacle – Hail to You, Bluejeans Generation*] at a moment which marked the poet’s apogee, even though the film was banned on its release in 1983. By then, however, Adrian Păunescu’s dual game – vacillating between Ceaușescu and the people, between accepting the leadership of the former and contesting the status quo by blaming the subalterns, between slogan and poem, between the propagandist and the poet – had reached a critical point. The official *pop star* was disloyally competing with *Cântarea României*, the nationwide tribute-festival dedicated exclusively to the presidential couple, on Chinese and North-Korean template, with its unappealing rigid props, unable to convey any emotion or authenticity. By 1985, Adrian Păunescu’s popularity had by far exceeded Nicolae Ceaușescu’s – all this against the obvious worsening of the Romanian people’s lives – and the poet had succeeded to foster his own personality cult. Hence, the disbanding of the cenacle under the pretext of a commotion with casualties during a show at Ploiești also presented the opportunity to drive Adrian Păunescu away from the magazine. His withdrawal from the forefront of cultural life and from the stagelights translated as

⁶ “Să facem în așa fel încât bobul să prindă-n brazdă. Numai cu condiția să nu ne-nvețe în fiecare zi câte un deștept care nici nu știe să facă acordul între subiect și predicat cum să fim oameni, cum să stăm drepti, cum să facem la stânga, cum să facem la dreapta. Nu se poate face educația altora dacă tu nu crezi în ceea ce spui”.

⁷ Adrian Păunescu, *Analfabeților* [*To the Illiterate*], in *Cartea cârților de poezie*, p. 742: “V-am spus că fac teribil de urât/ De sunt călcat puțin pe libertate”.

⁸ *Ibidem*: “Și lumea nu se poate cuceri/ umflând la cifre și mimând tumulturi”.

a fall from grace ordered by the supreme Party ruler.

After the 1989 Revolution, Adrian Păunescu entered politics (in 1992) to become a senator for Dolj and the Social-Democrat Party chair of the Senate's Culture Commission. He re-established the cenacle – if under a different name, *Totuși iubirea* [*Still, love*] – on 7 May 1990, yet this *remake* enjoyed significantly less popularity, with less touring, save for its success in Bessarabia. The poet tried a gesticulation and a tone of voice nevertheless tinged with his previous ambivalence, now also linked to his political role, as well as affected by a reassessment of his equivocal roles under the communist regime. His literary posture after the Revolution still owed to the rich cultural phenomenon of the Flacăra Cenacle. His efforts to reinvent and relegitimize his literary position were at the same time meant to promote and rehabilitate his image as a patriotic writer, one owing allegiance to values and to a cause, rather than to a regime or to a political leader. The subject of numerous polemics and virulent contestation by prominent intellectuals (such as Mircea Mihăieș), which he sometimes peppered with invectives, Adrian Păunescu enjoyed an ambivalent position even in death. A minor member of the Romanian literary canon, Păunescu was nevertheless one of the few writers to receive national funerals – as a prominent member of the most powerful post-revolutionary party – as well as a eulogy by the President of the Romanian Academy, Eugen Simion, in the preface of a posthumous *Festschrift*⁹. Regarded from the perspective of the East-algia rampant within all post-totalitarian societies of Central and Eastern Europe, the fate of the Flacăra Cenacle may well be a first in contemporary Romania.

Posture between Text and Discourse

In her book *Du peintre à l'artiste*¹⁰, Nathalie Heinich distinguishes between two ways of assigning value: a work-centred one (*opéraliste*), which focuses on the work as the *fons et origo* of value, and a person-centred one (*personnaliste*), which focuses on the artist as an individual. The two converge, however, in a somewhat more recent notion, that of *posture*, as theorized with regard to literature by Jérôme Meizoz in *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*. The study makes Meizoz one of a series of theorists concerned with the effect a writer has not only through his/her work, but also through his/her social and mediatic presence. A concise definition of posture appears in Alain Viala's *Eléments de sociopoétique*: the posture is “a way to occupy a position” (“façon d'occuper une position”) in the

⁹ Adrian Păunescu 1943–2013. *Omagiu adus memoriei poetului la data când ar fi aniversat 70 de ani de la naștere* [Adrian Păunescu 1943–2013: *In Honorem Adrian Păunescu on the Date He Would Have Turned 70*], București, Liga Culturală pentru Unitatea Românilor de Pretutindeni și Editura Semne, 2013.

¹⁰ Nathalie Heinich, *Du peintre à l'artiste. Artisans et académiciens à l'âge classique*, Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1993.

socio-literary field, within the performative context of social existence¹¹. It is what, within the formative context of existence proper, Natalie Zemon Davis (in *Léon l'Africain : un voyageur entre deux mondes*) names a “façonnement de soi”¹², Marielle Macé (in *Styles. Critiques de nos formes de vie*) a “stylistique de l'existence”¹³ and Boris Groys (in *Going Public*) “autodesign” or “autopoetics”, namely “the production of one's own public self”¹⁴.

Jérôme Meizoz claims that posture cannot be reduced to the mise en scène of one's intentions, to the performative context of certain acts and the social conduct assumed as an author/artist, “une pose, une coquetterie, un artifice conscient [...] à un acte promotionnel ou à une ‘stratégie’ au sens concerté du terme”¹⁵. Rather, posture reflects a much richer context, to which fellow authors/artists also contribute and which exceeds the level of the classical *intentio auctoris*, with its public stakes. According to Meizoz, posture manifests itself simultaneously on two levels, of conduct and of discourse. The former concerns social conduct in contexts peculiar to literary life; the other concerns a self-image which the discourse expresses, “des effets de texte” or, in rhetorical terms, one's *ethos*. Meizoz emphasizes the inextricability of the two dimensions within an integrative representation. The analogy between the orator and the author may also entail a scenic effect, which Meizoz rather downplays, yet which may at times acquire signal importance. Such is the case of Adrian Păunescu, in a context that provides for mediatic exposure and nationwide dissemination of the image, akin to that of a *pop star*. Specifically, to the *logos*, which concerns validation through argumentation, and to the *pathos*, which concerns validation through emotion, is added the *ethos*, a component – defining for posture in Meizoz's view – which concerns not average morals, but one's self-image, to secure the impact of one's discourse. I would rather not invoke here the notion of credibility, grounded though it is in all the above-mentioned undercurrents of discourse; nonetheless, I ought to mention that the other two components – *logos* and *pathos* – which structure discourse, yet also underpin one's personality, contribute to the construction of one's “self-image” too. For a poet like Adrian Păunescu the *pathos* signally contributes to engendering a postural dominant, which associates him to the significant figure of the *tribune* as a popular orator in a political context, as academician Dan Berindei defines him – “a resurrected 1848 tribune, who inflames the people” – but also to the *rhapsode*, “a rhapsode of the entire Romanian

¹¹ Alain Viala, *Eléments de sociopoétique*, apud Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*, Genève, Slatkine, 2007, p. 16.

¹² Natalie Zemon Davis, *Léon l'Africain : un voyageur entre deux mondes*, apud Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires*, p. 18.

¹³ Marielle Macé, *Styles. Critiques de nos formes de vie*, Paris, Gallimard, 2016.

¹⁴ Boris Groys, *Going Public*, New York, Sternberg Press, 2010, p. 16.

¹⁵ Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires*, p. 19.

people”¹⁶, as Mihai Cimpoi, the President of the Writers’ Union of the Republic of Moldavia, dubbed Adrian Păunescu at the latter’s funerals. For parsing the literary posture of the poet with the vastest presence in the media under communism, I also find helpful Antonio Patraș’s theorization of personality, even though his case study, the Romanian critic Garabet Ibrăileanu, would be the very opposite of Adrian Păunescu in terms of stage performance¹⁷.

Meizoz nuances his definition of posture by distinguishing between an *external* form, which has to do with the writer’s public presence within the context of literary life, and an *internal* one, through his/ her texts, as an “enunciative posture”. Yet, what happens when the two dimensions merge within a performative context, as is the case at hand, is that much of the distinction may be retained, at least in theory. This is so, I argue, because the literary posture which Adrian Păunescu deliberately fashioned for himself benefited as much from his histrionism (exaggerated towards exhibitionism) and as from a genuine charisma combined with narcissism of the megalomaniac type, as also manifested in the poet’s public discourse.

Jérôme Meizoz has further elaborated the topic of posture in another book, *La littérature « en personne ». Scène médiatique et formes d’incarnation*, where he relates *posture* to *scenography*, whose choice is reflected formally: “Le fait qu’un auteur s’adosse à telle ou telle scénographie a des conséquences formelles sur la généricité des textes, les choix d’*ethos* et de style”¹⁸. Interested as he is in the performative dimension inferrable from *posture*, the theorist distinguishes the former notion from the notion of *scenography* in that

la scénographie est un fait générique et collectif, propre, par exemple, à telle école ou mouvement. La posture, quant à elle, désigne la singularisation d’un positionnement auctorial: une tentative de se présenter comme unique, hors de toute appartenance¹⁹.

This division which he posits between the individual and the collective strikes me as no more than a form of vacillation, as long as a writer, even as s/he may never acknowledge belonging to a “school” or literary movement, still belongs within an aesthetic genealogy, can identify her/his formation landmarks, and acts within a continuum that s/he may validate even polemically. The scenography which Adrian Păunescu chose corresponds not so much to a literary school as to

¹⁶ “un tribun reînviat de la ’48, un însuflețitor al oamenilor”, “un rapsod al întregului neam românesc” – both quotes come from the article “Adrian Păunescu a fost înmormântat cu onoruri militare” [“Adrian Păunescu Was Buried with Military Honors”], www.dcnnews.ro, November 7, 2010: https://www.dcnnews.ro/adrian-paunescu-a-fost-inmormantat-cu-onoruri-militare_18809.html. Accessed November 10, 2021.

¹⁷ Antonio Patraș, *Ibrăileanu. Către o teorie a personalității* [*Ibrăileanu: Towards a Theory of Personality*], București, Cartea Românească, 2007.

¹⁸ Jérôme Meizoz, *La littérature « en personne ». Scène médiatique et formes d’incarnation*, Genève, Slatkine, 2016, p. 12.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

conducts related to typologies, namely the typology of poets representative of revolutionary romanticism, with which its poetics shares clear affinities, and that of the *poeta vates*. His literary posture was fashioned through the contact of this poetry with the public scene via the Flacăra Cenacle stage, which simultaneously rendered impactful both the poem and its creator.

Poeta vates, the Court Poet and Revolutionary Romanticism

To the public, Adrian Păunescu is the poet par excellence, his literary quality is brought to the fore. His roles as an anchor, an entertainer, a DJ and a reciting actor derive from that of a poet. What kind of *poet* is Adrian Păunescu, though? For there is a relationship between poetics and literary posture: tell me what kind of poet you are, and I will tell you which literary posture suits you. To revert to Meizoz, literary postures can be regarded as “un répertoire historique d’*ethos* incorporés, affichés, renversés ou singés”²⁰, where the *ethos* fashions a self-image delivered with the aid of discursive strategies.

The founder and leader of the Flacăra Cenacle fashioned for himself the posture of a citizen-writer, *l’écrivain-citoyen* (in Jérôme Meizoz’s words), a writer dedicated to “values”, who, accordingly, acquires his/her legitimacy beyond the literary world, through public statements. This is the case of the activist-writers of the radical left, “fellows” and “comrades” of the Soviet Union, such as Henri Barbusse, Jean-Paul Sartre, Nikos Kazantzakis or Panait Istrati. The cause upheld by Adrian Păunescu – communism with nationalist inflexions, with which he forged a trademark thanks to Ceaușescu’s political doctrine – was a winning one in Romania. Păunescu established and shored up, within the Flacăra Cenacle framework, the legitimacy of Romania’s communist leader. He bestowed on communism a “human face”, to use the popular phrase coined by Alexander Dubček, the reformist President of Czechoslovakia, in 1968. Păunescu risked nothing, for he was not in any opposition, but rather in position – at the disposal of his political commander, by being Ceaușescu’s mouthpiece. His likeness to other engagé writers, activist-poets such as the Chilean Victor Jara Martinez, a contemporary of Adrian Păunescu’s, himself a playwright, poet, songwriter and founder of Nueva Canción Chilena, stops short where the Chilean writer, the cultural ambassador of socialist President Salvador Allende (the target of the successful coup of 1973), paid with his life for his activism during the Pinochet dictatorship.

Adrian Păunescu seems to belong to a classical typology, that of the *poeta vates*. What recommends him as such are his public attitude and the rhetoric of his poetry. His discourse-poetry was destined not for simple recitation, but for declamation; he acted on a stroke of inspiration, which he staged accordingly and

²⁰ Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires*, p. 23.

voiced in prophetic-visionary idiom, appealing to the people and to the entire humankind. The role is all the more suitable as all these constitutive traits emerge not only from the poetic text, but also from its performance, a kind of *stand-up poetry* with musical accompaniment, framed within a larger scenic representation (folk dancing, men's choruses, poetic recitation and so on), and also from the poet's assumption of a mission, that of "the encounter with History".

There is still one more poetic pattern in Adrian Păunescu's case, although it has nothing to do with a poetics; rather, it concerns a literary posture, namely that of the court poet, ever so different from the citizen-writer poet. The latter boasts a moral profile; the writer answers to a *creed*, not to any pecuniary reward, which sometimes places him/her in a risk zone. On the other hand, to be a court poet, the author of "commissioned odes", as such productions – remunerated either directly or through an advantageous social promotion – were called, was at odds with the other role assumed by Adrian Păunescu, the *poeta vates*, just as the offices associated with the two roles were in conflict with each other. Such conflictual roles would undermine Păunescu's credibility. At the same time, however, conflict was constitutive of the leader of the Flacăra Cenacle.

Cartea cărților de poezie [*The Book of Poetry Books*], the monumental anthology of verse edited by Adrian Păunescu after 1989, does not include the occasional poems dedicated exclusively to the presidential couple, published in the *Flacăra* magazine alongside countless celebratory articles. Both categories of writings share common topics and similar tropes of canonical value in the patriotic poetry of the likes of Corneliu Vadim Tudor, Victor Tulbure, Alexandru Andrițoiu, Nicolae Dragoș and many others.

The two literary roles – the *court poet* and the *poeta vates* – bestow on the poet the dominant traits of his posture, as well as a Janus Bifrons profile, akin to his histrionism. With the Flacăra Cenacle, Adrian Păunescu as *poeta vates* did his best to harmonize the two roles: to gain credit for Nicolae Ceaușescu and the party politics, thereby also crediting himself, on the one hand, and to defuse the tensions between the dictator and society as much as possible, on the other. To achieve this, the poet resorted to yet another literary posture, that of the revolutionary poet akin to Victor Jara, Mayakovsky, or, closer to home, Nicolae Labiș. Adrian Păunescu's concern with stage effect contributed massively to the configuration of a literary posture linked to the creation of discourse poetry, the expression of a poeticization of public discourse, with a high degree of addressee-appeal, sometimes live, graced with calculated rhetorical effects intended to produce a response, an instant connection. Poetry was thereby granted the effect of political discourse; certain messages were pure propaganda aligned to party politics. For instance, the topics peculiar to an effusive, vindictive, pathos-laden nationalism worked in tandem with the ever-stronger anti-Western attitude of Romania's communist regime in the 1980s. Adrian Păunescu declaims:

We were all too often lied to by the history books which empires equipped us

with for our generation, not to claim its right to perceive its heroes. Our national history has no expiry date. Today Romania makes its national history. Hardships notwithstanding. We are not an orphan people; we do not come from Europe's nurseries – just as the trunk of Wallachia shields the cosmic tree which is our country. Without Putna and Alba Iulia, Romania would be like a shot bird. Shot in both of its eyes²¹.

The sense of the nation's grandeur, of national beauty, is conveyed alongside realistic details of the everyday hardships encountered by most people. Yet, the poet succeeds in transmogrifying this distressful reality by disseminating the myth of the assaulted citadel, of externalized adversity, couched in terms of an orthodoxist revival, a Romanian prophecy-mongering drive with the flavour of local protocronist messianism.

There were two highly popular poets at the time, Nichita Stănescu and Adrian Păunescu. The former cultivated the image of the bohemian poet, whose conviviality is free of arrogance or public solemnity. Nichita Stănescu's charming accessibility was all the more appealing as the poet's fame soared with each new volume, acclaimed as each was by the topmost literary critics. In fact, there is an interesting early trajectory of the two poets. Nichita Stănescu debuted in 1960 with the volume of poetry entitled *Sensul iubirii* [*The Sense of Love*]; his second volume, *O viziune a sentimentelor* [*A Vision of Sentiments*], 1964, was virtually synchronous with Adrian Păunescu's debut volume, *Ultrasentimente* [*Ultrasentiments*], 1965, itself shortly followed by *Mieii primi* [*The Early Lambs*], 1966. The titles of both poets' debut volumes suggested a shared starting point and direction: the revaluation of affect, of "sentiment", i.e., of lyricism as enshrined traditionally in poetry. Not the slightest militancy transpires from Nichita Stănescu's verse; by contrast, in Adrian Păunescu's, it definitely shapes the poetic discourse. Furthermore, starting from 1973, Păunescu could rely both on a publicistic forum and on a stage medium, which enabled him to unleash all his dramatic expression. Both poets share a precursor in Nicolae Labiș, one of the poets whose verse merged the purest lyricism with the allegiance to a cause, to a political ideal. Young Labiș's poems curb lyricism, with its apolitical topics, by their engagé bias: see the titles both of his debut volume, *Primele iubiri* [*The First Loves*], 1956, and especially of his second one, *Lupta cu inerția* [*Struggle against Inertia*], 1958, with a motif borrowed from political discourse. It is noteworthy that love and sentiment are the keywords of all three poets.

In an age of the masses, the revolutionary figure appeals to the masses

²¹ "De prea multe ori s-a mințit în cartea de istorie cu care am fost dotați de diferite imperii pentru ca generația noastră umană să nu ai aibă dreptul să-și simtă eroii. Termenul de garanție al istoriei naționale n-a expirat. Astăzi în România se face istorie națională. Cu toate greutățile. Noi nu suntem un popor orfan, nu suntem culeși de la creșele Europei așa cum trunchiul Munteniei stă pavază acestui copac cosmic care este țara noastră. Fără Putna și fără Alba Iulia, România ar fi ca o pasăre împușcată. În amândoi ochii".

straightforwardly, sometimes from a makeshift tribune, from a balcony or a stage. In his *Die Verachtung der Massen* [*The Contempt for the Masses*], 2000, Peter Sloterdijk notes that the figure of the revolutionary as a political leader is framed rhetorically by a large stage, with its own scenography and stage direction. The German philosopher examines the similarities and shared means by which in today's mass culture the political spectacle and the show of pop and rock music transform the masses into an easily manipulable "ecstatic collective corps"²² reduced to the lowest common denominator of the mediocrity of the political leader or pop star. What matters is not the mediocrity of the discourse with its stereotypes, but the speaker's posture, (typically) his way to articulate his thoughts, to gesticulate – his *tone*. The political agitator and the revolutionary poet share the revolutionary pathos which fuels an ethics of indignation. The orator qua revolutionary is bound to inflame the masses, to disturb their spirits so that what is said is virtually no longer relevant, and the masses become a soundboard. This kind of discursive energy can infect everyone, it gives them an impetus; it is used by dictators and politicians alike. The two roles merge in Adrian Păunescu's case; the poet borrows the tone and tonus of both the revolutionary driven by his political agenda and the pop star who inflames the spectators into participative enthusiasm. Only two personages wielded the power afforded by grand stages at the time: Nicolae Ceaușescu, the head of state and secretary general of the Romanian Communist Party, and Adrian Păunescu, the founder of the Flacăra Cenacle.

Action Poetry and Flower Power Nationalism

The stage image of Adrian Păunescu includes a small table at which the poet sits to conduct the entire poetic-folk show like a DJ. Occasionally he rises tempestuously from his chair to recite and gesticulate. The table actually does double duty: it is used as a writing desk and also as a temporary storage area for various objects: the poet's volumes, scraps of paper with messages from the spectators, flowers, oranges, apples, quinces, a traditional loaf of bread, and also arts and crafts artefacts such as a miniature traditional wooden gate (from various historic regions of Romania such as Țara Loviștei or Țara Oașului). A symbolically charged object gifted to Adrian Păunescu may instantly become the object of a poem, a poetic object. Messages are passed from hand to hand to reach the poet, or, alternatively, they are brought to his table by their own author and Adrian Păunescu reads them aloud to the public, mentioning the author's name as well. Each one in the public may thus enjoy their brief moment of popularity. There is here a significant dialogic dimension, where private correspondence nevertheless becomes public, as does the name of its author; a sense is fostered of genuine

²² Peter Sloterdijk, *Disprețuirea maselor. Eseu asupra luptelor culturale în societatea modernă* [*The Contempt for the Masses. Essay on Cultural Struggles in the Modern Society*]. Translation and preface by Aurel Codoban, Cluj, Idea Design & Print, 2002, p. 19.

discussion between the poet and the people or between the pop star and his fans.

Yet, there is more to this table on the stage where the poet is seated, for it becomes the literary workshop of the poet at work. Inspired by the atmosphere, Adrian Păunescu can write poems on the spot, often without as much as altering a comma, which he afterwards reads aloud to the public, so that the poem – and poetry – becomes *performance*, a *happening*. He stages the very image we may have pictured at the back of our mind, of the poet seated at his (*sic*) table – such as the table of Eminescu’s productive melancholy, “I’m sitting at my fir table”²³ –, which thus comes to life and can be seen *live*. However, the traditional reclusion and introspection of the poet gives way here to communicative, digressive, agitatorial effervescence. Poems are made right in front of the public, just as in certain Japanese restaurants food is cooked in front of the customers, which transforms culinary art into a gastronomic show, into spectacle. What is more, the creative act receives an incentive from the public, and the poems are delivered fresh – steamy, one might say; such a poem is like a jet of water: it still retains the impression of an emotion shared with the public. The militant tone of such poems perfectly matches both the pathos which has fuelled it and the presence of a thrilled public, with whom the poet is in permanent exchange, counting as he does on overlapping affects. A poem is elicited not only by the spirits of the poet, but also by the circumstances of its production, viz., the venue, the local colour; he brings up identity-related topics, appealing to the place *geist*, to the collective imagination. Cornel Diaconu’s film features the recitation of such an ad-hoc poem, *Poarta Maramureşului* [*The Maramureş Gate*], occasioned not simply by the Cenacle’s touring of Maramureş, an ethnographic region which best embodies the traditions of Romania’s rural society, but also by a miniature artefact in the shape of a traditional Maramureş gate. The poet’s gesticulation is linked to this artefact, now a poetic object ranking as an ethnic symbol, a metaphor for transcendence. The impact is instantaneous and overwhelming since the poem benefits from the complex soundboard provided by a large audience, the musical background for enhancing reception, and the live presence, onstage, of the poet, as well as the dialogue he has established with the spectators all along. It also draws upon the privileged moment when Adrian Păunescu dedicates the poem to his spectators, taking into account local pride and collective emotions alike, which renders it particular, unique.

The Flacăra Cenacle became a vast social laboratory, a factory of the national imaginary, which shaped characters, instructed people and afforded immediate socialization, in which a private document, the letter, would be made public and commented upon and would receive a public answer. It is one of the attitudes which built up a role for Adrian Păunescu, which enabled him to fashion his

²³ Mihai Eminescu, *Singurătate* [*Solitude*], in *Poezii* [*Poems*]. Selection, chronology and notes by Cătălin Cioabă, Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2014, p. 235: “Şed la masa mea de brad”.

literary posture, a role which he defined in reply to a eulogistic question: “What drives you, poet, to offer yourself so passionately to so many thousands of people?”²⁴. He answered: “Hard to tell. Yet, I realize I cannot cease now. I feel like a truck driver who mustn’t fall sleep behind the wheel”²⁵. Here, Păunescu employs a deceptively modest simile to champion civic responsibility as one of the poet’s roles, governed by his creative enthusiasm.

What is peculiar to Adrian Păunescu’s poems? First of all, his poetry integrates the slogan as well as the widely popular political topics at the time, rendering the latter lyrical. Păunescu capitalizes on the energy of the slogan enhanced through poetic diction, a strategy that harks back to that of Nicolae Labiș, the Romanian Mayakovsky of the 1950s, who died untimely in a suspicious tramway accident. If we look closely at Labiș’s poetry, we will find in it the seeds of Păunescu’s: it is a declarative and interpellating poetry, one that calls out to the reader, akin to the public discourse, with a tremendous rhetoric load. The common denominator of their respective poetics lies in the two poets’ ability to transform political-propagandistic discourse – the slogan – into poetry: “To an idle, amorphous eulogy/ I prefer enthusiastic invective”; “In the name of our innate class/ We will eradicate predation, leprosy and scurvy alike”; “Our humaneness we won’t repudiate –/ One can’t renege what makes one human”²⁶. The militancy of such poems peculiar to revolutionary romanticism is manifested both in their slogan-sentences – their political message – and in the lyricized polemical stance.

A poem such as *Niciodată* [*Never*], for which Octavian Bud composed the music, includes criticism of office-based communist bureaucracy: “The disinherited struggle for a living/ The wretched shuffle by/ One cannot sit down in one’s office/ Dismissing them as they pass by”²⁷ or the slogan “We owe it to the poor, the disinherited²⁸/ To do the best in our powers”. The poem is powerful, with its social and emotional load; it appeals to socially disfavoured categories – to the marginals, the oppressed, “impoverished children”, “the disinherited”, “the poor, deprived of opportunity”, “the destitute”, “those sadder than we are”²⁹ – whom the revolutionary discourse should call to arms. The great achievement of Adrian Păunescu’s poem is to transfigure a political discourse into poetry thanks to his

²⁴ “Ce te determină, poetule, să te dăruiești cu atâta pasiune atâtor mii de oameni?”.

²⁵ “Greu de spus. Dar văd că nu mă mai pot opri. Mă simt ca un șofer de tir care nu are voie să adoarmă la volan”.

²⁶ Nicolae Labiș, *Era entuziasmului* [*The Era of Enthusiasm*], in *Primele iubiri* [*First Loves*], București, Editura pentru Literatură, 1962, p. 309: “Unui elogi trândav și inform/ Prefer injuria entuziastă”; “În numele natalei noastre clase/ Stârpi-vom jaf, și lepră, și scorbut.”; “Noi omenia nu ne-om săraci-o –/ Nimic din ce-i uman nu poți să negi”.

²⁷ Adrian Păunescu, *Niciodată* [*Never*], in *Cartea cârșilor de poezie*, p. 429: “Dezmoșteniții-și caută o cale/ Nenorociții trec cu pașii grei/ Nu ne putem închide-n cabinet/ Făcând ușor abstracție de ei”.

²⁸ *Ibidem*: “Noi pentru cei săraci și fără șanse/ Suntem mereu datori să facem tot”.

²⁹ *Ibidem*: “copiii săraci”, “dezmoșteniții”, “cei săraci și fără șanse”, “celor care n-au nimic”, “mai triști ca noi”.

remarkable capacity for versification. Păunescu can blend different registers and lyricize the prosaic mobilist discourse. He can switch from an elegiac register to a militant one and thereby his poem turns into a cry, an appeal, an inflammatory discourse or an indignant plea, which refashions the poet into a tribune. His own interpretation of the poem becomes the hallmark of his poetry and capitalizes on the musical background of the Flacăra Cenacle for emotional enhancement. The poet doesn't simply recite. Rather, he repeats the verses in his peculiar baritone voice either after the folk artist's singing or as if to cue the artist, who echoes them. Unsurprisingly, the poetic discourse as recited contrapuntally with the artist either through anticipation or through incantatory repetition creates a genuine Păunescu effect.

Adrian Păunescu thus successfully blended together the heterodox tastes of the flower power generation, the rocker generation, "the bluejeans generation", "the Adidas generation", who claimed their liberty in sartorial and musical terms, and the national culture of "hymns and pleas", to quote a hit of the Flacăra Cenacle, a genuine pedagogical poem: *Te salut generație-n blugi*. An echo of the 1968 emancipation movements in the West, for instance France's "il est l'interdit de l'interdire", could be heard in Adrian Păunescu's discourse: "This is the essence of the Flacăra Cenacle: it is mandatory that nothing is mandatory!"³⁰. Likewise, "Make love not war", the message of the American hippy counterculture, became, with Adrian Păunescu, *Iubiți-vă pe tunuri* [*Make love on cannons*], which he used as the title of one of his volumes of poetry. The reason for such echoing transpires in the same text, "For if we didn't provide them culture/ They would secretly borrow it from abroad"³¹, which moreover spells out the ideological role of the Flacăra Cenacle: Adrian Păunescu aimed strategically to provide an alternative culture which appealed to the taste of "the bluejeans generation", a blend of *pop culture* and national culture. Unsurprisingly, some of Adrian Păunescu's poems, once they made it into folk hits, became – in true pop culture spirit – popular culture, folklore³². Accordingly, the Flacăra Cenacle promoted Romanian folk and rock that incorporated national topics; it thereby furnished a suitable culture to a

³⁰ "Aceasta este esența Ceneclului Flacăra – este obligatoriu ca nimic să nu fie obligatoriu!"

³¹ Mădălina Amon, *Te salut generație în blugi* [*Hail to You, Bluejeans Generation*], <https://www.versuri.ro/versuri/madalina-amon-te-salut-generatie-n-blugi-iz02.html#:~:q=Și+dacă+nu+am+face+cultură+pentru+ei/Ei+și-ar+lua+o+în+taină+de+prin+străinătate>.

³² See – in Costel Crângan, "Interviu cu Nica Zaharia" ["Interview with Nica Zaharia"], *Adevărul*, February 3, 2019 – the testimony of Nica Zaharia, a member of the Flacăra Cenacle and the composer of the music to Adrian Păunescu's poem *Galbenă gutuie* [*Yellow Quince*], a hit in its own right: "Ever since, whenever I sing, I am requested to perform 'Yellow Quince' regardless of the season. I am told it is sung nationwide, that even kindergarten kids know it, that they perform it at weddings and baptisms and that it has virtually become a part of national folklore", https://adevarul.ro/locale/galati/autoarea-celebrei-piese-galbena-gutuie-adrian-paunescu-s-a-intors-mine-mi-a-zambit-zis-bravo-nicuta-1_5c53f836df52022f753d0a3e/index.html. Accessed November 10, 2021.

generation hard to keep off western music and consumer culture. Yet, the poet attained this desideratum primarily by using his own poetry and deploying legions of troubadours, trouvères, minstrels and ballad-makers, as well as his own orchestra, to sing his poems. He thereby fostered another personality cult – albeit in artistic terms – which, nevertheless, as the authorities would figure out, could only too well be converted politically.

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ADRIAN PĂUNESCU – POSTURAL POLYPHONIES IN *THE GOLDEN AGE*
(Abstract)

Adrian Păunescu is the initiator of an unprecedented cultural phenomenon in communist Romania, *Cenaclul Flacăra*, which, together with poetry, incorporates music and choreography into a show that synthesizes nationalist themes with those of Western pop culture. From the perspective of literary postures and the idea of the author as the sum of social representations and theatricalization of the self as theorized by Jérôme Meizoz, Nathalie Heinlich or Boris Groys, Adrian Păunescu assumes different “roles”; from that of *poeta vates* to that of court poet, from the entertainer to the educator of a new generation of young people, the bluejeans generation, from the propagandist to the liberator from the yoke of conventions. The present study reviews these roles by analyzing their significance in the context of the age, also called “the Golden Age” in terms of propaganda.

Keywords: Flacăra Cenacle, literary posture, the court poet, pop culture, propaganda, nationalism.

ADRIAN PĂUNESCU – POLIFONII POSTURALE ÎN *EPOCA DE AUR*
(Rezumat)

Adrian Păunescu este inițiatorul unui fenomen cultural fără precedent în România comunistă, *Cenaclul Flacăra*, care încorporează alături de poezie muzica și coregrafia într-un spectacol sinteză a temelor naționaliste cu cele ale culturii pop occidentale. Din perspectiva posturilor literare și a ideii de autor ca sumă a reprezentărilor sociale și teatralizare a sinelui așa cum le teoretizează Jérôme Meizoz, Nathalie Heinlich sau Boris Groys, Adrian Păunescu asumă diferite „roluri” de la cel de *poeta vates* la cel al poetului de curte, de la cel de entertainer la cel de educator al unei noi generații de tineri, generația în blugi, de la cel de propagandist la cel de eliberator de sub jugul convențiilor. Studiul de față trece în revistă aceste roluri analizându-le semnificația în contextul epocii, numită și „Epoca de Aur” cu termenii propagandei.

Cuvinte-cheie: *Cenaclul Flacăra*, postură literară, poet de curte, cultură pop, propagandă, naționalism.

LAURA PAVEL

A FICTIONALIST OF THE 1960s–70s – THE “TOTAL” NOVELIST

Nowhere else, perhaps, has the broad modernist definition of “aesthetics as anthropology” found a more vivid social illustration than in Communist Romania of the 1970s and 80s. In any case, nowhere in the European Communist East has there been such a widespread propensity towards aesthetics.

Mircea Martin, “Despre estetismul socialist”
[“On Socialist Aestheticism”]¹

This “superiority” of fiction in relation to reality explains the existence, in Romania and in the East, of a phenomenon that has, in the meantime, disappeared in the West: the writer’s role as a master of thought. While in the West it is journalists and politicians who question social reality and create public opinion, in the East the writer does so within the sealed, yet widely admired and discussed world of his fictional text.

Sorin Alexandrescu, “O cultură a interstițiului”
[“A Culture of Interstice”]²

A Theoretical Narrative

In the 1960s, as the literary ideologists of socialist realism in Romania were becoming less and less vocal, and as liberalizing discourse was gaining momentum, some of the canonical novelists appreciated by the public and critics alike acquired a privileged social and aesthetic position. Addressing such a position, various theories that emerged were meant to go hand in hand with some fictional texts and explain them, but also to promote the writers’ prestige, their “aura”, to perpetuate a form of – largely, albeit not exclusively – aesthetic power. The *total novel* was one such theoretical narrative, circumscribed to a literary genre and to a form of public recognizability associated with it. Although it had a considerable semantic span, which apparently sanctioned its wide applicability, the notion was used to refer to novels that were published, by and large, in the 1960s

¹ Mircea Martin, “Despre estetismul socialist” [“On Socialist Aestheticism”], *România literară*, 2004, 23, p. 19.

² See Sorin Alexandrescu, “O cultură a interstițiului” [“A Culture of Interstice”], in *Identitate în ruptură. Mentalități românești postbelice* [*Identity in Fracture. Post-war Romanian Mentalities*]. Translations by Mirela Adăscăliței, Sorin Alexandrescu and Șerban Angheliescu, București, Univers, 2000, p. 196.

and 1970s, after the dogmatic years of socialist realism. Some of the critics who invoked the notion of *total novel* were Lucian Raicu, Nicolae Balotă, Eugen Simion, and some of the novelists who accepted its relevance to their literary works were Marin Preda, Nicolae Breban, George Bălăiță and Constantin Țoiu. The term itself is fundamentally ambivalent: it partly endorses the idea of aesthetic autonomy, appearing to refer to a dedogmatized fictional formula, untouched by realist-socialist ideology. On the other hand, the ambition of totality comes from a bovarist willingness to acquire discursive power not entirely aesthetic in nature, to acquire a powerful position in the community and, broadly speaking, in society, and thus to challenge the political decision-maker's position of control.

An analysis of this theory dating back to the 1970s, and of some rhetorical and characterological construction strategies from self-entitled "total" novels, can be made today through a recuperative type of critical approach. This will combine an essentially "suspicious" ideological stance towards the discourse of power associated with this aesthetic phenomenon with a reconstructive, aestheticizing tactic (in the relatively recent sense of the post-critical "new aestheticism").

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In an article published in *România literară* in 1968, entitled "Romanul total" ["The Total Novel"], Lucian Raicu includes under this canonical, prestige-conferring umbrella four novels that were published that year: *Animale bolnave* [Sick Animals] by Nicolae Breban, *Îngerul a strigat* [The Angel Cried Out] by Fănuș Neagu, *Intrusul* [The Intruder] by Marin Preda and *Ce mult te-am iubit* [How Much I Loved You] by Zaharia Stancu. What these novels had in common was, according to Raicu, "a convergence of attempts, a solidarity of effort and a one-sided, obsessive creative ambition (that of producing the literature of the century) to reach an essential, irradiating core of the human condition, of human nature". What was, therefore, fascinating to both the critics and the novelists themselves was a universalistic perspective on canonical humanity, on a general human essence ("core") that the contemporary novel encompassed as an aesthetic and moral necessity: "Whichever point of reading we find ourselves in, the perspective that opens up to us includes a homogeneously oriented totality. The novelist lures us into the pathetic quest for a universal "key" that will allow him free access to wherever life is to be found"³.

Ion Simuț made a short genealogical foray into the idea of the Romanian total novel in issue no. 513 of the *Cultura* magazine dated May 1, 2015, in the article called *George Bălăiță – 80. Proiectul romanului total* [George Bălăiță – 80. The Total Novel Project]. Here, the critic highlighted the importance of the fact that, in 1968, R.M. Albérès's *The History of Modern Novel* was published, translated by Leonid Dimov and with a theoretical foreword written by Nicolae Balotă. In his

³ Lucian Raicu, "Romanul total" ["The Total Novel"], *România literară*, 1968, 11, p. 1.

foreword to the Romanian version of Albérès’s book, entitled “Marginalii la o istorie a romanului modern [“Marginal Notes on a History of the Modern Novel”], Nicolae Balotă analysed “the intention of the novel to embrace everything, to become a sum total”. It emphasized the “cosmotic propensity” of the narrative genre. The novels of modern authors such as Faulkner, Kafka or Beckett no longer revolved around social entities but around ontological entities, argued Balotă, the modern narrative conveying thus the “essentiality of Being”⁴. Ion Simuț remarked that “liberation from dogmatism made possible this theoretical fantasy, which imagined the possibility of a novel with no thematic and narrative constraints”⁵.

But what, apart from the natural desire to dedogmatize the novel, is the explanation for this theoretical obsession? It appears to have become a personal myth for several novelists and critics in the 1970s, shared within the microcommunity of writers who had newly emerged from the ideological coercion of Stalinism and of the Jdanovist cultural doctrine. However, the idea of novelistic totality cannot be perfectly explained in terms of the willingness of some authors (and the critics who validated their aesthetics) to include a broad thematic sphere and a variety of typologies in their writing.

The prestige enshrined in the epithet “total” was justified only up to a point by the vocation for building a large-scale narrative, by the relevance of the plot, by the consistency of the theme, or by the solidity of the characters in which archetypal human categories are reflected. Achieving narrative totality is an ambition that goes beyond the sphere of aesthetics or, more precisely, the limited sphere of artistic, literary projects. An interpretation of the idea of totality will, therefore, entail not only finding arguments pertaining to the aesthetics of the novel, but also analysing the social, communal position developed by the novelist who aspires to be “total”.

The ideological and anthropological approach should supplement the narratological perspective, since the writer’s position or the novelist’s place within the literary field is defined in relation to their own texts, to their diegetic structure and stylistic options, but also in relation to their exteriority, to their social relevance, and to the possibility of assuming a role in the literary community.

Aesthetic-Ideological Ambivalence

The period between 1965 and 1975 (or rather 1978) was imbued with the cultural ideology of “socialist aestheticism,” as demonstrated by Mircea Martin in a well-known and much-quoted text. The critic used this theoretical phrase to

⁴ Nicolae Balotă, “Marginalii la o istorie a romanului modern” [“Marginal Notes on a History of the Modern Novel”], in R.M. Albérès, *Istoria romanului modern [The History of Modern Novel]*. Translated by Leonid Dimov, with a theoretical foreword by Nicolae Balotă, București, Editura Pentru Literatură Universală, 1968, p. 6.

⁵ Ion Simuț, “George Bălăiță – 80. Proiectul romanului total” [“George Bălăiță – 80. The Total Novel Project”], *Cultura*, 2015, 15, pp. 16-18.

describe a counterpoint to the doctrine of socialist realism, suggesting its aesthetic-ideological ambivalence. The phrase *socialist aestheticism* is related to the idea of “aesthetic autonomy” ostensibly cultivated at the time (in fact, this was an aesthetic ideology, a counterpart to the official one), but it also refers to the immersion of the literary in the political in such a way as to, paradoxically, emancipate the literary from prescriptive and reductionist ideological interferences. The term also implied a series of disobedience modes, or some of the writers’ tacit compliance acts with the demands of the regime: a tendency to ignore, as far as possible, contemporary reality, to resort to general human parables, to forge an escapist imaginary universe and to avoid didacticism and forms of complicity with propaganda texts. It also encompassed a moderate subversiveness and a covert, slanted criticism of the regime, which after 1965 had lost its Stalinist-Zhdanovist dogmatic intransigence allowing art and literature to assert their autonomy, provided that these forms of aesthetic “play” did not blatantly contradict the “party line”.

Theoretised by Mircea Martin, the concept of socialist aestheticism made a career in Romanian literary criticism, even when (or, maybe, especially when) it was polemically contested⁶. All in all, it has emerged as a supple and versatile instrument of historiographic and cultural anthropology. However, as Andrei Terian shows, the concept was, in fact, the creation of Serbian critic and theorist Sveta Lukić, who invoked socialist aestheticism with reference to the literature of the Eastern European socialist countries in the 1960s-70s, when they had largely shed the doctrine of socialist realism⁷. Moreover, Terian proposes another concept that could more adequately describe the literary paradigm in Romania (and in other Eastern European countries) in the period from 1960/1965 to 1980, namely “socialist modernism”, arguing that it should have greater currency than those of neomodernism and socialist aestheticism. According to Andrei Terian, the concept promoted by Mircea Martin is marred by the semantic imprecision of the noun aestheticism and by the fact that it concerns any work that had a non-propagandist aesthetic stake at the time. By contrast, the phrase *socialist modernism* is relevant, first of all, for literary works deemed canonical in the 1960s-70s due to their modernist poetics. Moreover, the concept is coterminous with the typically modernist “ideology of progress”:

Romanian literary criticism of the 1960s and 1970s did not canonize all literary works, limiting this privilege to those works that followed the characteristic patterns of modernist poetics. Secondly, this is not only a matter of form, but also of ideology: specifically, the ideology of progress and of the succession of generations that lies at

⁶ See also Cosmin Borza, “Trei concepte ‘socialiste’: realismul, postmodernismul, estetismul” [“Three ‘Socialist’ Concepts: Realism, Postmodernism, Aestheticism”], *Caietele Sextil Pușcariu*, 2015, II, pp. 535-541.

⁷ Andrei Terian, “Socialist Modernism as Compromise: A Study of the Romanian Literary System”, *Primerjalna književnost*, 42, 2019, 1, pp. 133-147.

the very heart of the definition of modernism, of which aestheticism makes no mention⁸.

Given the specific alliance between form and its ideological function and considering the “Jamesonian” meaning of the “logic” shared by late modernism and socialist modernism, the latter can be seen, as Terian argues, as a “variant of late modernism”⁹.

Still, to Mircea Martin the concept of *socialist aestheticism* carries anthropological weight and is not relevant only as artistic ideology emancipated from the propaganda of the times. In the period from the late 1960s to the early 1980s, it was less important (and, perhaps, impossible) for the supporters of aesthetic autonomy to separate the artistic from the ideological. What mattered was to embrace writing assumed as an existential solution. Besides, such an attitude is associated with a manner of moulding both one’s artistic, authorial existence, but also one’s everyday life, however banal it may be, in keeping with some aesthetic patterns and attitudes (I referred more broadly to some of these aesthetic patterns transferred as modes of being into day-to-day life in the chapter dedicated to the local literary-artistic bohemian ethos of the 1960–70s):

By avoiding political engagement in his literature (and, less often, his own political engagement), the Romanian writer accepted a form of existential commitment premised on the understanding that writing itself was existence. This meant, without a doubt, that writing, art, and literature were taken very seriously, but also that life itself could (essentially) be given aesthetic meaning. The aesthetic that becomes a mode of existence is not so much a way of living literature, as of living life according to the model of literature, of actually living in an alternative world¹⁰.

In addition, the importance of the national criterion grew in the party’s ideological documents of the early 1960s, including in those related to culture, at the expense of the class criterion. Writers could now discover an opportunity for expanding their stylistic repertoire and their freedom of imaginative creation. Therefore, emphasis was laid on criteria of competitiveness and creative emulation within the aesthetic field, once this was seen as representative for national literature and culture:

By establishing a national form of representation (rather than a social, class-bound one), a different competition was launched, regulated by criteria that all those inside a specific field knew they had to obey: while the ideological demands (institutionally imposed and controlled) had been felt as constraints, the aesthetic requirement was accepted naturally¹¹.

At the same time, while the revival of the idea of national culture offered a

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 141.

⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 44-45.

¹⁰ Mircea Martin, “Despre estetismul socialist”, p. 19.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

framework for the (re)professionalization of authorship, the thesis of artistic autonomy became, as Claudiu Turcuș shows, an appealing ideology from an ethical perspective, as well as a form of micropolitics about the right to privacy:

Thus, besides the aesthetic justification of the world Martin talks about, we could say that the post-war Romanian novel was driven both by a political aspiration and by an existential project. Socialist aestheticism turned, at one point, into an ethical ideology, the plea for the autonomy of art being, in fact, a plea for a social and private life¹².

This is the ideological-aesthetic context in which it is worth discussing whether the notion of *total novelist*, derived from that of *total novel*, can be relevant to the analysis of the authors' self-image in the national-socialist era, to self-insertion into their own fictions, and even to the expansion of the field of fiction into social molecules that outgrew the community of artists and writers.

Socialist Fictionalism

The author who proposes himself as a *total novelist* resorts to a series of fictionalizing strategies, so to speak, which are identifiable both within the literary text and outside it, in the common ideology of literary life, in the aestheticization of everyday rhythms and in the construction of his self-image. In order to unravel the pattern used by Romanian writers in the 1970s to construct the myth of the total novel and to nourish the phantasm of becoming a total novelist, I will use the ideological reading grid of art critic and aesthetics professor Boris Groys. Referring to the postutopian Soviet art and literature (*soț-art*) of the 1970-80s, Groys passes a demystifying verdict on how the artist could see his own social position in relation to the politician:

The artist could detect an *alter ego* in the Soviet leaders who aimed to change the world – or at least their own country – according to a total artistic plan; he could inevitably notice a specific complicity with whatever oppressed and rejected him and could see that his own inspiration, and soulless power, sprang from common roots¹³.

On the other hand, a landmark for discussing the writers' fascination for *totality* can be found in Jérôme Meizoz' literary anthropological perspective, as outlined in *Postures littéraires*¹⁴ and in *La Fabrique des singularités*¹⁵. Meizoz' use of the notion of authorial posture has the advantage of transcending the old dichotomy between intra- and extratextual approaches, as the Swiss novelist and

¹² Claudiu Turcuș, *Împotriva memoriei. De la estetismul socialist la noul cinema românesc* [Against Memory. From Socialist Aestheticism to the New Romanian Cinema], Cluj-Napoca, Eikon, 2017, p. 198.

¹³ Boris Groys, *Stalin – opera de artă totală. Cultura scindată din Uniunea Sovietică* [Stalin – the Total Artwork. The Divided Culture in the Soviet Union]. Translated by Eugenia Bojoga and George State, Cluj-Napoca, Idea Design & Print, 2007, p. 11.

¹⁴ Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*, Genève, Slatkine, 2007.

¹⁵ Jérôme Meizoz, *La Fabrique des singularités. Postures littéraires*, II, Genève, Slatkine, 2011.

theorist is interested in those “conduits *énonciatives et institutionnelles*”¹⁶. Studying a posture (*une posture*) means, for Meizoz, approaching “the conduct of the writer, the ethos of the inscriber and the acts of the person”¹⁷.

A prisoner of his own phantasms of demiurgical power in and beyond the aesthetic realm, the *total* writer is the author of a kind of literature that no longer wants to be subdued, but aims to run parallel to or even become emancipated from the ideological discourse of power. Although duplicitous (and complicitous) with “whatever oppresses” him – to borrow a phrase from Groys’s interpretation of the ideologically suspicious – the *total* novelist of the period of socialist aestheticism cultivated a compensatory bovarism. Whether consciously or not, he rivalled the political decision-makers of the time and their ideological fiction.

In relation to previous periods – of the Zhdanovist doctrine¹⁸ and socialist realism – the literature of the 1970s fulfilled the authors’ phantasm of power. The nationalism and authoritarian centralism of political dictate were reflected by the centralism of the will to authorial power, a power that was all-encompassing and totalizing. The 1970s novelists mentioned so far, including Marin Preda, Nicolae Breban, Constantin Țoiu, George Bălăiță, did not approach their own fictions self-reflexively (as the authors of the 2000s would generally do), but preferred to project themselves into a conglobating “total” fiction, in a depersonalized, transubjective, or more precisely, oversubjective manner.

This type of *fiction-making* (I am using a different term from *fictionalization*, which would suggest the fictional transformation of biography) tends to extend into the author’s life, into his ways of organizing and structuring his everyday life. This results in the aestheticization of life, not in the “authenticity” of self-fictionalization. What could be called “socialist fictionalism” includes a set of such rhetorical strategies of fictional construction, but also of standards of public behaviour and expression within the literary-artistic world (even on the scene of confrontations with political decision-makers at the national Conferences of the Writers’ Union, whose last meeting allowed by the regime takes place in 1981)¹⁹. There is, in this accentuated, ostensibly escapist fictionalism, a certain dose of

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 82.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 84: “les conduites de l’écrivain, l’ethos de l’inscripteur et les actes de la personne”.

¹⁸ See, in this regard, Sanda Cordoș’s clarifications about Zhdanovist ideology in the chapter on *Rezistența în literatură* [*Resistance in Literature*] of her book *În lumea nouă* [*In the New World*], Cluj-Napoca, Dacia, 2003, p. 16: “Remaining a dominant feature of the communist period (no matter what alliances it formed along the way and what strange ideological aggregates it could be found in), Zhdanovist ideology no longer succeeded in subduing or shaping Romanian culture entirely, as it had in the 1950s. Even though (with the aforementioned exceptions from 1971) there was no explicit or open disagreement with party politics on the part of writers, they tried to evade such politics (with the exception of those who, because of blindly obeying the propaganda directives, ceased to exist artistically) and to promote in their works not the directives of power, but the universal values of art and humanity”.

¹⁹ Referring to this Conference, Norman Manea wrote about “how surprised he was to see how vigorously and frankly writers spoke about the crippled Romanian cultural life”, in *Despre clovni: dictatorul și artistul* [*On Clowns: the Dictator and the Artist*], Cluj-Napoca, Biblioteca Apostrof, 1997, p. 29.

subversiveness, but also a paradoxical agreement with the centralizing, totalizing dictates of politics.

Among such strategies that can be associated with socialist fictionalism as stated above, what is essential is the creation of seemingly autotelic fictional worlds, in accordance with the totalizing, maximalist propensity. One could go so far as to say that these novels, called total by the novelists themselves or by their critics, resort to an intense decontextualization of the narrative imaginary and of the broader, generally human “message”. Nevertheless they are often, as in the case of Marin Preda’s *Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni* [*The Most Beloved of Earthlings*] (1980), Constantin Ţoiu’s *Galeria cu viță sălbatică* [*A Gallery of Wild Vine*] (1976), or George Bălăiță’s *Lumea în două zile* [*The World in Two Days*] (1975), also political novels of the “haunting decade”, because they critically render or allegorically transfigure (for instance, Ţoiu and Bălăiță) the Stalinist period of the 1950s. In Constantin Ţoiu’s *Galeria cu viță sălbatică*, for example, some characters espouse a universalist, essentialist philosophical vision (Chiril Merișor himself, or Isac, or the collective character that is mildly ironically called “The team we travel through life with”), and do not criticize the ideological excesses of the Stalinist era. However, subversiveness strategies²⁰ are used to build characters and narrative situations of timeless, archetypal validity. The inner alchemy of Chiril, the suicidal man in Ţoiu’s novel, and the metonymic shift of meaning between the fictional present and the present in which the novel is written can only partly be read as subtle ways of demystifying the ideological manipulation of the 1950s.

By contrast, in terms of the sheer amount of subversiveness, *Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni* ranks supreme among the novels of the “haunting decade”, as Alex Goldiș shows:

Preda’s novel is the most subversive novel of this type, exhausting, to some extent, its possibilities, largely because Petrini’s critical vision of the system is not counterbalanced by the vision of the other characters, nor is it amended by the narrator’s authoritarian position²¹.

This plausible argument for considering Preda’s novel as belonging to the prose of the “haunting decade”, and in particular the fact that Victor Petrini’s perspective (and the viewpoint of the novelistic fiction itself) is not challenged by some naratorial over-perspective, can be seen as a counterargument to including *Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni* in the category of total novels. Since it is clearly a

²⁰ As Eugen Negrici remarks in *Literatura română sub comunism* [*Romanian Literature under Communism*], București, Editura Fundației Pro, 2003, p. 309: “Regarding the *Gallery*..., I would say that C. Ţoiu has embarked on a subversive mission of boycotting communist techniques of manipulation through oblivion, circumvention, embellishment or, more clearly, through the direct and cynical rewriting of the past. It’s his personal struggle with the Ministry of Truth”.

²¹ Alex Goldiș, “Pentru o morfologie a romanului ‘obsedantului deceniu’” [“For a Morphology of the ‘Haunting Decade’ Novel”], *Caietele Sextil Pușcariu*, 2017, III, p. 500.

subversive political novel which delves into ideological criticism, *Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni* seems to remain confined to its own prose formula, unable to lay claim to a “total” narrative universe with all its thematic, stylistic-discursive and naratological features. Still, at the time of its publication in 1980, Eugen Simion pleaded for including it in the canon of total novels and gave several arguments why it should be considered a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, such as its manifold registers, the coexistence of several genres, styles and discourses (political novel, romance novel, moral novel, the novel of “a great conscience”), the way in which a particular destiny, Petrini’s, became metonymic for History, and even the way it condensed an entire philosophy of history:

The Most Beloved of Earthlings, Marin Preda’s new novel, can be defined as a **total novel**. Neither a **roman-fleuve**, where the unfolding of the plot is horizontal and the chronology is quite vast, nor a **cyclical novel**, where themes and destinies are strung like beads on a thread, but a **total novel**: the novel of a destiny that assumes **history**, the novel of history that lives through a **destiny**²².

The constraining socio-political context of the era was meant to be ignored in totalizing fictional worlds, whose epic visionarism had universalistic and generalizing overtones. In the case of Marin Preda, the urge to build a transindividual, non-subjectivist narrative perspective, which also strengthened the writer’s “posture” (in the sense advocated by Jérôme Meizoz) as a *total*, omniscient artist, also appears in the nonfictional first-person discourse of his autobiographical novel *Viața ca o pradă* [*Life as a Prey*] (1977):

When I realized that nature and I had no common fate, that I would eventually disappear and it would stay, *I saw it* and started to like it not because it was beautiful, but because it would live on and, just like I was born and nurtured, for a long time, the thrill of eternity, others would be born, too, and *would see it* as I do. [...] It wasn’t until much later, when I read Tolstoy, that I realized that not only words express the human soul, but also the outside world into which it projects itself or which covers it like a veil, and so nature and the social environment in which he leads his life, the objects and animals belonging to him, even his own appearance, the mustache he grows, the clothes he wears (in a certain way) represent him, hide or express him according to the same – sometimes mysterious, at other times clear and rational – impulse underlying his utterance of words²³.

Discursive Strategies, Fictional Types

Besides the above-mentioned thematic options and narrative structure formulas, there is a number of discursive-rhetorical strategies that are specific to a

²² Eugen Simion, “Romanul total” [“The Total Novel”], *România literară*, XIII, 1980, 13, p. 10, 15. Resumed in Marin Preda, *Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni* [*The Most Beloved of Earthlings*], second edition. Foreword by Eugen Simion, I–III, București, Cartea Românească, 1984.

²³ See Marin Preda, *Viața ca o pradă* [*Life as a Prey*]. Foreword and curriculum vitae by Nicolae Bârna, București, 100+1 Gramar, 1999, pp. 29–31.

total novel. Mystifying discourse is one such strategy, derived from a paradoxical cult of falsehood, which is positively seen as a parody of the official ideological “truth”. For example, in *Lumea în două zile* [*The World in Two Days*] (1975) by George Bălăiță, Felicia believes that Antipa, the soothsayer of death, could ingeniously turn the truth into a lie. Antipa himself, as a dual character, hesitates between his “domestic” and infernal selves and praises the “necessary” and liberating lie as a form of tolerant truth, always adaptable and adjustable to concrete situations:

My lie takes on monstrous proportions and, given its zealous effort to defend me, I can easily get crushed. But I would tell another lie right now if I did not talk about the intense state and obscure joy, about the pleasure exuded by my lie, an impulse that I gave but that acquired a life of its own, an independent development. [...] Lying is fantasy, independence, immeasurable freedom²⁴.

When he describes his own method of narrative creation, Nicolae Breban comes close to making a eulogy of the ability to “falsify”, mystify and anamorphosize reality, much like the mannerists do. The act of fiction is based on a *false* statement, “capable of withstanding tons of real slag and surviving through time”²⁵, a statement around which slivers of reality later gather: “I could not change this angle, its slant on the real, because it was my very structure. And so I loaded it with reality, and my own world began to revolve around... this slightly tilted and false spindle”²⁶. *Deception* and *falsehood* (with affective, existential consequences) may become modes of emancipation from the lies proffered as truths by the officially proclaimed ideology. For example, the specific atmosphere of the bohemian literary-artistic life in the 1960s and 1970s, which Breban invokes in one of the best chapters in his autobiography *Viața mea* [*My Life*], was a Quixotic way of “social dreaming”, since it was used to create “real and false histories”, sometimes “real or false citations”, or even “books and false biographies”²⁷, all of these evincing, in self-ironical manner, a special kind of „imposture”. Significant, in this respect, is Paul Sucuturdean, the protagonist in Breban’s *Animale bolnave* [*Sick Animals*] – a work described by Lucian Raicu as a *total novel* in 1968 –, who reinvented his past as “a right of his own and not a truth”, according to the dictate of his own phantasms.

On the other hand, the protagonist of Matei Călinescu’s essay-novel *Viața și opiniile lui Zacharias Lichter* [*The Life and Opinions of Zacharias Lichter*] (1969)

²⁴ George Bălăiță, *Lumea în două zile* [*The World in Two Days*], third edition. Foreword by Eugen Negrici, chronology by Marilena Donea, Iași, Polirom, 2009, p. 109.

²⁵ Nicolae Breban, *Literatura, cultura este ea însăși o zonă majoră (și nu anexă) a existenței morale și sociale* (Interview by Ioan Groșan), in Aurel Sasu, Mariana Vartic (eds.), *Romanul românesc în interviuri. O istorie autobiografică* [*The Romanian Novel in Interviews. An Autobiographical History*], I, București, Minerva, 1985, p. 442.

²⁶ See Aurel Sasu, Mariana Vartic (eds.), *Romanul românesc în interviuri*, p. 431.

²⁷ Nicolae Breban, *Viața mea* [*My Life*], Iași, Polirom, 2017, p. 411.

also denounces the hypocrisy and illusions underlying social norms. To the hero, lying becomes a metaphorical, sometimes redeeming truth: “The only lucidity we are left with is that we lie constantly, that we ‘say what *is* not’ by saying anything”²⁸. I am mentioning Matei Călinescu’s micronovel as a possible contrasting landmark in relation to the typology of the total novel. In effect, *Viața și opiniile lui Zacharias Lichter* can be included, alongside *Matei Iliescu* (1970) by Radu Petrescu, in an alternative canon of Romanian prose. By contrast with fictional worlds defined by their polyphonic narrative totality, the narrative formula of these novels relies on the eccentricity and “partiality” of some atypical, idiosyncratic, seemingly non-narrative and non-representative typologies. However, the protagonist Zacharias Lichter, inspired the Bucharest bohemian Genu Ghelber (called by Cioran a “unique nothingness”), is a marginal individual who is nonetheless capable of conveying the Idea, or a certain “hard” ontological vision. Lichter, the cynical prophet, assumes a stance similar to that of the Nietzschean AntiChrist, but nevertheless less a Christian one (“I myself was *chosen* – God *chose* me – to answer for all the past, present, and future errors of my fellows”²⁹). The genuine “Zacharias Lichter psychosis” caused by Matei Călinescu’s micronovel, lasting from the year it was first published, 1969, to the year of the author’s self-exile, 1973, is the sign that fiction tended to expand its sphere of influence beyond its conventional, literary borders.

The total novel also focuses on themes associated with fictional types that can function as behavioral (anti)models which could be exported outside narrative fiction, with subversive, destabilizing and critical effects: the *prophets* of a new myth of (metaphysical rather than political) power and their position as *masters* who create disciples, even without engaging in overt acts of proselytism, as in the case of the characters Grobei and Farca in Nicolae Breban’s *Bunavestire* [*The Annunciation*] (1977) and of Antipa in George Bălăiță’s *Lumea în două zile* (1975); the *self-destructive*, the suicidals who are averse to moral ambiguity, such as Chiril Merișor in Constantin Țoiu’s *Galeria cu viță sălbatică* (1976); the *losers*, whose failure (psychosocial or erotic) carries an aura of heroism, like Victor Petrini in *Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni*, who undermines the authorities of the “era of villains” (the title of an essay Petrini writes), or like Ovidiu Minda in Breban’s *Îngerul de gips* [*The Gypsum Angel*] (1973), who socially fails of his own accord and whose existence defies and hijacks the mechanisms of social power; *ambivalent figures*, serene Apollonians one moment, demonic the next, like Antipas in Bălăiță’s *Lumea în două zile*, or Grobei, a dual character, the “first” Grobei being a humble, mediocre specialist in commodities, while the “second” is a man who is “possessed” by his Idea, a mythographer, as he appears at the end of the novel; the prototype of the *failed new man*, derailed from his “mission”, like Călin

²⁸ Matei Călinescu, *Viața și opiniile lui Zacharias Lichter* [*The Life and Opinions of Zacharias Lichter*], București, Humanitas, 2016, p. 134.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 55.

Surupăceanu in Marin Preda's *Intrusul* [*The Intruder*] (1968); later, the disappointed, bovarist misfits in the novels of Dana Dumitriu (which lend themselves to the definition of "total" narrative universes), *Masa zarafului* [*The Usurer's Table*] (1972) and *Întoarcerea lui Pascal* [*Pascal's Return*] (1979); the *archivers* of reality, of imagined reality nonetheless, who preserve the myths of their community: Breban's Grobei (who archives the testimonies of exemplary existence, for instance, Farca's), or Harry Brummer and Isac in Țoiu's *Galeria*....

All four novelists whose novels I have mainly referred to, Preda, Breban, Țoiu and Balăiță, enjoyed, of course, the status of celebrity writers in the 1960s and later. The author of *Moromeții* [*The Moromete Family*] became, in 1970, the director of the Cartea Românească Publishing House. In 1974 he was elected a correspondent member of the Romanian Academy, and in 1980, the year he published *Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni*, just a few months before his death (subject to many speculations and controversy), Preda became a deputy of the Great National Assembly. Because it re-focused attention on the problem of the "haunting decade," *Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni* was considered to be so subversive that, despite the author's fame and his clear critical and public success, Preda's books were removed from bookstores and libraries shortly before his demise under mysterious circumstances (something his family hinted was connected precisely to the publication of this novelistic trilogy). Typical of the novelist's self-projection in his own fiction and of the fabrication or *fictionalization* of an aura surrounding Victor Petrini, his *alter ego*, is the irony of the title *Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni*, containing, as critics noticed, a rhetorical syllepsis associating literal with figurative meaning, or more precisely with false meaning, a counter-meaning, in one and the same ambiguous phrase.

As for Nicolae Breban, he has been defined by critics as a canonical author and has achieved public success. The author of *Francisca* did not embrace Stalinist ideology, nor did he make any concessions to socialist realism in his books, but in his autobiography called *Viața mea*, he admits without hypocrisy that he was *happy* during his short-lived political career under communism. In 1969 he was elected an alternative member of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party. In 1971, Breban fell out of grace with the Communist authorities when he decided to attack the dogmatism of the cultural policy endorsed by the July "theses", of Maoist inspiration, and to resign from the position of editor-in-chief of the *România literară* journal. The tone of his recollections in *Viața mea* is bitter-ironic at times, since he experiences ethical dilemmas, disappointment with several iconic figures of the Parisian diaspora, with the ideological compromises and inconsistencies in the careers of fellow writers (Petru Dumitriu), as well as with his own "concessions" to his often excessive, ridiculous social posture. In fact, Breban theorizes, in the pages of the essays inside his novels, the Quixotic ridiculousness of Paul Sucuturdean, Rogulski, and Farca.

There is a strange nostalgia, but also some disappointment with the inevitable amount of *kitsch* in this record of his own existence (which also marked the

existence of those around him, be they friends or detractors). He assumed, and then immediately denounced, that *kitsch* (like the one afflicting Grobei, the mediocre commodity specialist, Lelia-Haretina Crăiniceanu, the provincial diva, and Rogulski, the charming prankster in *Don Juan*) in a way that was both self-flagellating and subversive. In *Literaturile române postbelice* [*The Post-War Romanian Literatures*], Ion Simuț classifies Breban’s texts as “subversive literature”, recalling the furious attack that Titus Popovici, the former official writer of the 1950s, launched against the novel *Bunavestire* at the 1977 Plenary of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party. However, for Breban, it is precisely the option of living inside a certain form of fiction – one that is *alive*, vibrant, transformative – which becomes a subversive way of existence, undermining mortifying platitudes and compromises. The novelist and his characters such as Castor Ionesco, in *Drumul la zid* [*Back to the Wall*], praise the living, the state of being *alive* acquired after a fundamental “break” – Breban has extensively theorized on the idea of narrative and typological *rupture* – and of self-reinvention by way of some sophisticated inner alchemy.

The total novelists reveal their obsession with self-construction and with the discovery of their calling, of a *destiny* (Breban theorizes upon the Nietzschean *amor fati*), through various forms of visionarism, but also of narrative histrionism: in the self-flagellating attitude of some of their characters, in the subtle forms of proselytism advocated by protagonists like Chiril in *Galeria cu viță sălbatică*, or Grobei in *Bunavestire*, in the mix of registers and aesthetic categories where the farcically grotesque and the tragic live side by side as in the works of George Bălăiță, in the overflowing eloquence of Breban’s characters, in the gloomy aura of a failure assumed as victory (in Preda’s Victor Petrini), in the way of acknowledging the major authors who inspired them (for Preda, these were Faulkner and Tolstoy; for Breban, Dostoevski, Thomas Mann and Nietzsche), but also in an aesthetic of stylistic excess or redundancy (Nicolae Breban, Constantin Țoiu and George Bălăiță). On the one hand, the paradox of the totalizing and ostensibly autonomous narrative is to be found in the prose writers’ need to escape political-ideological pressures and to build a horizon of autonomous aesthetic existence, structured and lived according to artistic rhythms. By sometimes living like his own characters, the total novelist ultimately offers himself as a character.

At the same time, the total writer holds on to a bovarism of power. Tempted to exercise his symbolic authority beyond the boundaries of his own texts, he resorts to discursive modes of aestheticizing and fictionalizing his exceptionalist, demiurgical phantasms. The ambivalence of fictional discourse in the total novel comes from the way in which narrative situations, fictional typologies, conflicts, narrative nodes and rhetorical formulas break down parodically and then recompose the discursive mechanisms of ideological power.

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A FICTIONALIST OF THE 1960s–70s – THE “TOTAL” NOVELIST

(Abstract)

A prisoner of his own phantasms of demiurgical power in the aesthetic realm, and not only, the total writer is the author of a kind of literature that no longer wants to be subdued, but aims to run parallel to or even become emancipated from the ideological discourse of power. Although duplicitous (and complicitous) with “what oppresses” him – if I were to sponge here a phrase from Groys’s ideologically suspicious interpretation, the total novelist from the period of socialist aestheticism cultivated a compensatory bovarism. Whether consciously or not, he rivalled the political decision-makers of the time and their ideological fiction. In relation to previous periods – of the Jdanovist doctrine and socialist realism – the literature of the 1970s fulfilled the authors’ phantasm of power. The nationalism and authoritarian centralism of political will were reflected in the centralism of the will to authorial power, a power that was all-encompassing, totalizing.

Keywords: total writer, total novel, posture, bovarism of power, socialist aestheticism, socialist fictionalism.

UN FICTIONALIST AL ANILOR '60–'70 – ROMANCIERUL „TOTAL”

(Rezumat)

Captiv al propriilor fantasme de putere demiurgică în plan estetic, și nu numai, scriitorul total este autorul unei literaturi care se vrea a nu mai fi subsumată, ci paralelă cu sau chiar emancipată în raport cu discursul ideologic al puterii. Deși duplicitar, căci complice cu „ceea ce îl oprimă” – dacă este să reiau o formulare din interpretarea ideologic-suspicioasă a lui Groys, romancierul total din perioada estetismului socialist își cultivă un bovarism de compensație. El rivalizează, conștient sau nu, cu postura decidentului politic al vremii și cu ficțiunea sa ideologică. În raport cu perioadele anterioare – a doctrinei jdanoviste și a realismului socialist –, literatura anilor '70 a împlinit o fantasmă de putere a autorilor ei, naționalismul și centralismul autoritarist al voinței politice regăsindu-se într-un centralism al voinței de putere auctoriale, atotcuprinzătoare, totalizante.

Cuvinte-cheie: scriitor total, roman total, postură, bovarism al puterii, estetism socialist, ficționarism socialist.

IOANA MOROȘAN

**AUTHORSHIP POSTURES AND THE POSTURAL
REFORMULATION DURING THE 1950s. THE CASE OF
WOMEN PROSE WRITERS: LUCIA DEMETRIUS,
IOANA POSTELNICU AND CELLA SERGHI**

In the wake of new definitions of the author formulated by Roland Barthes, the concept of authorship begins to be a more frequented theme in the theoretical discourse. The *death of the author* marks the volatilisation of the notion, in the sense of assigning it to a human subject and its substitution with the textual subject: “language knows a ‘subject’ not a ‘person’”¹. The postulate of the death of the author, according to Barthes, finds an even more radical version in Michel Foucault’s theoretical assumptions, and more precisely, through what he designates as the *author function*. Thus, the author function is subsumed to socio-institutional systems within which discourse is articulated². So, the main contribution of both theorists in reconsidering the concept of author lies precisely in circumscribing the notion in the order of a product of discourse, and of the extra-literary coordinates decisive for its articulation. Starting with Foucault though, the deterritorialization of the concept of author from the paradigms of its understanding as a creator increasingly becomes manifest, as is its placement (or rather, the placement of its functions) in the order of a social rhetoric. The process of demystification and sociological reification of the concept therefore leads to the development of a new theoretical frame through the figurative reformulations brought by theorists such as Nathalie Heinich, Gisèle Sapiro, Alain Viala or Jérôme Meizoz, who reconcile Foucauldian assumptions according to Bourdieu’s sociological terminology in reformulation and extension perspectives going beyond traditional notions of authorship.

Theoretical reflections on the rethinking of the concept of the author are subsumed to a relational scheme of defining the notion of the author. For instance, in the contemporary literary field of the commodification of symbolic goods and the insertion of the literary product in a distribution circuit regulated by market laws, the author’s identity inevitably begins to integrate into the transactional scheme as well, being mobilised around a macro-structure that includes both the ideological frames of the socio-political field, with a direct effect on the label under

¹ Roland Barthes, *The Death of the Author*, in *Image, Music, Text*. Essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath, London, Fontana Press, 1977, p. 145.

² Michel Foucault, *Ce este autorul? Studii și conferințe*, [*What Is an Author? Studies and Conferences*]. Translated by Bogdan Ghiu and Ciprian Mihali. Foreword by Bogdan Ghiu. Postface by Corneliu Bîlbă, Cluj-Napoca, Idea Design & Print, 2004, pp. 46-48.

which the literary goods with which they contribute to literary production are put into circulation on the market of cultural goods. So, in these new settings of the field, the role of the editor as the first shaper and curator of the texts put in the circuit is crucial. Furthermore, in this order, the author finds itself in the situation of constant maintenance of the relationship with the editor, which is determined by elective affinities³. Thus, starting from the conceptual frameworks mentioned above, the definition of authorship proposed by Jérôme Meizoz through the notion of *posture* places the image of authorship more within the limits of an extra-literary performative act than a solely textual one; the author's degree of representation and identification through discourse is diminished, as it mobilizes around a strategy of capitalizing on positions in the literary field. The author's assertion is subjected to an economy of images through many types of strategies of becoming a singular and culturally important figure in the field reliant on self-promoting tools such as social-media and multimedia forms, social discourses, public appearance and so on. Although the public assertion of authors is closely related to the extra-literary desideratum of either the market or a fraction to which author belongs, or the systemic, political and social desideratum; the latter occurs especially when the dynamics of the field are situated under an ideological will. Therefore, the authorial position, in Meizoz's terms, obliges to a definition of the author not only relying on the textual support, but especially including in his definition the evaluation of its extra-literary acts through which authors construct their position. Thus, if extra-literary acts contribute to this construction (that is to say, if the stake is the occupation of a certain position in the literary field), the postural processes are positioned all the more outside of the literary field, as the positions are forced to exist within their systemic convenience, and to fit a political agenda. Thus, the Romanian literary field during the Socialist Realist era illustrates exhaustively the way in which authorial positions are constructed not so much from the discretionary position of the writer, but mainly from a systemic will to which the interests of occupying certain positions in the field overlap.

The confusing changes that the literary field underwent together with the redefinition of literature, starting with 1948, when the literary discourses started to be operated as a tool for disseminating propagandistic contents, implicitly forced a reformulation of notions of writer and authorial function as well. Therefore, we will seek to nuance further the path of the postural configurations that were imposed during the first Communist decade, together with the reconsideration of the description of the writerly profession, which now stipulates a series of commitments and tasks that go beyond a mere profession of writing. The once-wide space of positions taken is replaced, concurrently with the imposition of the reorganization of cultural activities following the Soviet model, by a form of

³ Gisèle Sapiro, "The Writing Profession in France: Between Symbolic and Professional Recognition", *French Cultural Studies*, 30, 2019, 2, pp. 105-120.

unidirectional assertion that includes the devotional writer-party relationship. And from this point, the position designates not a strategy to distinguish the writer by constructing a singularizing figurative position, but a coercive form of simulating a discourse and an ideologically impregnated attitude, through which the writer confirms their commitment to the new aim of literature, imposed by the political regime. The tension marked by the capitalization of the authorial identity by official ideology and its assignation to the project of the acquisition of a propagandistic movement generates a radical and ambiguous mutation of the authorial portfolio. Therefore, the lack of discretionary positioning in a certain position, without it being regulated by the ideological authority and subject to systemic obligations, requires more nuances and reshaping of the established concepts by which the authorial position was discussed by Jérôme Meizoz. This way, the paper follows to nuance how the minor community of women prose writers adjust to the new scheme of positioning their writing.

Worth noting, according to Meizoz, the construction of postures is a direct effect of the logic of the field, of the market rules or of the critics and the reader's expectations to which the authors adjust or, conversely, contest such norms, being able to tackle many *personae* for more visibility. Unlike contemporary literary fields, the postural processes inside of totalitarian regimes are regulated by political power, the single pole that can assure the legitimacy and visibility of cultural agents. So, what is more particular in the postural strategies under local dictatorship is a contraction relation between postures and ideology, insofar as the constraints placed on the authors encouraging political subordination return to different ways of recognition (institutional, political, economic, social, cultural and so on). This furthermore leads to the emergence of two main patterns of postures that depict the formal and informal dimensions of the field. In other words, the imposed political ratification creates systemically desirable authors and politically inconvenient ones, in addition to their differing cultural relevance depending on their interests and intentions (in symbolic, politic, economic or institutional order).

Furthermore, adjusting Meizoz's theoretical frame and replacing the postural strategies (such as those authors who assure their visibility through media channels)⁴ – with a contextual function for the contemporary mediated literary field – to the structure of an ideologically subjected field, it can be seen how the mobilising of postural strategies is defined around political power, depicting the author's proximity toward it and their literary and extraliterary interests which in turn granted them certain types of relevancies in the field. Therefore, the aim of the present article is to analyse the postural strategies against the background of the impact of political intervention in the production and organization of cultural space, the cases of women prose writers – with special focus on the trajectories of

⁴ See Jérôme Meizoz, "L'Exposition médiatique des écrivains", *Courrier*, 16 June 2016, <https://goo.gl/bjtJG2>. Accessed on September 10, 2021.

Lucia Demetrius, Ioana Postelnicu and Cella Serghi – who asserted themselves during the inter-war era, and now participate in doctrinal ratification, become more illustrative for the following of reshaping of posturing acts from two points of view: on the one hand, as agents who mobilise their beliefs in the proletarian class struggle as a strategy of repositioning, as well as a peripheral fraction, represented by women writers, and finally also according the scale of success in assertion under the new literary frame. Thus, their apparently-radical conversion to the Socialist Realist established aesthetics occurred, in turn, for women writers for two reasons: out of an interest of occupying a dominant position in the field in both literary and extra-literary terms (which is proved by their successive adoption of systemically convenient positions); and as minor figures, the ratification of the new imposed literary rules meant also trying to requalify their writing, the main reason for their authorship trajectories, from one stage to another of the literary field, involving a dimension of predestination to the detriment of an elective one, as far as during the first stage of Communism the aesthetically diminished concept of *women's writing* is replaced by a revolutionary spirit. In other words, the previously adopted positions are reformulated in the context of politicisation during the Communist years, the diminished contribution of the author in building his/her own position is emulated by the political will to impose the collective identity of the new writer in the service of a social art and satisfying the party's obsessions (class, socio-economic changes prompted by the regime and the belligerent reaction against anti-communist attitudes).

Putting in order the definitions that circumscribe the concept of posture proposed by Dominique Maingueneau and Alain Viala, Jérôme Meizoz extends the established conceptual limits, by overcoming the boundaries of the authorial ethos (the degree of authority and trust that the writer carries). So, as I previously emphasised, Meizoz inscribes under the umbrella not only a general way of being of the writer, but includes both the rhetorical dimension and the action, the posture relying on the binomial structure action-rhetoric/ text-context:

Mais *ethos* renvoie aussi à un concept précis de la rhétorique, et risque ainsi d'être source de confusion. Pour ma part, tout en reprenant l'essentiel de la féconde proposition de Viala, j'opte pour la notion de "posture" dans un sens englobant: la "posture" d'un auteur désigne alors ce que Viala nomme *ethos*. J'y inclus la dimension rhétorique (textuelle) et actionnelle (contextuelle)⁵.

Moreover, Meizoz nuances the importance of the space of postural constitution, identifying in its strategies not only the external performativity of the writers and the internal reverberations of their actions through their literary discourses, but, shows Meizoz, the constitution of the posture involves individual variations that overlap with a repertoire inculcated in the memory of literary practices: individual variation on a position, the posture is no less attached to a

⁵ Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraire. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*, Genève, Slatkine, 2007.

repertoire inculcated in the general conscience of the literary practices⁶. The interchangeability between posturing and the author's identity is only partial, insofar that the position as a literary identity is not constructed, but rather adapts to the set of symbolic materials inherent in literary practices based on which the authors model their position⁷. Thereby, the reshaping of Meizoz's postural scheme – undergoes in a literary field in which literary production and the writer's task are integrated into the general project of re-education ideology in the spirit of Soviet socialism – discloses the constraints and ideologically-focused manner in which authors should act; the narrow space of posturing offered being obviously determined by the excessive vigilance exercised over the literary field through repressive strategies of reducing the creative space and the postural act to a monovalent and uniformizing definition, the disparities subsuming to a collective endeavour of eulogising and to a partisan devotion claimed from above.

From the Antechamber of Bourgeois Literary Salons to the Factory Floor. Or How "Femininity" Dons the Proletarian Jumpsuit

In 1949 in the first issue of *Almanahul literar* [*The Literary Almanac*], Cornel Regman publishes an article entitled "Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Romanian Culture", where he analyses critically the capitalisation of the Romanian culture by the bourgeois dominant intellectual fraction during the inter-war period. Among others, he denounces Lovinescu's literary fractions as an aesthetic-formalist and bourgeois guild, represented also by the female writers such as Cella Serghi or Ioana Postelnicu⁸, and less by Lucia Demetrius, and their status in the field during this period will be radically reversed once with implementation of Soviet cultural frame, as far as despite their endeavours, Serghi and Postelnicu remain in the shadows, unlike Demetrius, for instance. Letting us back to the position of these writers during the inter-war era, it is worth noting that women's writing was destined for a minor regime of manifestation, circulation, appreciation, and reception at that time. The marginalising of women's writing is not a particular case of exclusion that occurred only in the local literary field. As well as in Romania, in France the exclusion of women writers took place around the categories such as "femme auteur" or "bas bleu"⁹; moreover the strategies of women writer's exclusion for gender reasons is similar from a cultural space to

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 25: "variation individuelle sur une position, la posture ne se rattache pas moins à un répertoire présent dans la mémoire des pratiques littéraires".

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 26: "l'auteur adapte et compose avec un imaginaire déjà présent, connu des lettrés de son temps".

⁸ Cornel Regman, "Naționalism și cosmopolitism în cultura română" ["Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in the Romanian Culture"], apud Eugen Simion (coord.), *Cronologia vieții literare românești* [*Chronology of the Romanian Literary Life*], IV (1949–1950), București, Muzeul Național al Literaturii Române, 2011, pp. 199-214.

⁹ See Christine Planté, *La Petite sœur de Balzac. Essai sur la femme-auteur*, Paris, Seuil, 1989.

another, being rooted in a culturally embedded gender division of writing (women seen as only capable of tackling the weak themes, limited to private and domestic spaces, to the sentimental, emotional and intimate writing, unlike the manly one that represents *writing degree zero*). However, the emergence of women in a field where the dominant values and establishment are sexually marked¹⁰, the overcoming of the feminine aesthetic – by female authors such as Simone de Beauvoir in France or Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu in Romania, during the inter-war period – is conceived by the masculine dominant fraction as a virile writing appropriating them to the masculine doxa, as it happened in the case of both mentioned authors. For instance, in the case of de Beauvoir, Thierry Maulnier confirms the value of her work, *L'Invitée*, insofar as not having fallen victim to the “error” of the feminine style¹¹.

On the other hand, Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu is subjected to a similar treatment, when her writing is received as a profound masculine and virile literary discourse by the literary authorities of that time mainly represented by Eugen Lovinescu. The circumscription of women’s literary production within the limits of a marginal phenomenon remains dependent on several factors that contributed to diminishing the endeavour of women writers and, moreover, created a facile ground for clichéd definitions and classifications of them: a) the editorial presence of women writers is still a recent fact during the inter-war period; b) the evolution of their writing occurs exclusively in relation to macho socio-cultural prejudices; c) both the critical authority (G. Călinescu) and the presidents of the literary salons (E. Lovinescu) overcome the limits themselves of the publicist observations, the female writers’ texts being received by them in a deeply dishonourable way. The reductionism operated in the classification of the female writing finds an amplitude in shaping the predestined positions for them, but also in the conceptual coverage of the slips practiced towards the texts and the position of women. Therefore, the marginalization of women’s creation will progress further under the umbrella of the *feminine* method of creation, that has proven its effectiveness in repudiating texts and in suspicion of the lack of competence, which is established in the context according to gender criteria and to the degree of virility that is homologous with between the literacy and with the aesthetic quota:

between a pigeon and a woman there are correspondences that brings them closer [...] the same strong instinct, which master and lead them [...]. If the pigeons had a literature, it would resemble to the literature of the greatest contemporary women writers [...]. Lacked any initiative in love and without the possibility of a clear

¹⁰ Delphine Naudier, “L’écriture-femme, une innovation esthétique emblématique”, *Sociétés contemporaines*, 2001, 44, pp. 57-73, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-societes-contemporaines-2001-4-page-57.htm>. Accessed on September 15, 2021.

¹¹ Gisèle Sapiro, *The French Writer’s War: 1940–1953*. Translated by Vanessa Doriott Andersen and Dorrit Cohn, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2014, p. 290.

expression of her heartbeat, the woman has given us, naturally, a literature of shadows and whispers, of mystery and velvet saloons¹².

The relation of interchangeability between (feminine) gender and (feminine) creative method will be translated into the literary practice through the frequently using of certain plots, thematic directions and motives. Thus, the sentimental plots, the female characters whose psychological analysis is reduced to the exhibition of an inner life marked by the sentimental intrigues, that capitalise the creative space of the female writers. According to the projection of the literary authorities from that time, the female writers position constitutes a figural posture that is also reduced to superficiality, sentimentality and naivety that betrays, on the one hand, a limitation of the access of women to writing through their diminishing and objectification; and thus, rather a mimicry of the writing profession, on the other. The homology between female author – feminine paradigm, embedding entirely its arsenal (feminine mystery, sentimentality, lyricism and subjectivity) belongs not only to the correspondence naïve and weak writing – feminine gender, but also it is necessary to account that the critical prejudices are relied on a repertoire of symbolic materials, in full accordance with Meizoz's postulations regarding the inherited materials on which the authors create their strategies for the postural acts. It must be mentioned in the case of women writers, the symbolic materials depict not an own ground for the postural acts that could be reformulated or denied, but a material on which the literary doxa creates positions to them:

Worth noting the very early appearance of a female protagonist on the stage of the Romanian literature. The erotic plot, always connected by the presence of the feminine, can also be seen as an anaemic, but existent emancipatory phenomenon. Although, women were also introduced from a masculine, patriarchal perspective, their presence as protagonists where the prevailing scenario is erotic is a small gain in the era, but a significant one in the evolution of de-tabooing the female presence in the Romanian writing¹³.

¹² Elena Zaharia-Filipaș, *Studii de literatură feminină [Feminine Literature Studies]*, București, Paideia, 2004, pp. 7-9: “între o porumbiță și o femeie sunt corespondențe ce le apropie [...] aceleași instincte puternice, le stăpânesc și le conduc [...]. Dacă porumbițele ar avea o literatură, s-ar asemena cu literatura celor mai mari scriitoare contemporane [...]. Lipsită de orice inițiativă în dragoste și fără puțința expresiei clare a bătăii inimii sale, femeia ne-a dat în chip firesc, o literatură de umbre și șoapte, de mister și alcov capitonat”. Unless otherwise stated, the quotations are translated into English by the author of this paper.

¹³ Andrei Terian, Daiana Gârdan, Cosmin Borza, David Morariu, Dragoș Varga, “Genurile romanului românesc în secolul al XIX-lea. O analiză cantitativă” [“Genres of the Romanian Novel in the 19th Century. A Quantitative Analysis”], *Transilvania*, 2019, 10, p. 24: „Este de notat, însă, apariția foarte timpurie a unui protagonist feminin pe scena literaturii române. Trama erotică, conectată mereu de prezența femininului, poate fi privită și ca un anemic, dar existent fenomen emancipator. Cu toate că femeile sunt introduse tot dintr-o perspectivă masculină, patriarhală, prezența lor ca protagoniste acolo unde scenariul care prevalează este cel erotic reprezintă un câștig mic în epocă, dar unul însemnat în evoluția detabuizării prezenței feminine în scriitura românească”.

Furthermore, it must be nuanced that the literary production of women writers is not limited to the only formula of *feminine* writing received in the clichéd discourses by the literary criticism. Two axes of prose are articulated according to the degree of devotion to the commonplace of the feminine writing to which the authors are predestined: firstly, the practice of the established formula for female writing, which makes the texts convenient to the system of prejudices, and a writing which overcomes the established method. In this sense, the merit of Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu – whose writing appears as an avant-garde in relation to the expectation and general practice – is to open a new direction and to establish a new posture through literary competence and refusal of the established method for women, and through unanimous recognition and authority gained on this way. In parallel, with the use of the bankrupt concept of female writing, it arises a “bengescian” tradition, as proof that her authority and her posture of “novelist of women”, starts honouring the inertia of her congeners.

Thus, the novels of Lucia Demetrius, Ioana Postelnicu and Cella Serghi, three important female names in the prose of the inter-war era, illustrate the interference of these two position-takings. Located on the same wave of visibility, however, the types of their recognition and prestige are distributed according to proven literary skills, and to the relational capital held. Ioana Postelnicu continues to demonstrate her literary perseverance through sustained editorial activity marked by novels that reconcile the narrative complexity established by Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu and sentimental slips. For instance, for the novel *Beznă* [*Gloom*] she is rewarded in 1943 with the prize of the Romanian Writers Society “I.A.I. Brătescu-Voinești”, for prose. While Cella Serghi’s text (*Pânza de păianjen* [*Spider Web*], 1938) does not exceed the limits of naïve confessions, but, nevertheless, her increased visibility serves as a proof of the fact that the insertion in an established group inside the prestige and symbolic capital are concentrated (Mihail Sebastian, Camil Petrescu, Mircea Eliade) becomes a viable strategy with a more direct lucrative effect in the accumulation of capital and visibility. In a context of cosmopolitanism, worldly relations come to replace actual competence, often being defining in establishing the degree of visibility and prestige contained in the author’s image, thus integrating into the postural acts these established comrades settled according to the criterion of the symbolic value of the group to which they aspire. However, the misogynistic character of the field is most evident at this degree, as the insertion of prose writers in the middle of these coteries with important characters is relied on a system of direct sympathies that often cover more than a literary competence, illustrative being the enthusiastic appreciations of E. Lovinescu addressed to Ticu Archip, an important figure among female writers during the inter-war era: “When he says about Ticu Archip that ‘she gradually ascended among us all the steps of

attention, appreciation, and great literary esteem' he probably gives the woman-writer the greatest compliment, including other valences, unable to confess"¹⁴.

Unlike the French literary field, where the position of women writers undergoes a significant evolution once with the phenomenon of *(re)naissance du feminisme*¹⁵ after the revolution of May '68, when the feminine style is reintegrated in the new revolutionary aesthetic formula, in the local literary field the evolution of women writing is hindered by the ideological domination of the field. Also, if in France during the post-war period, especially after 1968, the postures of female writers engage the struggle against masculine monopoly above literature and aesthetical canon¹⁶, and the major part of the female authors revolving around the avant-gardist fractions¹⁷ through their discourses opposite to the dominant masculine one; in Romania during the post-war era the avant-gardist position and postures are defined in a subversive relation with the political power, as well as all positions are defined through the relation with the regime and political party, that serving as a proof of the question of women authors' marginalisation and exclusion will be postponed for several more decades. The reinvention of prose writers after 1948 nuanced paradigmatic changes not only at the discursive level, but also gives rise to an attitudinal discrepancy and the postural contrasts from one epoch to another. So, the great reforms that are taking place are not limited to rhetorical transformations, but also to a reorganization of the literary community, the role, and the new author figures in accordance with its new political and social functions of literary discourses. Thus, the production of cultural goods is included in the structure of a centralized socio-economic organization, whereas the unification and supervision of creation are facilitated by the setting up of institutions (the establishment of the Writers' Union in 1949) and the insertion of the literary agents in the industry of wide production of the literary goods – on this way being opened several professional positions inside of publishing houses and literary magazines. The attracting within the system of the mass of writers meant to produce systemically convenable literature is also sustained by the establishment of a Literary Fund that makes the new system more attractive for writers by financially stimulating creative activity. Therefore, the occupation of writing becomes a lucrative profession, and is subjected to a transactional plan based on a benefit – remuneration scheme, the mechanisms of rewards functioning either in economic, political, and professional or symbolic order.

¹⁴ Elena Zaharia-Filipaș, *Studii de literatură*, p. 16: "Când el spune despre Ticu Archip că 'a urcat printre noi, încetul cu încetul, toate treptele atenției, ale prețuirii și ale marelui stime literare', probabil că îi face femeii-scriitor cel mai mare compliment, incluzând și alte valențe, nemărturisibile".

¹⁵ Delphine Naudier, "L'écriture-femme", p. 60.

¹⁶ Marcelle Marini, "D'une création minoritaire à une création universelle", *Les Cahiers du GRIF*, 1990, 45, pp. 51-66.

¹⁷ Delphine Naudier, "L'écriture-femme", p. 68.

The re-education of writers and the sculpting of their new position claimed by the party involves a complex process and an ambitious curriculum in the spirit of values imported from the Soviet cultural field. This is locally reified in training schools, with the intention of setting up an avant-garde generation of young writers, lacking the elitist statutory forms, and susceptible for assuming a progressive revolutionary attitude (a notable institution of this kind is the “Mihai Eminescu” School of Literature and Literary Criticism). According to Nathalie Heinich, the visibility is a significant capital in the order of recognition inside of the mediated regime, thereby visibility works as a guarantor of success¹⁸, but naturally the same needs of visibility occurred also inside of all type of the cultural contexts, as well as in the domestic literary field during the 1950s, where the writers do not adjust to the cult of the social media or market, but to the narrow ideological system, so that visibility is guaranteed exclusively by political ratification. From this point on, as one of the most important stakes of writing is occupying a new vacant position in the literary field. Thus, I will emphasise further, by accounting the cases of the three female authors, the different types of posturing related with the aims of the writing profession and the type of accumulated capital (institutional, symbolic, social, economic, and so on) in that new cultural frame.

At the same time, the authors of the old system are not excluded from the Socialist Realist literary scene. On the contrary, their intense publishing activity and insertion in the field, as well as their desirability despite systemically inadequate social portfolios, indicate the crisis of legitimacy of the current regime, which seeks to solve its inconsistency by perverting their literary prestige into political capital¹⁹. The assumption of the Socialist Realist method, being imposed to be respected with an absurd fidelity – the main suspicion as it regards the devotional purity of writers being aroused by the suspicion of political authorities for a superficial takeover of the method, without a real ideological conviction – requires a careful training of writers, who must sharpen their understanding of the proletariat and of class struggle by attending to the workers’ activity in the factory, which started to serve as an indispensable research space for the creative process. Thus, the inter-war novels of Lucia Demetrius, Ioana Postelnicu and Cella Serghi, built around sentimental intrigues and complex psychologies, placed in the dandyish and cosmopolitan world of the bourgeoisie are replaced by novels with an industrial theme, dedicated to the idealisation of progressive revolutionaries (*Cântecul uzinei*, [*The Song of Factory*], Cella Serghi, 1950) and the praise of the working heroines in the factories (*Pădurea Poienari* [*Poienari Forest*], Ioana Postelnicu, 1953).

¹⁸ Passim Nathalie Heinich, *De la vizibilitate: Excelență și singularitate în regim mediatizat*, Paris, Gallimard, 2012.

¹⁹ Ioana Macrea-Toma, *Privilegiul literar în comunismul românesc* [*Privilegiate. Literary Institution in Communist Romania*], Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2009, p. 105.

Furthermore, in the case of these authors, the conversion nuances the paradox and the inadequacies between the socio-literary portfolio of the candidates and the postulated desideratum of the new system. The assumption of the new position of the intellectual worker is revealed not only at the degree of the rhetorical mutations, but also in the practical demonstrations of the convictions towards the benefits brought by the regime. Lucia Demetrius's prose is subject to the detachment from the plots, hitherto frequented, placed on the background of a universe populated by patricians, here both inter-war novels of the author being illustrative: *Tinerețe* [Youth], 1936, and *Marea fugă* [The Great Flight], 1938; for praising the proletariat and degrading the bourgeois order. Thus, the ideologizing of writing occurs in the form of a spontaneous revelation insofar as at a decade and a half, the author will apologize by spontaneous obsession with her previous literary experiences, sculpting her position in the line of partisan's convenience:

It seems to me that any person in our country, writer or not, with or without documentary thoughts, should go there once, to enter in the halls where the metal is mastered, domesticated, forged, to see the lights that do not switch off from evening till morning, the flames rising into the depths of the air, it sounds their continual roar, the vibration of the great untiring machines, to see the workers dominating machines and waves of incandescent metal, stoves and furnaces, for understanding deeply, stunned, how strong we are, how strong is the human, how wonderful, to understand the dimensions that the socialist construction takes²⁰.

During the 1950s Lucia Demetrius public discourses are plenty engaged in proving her socialist and progressive beliefs, for instance asserting that the new ideology of literature helped her find out the true essence of literature, therefore she declares due to the new frame "I've figured out that most important is the **human** who tries to change and to know himself, who rises, who fights, not the human who gets lost within unnecessary contemplations"²¹. However, Lucia Demetrius is an isolated case among the female authors in the process of assuming the new identity. The race for legitimacy and validation from above is doubled by a tournament of testimonies meant to bring the authors closer to the ideology, in this order, many trying to prove their pre-communist socialist affiliation. Therefore, Demetrius will in turn be in the wake of the political affinities of her father, Vasile Demetrius, for confirming her ideological beliefs and socialist profile, operating, practically, a selective system of filtering biographical data easily adjustable to the socialist repertoire, and to the proletarian ethos: "Lucia Demetrius does not deny, oedipally,

²⁰ "Interviu cu Lucia Demetrius despre măiestria literară" ["Interview with Lucia Demetrius on Literary Mastery"], by Petru Vintilă, *Luceafărul*, 1962, 13, apud Paul Cernat, "Inițierea comunistă a femeii" ["Communist Initiation of Women"], in Paul Cernat, Ion Manolescu, Angelo Mitchievici, Ioan Stanomir (eds.), *Explorări în comunismul românesc* [Explorations of Romanian Communism], I, Iași, Polirom, 2004, p. 162.

²¹ Lucia Demetrius, "Ce am învățat de la dramaturgia sovietică" ["What We Have Learned from Soviet Dramaturgy"], apud Eugen Simion (coord.), *Cronologia vieții literare*, V (1951–1953), p. 291.

her father, but claims him, posthumously, as an argument for adherence to the policy of the Father-Party”²². Thus, not coincidentally, in the 50’s her name will be one of the most visible. To the political prestige is added the professional prestige, as far as she is an important figure of the leading wing of the Writers’ Union, as a proof of the success in terms of gaining the trust of the political authorities. Demetrius also sought to be an awarded and conjecturally established author insofar as she is officially acknowledged among the most important writers of this period alongside Mihail Davidoglu, Maria Banuș, Zaharia Stancu, Aurel Baranga²³ and so on. Now, the suspicion of enthusiasm shown by a simple strategy of opportunism is quite naïve in this context, firstly because the reasons of accession are more complex than they could be covered and explained by such a moralizing analysis; and then, because, nevertheless, Lucia Demetrius is among the very few female authors who unequivocally sign the “Manifesto of Romanian Intellectuals” in 1945, through which progressive intellectuals express their ratification of PCR policies. In terms of a postural problematization, an essential aspect is circumscribed to the figurative representations of Lucia Demetrius. Reiterating here Meizoz’s hypothesis of partial overlaps between posture and author’s figure, we can see, in the case of most female authors, even a partial overlap in the inter-war context between the authorship and text, then a complete excommunication from the postulate acts of the author’s identity (even the gender identity) during the 1950s. In the case of Demetrius, however, if we are to fully credit the positions exposed by the author, paradoxically, the position of the author in the first period of creation develops from an ethos of solidarity with the general poetics of the context, containing them to a lesser extent the individual variations, or, once the systemic change is articulated an homology between the particular figure of the author and the authorial repertoire claimed by the party: “Lucia Demetrius’ pre-communist biography contains all the elements of a predestination, she is saved from the Inferno and the Party open to her new ways and unties her wings”²⁴.

The homology of the author’s action and its rhetoric becomes immanent to ideologically subsumed creative acts. Social practice and the conduct of writers must prove the same ideological purity as the texts that they sign. The reinvention of the female authors under the formula of postural reshaping in the context of cultural ideologisation contradicts the established manner of the articulating of posture, insofar as the act acquires meaning in relation to the author’s trajectory (social origin, education, literary performance, the position in front of the literary system, in general). This phenomenon is proved in the case of those three authors. For instance, Ioana Postelnicu or Cella Serghi not only prove to carry an

²² *Ibidem*, p. 163.

²³ See Pavel Țugui and S. Damian, “Despre unele probleme ale dramaturgiei noastre” [“On Certain Problems Faced by Our Dramaturgy”], apud Eugen Simion (coord.), *Cronologia vieții literare*, V (1951–1953), p. 278.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 161.

incompatible social portfolio (both have a higher education and training, are former members of an elite group of literati, etc.), but have never shown socialist affinities before, let alone Marxist ones, thus confirming a mimetic dimension of their practicing of the authorial actions claimed by the political field. Unlike Lucia Demetrius, Ioana Postelnicu, like Cella Serghi, carve their new positions by short-circuiting the path of the individual-collective transition, the postural act being shifted into a social act, not so much of the individual, but of the regime²⁵. In the same order, the symbolic materials, integrated so far in the authorial profile, are not eluded from the postural reformulations, and that befalls at the rhetorical degree, even if it is systemically undesirable. For instance, Cella Serghi's first Socialist Realist novel – *Cad zidurile*, 1950 [*The Walls Are Falling*] fails in sterilizing the text of the inadequate narrative formulas to the new creative context. So, the plot of her works does not undergo substantial changes from one novel to another, permuting, instead, the social position of the protagonists, against the background of the same intrigues, ideological-literary conversion of Serghi resides in building a heroine of the revolutionary and progressive class.

From this point, the major paradox that overlaps to the doctrinal ratification acts consists precisely in the fact that the assumption of the new posture accompanied by the inherited symbolic repertoire destabilizes the consonance between the posture and ethos, as the author's action and rhetoric evade from its credibility and authority, resulting into a mimetic interface of the written exercise of the Realist Socialist method; and into an attitudinal ambiguity towards the ideological puritanism claimed above. If to some extent, Lucia Demetrius was an exception, Cella Serghi and Ioana Postelnicu remain illustrative cases of persuasive deficiencies, also that being the reason they do not even enjoy the same visibility in relation to their congener during the years of Stalinism in its essentialist version, at most the ratification assures to both of them the maintenance of their status as writers. As an effect of this, Cella Serghi's socialist realist novel, *Fetele lui Balotă* [*Balotă's Daughters*] is received with mistrust – for instance, Ion Lungu comments critically on her novel, asserting that “Cella Serghi has a combative attitude regarding the bourgeois moral and ideology, though she does not crystallise a central problem, the aim of the book is not sufficiently pithy and mobilising”²⁶. Nevertheless, doctrinal adherence marks the possibility of occupying new social and professional positions to which marginalized authors so far can candidate in the hope of restoring their status in the field. The publication of systemically convenient novels reveals two defining aspects for maintaining the author's state in the conditions of ideological purification of the literary discourse: a) the act of

²⁵ Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires*, p. 27: “la posture constitue ainsi un espace transitionnel entre l'individuel et le collectif, corroborant la distinction de Gustave Lanson, pour qui l'écriture est un acte individuel, mais un acte social de l'individu”.

²⁶ See Eugen Simion (coord.), *Cronologia vieții literare românești*, VIII (1958–1959), București, Muzeul Național al Literaturii Române, 2012, p. 150.

publication corresponding with the confirming of the author's identity – according to the scheme of Nathalie Heinich, that is contextually applied by Ioana Macrea-Toma in the analysis of the local field during Communism: self-perception (to be perceived as a writer), representation (to be exposed as such) and designation (to be recognized by others as a writer)²⁷ –, and the integration of the Socialist Realist method becomes immanent to the act of assertion, as the method remains the only viable currency in the system of cultural goods; b) highlighting the question of authorial responsibility, it is required a contextually understanding of responsibility. Once the laws for the functioning of the literary field are established and the role and tasks of the author are outlined in accordance with the desideratum of the ideology, the author's responsibility is redefined in terms of its politicization. Also worth noting is that the ethic and responsibilities, in the terms of Gisèle Sapiro, are defined against established morality and political conformism as a key of emergence in the autonomous literary field, contextually denying an independence from the political pole involve the risk of exclusion from writing profession field, at least. Therefore, the writers' systemic adherence confirms the observance of the responsibilities set by the regime, renouncing their ethics and responsibilities, through the ratification of the status quo:

writers defined their own ethics of responsibility against the values of conventional morality and political conformism through which their work was liable to condemnation [...]. Articulating these ethical principles affirmed the writer's independence from political and religious authorities and contributed to the emergence of an autonomous literary field²⁸.

Conclusions

Finally, removing the issue of authorship and postural acts from the dichotomy of post-war heteronomy versus inter-war autonomy, regarding the situation of the women prose writers who accumulate prestige inside of the old system and redefine their position in accordance with the rules of ideology, in this order some emphasis is required. Firstly, the postural definition in their case has not occurred into an autonomous framework of assertion in either stage. The introduction of these authors in literature by the leader of the Sburătorul group is equivalent to a postural predestination, rather than to the individual building of a singularized position with its own strategies. Most illustrative, in this sense of the assertion of women writers under identitarian constraints, are the pseudonyms that E. Lovinescu assigns to the female authors in a gesture of requisitioning their literary posture: Eugenia Banu ends up signing under the pseudonym Ioana Postelnicu, or

²⁷ See Ioana Macrea-Toma, *Privilighenja*, p. 70.

²⁸ Gisèle Sapiro, "The Writer's Responsibility in France: From Flaubert to Sartre", *French Politics, Culture and Society*, 25, 2007, 1, pp. 2-3.

the authorial identity of Maria Ionescu-Aderca becomes Sanda Movilă. Then, the systemic changes of the late 1940s only marks a shift of the reins of control over the definition of postulation in the case of peripheral writers, concentrating the action and profile of the authors in a collective act of political glorification. If the reshaping of the position of women writers in France during the post-war period, especially after May '68, has occurred under the reshuffling of women's writing into an avant-garde movement whose aim was to deny the established men's monopoly; paradoxically, in Romania the women writers regroup into an avant-garde movement during the 50s (as far as Socialist Realism lays claim to constituting an avant-garde phenomenon that will replace the bourgeois inter-war cultural heritage), but not for defending their writing and their repositioning, but for consolidating the ideological establishment. Although, as for the legitimacy and validity of these positions (from the *feminine* figurative model to the posing as the heroines of the proletarian class) it would be reasonable to lean on the resistance and prestige over time of literary productions that embody these figurative representations, but about which can only be said that remained, more or less, lost bets in the economy of the evolution of the novel written by women during the last century.

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AUTHORSHIP POSTURES AND THE POSTURAL REFORMULATION
DURING THE 1950S. THE CASE OF WOMEN PROSE WRITERS: LUCIA
DEMETRIUS, IOANA POSTELNICU AND CELLA SERGHI

(Abstract)

Operating under a definition of authorial postures advanced by Jérôme Meizoz, the present study aims to identify the postures adopted by women prose writers who started asserting themselves in the interwar period and, later on, after 1948, partook in the doctrinal ratification process by publishing Socialist Realist novels. Thus, I have identified two overarching categories of postures that engaged literature written by women. In a first phase, I discuss a position that forcefully presses for the articulation of certain postures born of macho prejudice that have become established during the same period in the shape of such concepts as femininity and the feminine creative method, but which ultimately represent merely a strategy for the marginalization of the literary production of women. With the change of regime, which marked the capitalization of the creative space by the field of political power, the systemic adjustment of female prose writers is reified, at the rhetorical level, by revealing the social function of the text. The pretence of them being heroines of the proletarian class marks a radical change in behaviour and discourse from one epoch to the other. What we can conclude from this is that even at the level of an analysis of authorial postures, the minor community of women prose writers submits to predestined postural acts, rather than following the path of articulating an authorial posture, at least not as it was proposed by Meizoz.

Keywords: authorial postures, women prose writers, feminine creative method, Socialist realism, heroines of the proletarian class.

POSTURA AUCTORIALĂ ȘI NECESITATEA REFORMULĂRII ACTELOR
DE POSTURALITATE. CAZUL PROZATOARELOR: LUCIA DEMETRIUS,
IOANA POSTELNICU ȘI CELLA SERGHI
(Rezumat)

Articolul propune o analiză asupra strategiilor postulare mobilizate de scriitoarele Lucia Demetrius, Cella Serghi și Ioana Postelnicu în contextul literar al anilor '50. În sîajul reflecțiilor teoretice avansate de Jérôme Meizoz asupra noțiunii de postură ca proiecție figurală construită de agenții literari cu scopul ocupării anumitor poziții în câmp, analiza urmărește încercările de dislocare ale dispozițiilor literare consacrate scriitoarei, ca producătoare minoră, în cadrul sistemului literar redefinit în termenii heteronomizării prin dependența față de câmpul politic. Remanierile de după 1948 retrasează mizele competiției pentru legitimare, iar în această ordine, acțiunile postulare – suficiente pentru a-și menține statutul de scriitoare, dar nu și pentru ocuparea unor poziții favorabile – motivează intențiile de ascensiune în câmp prin ranforsarea gesturilor de ratificare sistemică. Subsumarea vieții literare la agenda partidului implică valorizarea unui capital politic existent în portofoliul Luciei Demetrius, bunăoară, și absent în cazul celorlalte. Capitalul politic și istoric (prin care în context se subînțeleg afilierea organice la valorile socialismului manifestate înainte de instaurare), devenite o valută centrală în raporturile de tranzacționare cu regimul, definesc jocurile postulare și determină credibilitatea și viabilitatea autoarelor în sistem. Acest lucru, de exemplu, justifică prestigiul conjunctural al Luciei Demetrius și eșecul Ioanei Postelnicu și al Cellei Serghi. Succesul temporal al Luciei Demetrius susținut de recunoașterile instituționale la care se adaugă prestigiul literar contracarează pozițiile ultimelor două. Traseul Ioanei Postelnicu și al Cellei Serghi în câmpul literar al anilor '50 relevă reproducerea de poziții și dispoziții printr-o evoluție mai degrabă inerțială pe marginea terenului de confruntări și prevestesc un model evolutiv falimentar pentru reabilitarea condiției scriitoarei care rămâne reprezentativ pentru destinul literar al femeilor în câmpul literar de-a lungul întregului interval postbelic.

Cuvinte-cheie: postură auctorială, proza scrisă de femei, metoda feminină de creație, realism socialist, eroinele clasei proletare.

MAGDALENA RĂDUȚĂ

**SAVOIR-FAIRE. SONORITÉS ET MÉTIER POÉTIQUE
DANS LE TRAJET POSTURAL DE MIRCEA
CĂRTĂRESCU**

Défini dès le début par Jérôme Meizoz comme une « manière singulière d’occuper une ‘position’ dans le champ littéraire »¹, le terme de posture cherche à réfléchir une fois de plus sur l’articulation nodale entre l’individuel et le collectif, articulation qui fonde le *cogito* disciplinaire de la sociologie littéraire. Structure duale, qui présuppose l’existence d’une simultanéité de la pratique littéraire dans le champ –la création et sa présence rendue publique par les actions de son auteur –, la posture arrive à montrer son utilité analytique en conjuguant dans un seul regard la dimension discursive et le versant contextuel, pour construire une image relationnelle, mobile et nuancée de l’identité auctoriale. Pour cette approche, on fait appel à une diversité de ressources : de paroles d’écrivain lui-même sur sa littérature jusqu’aux représentations fictionnelles de l’auteur à l’intérieur de l’œuvre, de l’écriture intime aux textes journalistiques et aux prises de position publiques dans des circonstances non-liées à la littérature, de ses déclarations d’affiliation à un certain groupe jusqu’aux séries de rupture, tout type de présence discursive dans le champ est à prendre.

En ce qui suit, on se propose d’examiner le trajet postural de Mircea Cărtărescu (n. 1956), poète et prosateur roumain dont le récent succès international est dû principalement à son activité de romancier. Son entrée dans le champ littéraire roumain s’actualise toutefois comme poète, membre d’un groupe générationnel de jeunes écrivains de Bucarest imposés dans la dernière décennie communiste et connus sous le nom de quatre-vingtards. Dans une carrière littéraire de quarante années, Mircea Cărtărescu décline son identité auctoriale à travers quelques auto-figurations textuelles devenues presque emblématiques : *moi* singulier dont le rapport au monde est fluctuant et fragile; créateur qui s’approprie et qui recompose facilement avec une famille de repères historiques valorisant l’hyperinvestissement des « pouvoirs » infinies de la littérature ; identité d’écrivain travaillé toujours par le doute, même s’il possède déjà, au moins dans la dernière décennie, les indicatifs d’un grandissant succès national et international. En choisissant trois moments de la carrière poétique de Mircea Cărtărescu – *Faruri, vitrine, fotografii* [*Phares, vitrines, photos*] (1980), *Levantul* [*Le Levant*] (1990) et

¹ Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l’auteur*, Genève, Slatkine, 2007, p. 18.

Nu striga niciodată ajutor [Ne crie jamais à l'aide] (2020) –, l'article essaie de répertorier quelques indices posturaux visibles et résistants dans le discours poétique de Cărtărescu, réunis autour d'une image-auteur spécifique : sincérité visionnaire de « l'amour pour la poésie » (traduite dans les efforts de rendre visible la mémoire du champ, déclinés dans les insertions citationnelles et des 'sons' familiers au lecteur de poésie) ; figure du poète-artisan, pour lequel la poésie constitue un métier dont la maîtrise doit être constamment prouvée et qui arrive à la consécration à travers cette reprise probatoire continue ; identité du créateur en crise existentielle, qui examine répétitivement les atouts du mot écrit et leur force symbolique dans un monde réel qui se trouve menacé dans ses ressorts humains les plus intimes.

1. *La posture dans la fiction – une question délicate*

Dans son étude de 2007, J. Meizoz fixe très clairement les axes autour desquelles le terme de posture peut se rendre observable : une simultanéité analytique entre l'image de soi (que l'énonciateur impose dans son discours pour assurer son impacte) et la mise en œuvre publique de la fonction-auteur², les recherches qui ont nourri la réflexion sur la posture (Alain Viala ou Dominique Maingueneau) et ses exemples constitutifs (de Rousseau à Céline). Mais il reste très prudent sur un point essentiel de la démonstration : la dimension intratextuelle de la posture. S'il s'agit, comme il le répète maintes fois, d'autogérer une image personnelle d'écrivain, dirigée via les médias vers le public, comment faire pour déceler dans les textes de fiction d'un tel écrivain les axes d'une analyse posturale ? Autrement dit, comment retenir (et rendre plus visible, dans un deuxième temps) le collectif dans la manifestation la plus célébratoire de l'individuel qui est la fiction, sans tomber dans un intentionnalisme démodé ou dans une démarche biographique teinté de déterminisme social ou, aussi pire, de psychologisme ?

Pour J. Meizoz, la question d'identifier des traces posturales pertinentes dans l'œuvre de fiction reste, selon ses propres mots, « délicate »³ : « Avec la fiction, les médiations sont plus complexes, il y a des personnages délégués. Et l'on ne peut leur attribuer sans discussion une posture relevant de l'auteur puisqu'en quelque sorte l'auteur s'est diffracté en eux, usant de contre-personnages, de doubles, d'opposants, etc. »⁴. S'il y a quand même une réponse, elle se constitue au niveau de ce que l'on appelle généralement le 'style' : « une empreinte stylistique [...], ce que les écrivains appellent de manière souple un 'ton' »⁵. On comprend que l'analyse posturale appliquée à la fiction doit prendre garde à bien choisir ses

² *Ibidem*, pp. 22-23.

³ Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires*, p. 28.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 29.

genres (la prose plutôt que la poésie – qui plus est, les genres de la fiction autobiographique y semblent le choix le plus raisonné), les modèles du codage rhétorique (muni d'une dominante réflexive plutôt que des marques de transitivité 'transparente') et une certaine perceptibilité (comprise presque étymologiquement – ce qui est perçu dans et par les sens) des choix stylistiques d'un auteur censé faire preuve de « présence du corps dans la langue »⁶. Si l'on ajoute à cette énumération la condition de simultanéité comprise dans la structure duale de la posture et l'accès aux textes qui rendent publique l'image de la fonction-auteur (journaux intimes, mémoires, témoignages, entretiens, toute la pléthore des confessions publiques d'un auteur concernant son œuvre) –, le choix de 'bons noms' semble d'autant plus difficile.

Dans les décennies qui suivent la parution de l'ouvrage de Meizoz, ce point délicat dans l'usage du terme revient dans plusieurs débats sur le sujet. Dans le numéro thématique sur la posture de la revue *CONTEXTES*, Denis Saint-Amand et David Vrydaghs avancent une solution tout à fait restrictive, au moins à première vue : « On considère pour notre part qu'il vaut mieux restreindre le champ d'application du concept [...] aux seuls textes (oraux et écrits) autobiographiques »⁷, permettant la présence de la fiction dans l'espace de l'analyse posturale dans des conditions qui semblent assez strictes :

il existe au moins deux cas de figure où ces textes [de fiction] peuvent être sollicités par l'interprète : [...] lorsque l'auteur, dans une intervention qu'il fait de son nom propre, pose un jugement sur ses œuvres de fiction [...]. Second cas de figure : certains personnages romanesques sont construits de manière à être des doubles de l'auteur, partageant le même prénom, certains pans de sa trajectoire, une idéologie comparable [...]⁸.

Mais ce qui semblait une sélection rigoureusement étroite arrive à s'élargir à travers les exemples choisis par les éditeurs du numéro thématique pour illustrer ces deux cas : Flaubert et sa phrase célèbre sur *Madame Bovary*, respectivement Houellebecq et Céline. L'occasion se présente ainsi au chercheur éventuel d'y ajouter d'autres noms similaires, et encore en grand nombre, suivant les prises de position des auteurs qui s'expriment publiquement sur leurs œuvres (dès l'apparition de la forme journalistique de l'entretien d'écrivain jusqu'aux multiples manières de s'assurer la visibilité à l'époque contemporaine, la liste en est très fournie) ou qui pratiquent des genres littéraires proche de l'autofiction.

Plus récemment, la réflexion sur l'analyse posturale dans la fiction se montre riche et stimulante, articulée principalement aux questionnements contemporains

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ Denis Saint-Amand et David Vrydaghs, « Retours sur la postures », *CONTEXTES*, 2011, 8, dossier thématique *La posture. Genèse, usages et limites d'un concept*, <https://journals.openedition.org/contextes/4712>. Consulté le 7 avril 2020.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

sur l'auctorialité. La prose semble, une fois de plus, le terrain de choix pour la pluralité des lectures des marqueurs posturaux ; plus d'une fois, les écrivains mêmes semblent faciliter la tâche au chercheur, en misant ouvertement sur le procédé depuis longtemps connu de la métalepse du narrateur⁹, sur les techniques d'autoportrait transparent¹⁰ ou, dans une admirable longévité de l'héritage gidien des *Faux monnayeurs*, sur des déclinaisons diverses du personnage-qui-écrit (documentariste, scénariste, universitaire, etc.). Dans le même trait, la lecture posturale bénéficie de ce que Dominique Viart appelle les « fictions critiques »¹¹ contemporaines, où « fiction et réflexion travaillent ensemble [...], l'expression d'une vaste tendance, de nombreux auteurs proposant au sein de leur œuvre une ou plusieurs pistes de lecture savante ou critique »¹². Au cadre de l'analyse posturale, réfléchir sur les enjeux de cette « lecture autocommentante »¹³ et érudite ouvre davantage la discussion vers l'édification d'une identité auctoriale très forte, qui s'approprie le lecteur, le façonne et le dirige vers une seule lecture possible, tout en justifiant en permanence sa place dans le champ, son appartenance au métier, en faisant appel au répertoire des postures (érudites, critiques, classiques etc.) fondatrices, légitimées et légitimatrices. S'autocommenter – comme dans l'exemple de Dominique Viart, par la fiction articulée à la réflexion, mais également par des procédées plus discrètes, mais paradoxalement plus transparentes dans leur dimension expérimentale, comme des insertions citationnelles, l'usage des pastiches, le mixage de références cultes, etc. – c'est, en fin de compte, se montrer digne, devant soi et devant les pairs, de connaître les ficelles du métier et de bien jouer le jeu.

2. Devenir poète : le début d'un trajet postural

Cet effort permanent de construire sa propre position dans l'espace littéraire à travers l'incessant appel à l'histoire réflexive du champ commence, pour Mircea Cărtărescu, dès son premier volume de poésies. Construit en cinq sections, il mixe la formule de poèmes amples (*Căderea* [*La chute*] et *Calea regală* [*La voie royale*] avec deux séries de poèmes brefs, dynamiques, citadines et ludiques, qui annoncent

⁹ Comme Amélie Nothomb dans le roman *Robert des noms propres* (2002), où un personnage homonyme entre dans la diégèse. Pour l'analyse posturale de cette écrivaine munie d'une « personnalité media distinctive » et dont « l'esthétique est fondamentalement anti-barthesienne », voir Lucy O'Meara, « Killing Joke : Authorship from Barthes to Nothomb », *L'Esprit Créateur*, 55, 2015, 4, pp. 101-117.

¹⁰ Gaspar Turin, « Rire en Quignardie : pour une lecture posturale », *L'Esprit Créateur*, 52, 2012, 1, pp. 78-79.

¹¹ Dominique Viart, « Fictions en procès », in Bruno Blanckeman, Aline Mura-Brunel et Marc Dambre (eds.), *Le Roman français au tournant du XXIe siècle*, Paris, Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2004, p. 280. Cité dans Gaspar Turin, « Rire en Quignardie », p. 80.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ Gaspar Turin, « Rire en Quignardie », p. 80.

carrément l'appartenance à une posture générationnelle de jeunes poètes citadins, concrets et ludiques (*Fotografii* [*Photos*] et *Jocuri mecanice* [*Machines à sous*]) et, finalement, avec une reprise ouvertement parodique de la forme de pastorale, transplantée dans le présent grotesque de la Roumanie en pleine dictature communiste (le cycle *Georgicele* [*Les Géorgiques*]). Pour déceler les marques posturales du poète débutant, on choisit pour cet article de regarder de près seulement les deux premiers poèmes, écrits autour de 1976, donc avant la socialisation en cénacle des quatre-vingtards ; le trajet de « devenir poète » sera donc analysé en termes de construction singulière de soi comme écrivain : sélection primaire des lectures, ritualisation de l'écriture, rapport originaire, sans médiation des pairs, à la littérature et à l'acte de l'écriture. À la lecture de la posture intratextuelle du volume de 1980 on ajoutera les textes de Mircea Cărtărescu sur sa propre pratique littéraire, parus dans la presse culturelle entre 1983 et 2010 et réunis sélectivement en deux volumes (*Pururi tânăr, înfășurat în pixeli* [*Jeune à jamais, drapé en pixels*], 2003, et *Ochiul căprui al dragostei noastre* [*L'œil brun de notre amour*], 2012). Leur exploration corrélatrice construit la posture d'un jeune poète qui, entraîné dès l'adolescence, en solitude, à la lecture de poésie, sélectionne des formes, des noms, des titres et des 'tons' lyriques dans un espace poétique étendu et libre, selon des critères esthétiques plutôt formalisés et classicisants : rythme, sonorités, images agglutinantes, vers à longueurs variables, divisions en versets, etc. Le jeune Cărtărescu fait l'expérience de la poésie en tant que perception – sensorielle, surtout sonore et visuelle – de la forme lyrique.

Refaire le devenir du poète, c'est-à-dire la réunion des *felicity conditions* qui assurent l'identité du jeune écrivain avant l'entrée dans l'espace littéraire, on se trouve devant une série de prédispositions et de pratiques de lecture qui favorisent la rythmicité, le sonore, la cadence. Le point de départ semble l'existence d'une prédisposition native :

j'ai toujours eu une très bonne mémoire pour la poésie. J'étais capable d'apprendre par cœur, spontanément, tout ce qui me plaisait. [...] Pendant le lycée et la faculté j'ai appris par cœur les vers de presque tous les poètes que j'aimais - et je sais encore aujourd'hui par cœur (les gens qui me connaissent savent que ce n'est pas une exagération) surtout les vers de Blaga, Barbu, Bacovia, Voronca et Arghezi, mais également de NichitaStănescu et Dimov. Barbu et Bacovia – quasi-intégralement¹⁴.

Au début, les pratiques de lecture, arrêt obligatoire pour s'assurer les fondations légitimatrices et le savoir réflexif du champ, sont non-dirigées (« je lisais pêle-mêle, un bouquin sur Edison et un autre sur les cachalots »¹⁵), mais elles semblent rythmées dès l'adolescence par la même facilité de mémoriser des vers.

¹⁴ Mircea Cărtărescu, « Cum am devenit poet » [« Comment je suis devenu poète »], daté 1983, in *Pururi tânăr, înfășurat în pixeli* [*Jeune à jamais, drapé en pixels*], București, Humanitas, 2003, p. 62.

¹⁵ Mircea Cărtărescu, « Cum m-am trezit pe lume » [« Comment je me suis éveillé au monde »], in *Pururi tânăr*, p. 10.

Apprendre par cœur c'est déjà la marque de familiarité avec l'univers de la poésie : « En lisant l'anthologie de la poésie roumaine moderne, que j'ai appris par cœur très rapidement, je suis entré pour la première fois dans le *feeling* différent de la poésie (pour laquelle, même si j'avais déjà mis ensemble quelques poésies, je ne manifestais encore trop d'intérêt) »¹⁶. La sonorité semble y être la marque essentielle de ce début : la poésie signifie premièrement la perception du rythme et même de la cadence, puisque le lycéen lit en marchant : « Quand j'étais gamin de lycée, je ne lisais que de la poésie, à peu près. Je me souviens que même pendant les récré, [...] je sortais de la cour du lycée vers les petites ruelles d'alentour [...] avec un volume de poésie à la main et je lisais passionnément »¹⁷. Moins d'une décennie après le premier volume de Cărtărescu, l'un des mentors des quatre-vingtards, Ov. S. Crohmălniceanu, fonde son verdict également sur la force sonore de ses vers, qui, selon une confession intime du poète-même, acquéraient un corps sonore dès le moment de leur mise en écriture :

[II] pratique une poésie imbibée de concret aussi parce qu'il mise sur son éloquence et, par conséquent, il lui imprime un mouvement évidemment oratoire. [...] Habitué à lire dans des cénacles, Cărtărescu se confessait : quand il couche ses vers sur le papier, son oreille les entend simultanément en récitation et, selon lui, personne ne serait plus capable de les lire que lui-même [...]¹⁸.

Dans le premier poème du volume de 1980, *La chute*, les sonorités se déclinent dans de multiples versions : ruptures de rythme d'une section à la suivante, fragments à rime, constructions de pastiches sonore – des 'sons' identifiables de la poésie roumaine moderne (Tudor Arghezi, Ion Barbu, Ilarie Voronca, Ștefan Augustin Doinaș), des insertions citationnelles, des noms des personnages de source classique¹⁹. La carte des références s'étend, dans un mouvement agglutinant, des malédictions populaires en monorime²⁰ et des versifications de *Psaumes* dans la langue roumaine de 1673²¹ jusqu'aux insertions en latin. La première insertion de ce type vient achever un tableau des sonorités graves :

Les cloches pulsent, se remplissent d'une écume marine et de la végétation
désespérément bleue enfoncée dans la poitrine

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

¹⁷ Mircea Cărtărescu, « Farmecul discret al poeziei » [« Le charme discret de la poésie »], in *Pururi tânăr*, p. 73.

¹⁸ Ov. S. Crohmălniceanu, « Euphorion redivivus », in *Al doilea suflu [Le deuxième souffle]*, București, Cartea Românească, 1989, p. 78.

¹⁹ Parmi d'autres : Aspemantus, le personnage de *Timon d'Athènes* de W. Shakespeare (p. 25 dans l'édition intégrale paru chez Humanitas en 2015), Sycorax, la mère-sorcière de Caliban (p. 30), l'énumération incantatoire de démons de l'Apocalypse (Adramalech, Astaroth, Abaddana, Thammuz, Urian, Leviathan et Valafar, p. 32), quelques extraits de lettres de Pline le Jeune, épitaphes de chapitres de *Tristram Shandy* (p. 31).

²⁰ Mircea Cărtărescu, *Căderea [La Chute]*, in *Poezia [La Poésie]*, București, Humanitas, 2015, p. 31.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 27.

des oiseaux des mers coniques dans la lumière [...]
 « melos, qui veut dire moys »
 et il y avait aussi le son comme le murmure
 d'un ruisseau qui jaillissait dans cette vallée-là
 et qui devenait plus loin le fleuve Huang-Ho.
 les modulations de l'eau
 « musicam quasi moduficam, id est amodulatione »
 moys, et dans le globe oculaire les humeurs bouillissent²².

Reprise presque intacte du *Tractatus de musica* de Jérôme de Moravie²³, l'insertion fait écho à la dominante stylistique du poème, qui est la matérialité perceptive de la sonorité rythmée et de l'imagisme vibrant. À la cadence alluvionnaire de ce poème ample vient s'ajouter le visuel luxuriant, d'une tridimensionnalité presque palpable dans le texte. Les témoignages du jeune poète enregistrent également le processus de ce devenir matériel du vers – le réel du monde devient encore plus réel une fois transplanté en imagination :

à cette époque je regardais un couvercle de stylo ou un taille-crayon sur ma table si intensément et si impersonnellement que tout disparaissait autour de moi et ces objets s'élevaient entièrement dans mon regard, vus simultanément dans toutes leurs dimensions et saisis à la fermeté du toucher et au chimisme de leurs surfaces en métal et en plastique comme s'ils n'étaient pas en dehors de mon corps, mais comme s'ils lévitaient – et ils lèvitent, du vrai – dans l'air doré de mon cerveau²⁴.

La Chute est, à son tour, appris par cœur et récité en solitude, « avec une expression sombre, dans mes égarements à travers les rues de Buzești ou de Dămăroaia, dans la ville caniculaire. [...] Je n'avais pas écrit une meilleure poésie jusqu'à ce moment-là »²⁵. La deuxième récitation est dans le Cénacle de Lundi, en 1978, sans aucun changement par rapport à la version de 1976. Selon le souvenir du mentor de cénacle, N. Manolescu, l'auditoire reste muet devant la vague sonore et visuelle : « on ne pouvait plus respirer à cause du *crescendo*. Aucun commentaire de cénacle n'était plus possible pour un poème comme celui-ci. Je me suis contenté à signaler l'originalité du langage et de confier qu'à partir d'un moment, je m'étais senti comme cloué dans la chaise [...] »²⁶.

Le même poème qui ouvre le premier volume est celui dont l'articulation simultanée conduite-discours trouve l'une de ses expressions les plus claires – mais

²² *Ibidem*, p. 18.

²³ Fratris Ieronimi de Moravia, « Tractatus de Musica », in Edmond de Coussemaker, *Musica mediævii. Novas Seriem a Gerbertina Alteram*, Tomus I, Paris, A. Durand, 1864, p. 5 : « Aliimusicam, quasi moduficam, id est a modulatione. Aliimusicam, quasi moysicam, a moys, quod est acqua ».

²⁴ Mircea Cărtărescu, « Pentru D., *vingt ans après* » [« Pour D., *vingt ans après* »], in *Pururi tânăr*, p. 56.

²⁵ Mircea Cărtărescu, « La aniversară » [« À un anniversaire »], in *Pururi tânăr*, p. 120.

²⁶ Nicolae Manolescu, « Mircea Cărtărescu. *Faruri, vitrine. fotografii* » [« Mircea Cărtărescu. *Phares, vitrines, photos* »], in *Literatura română postbelică. Poezia [La littérature roumaine d'après la deuxième guerre mondiale. La Poésie]*, Braşov, Aula, 2001, p. 392.

non seulement dans son développement des visionnarismes perceptifs, mais, avec moins de raffinement, dans son titre. Il n'y a que peu de commentaires sur le nom qui donne le titre du poème – et la plupart d'entre eux le mettent en rapport avec la référence biblique²⁷. Mais, dans sa propre mise en scène, Cărtărescu sélectionne son moment d'éveil vers le monde, le moment auroral de la prise-de-conscience du soi, à propos d'une autre chute – la lecture de *La Chute* d'Albert Camus :

Je connais le jour et l'heure, peut-être même la seconde où l'événement astral de ma vie, aussi important que ma conception, que ma naissance. J'étais plongé dans *La Chute* de Camus. Je percevais très vaguement le changement de la lumière autour de moi : le soir tombait. Le papier de mauvaise qualité, jaune, du bouquin tirait sur l'orange. Les peupliers de la cour en ruine frémissaient. Et, tout d'un coup, je me suis rendu compte pour la première fois dans ma vie que j'existais. J'ai levé mes yeux en dessus des pages : voilà, j'existais ! À partir de cette seconde et pas du tout avant, quelqu'un avec le nom de Mircea Cărtărescu était présent dans le monde. [...] Le récit de Camus ne signifiait rien de plus pour ce qui m'arrivait que le foin, les araignées, les peupliers, le tomber du soleil. Mais *La Chute* a été le premier texte que j'ai vraiment compris²⁸.

Le premier texte compris et le premier texte écrit portent le même nom – et la posture qui commence à se construire depuis ce moment est la posture d'un poète pour lequel entre le réel et la création artistique il y a des frontières friables et permissives. Qui plus est, le vrai monde, plus rationnel et plus confortable, semble la fiction : « le drame de ma vie a commencé plus tard, quand au lieu du Livre j'ai été forcé à vivre la réalité »²⁹.

3. *Métier Poète : Le Levant et la consécration*³⁰

Avec l'analyse des indices posturaux du poème *Le Levant* (1990), qui emprunte le modèle de l'épopée et qui mélange tout au long de ses douze chants des périodes historiquement diverses de la poésie roumaine, on essaie de rendre plus visible la posture intratextuelle de l'artiste en train d'édifier sa consécration littéraire. Les représentations de la fonction-auteur et la composition des

²⁷ Voir, par exemple, Emilia David, *Poezia generației 80 : intertextualitate și « performance »* [*La poésie de la génération 80 : intertextualité et « performance »*], București, Muzeul Literaturii Române, 2016, pp. 253-263.

²⁸ Mircea Cărtărescu, « Cum m-am trezit pe lume », pp. 11-12.

²⁹ Mircea Cărtărescu, « Ruina unei utopii » [« La ruine d'une utopie »], in *Ochiul căprui al dragostei noastre* [*L'œil brun de notre amour*], București, Humanitas, 2012, p. 202.

³⁰ Cette section reprend, partiellement et avec quelques modifications, les axes de la première partie de mon chapitre « Când poetul știe meserie » [« Quand le poète connaît son métier »], in Oana Fotache, Cosmin Ciotloș (eds.), *Harta și legenda. Mircea Cărtărescu în 22 de lecturi* [*La carte et la légende. Mircea Cărtărescu en 22 lectures*], București, Muzeul Literaturii române, 2020, pp. 113-127.

« scénographies auctoriales »³¹ y vont de pair avec les choix formels : le cadre narratif du voyage, le pastiche du modèle de l'épopée, le jeu permanent de reprises des sonorités poétiques historiquement circonscrites et offertes au lecteur afin d'être reconnues et revalorisées dans leur nouvel usage. L'autoportrait complexe qui en résulte est celui d'un poète qui 'connaît son métier', qui maîtrise ses outils, qui a bien appris l'histoire de sa guilde, qui est familier avec les rigueurs, les responsabilités et les clichés de son travail ; qui plus est, il rend visible tout ce multiple savoir d'un bout à l'autre du poème. La fréquence et la diversité de ces représentations probatoires et probantes dépassent le cadre d'une représentation auctorielle devenue habituelle en littérature dès le début de l'époque moderne, quand « la figuration de l'auteur (mais aussi du *lecteur* et du *livre* [...]) est une nécessité de toute consommation littéraire »³². Avec *Le Levant*, on y va plus loin : le poème consacre définitivement son auteur à travers la suite d'autoreprésentations en figure auctorielle qui appartient complètement et définitivement à l'histoire poétique dont les actualisations composent *Le Levant*. Cette longue série articule un double étalage de légitimations : celle apportée par l'appel à des formes poétiques, majoritairement roumaines, aux propriétés valorisantes (elles sont censées d'ailleurs fournir la matière pour le plus classicisant modèle du genre, l'épopée) et celle qui met en valeur la figure du poète astucieux, à l'ingéniosité explosive – une catégorie à part dans la série des attributs des poètes esthétisants – qui se montre capable à maîtriser toutes ces formes poétiques et à organiser leurs références dans une image cohérente.

À force de jouer sur le modèle de l'épopée, la mise en forme doit porter à son tour les indices de la cohésion : ce « temple dans une pierre de halva »³³ suit le trajet ponctuel du récit de voyage. Dans l'Orient du début du XIX^e siècle, une bande d'insoumis en quête de liberté, chacun avec son destin picaresque, traverse les îles de Grèce et arrivent dans une Valachie sous l'emprise phanariote. La carte géographique fait écho à une carte des formes et des âges poétiques de la littérature roumaine et, dans une moindre mesure, de celle universelle : citations exactes et inexactes, pastiches, structures formelles homologues, sonorités similaires et remaniements plus ou moins transparentes, une totalité composite offerte pour être reconnue et valorisée dans sa diversité amalgamée. *Le Levant* étale dans ses pages une impressionnante série de savoirs philologiques, réunis sous les signes de la familiarité et de la simplicité – opérations qui signalent, à leur tour, un certain ethos

³¹ V. José-Luis Diaz, *L'Écrivain imaginaire. Scénographies auctoriales à l'époque romantique*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2007.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 26.

³³ Mircea Cărtărescu, *Le Levant*. Traduit du roumain par Nicolas Cavaillès. Paris, P.O.L., 2014, p. 144. Puisque, selon la note du traducteur, « le texte donné ici traduit une version du livre remaniée par l'auteur, sensiblement différente, donc, de l'édition originale roumaine », on indiquera en note également la version roumaine (selon Mircea Cărtărescu, *Levantul*. Notes, commentaires, glossaire et postface de Cosmin Ciotloș, București, Humanitas, 2016). Pour la citation ci-dessus : « templu într-o stâncă de halva », édition roumaine, p. 149.

du vrai *connaisseur*, du poète qui maîtrise d'autant plus son métier qu'il est capable à l'exercer en faisant paraître facile.

Les héros du poème – Manoïl, jeune idéaliste nourri aux idées de la Révolution française, les fougueuses Zénaïde et Zoé, Sieur Iaurta le pirate, Léonidas, inventeur des mécanismes et machineries sorties tout droit du *steam punk*, le zouave Languedoc Brillant et tant d'autres – ne peuvent voyager seuls, orphelins de leur auteur, que peu de temps. La figuration du poème en tant que tel, création autosuffisante dans sa singularité, se montre fragile. Le premier indice que l'on se trouve à l'intérieur d'un montage, dans une mise en récit dont l'auteur doit se faire reconnaître en tant qu'auteur, arrive très tôt dans le poème, dès le premier chant, quand un aparté de la voix narrative signale une erreur dans le dosage de l'action : « Mais, effendi narrateur, tu t'es emballé d'un chouïa dans ta diégèse, et tu en as trop dit. Mieux vaut retourner là où nous en sommes restés [...] »³⁴. Dès le quatrième chant, l'autoréférentialité gagne définitivement son droit de cité, avec un arsenal complet : adresse directe, en nom propre, au lecteur (ici, une lectrice, puisque ce chant est dédié, comme dans les albums de salon, à une « douce vierge »), négation de l'omniscience, autfiguration du poète inspiré, qui reçoit la poésie au pied levé :

Douce vierge, je ne te mentirai pas d'une once de cumin : ce fier personnage est né d'un coup de poing donné dans la table. Je n'avais jusqu'alors jamais ouï dire qu'il vécût en Orient un certain Languedoc Brillant, ce zouave, car *je ne suis point omniscient*. Et si je ne t'ai rien dit de lui dans le troisième chant, c'est que *moi-même, le poète, je n'étais pas prêt à comprendre sa présence*³⁵.

L'indice postural intratextuel – le poète visité par la révélation inspiratrice, artiste qui ne sait rien sur sa création avant ce moment auroral – va de pair avec le témoignage de Cărtărescu sur le processus d'écriture du poème même : « c'est dans ce moment-là que j'ai su : je ne voulais pas écrire des poésies distinctes, mais un grand poème en alexandrins [...]. Je n'ai eu aucun plan, aucune idée de ce que je voulais faire. Pendant une année et demi, j'ai écrit environ sept mille vers »³⁶.

À partir de l'aveu du quatrième chant, *Le Levant* déroule une série chronologiquement supplémentaire : son trajet ne suit pas seulement l'histoire des formes poétiques autochtones, mais également l'évolution historique de la fonction-auteur. Point de départ obligatoire dans l'étalage chronologique, l'omniscience reprend sa force : dans le cinquième chant, les personnages effrayés

³⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 9-10. Édition roumaine, p. 18 : « Dar, efendi narator/ Cam grăbiși cu diegesis și te luă gura-nainte/ Să purcedem dar din locul ce-l lăsarăm [...] ».

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 56, s. m. Édition roumaine, p. 58 : « Ca să nu te miț, fecioară, nici cât bobul cel de chimen,/ Dintr-un pumn izbit în masă născu mândrul ipochimen./ Nu gândisem pân-atunce că să află-n Orient/ Languedoc Brillant, zuavul, căci nu sunt omniscient./ Și de nu ți-am spus încântultreile, e că n-am fost/ Însumi eu, poeticescul, pregătit să-i dau de rost ».

³⁶ Mircea Cărtărescu, *O, Levant, Levant ferice [Oh, Levant, heureux Levant]*, avant-propos de l'auteur à l'édition roumaine de 2004, repris dans Mircea Cărtărescu, *Levantul*, p. 8.

entrevoyent en haut des cieux un œil qui, pour eux, ressemble à celui du bon Dieu³⁷, mais qui se révèle comme l'œil auctorial³⁸, muni du droit divin de surveiller sa création tout en gardant sa distance pour ne pas troubler les aventures des êtres dont il est responsable. La série, rigoureuse dans l'enchaînement des chants, continue avec la scénographie moderniste, déclinée dans la représentation du poète qui travaille incessamment la forme expressive, toujours troublé par l'amère prise de conscience que la littérature n'est qu'une illusion :

prenant pour comptant tout ce qui dans ce livre n'est que ruse et illusion, technique que j'essaie désespérément de maîtriser : je taille des émeraudes, j'entoure des saphirs de dentelles de fil d'or, mais qu'est-ce qui est poésie ? qu'est-ce qui est seulement bricolage de brindilles et d'ornements collés sur une coupe dorée ?³⁹.

Finalement, le neuvième chant accomplit le trajet à travers la plus puissante technique d'autoreprésentation, la métalepse auctoriale : l'Auteur, figuré en pleine acte d'écriture (en tapant le poème à la machine à écrire) est arraché par le personnage Manoïl (« à moitié sorti de son épopée comme un gardien de but de water-polo »⁴⁰), et tiré dans le monde du texte, où il va rester pendant plusieurs chants. Mircea-dans-le-texte c'est le moment de grâce – violent, en brouillant les conventions narratives et en détruisant même la mise en page, jusque-là très soignée – de l'autoreprésentation intratextuelle, qui modifie les rapports de force entre l'auteur et ses personnages. La réponse symétrique – les personnages qui font irruption dans le monde de l'Auteur, un appartement bucarestois banal et froid de la fin des années 1980 – est également présent, une dizaine de pages après.

La scénographie auctorielle de ces scènes compose avec la dualité auteur/personne civile, en prolongeant la division spécifiquement romantique de la figure du poète, « être chimérique [...] à la fois corps souffrant et Dieu »⁴¹. La référence romantique est renforcée par une figuration de l'écrivain en train d'écrire⁴², qui renvoie à travers ses détails physiques à la plus célèbre photo du

³⁷ Mircea Cărtărescu, *Le Levant*, p. 76 : « Tenez, je vous l'avais dit ! Voilà le bon Dieu ! ». Édition roumaine, p. 79 : « Ce v-am zis? E Dumnezeu! ».

³⁸ *Ibidem* : « L'œil apparu entre les nuages n'était pas celui de Dieu, mais le mien, hasardant un regard indiscret entre les pages de mon œuvre comme le biologiste observe des insectes au microscope. [...] si je veux inventer un monde vivant, je n'ai le droit ni de le toucher ni de le regarder, à aucun moment ». Édition roumaine, pp. 79-80 : « cel ochiu ce o clipă în poema-mi se ivi/ Al lui Dumnezeu nu fuse, ci al meu, care luci/ Uitătură indiscretă între pagine de op./ Cum privește biologul goangele la microscop. [...] de vreu o lume vie să o ticluiesc/ Nice voie am vreodată nici s-ating, nici să privesc ».

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 104. Édition roumaine, p. 107 : « Luând dă bune tot ce-n opu-mi doarilusie, tertipu-i./ Meșterșug ce-n desperare tot încerc a stăpâni./ Bat smaragde, pun safire în horbote aurii./ Dar ce iaste poesie și ce iaste doar lipit/ Dătortite, fioriture pă pocalul daurit? ».

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 164. Édition roumaine, p. 166 : « ia uite-l cum stă pe jumătate în epopée ca un portar de polo ».

⁴¹ José-Luis Diaz, *L'écrivain imaginaire*, p. 4.

⁴² Mircea Cărtărescu, *Le Levant*, p. 160 : « L'espace d'un instant, dans le carré ainsi ouvert dans Le Levant, j'apparais moi-même en train de taper le neuvième chant à la machine : un visage oblong, une

poète national Mircea Eminescu et également aux vers de la *Lettre III* de ce dernier, texte canonique de l'enseignement roumain. La figure tutélaire du poète national infuse le poème dans plusieurs instances, plus ou moins transparentes : de la reprise graphique des lignes interrompues qui ponctuent le chemin entre deux mondes d'un autre corps souffrant – le 'pauvre' Dionis, personnage de la nouvelle homonyme d'Eminescu – jusqu'à l'image qui ouvre la série des statues parlantes des poètes qui composent le canon didactique de la poétique roumaine (Mihai Eminescu, Tudor Arghezi, Ion Barbu, G. Bacovia, Lucian Blaga, Nichita Stănescu). Cette série s'achève, dans un mouvement définitif d'auto-consécration, avec la statue de Cărtărescu même, statue parlante « en verre polie » qui ne se donne pas à voir. Ce « dernier grand poète de ce siècle »⁴³ récite justement les premiers vers du *Levant* – et, avec cet épisode, la série d'auto-mises en scène valorisantes atteint son climax, en accomplissant la véritable « manière de se faire son propre héraut, en se traitant soi-même comme une allégorie »⁴⁴.

Inventaire historique des formes poétiques, aveu dans la force de l'illusion littéraire et enchaînements des autoreprésentations à des fins valorisantes, *Le Levant* établit l'aboutissement du trajet de consécration du poète Cărtărescu. Après 1990, l'écrivain dirigera sa pratique littéraire vers le genre de la prose, avec une activité de romancier en voie d'internationalisation.

4. Ne crie jamais à l'aide – le minimalisme de la détresse

Pendant trois décennies (1990–2020), la pratique littéraire de Mircea Cărtărescu exclue presque complètement la poésie. Après la parution du *Levant*, il fait publier une trilogie romanesque, *Orbitor* (1996–2007), et un autre roman massif, *Solenoïde* (2015), plusieurs recueils de proses et une série de quatre *Journaux* intimes (2005–2018). Ces derniers, minutieux enregistrements des tribulations d'un écrivain solitaire, qui s'efforce à rester fidèle à sa croyance dans la littérature comme acte pure et gratuit, peuvent être lus également comme documents de 'chantier' pour les romans, en révélant l'entier processus d'écriture de ces volumes dans ses moindres détails. C'est la figure de l'écrivain toujours travaillé par le doute, qui se questionne fébrilement pendant la création, méfient et incessamment épouvanté par le spectre d'un éventuel échec, qui se rend visible tout au long des journaux – une conduite d'écrivain en détresse qui va faire écho à la voix poétique du plus récent volume de poèmes de Mircea Cărtărescu, *Nu striga niciodată ajutor* [*Ne crie jamais à l'aide*].

joue frêle, des yeux obsédés par eux-mêmes, qui se renversent constamment sur soi. Mais Léonidas recoud sans tarder la faille avec du fil [...] ». Édition roumaine, p. 163 : « Preț de-o clipă, în cotlonul/ Deschis astfel în *Levantul* apărui chiar eu, bățând/ La mașină cântul nouă, chip prelung, obraz plâpând./ Ochi ce obsedați de sine doar spre sine se întort./ Dară Leonidas coase gaura c-un fir de tort ».

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 130. Édition roumaine, p. 139 : « ultimul poetic însemnat dăna vacul cari/ Va să vie [...] ».

⁴⁴ José-Luis Diaz, *L'écrivain imaginaire*, p. 44.

Les indices de cette conduite dysphorique s'accumulent également en dehors de l'écriture intime des journaux. Dans plusieurs articles de presse – réunis dans des recueils parus tout au long de ces décennies⁴⁵ – l'écrivain façonne graduellement la mise en scène d'un soi-même mélancolique et solitaire, qui n'arrive plus à comprendre les ressorts du monde contemporain et qui en reste stupéfait devant son spectacle dégradant. À ce qu'il ressent comme agression permanente du quotidien vient s'ajouter la violence des polémiques littéraires et politiques au centre desquelles il se trouve pendant plusieurs années. Les marques posturales de l'écrivain-journaliste – pour lequel l'écriture de presse reste un travail alimentaire, qui doit être néanmoins pratiqué en raison du devoir envers le public et de l'amour pour la vérité – articulent l'ethos de l'écrivain esthète à la figure publique du journaliste 'de conscience', voix intellectuelle engagée et responsable pour le bien commun :

Maintes fois, pendant ces années, je me suis posé la question : pourquoi j'écris des articles de presse ? L'une des réponses, et la plus triste, est à la portée de main : pour survivre. C'est la raison pour laquelle la plupart des écrivains roumains, pendant plus d'un siècle, ont pratiqué l'écriture de presse. Mais il y en a quelque chose de plus. Si on a la conviction, même illusoire, d'être capable d'améliorer le monde, si on discerne encore le bien dans la boue généralisée, si on garde l'espoir de trouver quelqu'un de non-corrompu, une personne ou une force qui veut et qui peut faire sortir du marasme notre malheureuse nation, alors la presse politique vaut le coup. Même si on sait parfaitement que tu gaspillais ainsi des années fructueuses, ta voix sera entendue et elle prendra peut-être un certain sens pour les gens – et cette pensée te reconforte⁴⁶.

Le contrecoup de ces années d'écriture de presse, qui assure à Cărtărescu un lectorat divers, bien différencié par rapport à ses lecteurs de fiction, et une visibilité mitigée dans un espace public divisé, se rend manifeste dans l'accumulation des marques du repli sur soi : les repères du monde extérieur sont figurés comme étant de plus en plus fragiles, l'incompréhension du quotidien s'accroît et l'autoreprésentation en tant qu'écrivain mal-aimé devient dominante, avec un *lamento* progressif :

[après la lecture des revues littéraires] tu reviens vers ta tanière en pleurs, affligé, ravagé – et cela dure des jours et des jours. Au début, tu te demandais qu'est-ce qu'on avait fait de mal à ce gens-là [...]. Et puis tu t'es rendu compte que tout manquait de sens : tu n'es pas ostracisé pour une culpabilité réversible, mais tu es devenu une sorte d'adversaire 'objectif', un ennemi naturel dont les données psychologiques ou éthiques n'ont aucune importance. [...] Pendant la canicule, comme c'est le cas aujourd'hui, ton cerveau rumine sans interruption ces pensées. Pourquoi ? Pourquoi

⁴⁵ Une sélection de ces articles à parution hebdomadaire (dans des quotidiens généralistes, entre 2004 et 2012) est reprise dans les volumes *Baroane ! [Baron !]*, București, Humanitas, 2005, et *Peisaj după isterie [Paysage après l'hystérie]*, București, Humanitas, 2017.

⁴⁶ Mircea Cărtărescu, « Tanda sau manda ? » [« C'est la même Jeannette ? »], in *Peisaj după isterie*, p. 98.

t'ont-ils aimé (ou au moins ils t'ont respecté, ce qui est presque la même chose) jusqu'il y a quelques années, et maintenant ils te haïssent tant ?⁴⁷

Le versant intratextuel de cette conduite d'écrivain qui accumule les angoisses et qui met en scène sa tourmente solitaire se rend visible dans le retour de Mircea Cărtărescu à la poésie, en 2020. Le bouleversement des rythmes de la vie pendant le confinement et la crise sanitaire composent la toile de fond du volume *Ne crie jamais à l'aide*, qui comprend une centaine de poèmes brefs, aux titres transparents (*une attaque de panique*, p. 23, *seul comme un chien*, p. 33, *je n'attends plus que ma propre mort*, p. 60, *je ne veux plus être dans le monde*, p. 123, etc.) et dont le minimalisme de l'expression signale une rupture évidente avec les formes d'expression antérieures dans la pratique poétique de Mircea Cărtărescu. Le rejet de l'ornement, l'abandon du travail minutieux sur la forme du vers, l'énonciation brutalement dénudée, le manque de toute médiation de style – tout renvoie à une formule poétique qui cherche à représenter la détresse d'un écrivain en crise anxieuse et en délaissement de grâce poétique.

L'exclusion de tout 'style' semble définitive et irrévocable, et d'autant plus le rejet d'une certaine tradition poétique :

je jette sur le feu/ de grands mots/ qui crépitent bêtement/ depuis plus d'un siècle/
images/ comparaisons/ parables/ allégories/ je jette sur le feu/ des façons et des
snobismes/ tournures de phrases/ paroles remâchées/qui viennent d'autres paroles déjà
mâchées/ des millions de livres/ qui imitent d'autres livres [...]⁴⁸.

Un seul indice formel reste actif et reconnaissable comme partie résistante du répertoire poétique : la sonorité cadencée du vers, ancien trait réactivé même en conditions d'ascétisme maximal de la forme. La cadence apporte de l'ordre dans cet univers détraqué et hanté par la fin, elle organise et donne du rythme à la détresse, en introduisant une temporalité et une certaine mesure (dans le sens musical du mot) dans le désarroi. Dans la matière du volume il n'y a que très peu de poèmes qui échappent à la lourde figuration de l'angoisse toute puissante⁴⁹ – et pour chacun d'entre eux le principe structurant reste la cadence des répétitions, qui mettent de l'ordre et rythment le tout, en limitant l'incertitude :

même si le tout/ n'était que// même si le tout n'était que/ vie/ amour/ mort/
impuissance/ même si le tout/ n'était que vie/ amour, mort, impuissance/ même alors/
même alors/ je nouerais mes lacets/ je couperais mes ongles/ j'écrirais mes lettres de
l'alphabet/ même alors/ je mangerais ma nourriture/ je boirais ma boisson/ je
dormirais mon sommeil// même alors/ même alors⁵⁰.

⁴⁷ Mircea Cărtărescu, « Une divagation... », in *Pururi tânăr*, p. 193.

⁴⁸ Mircea Cărtărescu, *Nu striga niciodată ajutor* [*Ne crie jamais à l'aide*], p. 99 : « puisque c'est le dernier jour ».

⁴⁹ Mircea Cărtărescu, *chiar și dacă totul* [*même si le tout*] (p. 64), *vino* [*viens*] (p. 104), *apăsam cu degetele* [*j'appuyais avec les doigts*] (p. 118).

⁵⁰ Mircea Cărtărescu, *Chiar și dacă totul* [*même si le tout*], in *Nu striga niciodată ajutor*, p. 64.

La sonorité et la cadence – indices de la prédisposition innée vers la poésie – qui s’entend et de la pratique continuelle du vers de type phonique, dès les années du début en poésie – donnent l’image de la résistance d’un choix expressif même en condition d’épuration formelle totale et programmatique.

Qui plus est, la résistance de la sonorité intratextuelle va de pair avec la persistance d’un autre indice postural, lié cette fois à la mise en scène du soi créateur de Mircea Cărtărescu : la posture de l’écrivain sans plan et sans contrôle conscient de sa création, poète inspiré, qui reçoit le poème en tant que longue dictée venue d’ailleurs. On y est devant une reprise partielle de la scénographie tardo-romantique que J.-L. Diaz identifie comme « la paratopie mélancolique »⁵¹, circonscrite spatialement dans la solitude, qui « préfère la voix, et plus encore cette voix harmonieuse qu’est le chant, à l’écriture »⁵² et qui choisit comme dispositif énonciatif l’élégie.

Dans plusieurs entretiens et interviews de l’année 2020, après la parution du volume de poèmes, Mircea Cărtărescu reprend cette autoreprésentation du poète-médium : « ce livre m’a été dicté, comme tous mes livres m’ont été dictés »⁵³ ; « Ce volume a tombé sur moi à l’improviste. [...] j’ai été purement et simplement saisi et jeté dans la poésie. [...] Un jour je me suis assis à ma table de travail et je me suis mis à écrire. Et dans ce jour-là j’ai écrit plus de vingt poèmes. D’un coup. En environ six heures »⁵⁴. Résistante, cette auto-mise en scène du soi fait écho à celle, presque identiquement phrasée, de l’avant-propos du *Levant* : la création fait irruption dans le quotidien et le poète devient un vase, un instrument d’écriture dont la seule action est de coucher sur le papier, mot-à-mot, ce qu’il entend. Tous les éléments d’une écriture intensément ritualisée dans sa configuration médiumnique y sont repris : la ‘dictée’ prend corps à travers une écriture à la main, presque sans ratures, dans des cahiers qui sont remplis un à un, « comme dans une transe » :

Aujourd’hui j’ai fini le cahier de 400 pages, aux couvertures en plastique bleu, où j’avais commencé le troisième volume d’*Orbitor*. J’ai écrit comme dans une transe,

⁵¹ José-Luis Diaz, « Paratopies romantiques », *COntEXTES*, 2013, 13, dossier thématique *L’ethos en question*, <https://journals.openedition.org/contextes/5786?lang=en>. Consulté le 11 mai 2021.

⁵² *Ibidem*.

⁵³ Vidéo-interview de Magda Grădinaru, *Spotmedia*, le 25 décembre 2020, <https://spotmedia.ro/stiri/social/mircea-cartarescu-despre-scrierea-terapeutica-a-cartii-care-l-a-vindecat-dupa-covid-despre-frici-depresie-si-pisica-oarba-si-zen-ca-un-batran-chinez-interviu-video>. Consulté le 3 septembre 2021.

⁵⁴ Audio-interview de Anca Mateescu et Diana Jocalciuc, *La radio-revue littéraire*, Radio România Cultural, le 13 septembre 2020, <https://www.radioromaniacultural.ro/revista-literara-radio-cu-anca-mateescu-si-diana-jocalciuc/?fbclid=IwAR2nLSqBYynMdEf2Y3quUllsZmjDKTElXYiWMIFnuh1LZxy7X1pX2Buktuw>. Consulté le 3 septembre 2021.

les pensées – non, mon être entier – n'étant qu'ailleurs (ou nulle part), en laissant le livre, encore une fois, se faire par lui-même [...]»⁵⁵.

Pendant quatre décennies d'activité poétique, le trajet postural de Mircea Cărtărescu réunit quelques indices posturaux résistants (l'attention aux sonorités et aux résonances du vers, l'autoreprésentation en tant que poète qui connaît l'histoire, les instruments et les formes de son métier, la mise en scène de l'inspiration comme moteur essentiel de la création, dont il ne possède aucun contrôle conscient). Ces indices, déclinés et repris tout au long de ses volumes de vers, construisent une image-auteur qui superpose des éléments tardo-romantiques et post-modernes, dans un syncrétisme assez surprenant, mais constant et cohésif.

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⁵⁵ Mircea Cărtărescu, *Zen. Jurnal (2004–2010)* [*Zen. Journal (2004–2010)*], București, Humanitas, 2011, p. 245. Notation du 17 novembre 2006.

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SAVOIR-FAIRE. SOUND AND POETICAL CRAFT IN MIRCEA CĂRTĂRESCU'S POSTURAL TRAJECTORY

(Abstract)

During a forty years-long literary career, Mircea Cărtărescu composes his authorial identity through a few – and almost emblematic – textual self-figurations: singular self in a fluctuating and fragile relationship with the world; reflexive creator highlighting the hyper-investment in the infinite powers of literature; intratextual identity tormented by doubt, even if he already possesses, at least in the last decade, the signs of a growing national and international success. By choosing three moments from the poetic career of Mircea Cărtărescu (his first poetry book, *Headlights, Shop Windows, Photos*, 1980; the skilful replay of Balkan epos *The Levant*, 1990; and his most recent poetry book, *Never cry for help*, 2020), the article aims to identify some visible and resistant postural representations in Cărtărescu's poetic discourse, gathered around a specific postural image: the poet as craftsman and connoisseur, acknowledging his everlasting 'love for poetry' (through a post-romantic and simultaneously postmodern heritage) and constantly proving his mastery.

Keywords: postural trajectory, auctorial identity, Romanian post-war poetry, Mircea Cărtărescu.

SAVOIR-FAIRE. POSTURĂ ȘI „MESERIE” POETICĂ ÎN POEZIA LUI
MIRCEA CĂRTĂRESCU

(Rezumat)

De-a lungul celor patruzeci de ani de carieră poetică, Mircea Cărtărescu își declină identitatea auctorială prin intermediul unor autofigurări textuale devenite aproape emblematice: eu singular aflat în raport fluctuant și fragil cu lumea; creator ce își aproprie și care manevrează fără efort serii întregi de repere istorico-literare ale credinței în puterile infinite ale literaturii; identitate auctorială permanent măcinată de îndoieli, în ciuda semnalelor din ce în ce mai clare, cel puțin în ultimele două decenii, ale unui indubitabil succes național și internațional. Alegând trei momente cronologice distincte ale traseului poetic (*Faruri, vitrine, fotografii*, 1980; *Levantul*, 1990; *Nu striga niciodată ajutor*, 2020), articolul își propune să identifice diversele forme de reprezentare posturală a autorului și să alcătuiască un inventar al indicilor posturali care rezistă din momentul debutului până la cel mai recent volum de versuri. S-ar alcătui, astfel, un traseu postural ce s-ar cristaliza într-o imagine auctorială specifică: poetul „meseriaș”, cel care, crezând într-o neclintită „dragoste pentru poezie” (categorie cu dublă descendență, postromantică și postmodernă) probează constant că își cunoaște și meșteșugul, și istoria lui.

Cuvinte-cheie: postură auctorială, identitate poetică, poezie română postbelică, Mircea Cărtărescu.

L'ÉCRIVAIN FACE AU MONDE : LA CONDUITE DE MIRCEA CĂRTĂRESCU DANS LES ENTRETIENS POUR UN PUBLIC ANGLOPHONE

L'œuvre de l'auteur roumain Mircea Cărtărescu semble pénétrer de plus en plus dans l'espace littéraire mondial, au fur et à mesure que ses textes sont traduits à travers le monde. Suite à une première version en français du *Visul* [*Le Rêve*] en 1992, les traductions se multiplient à tous azimuts, la plus récente et plus prestigieuse à la fois étant la nouvelle édition de *Nostalgia* [*La Nostalgie*] chez Penguin Modern Classics, qui reprend une traduction de Julian Semilian. Les prix littéraires participent également à la consécration de l'auteur et sont parfois partagés avec les traducteurs. Par exemple, en 2012, la version en allemand d'*Orbitor* (trad. Gerhardt Csejka et Ferdinand Leopold) obtient le prix de *Haus der Kulturen der Welt*. En effet, les dix dernières années voient se produire cette distribution de l'œuvre, y compris la réception d'*Orbitor* à l'étranger, mais aussi le *breakthrough* de *Solénoïde*, notamment dans les espaces hispanophones (l'Espagne et l'Amérique latine) et en France. Ainsi, il est possible d'affirmer, suivant le schéma de Pascale Casanova, que l'auteur acquiert progressivement du capital symbolique à l'étranger, en suivant une trajectoire ascendante.

Cette visibilité récemment acquise correspond à la fois à un travail de distribution de l'œuvre qui bénéficie du soutien des institutions roumaines, comme le montre Delia Ungureanu¹, et à la présence de l'auteur dans l'espace mondial à travers non seulement ses textes littéraires, mais aussi d'entretiens auxquels il participe. Par la suite, je propose l'analyse d'une sélection d'entretiens parus en ligne entre 2011 et 2019 pour un public anglophone, afin de rendre visible quelques traits de la conduite sociale de l'auteur qui esquissent une posture littéraire possible, mais dont la complexité ne pourrait pas être comprise dans une seule réflexion. Ainsi, je reprends la définition des *postures* d'Alain Viala², qui insiste

¹ Delia Ungureanu, *From Paris to Tlön: Surrealism as World Literature*, New York, Bloomsbury Academic, 2017, pp. 266-267 : « Cărtărescu [...] benefited from State-sponsored cultural mechanisms developed to protect the autonomy of the literary field against market forces [...] As part of a collective project to translate twenty Romanian contemporary writers, Romania's National Book Center funded no fewer than twenty different translations of Cărtărescu's novels into Swedish, German, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Spanish, and English. ».

² Alain Viala, « Éléments de sociopoétique », dans Georges Molinié et Alain Viala (eds.), *Approches de la réception*, Paris, PUF, 1993, pp. 216-217 : « Il y a plusieurs façons de prendre et d'occuper une position. [...] En mettant en relation [la] trajectoire [d'un auteur] et les diverses postures (ou la continuité dans une même posture [...]) qui s'y manifestent, on dégagera la logique d'une stratégie littéraire ».

sur la relation étroite entre celles-ci et la trajectoire de l'œuvre, ainsi que la position dans l'espace littéraire. Or, lorsque l'on dépasse les limites du champ national (dans le sens de Pierre Bourdieu), le positionnement de l'auteur contemporain et de son œuvre n'est pas si facilement décelable d'un point de vue théorique, puisqu'il dépend toujours des variations du marché économique et symbolique qui pourraient être prédictibles, mais pas certaines.

Une analyse posturale, en revanche, peut rendre compte au moins d'une position virtuelle de l'auteur, telle qu'il l'imagine lui-même. Ainsi, en choisissant de se pencher sur la conduite de Mircea Cărtărescu en dehors des frontières nationales, nous nous proposons de mettre en lumière quelques traits liés à une posture littéraire potentielle, en identifiant ainsi des relais qui serviront à une réflexion plus approfondie sur la position de l'auteur dans l'espace littéraire mondial. Si une telle démarche est entamée, nous sommes pourtant d'avis que cela nécessite une considération élargie vers toute la figuration de l'auteur, y compris la conduite sociale dans les espaces national et mondial, ainsi que l'analyse du discours littéraire et paralittéraire.

L'entretien littéraire dans l'espace mondial

En esquissant les traits de ce que l'on pourrait nommer *l'entretien littéraire* (*literary interview*), Anneleen Masschelein *et al* insistent sur le caractère hybride du genre, puisque sa production se trouve au carrefour des médias, des types de discours et des luttes pour l'autorité de l'auteur. La définition qu'ils donnent à ce type de texte est assez ouverte³, mais le groupe de chercheurs identifie néanmoins deux conditions nécessaires afin que le texte puisse s'intégrer dans cette catégorie : la présence d'un *literary interlocutor*⁴ et le produit qui résume l'entretien dans une forme narrative⁵, supposant ainsi des modifications. Ces dernières sont essentielles car elles réduisent la spontanéité et potentiellement les répétitions ou les divagations, en produisant ainsi une image cohérente (et littérisée) de l'auteur qui fait l'objet (ou bien le sujet) de l'entretien.

D'après Atkinson et Silverman, on vit dans ce qu'ils nomment *interview society* et l'une des premières modifications que la croissance des entretiens

³ Anneleen Masschelein *et al.*, « The Literary Interview : Toward a Poetics of a Hybrid Genre », *Poetics Today*, 2014, 35, p. 3 : [Le *literary interview* renvoie aux] « personal interviews in both popular and more specialized literary media, such as are given by, or in some cases also conducted by, a literary author, that have some bearing on literature, its writing, or its experience ». Dans le même contexte, ils proposent le terme *entretien d'écrivain* pour l'espace francophone. Par la suite, on va utiliser seulement *entretien (littéraire)*.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 39 : « the literary interview is minimally determined by the presence of a literary interlocutor ».

⁵ *Ibidem* : « A second condition lies in the narrative form of the finished report and the literary or aesthetic qualities of the written interview ».

favorisent est « the emergence of self as a proper object of narration »⁶. Ainsi, il est possible d'entrevoir dans ce type de texte la fabrique d'une construction personnelle qui détruit le mythe romantique de l'unité biographique et de l'exploration immédiate dans les profondeurs d'une autre âme. Ce qui pourrait naturellement suivre de cette déconstruction est l'analyse de la conduite sociale d'un auteur, afin de rendre compte des techniques et des figures qu'il emploie dans le but de (se) représenter en distinguant et en singularisant sa propre image. Puisqu'un auteur contemporain et ses lecteurs partagent l'appartenance à ce paradigme, on peut supposer en contrepartie que l'entretien littéraire oblige à la formation d'une image que l'auteur se donne de lui-même à travers la figuration posturale face aux lecteurs (réels ou potentiels).

Si la distribution est le critère le plus important dans la visibilité de cette représentation, les entretiens auxquels un grand public pourrait avoir accès jouent l'un des rôles les plus importants dans ce processus de figuration. C'est pourquoi dans l'organisation du corpus nous sommes penchées davantage sur des produits littéraires et média qui pourraient éventuellement concerner un groupe plus large. Or, pour le moment, et bien pour la période que l'on analyse – choisie en fonction de notre possibilité d'accès à la plus grande quantité d'informations possible –, l'anglais domine le marché des échanges littéraires⁷, en influençant ainsi les éditeurs à poursuivre les traductions, ainsi que et des para- et épitextes, parmi d'autres, comme le montre Pascale Casanova⁸.

La relation particulière entre la langue dominante et le prestige détermine ainsi la production accrue de textes qui renvoient à un auteur ou à son œuvre afin de le rendre plus visible (et, à travers un détournement ultérieur du capital, de *se* rendre plus visible par la suite). Ainsi, bien que les premiers « moteurs » de diffusion de l'auteur soient pour longtemps la Suède, l'Espagne et l'Autriche⁹, la nouvelle et prestigieuse parution de *Nostalgia* chez Penguin pourrait être reliée à une présence de plus en plus importante de Cărtărescu dans l'espace culturel anglophone.

⁶ Paul Atkinson, David Silverman, « Kundera's Immortality: The Interview Society and the Invention of the Self », *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1997, 3, p. 315.

⁷ Voir, par exemple, Gisèle Sapiro, *Translatio. Le marché de la traduction en France à l'heure de la mondialisation*, Paris, CNRS éditions, 2008, p. 385 : « L'évolution des traductions de l'anglais suit la même courbe que l'évolution globale des traductions, ce qui atteste le poids de cette langue dans l'intensification des échanges culturels internationaux [...] la diversification des échanges accompagne la domination croissante de l'anglais qui [...] apparaît, de plus en plus, comme un règne sans partage ».

⁸ Pascale Casanova, *La langue mondiale. Traduction et domination*, Paris, Seuil, 2015, p. 124 : « C'est parce que l'anglais est aujourd'hui dominant que ses traducteurs peuvent se permettre d'être plus attentifs aux demandes de leur public qu'aux impératifs du texte. Les éditeurs autorisent, sinon favorisent des traductions ethnocentriques et pas seulement cela mais aussi des analyses, des études, des points de vue, des mises en garde, des explications, des textes, des explicitations, etc. ».

⁹ Mircea Cărtărescu, *Un om care scrie. Jurnal : 2011–2017 [Un homme qui écrit. Journal : 2011–2017]*, București, Humanitas, 2018, p. 344.

On fait référence dans ce contexte non seulement aux entretiens réalisés dans cette langue, mais aussi aux traductions. La domination symbolique de l'anglais favorise le détournement des entretiens conçus d'abord comme locaux, mais dont le contenu est envisagé comme global, dans le sens où il pourrait virtuellement concerner tout lecteur (potentiel) de Cărtărescu. Il serait pourtant hâtif de supposer que les changements opérés par la traduction sont la modification la plus incommode ; il serait, en idéal, nécessaire de consulter les matériaux qui ont servi à la production des entretiens. Or, la fabrique de l'entretien nous demeure inaccessible à chaque fois, les interventions de l'interviewer et/ ou d'une troisième main – le traducteur, l'éditeur etc. – n'étant pas toujours décelables du texte final.

On va donc assumer cette caractéristique comme l'un des difficultés que ce genre d'analyse suppose dans l'espace littéraire mondial, en essayant de calibrer à chaque pas nos outils méthodologiques, afin de trouver des solutions contextuelles pour renforcer nos arguments. Ainsi, on va se pencher sur plusieurs exemples et intégrer des citations plus développées où cela s'impose, dans le but de mieux isoler des traits récurrents de la figuration de l'auteur. On rajoute également au corpus formé principalement de textes – des « compte-rendus » narratifs, dans la définition de Masschelein *et al* – l'entretien occasionné par la parution américaine de *Blinding (Orbitor)* et modéré par le critique littéraire Delia Ungureanu. Bien qu'il ne représente pas fidèlement les propos de l'auteur, puisqu'il se fonde toujours sur un type de traduction¹⁰, il contient tout de même la preuve la plus authentique de son expression. Les travaux de médiation¹¹ peuvent également être intégrés dans la catégorie des entretiens littéraires.

Tenant compte non seulement des difficultés d'ordre théorique – notamment liées au positionnement complexe d'un auteur contemporain dans l'espace littéraire mondial –, mais aussi d'ordre méthodologique, on estime pourtant que l'analyse que l'on se propose de mener en ce qui suit peut servir à l'esquisse d'une conduite littéraire, telle que la décrit Jérôme Meizoz¹².

Être « humaniste »

Dans un premier temps, on va traiter l'un des sujets les moins littéraires, mais qui rend possible une première articulation entre la nation et le monde, ainsi qu'une stratégie rhétorique que l'auteur emploie dans plusieurs contextes. À l'occasion des

¹⁰ Quoiqu'il fasse preuve d'une bonne connaissance de la langue, il affirme penser en roumain et devoir traduire lui-même ses mots avant de les dire, ce qui implique également une forme de médiation qui pourrait éventuellement fausser nos arguments.

¹¹ L'auto-traduction (ou bien l'auto-interprétariat) de l'auteur, les interventions explicatives de Delia Ungureanu, la lecture des fragments de l'œuvre dans les deux langues, ainsi que la présence des clichés renvoyant à une pré-construction du discours en font partie.

¹² Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*, Genève, Slatkine, 2007, p. 23.

entretiens avec Morten Høi Jensen et Ella Veress, des questions sur la politique et l'engagement de l'auteur sont mis en lumière, ce qui facilite l'exploration d'une posture dans le monde social – celle d'« humaniste ». Quoique l'auteur ne fasse aucune référence à cette étiquette dans les produits (écrits ou média) qui forment notre corpus, on trouve un terme semblable – compte tenu des médiations possibles, mais improbables pour un tel néologisme – dans d'autres entretiens, où il rend plus légitime son positionnement politique : « Personally, as a humanist writer and intellectual who has experienced dictatorship, I will always condemn the suppression of the right to free speech in countries with totalitarian or authoritarian regimes »¹³.

La même tendance à parler des valeurs générales se trouve dans l'entretien avec Ella Veress, mais dans ce cas il est possible d'y voir plus clairement la manière dont la légitimité d'un tel discours est conquise à partir des expériences personnelles, local(isé)es. Ces dernières garantissent à l'auteur une position d'autorité, puisque ses observations partent du fait qu'il a grandi et puis travaillé dans un faubourg où il a côtoyé des minorités ethniques : « this tragic and inescapable situation of the Roma population [...] immediately caught my attention because I was born in Colentina district, and I taught primary school in Colentina, where I had countless pupils of this ethnic background »¹⁴. À la suite de cet argument, il opère un transfert sémantique de la condition des Roms à celle des Juifs, fondé sur une réaction plus générale à ce que l'auteur définit – d'une façon également imprécise – comme le mal : « I am a man that has emotional reactions and ethical reactions against the entire evil that happens in the world. I don't see matters in their immediacy as political or ideological but as a human reaction to evil »¹⁵.

Ainsi, il est possible d'entrevoir deux stratégies conjointes : d'une part, le je discursif conquiert de l'autorité sur un sujet d'intérêt global, qui exploite une expérience personnelle et localisée, tandis que, d'autre part, il décrit ses réactions en termes d'un humanisme nécessaire, qui se nourrit des valeurs perçues comme naturelles et universelles. À la place des définitions étroites d'un engagement se trouvent deux origines différentes, une qui est locale et permet ensuite une trajectoire plus généralisante et une autre qui n'infère pas de mouvement – la prise de position est un produit d'une disposition naturelle. Cette dualité permet d'envisager la figuration dans les termes d'une négociation permanente de l'image projetée autour d'un seul sujet. En décrivant son engagement, l'auteur fuit les

¹³ ***, « Mircea Cărtărescu : The mainstream writer is no longer a star of the cultural world, nor an opinion maker ». Traduit du roumain par Réka Vitályos Bartalis, *hlo.hu*, le 23 décembre 2019, <https://hlo.hu/interview/mircea-Cărtărescu-interview.html>. Consulté le 10 novembre 2021.

¹⁴ Ella Veres, « Interviewing Giants : Mircea Cărtărescu », *Ella Veres' Corner*, le 30 mai 2013, <http://ellaveres.blogspot.com/2013/05/interviewing-giants-mircea-Cărtărescu.html>. Consulté le 2 novembre 2020.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

définitions étroites, le résultat pouvant donner une image intensifiée de son travail et de son empreinte dans le monde.

En même temps, on estime que ce double processus rend visibles deux moyens d'acquiescer de la légitimité. En effet, l'expérience personnelle garantit la véracité du discours et nous assure de l'autorité de l'énonciateur. La figuration de soi en humaniste redouble cette posture et indique une deuxième route perçue comme possible pour conquérir une position d'autorité dans le champ, en effaçant les conditions spécifiques de chaque situation qui « réclame » l'engagement. La même tendance à effacer les frontières du « local » se présente également dans le cas de l'esprit européen que l'on va traiter plus loin.

Mentionnons d'abord que cette figuration en « humaniste » est accompagnée par un refus explicite des étiquettes. Le dialogue avec Morten Høi Jensen donne lieu à la description d'un engagement tout aussi *naturel* que celui contre le *Mal* qu'il présente à Ella Veress. Quoiqu'on y retrouve également la même réflexion directionnelle (du local vers le monde), le sujet est l'activisme *en* (ou bien *pour la*) Roumanie. Or, le début de cette activité semble lié à la fois à une situation particulière, déterminée par des conditions socio-politiques concrètes, mais il est également décrit par l'auteur comme la réaction *naturelle* aux événements qui l'entourent¹⁶. Dans ce cas, l'indétermination efface la cause particulière : ce dont l'auteur parle n'est pas son travail d'homme engagé (dans une situation précise), mais la position qu'il incarne dans le corps social, celle d'un *homme qui réagit* (en général). Ce qui suit à la description du début de son engagement est celle d'un changement de public lié à des menaces dirigées vers l'écrivain et sa famille en Roumanie. Quoiqu'il ne renonce pas à ce qu'il perçoit comme un devoir (celui de *réagir*), il choisit de le poursuivre à l'étranger : « But wherever I go, on each and every occasion, I raise my voice and talk about what's happening in Romania »¹⁷.

Cependant, l'auteur nie l'étiquette d'idéologue ou d'activiste à chaque fois que l'un de ses interlocuteurs la propose : « I am not a political writer. I don't define myself as an activist or an ideologue »¹⁸. Autrement dit, il n'accepte pas de définition préétablie qui (dé)limite son travail, mais poursuit en se décrivant d'une manière qui, avec une apparence plus générale, exploite, en réalité, une éthique de l'éloignement. Ce processus est plus évident dans l'entretien avec Ella Veres : « First of all, I am not an ideologist; I don't even call myself an intellectual, but a mere artist. I am a man that has emotional reactions and ethical reactions against

¹⁶ Morten Høi Jensen, « Bookforum Talks with Mircea Cărtărescu », *Bookforum*, le 7 novembre 2013 : « Events sometimes force you into doing something that is not natural for you. I was forced at a certain moment to look around and see what had gone wrong in my country. I couldn't look and not react. So I started to write political articles », <https://www.bookforum.com/interviews/bookforum-talks-with-mircea-Cărtărescu-12506>. Consulté le 2 novembre 2020.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

the entire evil that happens in the world »¹⁹. La contradiction n'est pourtant qu'une stratégie de figuration : en refusant les étiquettes, l'auteur prend le relai et *performs* dans son discours une définition personnelle, si bien qu'il arrive à l'incarner d'une façon singulière (et singularisante). Ainsi, Cărtărescu n'est pas un idéologue quelconque, mais *cet homme* que l'on voit réagir, toujours en mouvement.

Le même processus rhétorique fait partie de la présentation de l'auteur face au public américain. Avant même de commencer la lecture d'un passage de son ouvrage ou de recevoir des questions soit de la part de Delia Ungureanu, soit du public, Cărtărescu affirme son refus d'être nommé « a writer », mais en revanche se décrit comme « a person who writes journal »²⁰. Dans ce cas, comme dans celui déjà analysé, l'auteur semble déconstruire un mot dont le réseau de significations est très complexe afin d'isoler seulement des traits qui se rattachent à sa propre image d'auteur. Après avoir éloigné sa représentation d'écrivain du réseau sémantique impliqué dans le mot « writer », il se définit en capitalisant sur l'une des définitions possibles de ce terme qui, à ce point, devient personnelle, en rendant la figure qu'elle caractérise singulière.

Dans les deux situations, la prise en charge du réseau sémantique permet d'éviter une éventuelle mésentente dans deux sens différents : l'auteur remplace une définition étroite d'« ideologist » par une autre, plus générale, alors que dans le cas de « writer », il particularise le sens afin de performer sa modestie face au métier artistique. Ce n'est pourtant qu'une décision contextuelle : le quatrième journal roumain, qui couvre la période entre 2011 et 2017, porte le titre « *un om care scrie* », « *un homme qui écrit* » – comparable à l'homme qui réagit. Dans ce cas, il change l'étiquette pour la complexité du réseau sémantique, prouvant ainsi que les opérations de déconstruction et reconstruction du sens se font dans un contexte précis qui change d'un cas à l'autre. Le contrôle que l'auteur exerce sur son discours reste pourtant un trait particulier de sa figuration.

Être « européen »

La tendance d'élargir les frontières du « local » se produit également dans les discours sur la culture. Quoique ses propos contiennent des références aux auteurs roumains et au manque des traductions²¹, dans la plupart des entretiens les

¹⁹ Ella Veres, « Interviewing ».

²⁰ « European Voices: A Reading and Conversation with Romanian Author Mircea Cărtărescu », entretien live avec le public américain organisé par Center for the Study of Europe et modéré par Delia Ungureanu chez Boston University, 16 octobre 2003, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zo3QsumVSI>. Consulté le 10 novembre 2020.

²¹ Nathalie Handal, « The City and the Writer : In Bucharest with Mircea Cărtărescu », *Words without Borders*, le 27 février 2014 : « But there are a lot of others who unfortunately are not translated », https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/dispatches/article/the-city-and-the-writer-in-bucharest-with-mircea-cartrescu?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+wwborders+Words+Without+Borders. Consulté le 2 novembre 2020.

questions d'ordre culturel sont détournées par l'auteur vers une culture partagée (voir *partageable*), soit européenne, soit mondiale. De ce point de vue, la scénographie de la rencontre avec Ella Veres est particulière : puisque l'interviewer fait preuve d'une bonne connaissance de la littérature roumaine²² et partage assurément quelques dispositions de l'*habitus* de l'auteur, elle l'invite à intégrer lui-aussi dans sa réponse la construction d'une lignée nationale dont sa prose soit l'héritière²³. Toutefois, lorsqu'elle interroge Cărtărescu sur les traits communs de sa génération, le *je* discursif choisit toujours de s'éloigner des conditions spécifiques et d'invoquer la culture européenne et la formation rigoureuse qui lui assurent une bonne connaissance de la littérature et de l'art internationaux. Ce qu'il décrit en fait est l'*habitus* partagé entre pairs et qui va influencer l'art qu'ils vont tous produire : « This propensity towards a true culture and towards a true intellectual life characterizes my generation. [...] We had an extremely cultivated generation and I am the same way myself »²⁴.

La question de l'*habitus* apparaît implicitement dans d'autres interventions de l'auteur, dont l'un des plus importants est « Europa are forma creierului meu » [« L'Europe a la forme de mon cerveau »]. Écrit en 2003, avant de la période qui nous intéresse dans cet article, il présente néanmoins la relation symbiotique²⁵ entre l'Europe et l'être qui l'habite. Les deux s'influencent réciproquement : l'exposition aux produits de l'esprit européen forme la capacité du lecteur à les reconnaître et à s'y joindre à la fois par ses lectures et ses écrits. Toutefois, l'article est écrit sous la forme d'un manifeste culturel²⁶ où l'accent est mis plutôt sur l'individu, ce qui justifie l'expression utilisée dans le titre. En revanche, nous nous intéressons à la fabrique de cette relation entre l'écrivain et le monde, ainsi que à ses effets dans les entretiens qui forment notre corpus.

²² Ella Veres, « Interviewing » : « I felt that you were part of a tradition of Romanian writing, that you were standing on the shoulders of your forefathers. I found echoes of Eugen Barbu, Marin Preda, but also of Eminescu and Tudor Arghezi, with the beauty of ugliness esthetic, the illness of the body ».

²³ *Ibidem* : « There exists a vein in Romanian fiction, extremely interesting, that starts indeed with Eminescu and is the thread of fantasy fiction I believe, rather in general terms, I belong under this thread with many books ». La réponse nuance en suite cette lignée, y intégrant des références balkaniques (les films de Kusturica ou de Bregovic) et latinoaméricaines (le réalisme magique).

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ Mircea Cărtărescu, « Europa are forma creierului meu » [« L'Europe a la forme de mon cerveau »], *Observator cultural*, le 28 janvier 2003 : « Il y a un grand nombre d'Europes dans l'espace et le temps, dans les rêves et les souvenirs, dans la réalité et l'imagination. Je ne revendique qu'une : mon Europe, facilement reconnaissable car elle a la forme de mon cerveau, parce que c'est elle qui me l'a modelée dès le début, d'après son image », <https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/europa-are-forma-creierului-meu/>. Consulté le 10 novembre 2021. La traduction des citations nous appartient, sauf mention explicite du traducteur.

²⁶ *Ibidem*. On pourrait y rajouter le caractère politique explicite : « Sur la surface il y a des rides et des plis profonds, des zones sensibles et motrices, des aires de la parole et de la compréhension. Mais il n'y a nulle part des murs en béton, des rideaux de fer ou des frontières ».

En ce qui concerne la production de cet esprit européen tel que Cărtărescu le conçoit, il est possible de rapprocher sa méthode à celle de Harold Bloom. Les deux partagent non seulement l'appréciation pour un critère esthétique dans l'évaluation de l'œuvre, mais aussi la tendance à classer les textes selon un critère mnémorique qui contribue à ce que l'on pourrait nommer l'esprit d'une culture : « européenne » pour l'auteur roumain et « occidentale » pour le critique américain. Dans ce but, bien qu'ils divergent sur d'autres points, les deux usent de ce que Bloom appelle « the Art of the Memory »²⁷, c'est-à-dire la reconstitution mentale soit des cartographies relationnelles (pour Cărtărescu), soit des sommets de la littérature (occidentale, pour Bloom). Cette mémoire n'est pourtant jamais innocente ou singularisante : bien au contraire, elle se fonde sur des jugements de goût et des valeurs esthétiques partagées et enracinées dans l'habitus de chacun.

Ainsi, il n'est pas surprenant que le panorama d'écrivains auquel renvoie Cărtărescu est présenté à la fois comme de la *littérature appropriée*, c'est-à-dire lue d'une manière individuelle, et *partagée* entre les pairs : « For me, Rilke and Rimbaud were much more real than Ceaușescu's regime. My literary friends felt the same way : we didn't live in Romania, we lived in Hesse's Castalia, in the republic of literature »²⁸. Dans cette prise de position, le réseau littéraire n'est pas encore un fait de la mémoire, mais il est activement vécu par l'auteur et ses pairs. En refusant la vérité sociale que leur est donnée, ils choisissent une *existence dans les textes* qui détermine un goût et un *habitus* spécifique. Ce dernier va définir ensuite (ou définit rétroactivement, si l'on considère cet entretien comme un positionnement commandé par une option artistique) l'esthétique des auteurs.

Avant de s'arrêter sur le travail de la citation et de la référence, il est nécessaire de voir les implications du déplacement du *local* (de la nation au continent) sur la position de l'auteur dans le champ du pouvoir symbolique. En outre l'ouverture littéraire que des critiques comme Delia Ungureanu notent dans les prises de position de Cărtărescu sur l'Europe et la construction de l'esprit européen²⁹, ce réseau permet également *la distinction* au sens de Pierre Bourdieu. Or, ses conséquences dans la conduite sociale vont nous intéresser, car cette figuration de soi en « européen » correspond à la position périphérique désespérante de la culture roumaine. En s'adressant à Rodrigo Hasbún, il affirme :

I come from the middle of nowhere. [...] My country is not only obscure, but also many times looked down upon for its poverty and its perceived low level of culture.

²⁷ Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon : The Books and School of the Ages*, New York, Harcourt Brace & Co., 1994, p. 17.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ « European Voices ». On y reviendra plus loin.

What does a Romanian writer look like? Nobody knows and I'm afraid nobody cares³⁰.

Pour dépasser ce positionnement peu favorable, l'auteur propose en revanche une image de *l'homme qui écrit* en dépit de toutes les difficultés. En poursuivant sa réponse, Cărtărescu explique que ce qui l'intéresse est seulement la production, non pas la distribution de son œuvre³¹. Vers la fin de l'entretien, il revient sur l'importance de la perfectibilité de son métier au détriment du succès³² et cette attitude prend ensuite des dimensions prophétiques : « If you write well, you are saved; if not, you may be the greatest activist of all time but your efforts will be in vain. Even if nobody on Earth is able to read, I will go on writing. I will continue writing even if I am the last man on Earth »³³.

Une autre méthode que l'auteur propose dans cet entretien est la figuration en « européen » qui lui permet dans ce cas d'assumer une distinction face à un interlocuteur qu'il juge extérieur au réseau. Le *je* discursif parle de « us Europeans »³⁴ qui suppose déjà l'opposition à un « you » implicite, les non-européens, un geste qui peut renvoyer déjà à une forme de violence symbolique, notamment dans la critique postcoloniale³⁵. Ensuite, l'auteur justifie ses visites peu nombreuses en Amérique Latine par l'appropriation d'une référence à Dante sur un critère plutôt géographique que culturel. En effet, le « réseau européen » auquel

³⁰ Rodrigo Hasbún, « A Conversation with Mircea Cărtărescu ». Traduit de l'espagnol par Sophie Hughes, *Music And Literature*, le 11 décembre 2018, <https://www.musicandliterature.org/features/2018/12/5/an-interview-with-mircea-crtrescu>. Consulté le 2 novembre 2020.

³¹ Jessie Chaffé, « An Interview with Mircea Cărtărescu », *Words without Borders*, le 23 juin 2016 : « My situation changed very little over those twenty years. I still consider myself an unknown and little-published writer abroad. But of course I can very well live with that. My only dream is to write another page that I like. Nothing more, nothing less » (Rodrigo Hasbún, « A Conversation »). Il convient tout de même de noter que dans d'autres entretiens, il démontre une bonne compréhension de cette lutte symbolique dans les entretiens. Quoiqu'il tâche de tracer l'image d'un auteur détaché du monde, il suit de près sa réception à l'étranger et suggère également que les traductions en italien peuvent faire partie d'une stratégie de distribution car « it would be a pity for us – for the Romanian writers – not to be understood in Italy where so many Romanians are », <https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/dispatches/article/an-interview-with-mircea-Cărtărescu-jessie-chaffee>). Consulté le 2 novembre 2020.

³² *Ibidem* : « As for myself, I don't give a damn about drawing attention ; I will go on simply trying to write good literature, for this is the only obligation of a writer, his or her only responsibility ».

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ Rodrigo Hasbún, « A Conversation » : « for us Europeans, the other hemisphere is a bit taboo. In the *Divine Comedy*, Ulysses confesses that in his last journey he traveled south, saw new constellations, and came close to the Mount of Purgatory, but he died there when God sent the storm that swallowed his ship ».

³⁵ Mais pas seulement : le critique littéraire roumain Mihai Iovănel note déjà à partir d'« Europa are forma creierului meu » que « l'auteur roumain se revendique anachroniquement [...] de la narration européocentrique de l'impérialisme du XIXe siècle, qui réduit la diversité planétaire à la jonction entre ses aspects et l'esprit européen » – Mihai Iovănel, *Istoria literaturii române contemporane, 1990–2020* [*Histoire de la littérature roumaine contemporaine. 1990–2020*], Iași, Polirom, 2021, p. 651.

d'auteurs géographiquement extra-européens comme Pynchon, Kawabata ou Marquez avaient pu être intégrés dans *Europa are forma creierului meu* ne s'y retrouve pas et la différence entre les héritiers de Dante et les autres est réduite aux conditions d'un voyage *au Sud*. L'argument à la fois le plus mondain et le plus personnel³⁶ suit à celui-ci et détourne l'impact de la violence symbolique qui demeure néanmoins présente dans la citation précédente.

La distance temporelle qui s'interpose entre cet article et l'entretien avec Hasbún nous oblige à prendre en compte la possibilité d'un déplacement des sensibilités de l'auteur, mais l'entretien américain montre que ce n'est pas le cas. Delia Ungureanu propose dans son introduction de remplacer *Europe* de l'article cité ci-dessus par *the world* (dans le sens de *World Literature*) et, à travers ses réponses, l'auteur démontre son adhésion à un réseau culturel tel qu'il l'avait présenté lui-même en 2003³⁷. En revenant à l'entretien, on estime nécessaire de souligner que la figuration en européen suppose à la fois l'ouverture et la distinction socio-culturelle. Ainsi, ce que l'on pourrait lire comme une référence littéraire instrumentalisée pour détendre l'atmosphère porte également les marques de la domination symbolique.

Le portrait de l'artiste en écrivain

La construction du Bucarest esthétique de Cărtărescu reflète également le changement de la définition du « local », d'abord par l'intériorisation du lieu référentiel et puis par l'intertexte culturel. La ville apparaît fréquemment dans les questions et, parmi les réponses de l'auteur, il est possible de distinguer l'image d'un référent, c'est-à-dire d'un correspondant virtuel, quoique littérisé, qui pourrait servir de dénominateur commun entre plusieurs œuvres littéraires. En fait, c'est Cărtărescu lui-même qui propose à Nathalie Handal la lecture des textes de Mircea Eliade ou de Mateiu Caragiale qui, comme lui, donnent des visions particulières d'un (même) référent, en l'appelant « our city »³⁸.

Cependant, dans le même entretien il fait référence au Bucarest de son enfance et au faubourg où il a grandi, mais le style de ce récit est marqué par une veine littéraire plus évidente, qui nous éloigne de ce référent, en proposant une image mythique :

The old house where my parents lived when I was born, and where I lived for a few years, has for me the dimensions of a myth. Anytime I go there, I lose myself in the maze of the narrow streets, and feel like I am voyaging in one of my dreams. It is

³⁶ Rodrigo Hasbún, « A Conversation » : « Besides, I have problems traveling by plane. The last time I went to the United States, one of my eardrums just popped when the plane descended into the Minneapolis airport... ».

³⁷ L'auteur compare son travail à ce des écrivains dont l'appartenance à l'Europe se fait plutôt dans l'esprit de ses œuvres et non dans la position géographique des auteurs, tel que Vladimir Nabokov.

³⁸ Nathalie Handal, « The City ».

like the sky over Coletina is my own cranium, and I walk within the circumvolutions of my brain. And then I see the house : it is always shining in the golden light of my earliest memories³⁹.

Le labyrinthe des rues et ruelles est progressivement désarticulé et intériorisé, jusqu'à ce que l'extérieur devienne une partie intégrante du corps de l'auteur. À la fin de ce chemin presque onirique, la maison qui relie l'être errant – sans âge – au souvenir de son enfance nous renvoie à un référent virtuel. Ainsi, la dialectique s'établit entre le lieu tel qu'il a été perçu et puis vécu (dans l'imagination) par l'auteur⁴⁰. Dans les deux cas, on reste entre les bornes d'un traitement que l'on pourrait qualifier de purement imaginaire, puisqu'il se fonde sur une image déjà appropriée et transfigurée par le travail de la mémoire.

Ce dernier anime à la fois l'expérience de l'individu et son habitus, c'est pourquoi à cette technique pourrait s'ajouter la manipulation d'un réseau de références culturelles qui s'entretiennent. L'entretien avec Nathalie Handal, qui porte notamment sur l'image de la ville, s'ouvre sur une définition complexe de Bucarest qui met en jeu à chaque niveau une représentation qui se nourrit soit des idées et des images reçues, soit de l'intertexte. La première comparaison, celle entre la ville et la langue basque, est sans doute la plus proche de l'esthétique de l'auteur (ou bien de l'esthétique qu'il veut performer), en revenant sur le leitmotiv du labyrinthe :

Bucharest is like the Basque language : you can learn it only from your mother. You have to be born here to understand and feel it. Even more, you have to be born by it and look like it. Otherwise, Bucharest might seem overwhelmingly intricate, like a spider web or a labyrinth, it might look unsettling and dangerous. A foreigner has to spend many years here to get the zest of the city and to get to love its inhabitants⁴¹.

Dès le début, le Bucarest de Cărtărescu nous attire par ses mystères et demande une forme d'initiation. Outre l'empreinte stylistique et thématique personnelle, il est possible d'entrevoir dans ce passage une forme de *captatio benevolentiae* qui, bien qu'elle tâche d'esquisser l'exceptionnalité de la ville, s'inspire des *topoi* de la littérature romantique et préromantique. Le deuxième niveau de la définition est plus clair dans ce sens : « Like nineteenth-century Paris, Bucharest has a subterranean life, full of mysteries. But unlike Paris, it is half Oriental, looking as much like Istanbul or Cairo as like Paris, Brussels, or Vienna »⁴². Les références au

³⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁰ Audun Lindholm, « The Mircea Cărtărescu Interview ». Traduit du norvégien par Thilo Rheinhard, *Vagant*, le 20 juin 2016, <http://www.vagant.no/the-mircea-cartarescu-interview/>, consulté le 2 novembre 2020. Dans ce contexte, l'auteur semble performer l'esthétique de *l'Orbitor*, tel que lui-même la présente : « I have frequently said that the Blinding trilogy is a map of my brain, but it is also an attempt to escape from it. [...] My own artistic and intellectual ambition is to blast my way through this wall, the front of my skull. I feel humiliated by the limitations imposed by my own cranium ».

⁴¹ Nathalie Handal, « The City ».

⁴² *Ibidem*.

roman noir et à Eugène Sue y sont plus limpides et la différence spécifique, c'est-à-dire le mélange culturel entre l'Occident et l'Orient, est, elle-aussi, mise en lumière.

Au centre de cette construction complexe se trouve pourtant ce que l'on peut considérer comme l'image la plus proche d'un référent réel :

It is a layered city, like a wedding cake, from the margins to the center you can recognize the big village it used to be until the eighteenth century—the Greek, Jewish and Turkish districts built fifty years after, then the French, German, and Italian influences of the beginning of the twentieth century, the International Style of the period between the wars, and the pervasive Communist apartment blocks built during the previous regime⁴³.

Jusqu'à ce point, la représentation peut être lue dans la suite naturelle des paragraphes comme un travelling à partir des lieux communs de la littérature et vers l'image la plus précise d'un référent « réel ». Cependant, quoiqu'on y retrouve d'une manière intuitive la marque d'un lieu reconnaissable, ce noyau est recouvert de deux définitions littéraires (du point de vue des techniques utilisées). En plus, à la fin du passage, l'auteur (re)prend possession de la ville, en insistant sur son caractère personnel et intériorisé, à la différence du référent extérieur que l'on serait tenté d'y retrouver : « I see myself in [Bucharest] like in a huge, convex mirror »⁴⁴.

La méthode qu'il choisit dans la construction de la ville fictionnelle est celle du *bricoleur* qui revient sur une pratique de l'enfance et donne, dans un même temps, une image singulière, au carrefour de l'expérience affective et du travail des *topoi*⁴⁵. Enfin, l'auteur met en scène « my Bucharest »⁴⁶, une ville qu'il invente à travers la production littéraire : « I would say that I have not actually explored Bucharest during the past fifteen years; I have invented the city. The Bucharest of *Blinding* is a complete construct »⁴⁷. Le rôle fondamental de l'invention – c'est-à-dire du travail artistique et créatif sur la mémoire – dépasse les bornes d'une rhétorique lorsque l'auteur mentionne le référent réel (Bucarest) n'est pas physiquement accessible pour lui au moment de la production d'*Orbitor*, puisque la trilogie est écrite entièrement à l'étranger⁴⁸. Par conséquent, toute exploration (ou bien *toute invention*) se fait dans l'intimité de la mémoire (travaillée).

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁵ Audun Lindholm, « The Mircea Cărtărescu Interview » : « The Bucharest I write about [...] is the Bucharest of my childhood and youth, [...] [which] for me it was something more, a miracle, a marvel to the young child wherever he looked. The child is a bricoleur, one who assembles his world using whatever he can get his hands on ».

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem* : « I wrote it all abroad. There is not a single line written in Romania. I started it in Amsterdam, where I lived for two years. I wrote the second volume in Berlin and in Budapest, and the third volume, which only took me a year, in Stuttgart ».

D’ailleurs, le Bucarest qui figure dans la création littéraire et qui est, à son tour, une construction artistique se sépare de la ville « de référence ». Cette dernière est aujourd’hui « not a particularly good place to live [...]. It has become a symbol of ruthless capitalism, a place where industrial magnates and oil tycoons arrogantly outbid each other in defiance of the rest of the population. It is also a dangerous city to live in »⁴⁹. Or le danger que l’on retrouve dans cet extrait n’est plus celui – plus attirant – de la fiction, mais un signe de la dégradation du monde. Quoiqu’il soit possible d’attribuer ce détachement à une prise de position typiquement conservatoire et d’interpréter l’amertume de l’auteur comme un renoncement au monde extérieur corrompu, qui ne correspond pas à un lieu spécifique, notre intérêt réside dans le fait que ce type de discours renforce la position de l’auteur en tant qu’être mobile.

La question qui se pose – et que d’ailleurs plusieurs médiateurs ont posé à Cărtărescu, pour des raisons différentes – est pourquoi il demeure malgré tout à Bucarest. Ses réponses montrent qu’il n’a pas une motivation précise⁵⁰, et que son choix n’influence pas l’écriture⁵¹. Il s’agit, donc, d’un compromis aléatoire. Dans ce cas, il est possible d’y voir la figuration d’un cosmopolitisme qui s’ajoute au portrait de l’écrivain humaniste dont les valeurs socio-politiques et esthétiques lui facilitent la mobilité à travers les espaces qui les partagent.

Cette présentation de soi influence également (ou bien est influencée par) le positionnement de l’œuvre dans l’espace littéraire mondial, puisque cet auteur mobile et détaché pourrait être à la fois le producteur et le garant d’une œuvre littéraire *dénationalisée*⁵². Bien que le *je* discursif ne contredit pas l’empreinte des expériences locales dans son œuvre, il choisit de présenter son travail littéraire (ainsi que sa posture en tant qu’auteur) plutôt par ce que, en suivant Jacques Derrida, on pourrait nommer « le pli de la citation »⁵³ : (presque) tout peut se réduire à un type d’intertexte ou de référence culturelle.

En guise de conclusion

Dans les limites imposées par notre cas particulier et par le corpus, performer une conduite sociale se définit principalement dans les termes d’un contrôle des définitions et des mots, afin de rendre visible la complexité de l’image que l’auteur se dresse de lui-même. Dans un contexte mondial, cette attention au détail permet

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁰ Ella Veres, « Interviewing » : « The fact that I live in Bucharest, where I was born, and that probably I won’t live anywhere else permanently, is somewhat by chance ».

⁵¹ *Ibidem* : « probably I stayed in Bucharest [...] because I didn’t want strongly to be somewhere else, because for me the place where I am physically is rather indifferent ».

⁵² Voir Pierre Bourdieu, « Les conditions sociales de la circulation internationale des idées », *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 2002, 5, pp. 3-8. On reprend le terme qu’utilise Pierre Bourdieu pour décrire la façon dont circulent les idées à travers le monde.

⁵³ Jacques Derrida, *La Dissémination*, Paris, Seuil, 1972, p. 384.

de mieux garder les nuances de la figuration même face à l'intervention postérieure des éditeurs et de la traduction. C'est pourquoi on a identifié à plusieurs reprises et dans plusieurs contextes une double appropriation du rapport au monde ou aux valeurs générales de l'éthique ou de l'écriture (généraliser en capitalisant sur une expérience locale et valoriser une adhésion naturelle, universelle), ainsi que des moyens rhétoriques semblables.

En général, on peut affirmer que l'image projetée par l'auteur favorise la *performance* d'une esthétique que Mihaela Ursa, parmi d'autres, qualifie de « néoromantique »⁵⁴. Les mondes compensatoires (à la fois vécus et inventés), la favorisation de l'exploration affective, l'écrivain dans sa tour d'ivoire⁵⁵ – toutes ces représentations culturelles s'articulent, bien qu'au niveaux différentes, dans une même figuration de soi (et d'un projet esthétique cohérent)⁵⁶. Le verbe « inventer » revient à travers les entretiens et indique un choix à la fois esthétique et performatif, notamment si l'on tient compte du fait que l'auteur n'invente pas seulement la ville, mais aussi la mémoire qui parcourt ses textes⁵⁷. Le choix du verbe peut également suggérer la figuration de Cărtărescu en grand auteur, en inventeur des lieux et des mondes tels que ceux qu'il habite durant son enfance. Dans ce contexte, son Bucarest peut être considéré comme un canevas fictionnel, un arrière-plan qui se définit plutôt comme une construction à la manière des écrivains qu'il apprécie⁵⁸. Cette conduite dévoile l'affiliation nécessaire de ses procédés littéraires à ceux de ses pairs le plus connus et plus prestigieux, selon un critère à la fois individuel et partagé.

Par conséquent, il convient d'affirmer que Cărtărescu *performe* l'intériorisation et l'appropriation des mots et des choses que son esthétique littéraire suppose et se représente en écrivain-humaniste détachée du monde et mobile. Les deux adjectifs ne sont pourtant pas identiques : d'une part, l'auteur projette son image en dehors des catégories relationnelles ou sociales, en capitalisant sur des dispositions que l'on pourrait qualifier de naturelles ou personnelles – la réaction au Mal ou l'appropriation de l'espace à travers le travail de la mémoire ; d'autre part, il négocie sa présence sociale à travers l'affirmation et puis le dépassement de

⁵⁴ Mihaela Ursa, « Mircea Cărtărescu revisited », *Vatra*, 2016, 1-2, p. 106.

⁵⁵ Jessie Chaffe, « An Interview » : « I don't care too much where I write. I have only one or two demands : the first is to be alone in a room with the door closed behind me, and the second is a cup of coffee on the table. So I don't need some special thing to bring me inspiration. Everything is inside – in corpo ».

⁵⁶ En plus, cette posture correspond également à la manière dont l'auteur entrevoit la lecture, à savoir comme une forme d'empathie qui élargit et transporte l'esprit, en le raffinant : « I'd like that the reader should feel an interior enrichment by reading my books, to feel suddenly a more complicated, more complex being, with a finer granulation, so to speak » – Ella Veres, « Interviewing ».

⁵⁷ Morten Høi Jensen, « Bookforum Talks » : « For me, memory is not just remembrance but invention. I invent memories ».

⁵⁸ *Ibidem* : « The Bucharest in Blinding is like Thomas Pynchon's Florence. When Pynchon wrote V. he'd never been to Florence ; he just reconstructed it from tourist guides. It's the same with me ».

l'origine (nationale). La figuration en européen, ainsi que la relation entre le Bucarest réel et celui de la fiction démontrent cette mobilité et permettent et même demandent dans certains cas le développement d'une réflexion sur la violence symbolique.

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THE WRITER FACING THE WORLD: MIRCEA CĂRTĂRESCU'S POSTURE IN INTERVIEWS FOR AN ENGLISH-SPEAKING AUDIENCE

(Abstract)

Using the concept of "literary posture" proposed by Alain Viala, this paper aims to analyse Mircea Cărtărescu's attitude in online interviews for an English-speaking audience between 2011 and 2019, in order to integrate the observations into a broader reflection on how the Romanian author positions himself in the world literary space. In this sense, we will refer, on the one hand, to the socio-political position and, on the other hand, to the literary aesthetics, considering primarily the image of Bucharest in the work (but also in the life) of the writer. Following these two directions, we can notice an expansive tendency, of transgressing the national, as well as of universalization, both in terms of interactions in the political field and of cultural landmarks. In addition, the author mobilizes a network of references for the construction of an internalized and, thus, delocalized textual Bucharest, building at the same time his position owing to a neo-romantic heritage. Following this process of figuration, the image of an uprooted humanist writer emerges. He projects his work for a foreign audience by virtue of a Western canon/ shared social and political values and against the national complexes that he displays nonetheless in interviews. The ambivalence of this posture, both confident and hesitant, benefits from the analysis of the possible trajectories on the road to consecration, showing in time the triumph of the illusion that envelops the struggle for symbolic power (*illusio*).

Keywords: literary posture, Mircea Cărtărescu, interviews, world literary space, Pascale Casanova.

SCRIITORUL ÎN FAȚA LUMII: CONDUITA LUI MIRCEA CĂRTĂRESCU ÎN
INTERVIURI PENTRU UN PUBLIC ANGLOFON
(Rezumat)

Pornind de la conceptul de „postură literară” propus de Alain Viala, lucrarea de față își propune să integreze analiza posturii lui Mircea Cărtărescu în interviurile destinate unui public anglofon într-o reflecție mai largă asupra modului în care autorul român se poziționează în spațiul literar mondial. În acest sens, ne vom referi, pe de-o parte, la postura socio-politică și, pe de altă parte, la estetica literară, având în vedere în principal imaginea Bucureștiului în opera (dar și în viața) scriitorului. Urmărind aceste două direcții, putem remarca o tendință expansivă, de transgresare a naționalului și de proiecție universalizantă, atât în ceea ce privește interacțiunile din câmpul politic, cât și cu privire la reperele culturale. În plus, autorul mobilizează o rețea de referințe pentru construcția unui București textual interiorizat și, astfel, delocalizat, construindu-și în același timp postura în sialul unei moșteniri neoromantice. În urma acestui proces de figurație, rezultă imaginea unui scriitor *umanist deșrădăcinat*, care își proiectează opera pentru un public străin în virtutea unui canon occidental/ a unor valori sociale și politice împărtășite și împotriva complexelor naționale pe care, totuși, le afișează în interviuri. Dualitatea acestei posturi, atât încrezătoare, cât și ezitantă, beneficiază de pe urma unei lecturi a traiectoriilor posibile pe drumul spre consacrare, arătând în timp triumful *iluziei* care învăluie lupta simbolică (*illusio*).

Cuvinte-cheie: postură literară, Mircea Cărtărescu, interviuri, spațiu literar mondial, Pascale Casanova.

ALEXANDRU MUȘINA BETWEEN BEAT POET AND “BALNEAL GENIUS”

The recent theoretical contributions discussing posturalism in the Western space renders possible an analysis of the writer profile that, correlating his social conduct and aesthetic choices, would allow for the singular definition of a “self-image” of the writer. Besides discussing “posture”, a concept defined by Meizoz in 2007¹ and then revived in 2013, or the “photographic portrait”², whether it is about “the imaginary writer” or “authorial scenography”³, “authorial ethos”⁴, or “the authorial mark”⁵, what is of interest in these approaches resides in the construction of the writer as a public figure, obtained through self-representation strategies, as well as by the aid of the publishing houses that market the writer figure through the consecration effect achieved by prize systems or schoolbook entry status. What we are proposing in the present text is an analysis of the ways by which Alexandru Mușina constructs his presence in the public space along with his image as a writer.

Mușina’s belonging to the 1980s generation determines from the outset his choice as subject for such a study which refers to two key moments: the period of the totalitarian regime, and the period after the Revolution of 1989, which correspond to two different ways of understanding the role and position of the writer in society and the process of recognition. We will be interested in how the writer represents himself as a public figure in each of these historical phases, in the interviews he gives, in his fiction, in the way he carries and describes his own body – when alone or in a group (at Cenaclul de Luni [Monday Literary Circle] or at Cercul literar 19 [Literary Circle 19]). We will also be interested in the figure of Mușina constructed through his reception, including posthumous reception.

¹ Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l’auteur*, Genève, Slatkine, 2007.

² Jérôme Meizoz, “Cendras, Houellebecq: Portrait photographique et présentation de soi”, *COnTEXTES*, 2014, 14, <http://journals.openedition.org/contextes/5908>. Accessed June 15, 2020. See the dossier in *COnTEXTES* magazine that tackles the photographic portraits of writers. “Le portrait photographique de l’écrivain”, *COnTEXTES*, 2014, 14, <https://journals.openedition.org/contextes/5904>. Accessed June 15, 2020.

³ José-Luis Diaz, *L’Écrivain imaginaire. Scénographies auctoriales à l’époque romantique*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2007.

⁴ Ruth Amossy (ed.), *Images de soi dans le discours: la construction de l’ethos*, Lausanne-Paris, Delachaux et Niestlé, 1999.

⁵ Marie-Ève Thérenty, Adeline Wrona, *L’écrivain comme marque*, Paris, Sorbonne Université Presses, 2020.

The Collective Corpus in the Literary Circle and the Influence of the Beat Generation

The very existence of the Romanian writer during the communist regime is conditioned by the emergence of some alternative ways of manifestation in the literary space, the only option to escape anonymity, even though positioning oneself is not manifested directly. Setting up literary circles specialized in prose or poetry implicitly becomes the survival condition of the writer. If on the one hand this means an apparent pact with the system to allow the literary circle to function, there is nevertheless a certain freedom of expression⁶ inside the literary circle, born out of the need to mark a difference with respect to the institutions of the time. A first image of Alexandru Mușina is thus outlined as a member of *Cenaclul de Luni* [the Monday Literary Circle], therefore as a member of a collective corpus, since the system imposed a group appearance in order to allow the publication of the writer's work. Daniel Puia Dumitrescu⁷ reconstitutes the practice of these collective debuts, through which the limitation of the writer's freedoms and the postponing of the individual debut (something that became less and less frequent) are accomplished. The recognized mentor of the 1980s poets, Nicolae Manolescu, also underlines the difficulty of publishing: "It had started to become difficult for the young writers to publish in magazines, let alone in books [...] we were forced into anthologies, it was impossible to have a debut of one's own. There were only common graves – that is what the communist regime wanted"⁸. As the interviews with members of the literary circle testify, being defined in relation to the group also involves a form of cohesion derived from the marginal status and based on the "solidarity of the excluded, of the self-excluded"⁹. Consequently, the literary circle represents, besides the proper environment for sharing ideas and assuming an aesthetic credo, a way of cohabitation. Writing becomes the result of an identity transfer, since "we were so impregnated with each other that we practically wrote each other's poetry lines"¹⁰.

Under the influence of the American model, the safe framework established within the literary circle favours the emergence of a *hippie* or *rock star* figure. Here is how the poets of the 1980s represent themselves: "[...] a generation of hippie practice. We are the Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Deep Purple generation; however, we

⁶ Daniel Puia Dumitrescu presents the literary circle as a "form of freedom and compromise". See Daniel Puia Dumitrescu, *O istorie a Cenaclului de Luni [A History of Monday Literary Circle]*, București, Cartea Românească, 2015.

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 245-284.

⁸ Nicolae Manolescu, interview in Mihail Vakulovski, *Portret de grup cu generația '80: interviuri [Group Portrait with 1980s Generation]*, București, Tracus Arte, 2011, pp. 376-382.

⁹ Alexandru Mușina, *Sinapse [Synapses]*, București, Aula, 2001, pp. 147-148.

¹⁰ Florin Iaru, interview in Mihail Vakulovski, *Portret de grup*, pp. 11-37. Unless otherwise stated, the quotations are translated into English by the author of this paper.

are not connected with T.S. Eliot and Saint-John Perse for nothing... It was a small West, with a small margin of aristocrats at the helm”¹¹. Beyond the attraction exerted by the Beatles, the 1980s poets are also influenced by the Beat generation, which represents the American counter-culture and promotes an iconoclastic attitude by manifesting a freedom to which the 1980s poets also aspire: “In our moments of student exaltation we said to ourselves: We are a generation. Even more so since we got our hands on a book about the Beat generation: Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, Kerouac, Corso [...] They are free, unlike us. And we became free... in our minds”¹². As is the case for any relevant imported model, it is compulsory to note the manner in which this model is employed in the autochthonous space, in order to establish to what extent and in what manner the 1980s poets allow themselves to be contaminated by this borrowed figures: where imitation lies and where the differences and variations begin, since a position is always constructed in relation to former models that enter a dialogue with it¹³. This is also the aim of Teodora Dumitru’s study which establishes connections between the 1980s generation and the Beat generation in the context of World Literature studies, noting that similarities do exist and function, but, as the context is different, the attitude of the 1980s poets is different, inscribed as it is in the larger context of a “cultural form of resistance”¹⁴.

The collective figure of the ‘80s poet as a rock star is built in terms of visibility in the public space, especially through a series of photographs taken by Tudor Jebeleanu, that illustrate the anthologies *Aer cu diamante* [*Air with Diamonds*] and *Cinci* [*Five*], two volumes that initiate the series of collective debuts at *Cenaclul de Luni*. The cover photo of *Aer cu diamante* (Annex, 1), in which (from left to right) Ion Stratan, Mircea Cărtărescu, Traian Coșovei, Florin Iaru are shown sitting on an engine, contains explicit references to the figure of the rock star through the taste for extravagance borrowed from the Beatles and which they use to obtain legitimation through association (the picture of the Beatles in a yellow submarine is well known). The image of the Beatles becomes a brand for the 1980s poets. They “wanted to be a sort of a literary equivalent of the Beatles quartet and, when they went to have their photograph taken at the CFR Museum, where they climbed on the engines [...], they were imagining themselves as the four Beatles and found their corresponding figures”¹⁵. Moreover, the name of the volume and the eponymous poem encouraged the association with the Beatles through an

¹¹ Doru Mareș, interview in Daniel Puia-Dumitrescu, *O istorie a Cenaclului*, pp. 239-240.

¹² Bogdan Ghiu, interview in Mihail Vakulovski, *Portret de grup*, p. 257.

¹³ Michèle Bokobza Kahan, “Image d’auteur”, in Anthony Glinoe and Denis Saint-Amand, *Le lexique Socius*, <http://ressources-socius.info/index.php/lexique/21-lexique/197-image-d-auteur>. Accessed June 15, 2020.

¹⁴ Teodora Dumitru, “Gaming the World System: Creativity, Politics, and Beat Influence in the Poetry of the 1980s Generation”, in Mircea Martin, Cristian Moraru, Andrei Terian (eds.), *Romanian Literature as World Literature*, New York, Bloomsbury Academic, 2017, pp. 271-287.

¹⁵ Interview with Ion Bogdan Lefter, in Daniel Puia Dumitrescu, *O istorie a Cenaclului*, p. 259.

invocation of the song *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*, a reference to a psychedelic effect¹⁶. In the case of the poets grouped in the anthology called *Cinci*, the reference to the mentioned figures is made rather implicitly and evasively in the photograph, through gestures that express an apparently tacit revolt. In a photograph where four of the five members – Ion Bogdan Lefter, Bogdan Ghiu, Mariana Marin and Alexandru Mușina – appear (Annex, 2), the gesture of the crossed arms imposes a distance suggesting their trying to avoid any form of intrusion into their personal, private space while at the same time highlighting an expressly nonconformist attitude.

Therefore, embracing the figure of the hippie is, at Cenuclul de Luni, an practice that assumes the same existential engagement visible in several poems from the anthology *Cinci*, that point to the influence of the rock star through characteristic dress code and appearance (jeans and long hair¹⁷) and, implicitly, to iconoclastic gestures that reconstitute a way of living and acting:

just arrived in bucharest/ in the 6th March dorm/ I was welcomed by a strange sturdy fellow/ with long hair and a moustache/ that introduced himself as ion [...] to type on the machine the word courage/ to fall on the table knocked over by the effort/ and piles of books to bury you quietly/ to pull out the poem from the heap at dusk// to have the chance of hearing the level, frozen voice of T.S. Eliot reciting Prufrock// to chat with Sandu Mușina/ about all of these// to be/ the knife thrust between night and day¹⁸.

Another poem expresses revolt and nonconformity: “You don’t test your fate by submitting yourself to it/ but by resisting it;/ so turn around and fight/ until the corpse of utopia will lie/ at your feet”¹⁹. In his recent volume dedicated to Cenuclul de Luni, Cosmin Ciotloș highlights the effects of recording the relationships between the 1980s poets in the poetic texts. Far from being deprived of finality, the biographical insertions testify to the atmosphere of the group, revealing the manner through which they choose to represent themselves:

¹⁶ Andrei Oișteanu, *Narcotice în cultura română. Istorie, religie și literatură* [*Narcotics in the Romanian Culture. History, Religion and Literature*], third edition, Iași, Polirom, 2014, p. 528.

¹⁷ Alexandru Mușina, *Sinapse*, p. 172: “We were very young, with long hair (even Ioan Groșan and myself) and jeans, we didn’t like the poetry of our immediate predecessors, too ‘metaphorical’, falsely ‘transcendental’, we thought – yes, we did have that naivety – that it is possible for a flower power movement to exist in Romania, under communism as well. We didn’t notice the difference between us and the youngsters of the free world”.

¹⁸ Romulus Bucur, *1 poem & 1/2*, in *Cinci* [*Five*], second edition, București, Tracus Arte, 2011, p. 13: “proaspăt sosit în bucurești/ în căminul 6 martie/ am fost întâmpinat de un vlăjgan dubios/ cu plete și mustăți/ ce mi s-a recomandat ion [...] să bați la mașină cuvântul curaj/ pe masă să cazi doborât de efort/ și vrafuri de cărți să te-ngroape tăcut/ poemul să-l scoată în zori din morman// să ai șansa să auzi vocea egală înghețată a lui T.S. Elliot recitând Prufrock// să stai cu Sandu Mușina de vorbă/ despre toate acestea// să fii/ cuțit înfipt între noapte și zi”.

¹⁹ Ion Bogdan Lefter, *Față în față cu dublul*, in *Cinci*, p. 46: “Nu-ți verifici soarta supunându-i-te/ ci împotrivindu-i-te;/ deci întoarce-te și luptă/ până când leșul utopiei va fi/ la picioarele tale”.

It is about a true underground legitimacy system consisting of dedications that the young authors launch to one another and of explicitly biographical references (again: mutual) submerged in the text. All animated by the tacit influence of publicly articulating what otherwise would have remained in the private realm of friendship or affinity²⁰.

The way in which the loud reading of the texts took place at *Cenaclul de Luni* indicates a particularity of this framework of literary sociability that reveals, from the very start, a new program for the production and the experiencing of poetry: “The reading sessions of the literary circle also had an undisputable agonistic charge: they were recitals, but also poetic tournaments in front of a competent audience [...]. Each reading and the subsequent commentaries were a show”²¹. The one who reads must be an actor, a showman, and his gestures are shaped to correspond to this previously established model in which the stage play and spontaneity of the one reading his text become defining gestures. The meetings reveal creative impulse and a manner of reading that Mușina explains precisely by the influence of the American poets. About the work of the 1980s poets, he states that “it is the first poetic formula meant to be read publicly. So there would be the orality²² of this poetry, its dynamism, its references to the immediate, to places, persons, situations also drawn on in the type of American poetry meant to be declaimed in front of a large audience”²³. The specificity of the reading atmosphere that the 1980s poets created cannot therefore be understood without referring to the poets of the Beat generation, those who had invented a “personal mythology”²⁴ in order to construct – appealing to performance – an identity in which the negatory attitude of revolt, manifested in presence and discourse, constituted forms of affirmation conveying, at the same time, disgust and alienation as a reaction to the materialism or conformism of American society. The gestures of the participants in *Cenaclul de Luni*, taken over as such from those of the Beat generation, were radical, configuring a form of biographism in which the figure of the poet was as much deconstructed and denounced as it was derived from a political protest commitment that will reach a climax in the Romanian space only in the works of

²⁰ Cosmin Ciotloș, *Cenaclul de Luni. Viața și opera [Monday Literary Circle. Life and Work]*, București, Pandora, 2021, p. 379.

²¹ Alexandru Mușina, *Sinapse*, p. 149.

²² Daniel Puia Dumitrescu evokes the importance of orality in a context in which, as we have previously noted, the editorial entries were limited, and the literary circle became a substitute for publication, understood as a “spoken magazine”. The interviews also reconstitute the image of the commentators, constructed in the same spontaneous game and reflected in gestures. See, for instance, the interview with Bogdan Ghiu in Daniel Puia Dumitrescu, *O istorie a Cenaclului*, p. 200: “People would comment very lively, almost ferociously, I would say. Florin Iaru would set the tone most of the time, giggling and jumping from his chair”.

²³ Alexandru Mușina, an interview with Daniel Puia-Dumitrescu, *O istorie a Cenaclului*, p. 236.

²⁴ Jonah Raskin, *American Scream: Allen Ginsberg’s Howl and the Making of the Beat Generation*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004.

poets from the generation 2000, the one that explores precisely an exposure of the self in a disadvantaged position by investigating personal traumas in a programmatic manner²⁵.

Strategies of Self-exclusion. From the Figure of the Commuter to Self-figuration through Negation

The first writer stance that Alexandru Mușina constructs for himself, initially as part of this collective figure, will ultimately become the specific trademark of his personality: it will remain connected to the atmosphere of the Beat generation through this collective ethos that imprints itself in one's way of being²⁶. For instance, his poem *Budila Express* conveys desperation, although in a quiet, suppressed form, without the pathos of revolt that permeates a similar poem, Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*, a future manifesto of the cry against a devalued society causing madness, hallucinatory states and the self-destruction of individuals. Here is how the collective identity is created in Mușina's poem, appreciated by the critics as the poem of an entire generation:

From time to time we sit at the table/ We knock some red eggs or raise glasses of wine, we chat [...] from time to time/ A poster./ Colourful, promises us the New Jerusalem/ In exchange for 30 cents or our silence [...] And we traveled with Budila-Express./ And we saw the drained faces like spent rags/ At the utmost limit, of the young lady-commuters./ And we felt the fluid of blind mistrust/ Descending like sulphuric acid in the bones [...] We entered the catacombs of reality./ At the bottom of the newspaper page and below the bottom./ There, where only/ Flesh and time, the fatigued sensor, exist./ And we got the tinfoil laurels/ Of the afternoons spent in meetings, and we/ Fought in the darkness with various/ County gods, and we lay/ On the bank of the river and cried [...] we howled, we expectorated/ The rancid sophistry of acceptance, and we/ Heard the whistle of the bullet by our ears/ in Budila-Express/ [...] Budila-Express! Budila-Express! Budila-Express!/ And we knew, and we loved./ And we had and could, wrote and read!²⁷.

²⁵ For a discussion about Romanian poetry after the year 2000, see Ștefania Mincu, *Douămiismul poetic românesc. despre starea poeziei II* [Generation 2000 in Poetry. On the State of Poetry II], Constanța, Pontica, 2007. See also Grațiela Benga, *Rețeaua. Poezia românească a anilor 2000* [The Network. Romanian poetry after the year 2000], Timișoara, Editura Universității de Vest, 2016.

²⁶ Jérôme Meizoz, "Postures d'auteur et poétique (Ajar, Rousseau, Céline, Houellebecq)". Texte présenté au colloque *Text und Feld*, Berlin, 5 février 2004, puis, sous une forme plus développée, au colloque international *Analyse textuelle et comparée des discours*, Université de Lausanne, 7 mai 2004, *Vox Poetica. Lettres et sciences humaines*, <http://www.vox-poetica.org/t/articles/meizoz.html>. Accessed June 15, 2020.

²⁷ Alexandru Mușina, *Budila-Express*, in *Poeme alese (1975–2000)* [Selected Poems (1975–2000)], Brașov, Aula, 2003, pp. 50-56: "Din când în când ne așezăm la masă/ Ciocnim ouă roșii sau pahare de vin, conversăm [...] din când în când/ Câte un afix/ Multicolor ne promite Noul Ierusalim/ În schimbul a treizeci de bani sau al tăcerii [...] Și noi am călătorit cu Budila-Express./ Și noi am văzut fețele stoarse, ca niște cârpe ajunse/ La gradul zero al folosirii, ale junelor navetiste./ Și noi am simțit fluidul neîncrederii oarbe/ Coborând ca acidul sulfuric în oase [...] Am pătruns în catacombele realității./ În subsolul paginii de ziar și mai jos de subsol/ Acolo unde nu mai există decât/ Carnea și timpul, senzorul obosit./ Și noi am cules laurii de staniol/ Ai după-amiezilor petrecute-n ședințe, și

The gestures that characterize the collective profile (the knocking of eggs by a glass of wine, the conversations) translate a form of cohabitation marked by the experience of helplessness becoming concrete as a “fight in the dark”, as a natural consequence of a policy of silencing which actually hides another common position well illustrated in Mușina’s texts: that of the commuter²⁸ subjected to a state of (self-)exclusion. For the individual carries with himself a stigma inscribed in this paradoxical condition: membership and non-membership at the same time, from which the feelings of self-dissipation and loss of landmarks emerge through unavoidable oblivion that creates the feeling of expulsion as well, since “The doormen of the hotels have forgotten us, the tender and aristocratic women/ Have forgotten us, the station porters have forgotten us and the lift boys,/ The flower vendors and the gem merchants,/ The streets have forgotten us, the white houses have forgotten us/ Houses climbed by the crimson ivy of the old ‘la bella estate’./ We have lost everything”²⁹. From this moment on, the model of the Beat generation is resized in the profile of Mușina, who remains, in later stances, faithful to the condition of the *self-excluded* turned into a distinctive trademark and employed both at discursive and at behavioural level.

All the strategies of self-representation, derived in Mușina’s case from a play of masks which becomes fundamental not only for his conception of poetry, but also for his formation as a writer figure, will work in the service of this stance of the self-excluded. By appealing to a mask, Mușina not only relates polemically to the totalitarian regime where disguise has become a condition of survival and a form of subversion (we are including here the perception of the literary circle as a way of masking a vision that does not submit to the regime), but also reinvents himself, adopting another identity or even creating a fictional identity through a pseudonym: Mușina participates in the 2002 debut prizes of *România Liberă* as Andor Vass, with the short anthology entitled *Dermata* (Brașov: Aula, 2002). Recalled and mentioned in a 2010 interview³⁰, the moment is validated by Alexandru Cistelean:

noi/ Am luptat în întuneric cu diverși/ Dumnezeu județeni, și noi am stat/ Pe malul fluviului și am plâns [...] am răcnit, am expectorat/ Sofistica râncedă a acceptării, și noi/ Am auzit șuierul glonțului pe lângă urechi/ în Budila-Express/[...] Budila-Express! Budila-Express! Budila-Express!/ Și noi am știut și noi am iubit,/ Și noi am avut și-am putut, am scris și-am citit!”

²⁸ For the figure of the commuter see *Lecția întâi. Spre culmi* [*The first lesson. To the top*], part of *Lecțiile deschise ale profesorului de limba franceză franceză A.M* [*The Open Classes of the French Teacher A.M.*], in Alexandru Mușina, *Poeme alese*, p. 39.

²⁹ Alexandru Mușina, *Budila-Express*, p. 50: “Portarii hotelurilor ne-au uitat, femeile fragede și aristocrate/ Ne-au uitat, hamalii din gări ne-au uitat și liftierii,/ Vanzătoarele de flori și negustorii de nestemate./ Ne-au uitat străzile, ne-au uitat casele albe/ Pe care urca iedera ruginie a vechii la bella estate./ Am pierdut totul”.

³⁰ Doina Ioanid, “Interview with Alexandru Mușina”, *Observator Cultural*, 2010, 526, <https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/am-incercat-sa-proiectez-chipuri-diferite-ale-neantului-din-interior/>. Accessed June 15, 2020.

The attempt was serious nonetheless; I don't know if it succeeded though. It could be said that it did, since Andor Vass received (almost) no commentaries – for had it been known that Andor was Mușina, the comments would have been present for sure. But, for the same reason, it could also be said that it wasn't successful. In any case, the experiment was not continued. I also feel responsible for its failure, since (at Mușina's request) I lent him a hand in getting into the role, presenting Andor Vass (in no. 11/1999 of *Vatra*) as a poet discovered on the Internet, and I gifted him with a minimal biography. I do not know if I am entirely guilty for this failure, as perhaps they took my word for it and nobody believed that Vass could be a fictitious invention or a mask³¹.

More than a contextualization of the poetry program that the writer is faithful to, the mask game designated, at the same time, an opposite option materialized in a poetics that Mușina wishes to distinguish himself from. In the same above-mentioned interview, the writer defines his formula as the desire to transpose into poetry a *Theatre of the Self* (a definition that reiterates/is derived from the theory of the new anthropocentrism), opposed to a formula that promotes the transformation of poetry into *Reality Show*. The distinction he makes actually demarcates two poetic programs and two types of stage presence of the poet as a public persona. On the one hand, there is (in Mușina's view), the artifice revealed in the Reality Show-type poetics, understood as a form of forging the self; on the other side of this issue, one can find the poet that lives his poetry, one that embraces existence, but not in the sense of reportage, for

to be in the world means to choose: to be yourself, alive in this world, with all of its complexity, or to appear on TV, to speak about how you argued with your boyfriend. But there you are on a stage. True poetry does not mean acting for others but accomplishing all that Mallarmé articulated: a 'Theatre of the Self', a sort of interior theatre that the other (the reader) is able to reconstitute within himself [...] then you feel this is poetry, you feel that you are receiving it as such³².

A figure complementary to that of the poet engaged in a *Theatre of the Self* is that of the *hunter-poet* whose aim is to cross reality and transcribe it without passing it through a strong bookish filter, which implies the repositioning of the human being in the poetic text from the perspective of "his own corporality; the mastery – through words – of his own sensations"³³. Beyond the theoretical aspects that nuance the hypothesis of the new anthropocentrism, poetry as a theatre of the

³¹ Al. Cistelean, "Erotica in nuce (O contribuție bibliografică strict necesară)" ["Eroticism in nuce (A Strictly Necessary Bibliographical Contribution)"], *Vatra*, 2014, 4-5, <https://revistavatra.org/2014/07/26/erotica-in-nuce-o-contributie-bibliografica-strict-necesara/>. Accessed April 14, 2021.

³² Doina Ioanid, "Interview with Alexandru Mușina", *Observator Cultural*, 2010, 526, <https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/am-incercat-sa-proiectez-chipuri-diferite-ale-neantului-din-interior/>. Accessed June 15, 2020.

³³ Alexandru Mușina, *Sinapse*, p. 61.

self can be connected with the use of the heteronym as a way of disguising, and the definition of poetry as a route that involves a succession of different authors. In *Jurnal* [Diary], published posthumously³⁴, the identification of the writer Mușina with authors that correspond to him at different moments of creation becomes the only possible definition of the self, while the projections designate the drama resulting from acknowledging the ontological deficiency of fragmentation and determining a questioning of identity: “Sometimes I feel like I am Tolstoy, another time Byron, sometimes Camus, another time T.S. Eliot, sometimes Shelley, another time Dostoevsky, and rarely Kavafis or Tournier [...] I wonder if I have any centre, if my ‘biography’ means anything other than some deluded enterprise with frequent changes of direction”³⁵. The role of heteronyms is not reduced to designating a free game of disguise, in the sense of performance. The stress falls rather on the illustration of “faces of the nothingness from the inside. For I believe that the modern man has a sort of inner, specific, defining incoherence”³⁶ that actually masks fleeing from oneself, a consequence of self-exclusion. Interpreting Mușina’s poetics as a form of disguise understood from the perspective of heteronyms, the writer thus appears in the position of a character from Ibsen’s theatre, Peer Gynt, while the mask becomes a way of salvation from nothingness.

Self-representation through negation and deconstruction is precisely the manner of engagement that Mușina adopts after 1989, subordinating it to the same figure of the self-excluded already crossing his biography. The disadvantaged or pessimist position displayed in his diary is also a form of deconstruction. The pretext is a disease purposefully highlighted in order to underline the passivity and, simultaneously, the liberation from the control exerted by the totalitarian regime, a freedom nonetheless experienced through lethargy, suggesting lack of a creative force, compensated or explained through the exposure of frailty, vulnerability, as well as through the exhibition of the hidden side of one’s existence. The reader becomes witness to the writer allowing intrusion in a private space, this time. In his diary, Mușina offers numerous images of the illness as retreat, decomposition and devitalization, while becoming sick is at the same time presented as a consequence of cultural trauma, for “the disease is within yourself, including in that inability to forget.” The same image of the (nostalgic) ailing person appears in poetry lines: “trucks and trolleybuses pass by my window/ dacia cars and vans, kneeling in the room/ and holding in hand two pictures, an elephant and a rooster/ my son is singing ‘the voice of america’ personally, I am down with the flu/ I have my scarf

³⁴ Fragments of *Jurnal* [Diary] appear in *Vatra* magazine beginning with 2014, which initiates the series of unpublished writings of Alexandru Mușina.

³⁵ Alexandru Mușina, “Jurnal”, *Vatra*, 2014, 10, <https://revistavatra.org/2014/12/16/alexandru-musina-jurnal-continua-re-2/>. Accessed June 16, 2020.

³⁶ Doina Ioanid, “Interview with Alexandru Mușina”, *Observator Cultural*, 2010, 526, <https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/am-incercat-sa-proiectez-chipuri-diferite-ale-neantului-din-interior/>. Accessed June 15, 2020.

around my neck my hat on the head I lie under the blanket and I smell/ of chinese ointment.”³⁷. The voluntary self-exclusion from literature through the refusal or postponing of writing is an attitude that ultimately emerges from the refusal of conformism, but not without self-persiflage:

Ultimately, everything revolves around the wish (vocation, eventually) of writing [...] Alu made me laugh. He likes to ‘make a fool of himself’, he has a tendency to clown around, a tendency which belongs – in general – to children, but which is also – he makes me believe it – is inherited from me. It’s all about not caring (only then are you free from the normal mediocrity of the others). If you really possess a piece of information or an intuition of information that is truly new, different, it is normal not to care about a ‘routine’, constancy, waiting, about the others. The dissimulation, the game in which you do not – apparently – contradict the program of those around you, but remain yourself, is difficult³⁸.

Thus, in *Jurnal*, the poet uses the right to be different through wilful infantilization transposed in a caricatural manner, as a sign of attitudinal revolt amplified in discourse: “I repeat the same clauses, the same sentences and expressions endlessly, Tania is right to be exasperated, but that is my way of getting revenge: On what? On the surrounding world, on myself, the one that has become a sort of intellectual fungus. A sort of fungus king, the fungus poet of a limp mind”³⁹. At the same time, he refers (self-ironically) to the freedom that he had promoted: “the liberty of being sleazy, untrustworthy and – nevertheless – of having access to a (small) audience”⁴⁰.

“The Balneal Genius”

Scrisorile unui geniu balnear [*The Letters of a Balneal Genius*] reiterate, in epistolary form, the pretext of illness and retreat, subordinating it to some assumed positions on the cultural scene. The position of “balneal genius” is also underlined by means of the photographic portrait taken by Tudor Jebeleanu for the cover of the book (Annex, 4). Mușina is captured in his pyjamas, lying in bed and holding a writing instrument in his hand. The image allows for his placement in an inter-textual dialogue with Caragiale’s piece *Conul Leonida față cu reacțiunea* [*Mr.*

³⁷Alexandru Mușina, *Scrisoare clipei care-a fost* [*Letter to the Past Moment*], from *Tomografia și alte explorări* [*Tomography and Other Explorations*], in *Poeme alese*, p. 112: “prin fața ferestrei mele trec camioane și troleibuze/ dacia și furgonetele în cameră stând în genunchi/ și ținând în mână două poze un elefant ș-un cocoș/ fiul meu cântă ‘the voice of america’ eu personal sunt gripat/ am fularul la gât căciula în cap stau întins sub plapumă și miros/ a alifie chinezească”.

³⁸ Alexandru Mușina, “Jurnal”, *Vatra*, 2015, 3-4, p. 11, https://vatraoficial.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/vatra_3_4_2015-2.pdf. Accessed June 16 2020.

³⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

Leonida Facing the Reaction], whose figure he imbues with new (ironic) meaning in order to introduce himself:

Sir Leonida was reading the gazette in his bed, in his pyjamas. I wrote the majority of the letters addressed to you in my bed, in my pyjamas. This way, the ontological-epistolary circle is closed. In the extreme, I would define the revelatory experience that lies at the core of the Olănești letters in this way: you can be brilliant, responsible, useful to the nation, and be in your pyjamas⁴¹.

One can notice here a specific manner of acting “against the grain,” an attitude explicitly adopted as Alexandru Mușina represents himself as *Gică Contra*, a position rooted, as we have noticed, at the very beginning of the writer’s formation through the rock star figure functioning against the totalitarian background. Nevertheless, after the Romanian Revolution, Mușina’s contrarian attitude is visible especially with respect to his generational colleagues: “And what tribe should I join? I was part of the tribe of the 1980s generation, but I backed out disgusted by ‘its mercantilisation’, by the loss of the ordinary and the dissipation of the initial ethos”⁴².

The disappointment causing the withdrawal emerges on the basis of the voluntary self-exclusion from the institutions in which his generational colleagues are also enrolled, institutions seen as able to confer prestige and legitimization, understood by Paul Dirks⁴³ as a form of accepting or rather obtaining a privileged position, as well as a way of sealing value in. After the fall of the Ceaușescu regime, the literary scene was divided in two groups: *Uniunea Scriitorilor* [The Writers’ Union] and *Asociația Scriitorilor Profesioniști* [The Professional Writers’ Association]. The latter was crystallized around the 1980s poets as an alternative to The Writer’s Union, which was accused of being organised according to the model used during the regime, with lack of transparency in granting positions and awards, and the precarious justification of internal decisions⁴⁴. A source of the disputes was the double membership of the writers both to ASPRO (The Professional Writers’ Association) and the USR (The Writers’ Union), a status that Mușina explains in the epistle called *Gică Contra între ASPRO și US* [*Gică Contra between ASPRO and US*]⁴⁵, where he underlines his position. What Mușina rejects is not legitimization and consecration in themselves, but the mechanisms through which these distinctions are obtained in the literary world, thus displaying an attitude that

⁴¹ Alexandru Mușina, *Scrisorile unui geniu balnear* [*The Letters of a Balneal Genius*], București, Aula, 2007, p. 202.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 125.

⁴³ Paul Dirks, “Le corps de l’écrivain, instrument et enjeu de reconnaissance”, *Carnets*, 2017, 9, <http://journals.openedition.org/carnets/2024>. Accessed June, 15, 2020.

⁴⁴ Mircea Vasilescu, *Cultura română pe înțelesul patrioților* [*Romanian Culture in the Sense of Patriots*], București, Humanitas, 2018, p. 54.

⁴⁵ Alexandru Mușina, “Gică Contra între ASPRO și U.S.” [*Gică Contra between ASPRO and US*], in *Scrisorile unui geniu balnear*, pp. 29-43.

is vehemently directed against imposture, even at the risk of marginality, understood this time as a sign of distinction and consequently valued positively. The writer therefore prefers marginality, using it as a weapon and pleading for assuming freedom through writing, since “here, in writing, I feel truly free to address the others just the way I would like to”⁴⁶. His obstinate attitude and the idea of social engagement can be noticed in the photographic portrait taken by Tudor Jebeleanu, where Mușina is pictured holding a gun to his head (Annex, 3). At the same time, Mușina stages a double reflection through the insertion of his own photograph on his T-shirt, completed by the message “Poesia o muerte”, which suggests the reactionary force of the word, as well the equivalence between writing and living.

Instead of Concluding Remarks

Existential engagement is invoked almost obsessively in discussions about Alexandru Mușina. The portrait recently compiled in *Vatra*⁴⁷ magazine, in a special tribute issue, is symptomatic as it articulates and completes the self-construction of the writer. The figure of the writer assembled from the outside is not fundamentally different from the one that he inscribed himself into, with special emphasis on the humoristic and ironic dimension. Humour and irony are effects of assuming and promoting a freedom which, as we have seen so far, functions as a nexus between different faces that the writer assumes, from collective to particular representations. The reconstitution of the mentor position and, implicitly, of the image of the founder around whom a mythology is built, brings again into focus the issue of freedom as fundamental element in the poetic program that Mușina assumes when he tries to define himself. In the biography of the writer, the moment when *Cercul literar 19* was born constitutes a reference point, as it is the place where his mentor status is configured. *Cercul literar 19*, founded in Brașov, was set up, just as *Cenaclul de Luni*, out of the need to create an environment different from that of the official system. Among those who frequented it we can count, along with Alexandru Mușina, Gheorghe Crăciun, Paul Grigore, Angela Nache, Vasile Gogea, Claudiu Mitan, Al. Sion⁴⁸, also Simona Popescu, Caius Dobrescu, Marius Oprea, Andrei Bodiu, who were high school students back then. Although he is acknowledged as a master, thus affirming himself, gaining a well-defined position within the group and subsequently contributing to the foundation of the philology

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 22.

⁴⁷ See dossier “Școala de la Brașov” [“The Brașov School”], *Vatra*, 2019, 6-7, https://vatraofficial.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/vatra_6_7_2019-1.pdf. See also dossier “Alexandru Mușina”, *Vatra*, 2014, 4-5, <https://vatraofficial.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/vatra-nr-4-5-2014.pdf>. Accessed June 10, 2020.

⁴⁸ Caius Dobrescu invokes these names in Mihail Vakulovski, *Portret de grup*, p. 163. The list of participants is slightly modified depending on the person interviewed.

school in Brașov known as “Școala de la Brașov” [“The Brașov School”], Mușina does not completely identify himself with the position of a host: he does not reclaim and use the privileges of the mentor position by imposing a hierarchy. The relation he establishes with the members of literary circle is rather one of equality, where readings are guided by the motto of cultivating a radical attitude with respect to what the literary tradition means.

Through the stakes he formulates, Mușina reveals not only the profile of a generation and implicitly of related poetry, but also a personal trademark, noticeable in gestures and discourse through successive trials of (self-)exclusion. Some features, reconstituted in the interventions collected in the *Vatra* issue, certify the influence exerted by the writer, as well as by the man that Alexandru Mușina was, one derived precisely from the freedom he promotes: “a man with a founding vocation” (Mircea Martin), “a special talent for mobilizing and engaging people. A talent for animating” (Ciprian Șulea), “the convincing tone” (Diana Tătăuș), “he had the abilities of a leader, not those of a mere boss”, “the hallucinating way in which he managed to keep you captive” (Cristina Palaș). Fascination with Mușina can be explained by his capacity of juggling the serious and playful tones, the writer constantly switching from character to character, in the same way that explains his preference for the use of heteronyms.

Mușina’s public appearances, as well as the manner in which he relates to others, are explained by reference to his irony, a characteristic feature of the writer’s behaviour, also present at discursive level⁴⁹ where it functions as self-irony. Transposed into behaviour, irony manifests itself through laughter, with the alternative smile and grin, variably present in the interviews about Mușina, confirming the position that he adopts. Laughter as a way of public manifestation initially appears in *Cenaclul de Luni*, with two distinct values: the *palliative-laughter* (of thaumaturgical value), as exploration of freedom, as relief, opposite *critical laughter* as a caustic form directed towards the others as critical reaction. The atmosphere can also be discovered in the Creative Writing Master’s degree classes, although Mușina particularly cultivates laughter in its caustic variation, as a sign of a personality that interrogates, questions or lambasts the world and himself, something that leads Ruxandra Ivăncescu to circumscribe a particular Mușina style in that “cascading laughter that I am sure everyone who knew Alexandru Mușina still remembers; Sandu, who butted in on complex scientific and theoretical discussions with his style of a Păcală-philosopher, ready to carry the door on his back just to show you how ridiculous you can be with all of your

⁴⁹ In an article dedicated to Houellebecq appears this strategy/ option of the writer to orient his readers through a transfer from the intra-discursive position to the extra-discursive one. See Louise Moor, “Posture polémique ou polémisation de la posture?”, *COntEXTES*, 2012, 10, <http://journals.openedition.org/contextes/4921>. Accessed April 20, 2021.

scientific pretence.”⁵⁰ This Păcală-philosopher style recreated the playful, jolly stance of Mușina and must be understood in relation to the figure of the balneal genius that he had adopted, an ironic and subversive figure. The notes that refer to the grin that “chastises stupidity” (Aurel Pantea) or the smile that draws attention: “beware! beware!” (Nicolae Coande) can fit into the same category.

At the end of this analysis regarding the ways in which Alexandru Mușina’s writer stance is construed over time, we can ascertain that the writer from Brașov evolves from a rock star figure that he shares with the whole group of Cenușarii de Luni, to putting into effect a “Theatre of the self” by using the mask as figuration of alterity and reinterpretation, lambasting the self, and ending with the figure of the “balneal genius”. However, all of these function as “faces” or facets of a single mould: that of the self-excluded, which ends up criss-crossing his poetry and prose, as well as his literary research, formed into a sarcastic, self-ironic, caustic and negatory discourse.

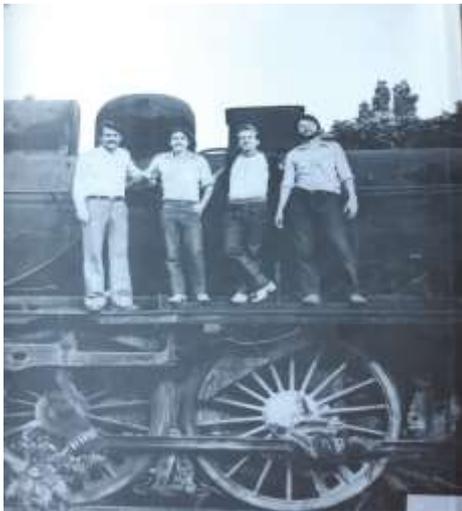
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⁵⁰ Ruxandra Ivăncescu, “Despre literatură și viață” [“On Literature and Life”], *Vatra*, 2014, 4-5, <https://vatraoficial.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/vatra-nr-4-5-2014.pdf>. Accessed June 12, 2020.

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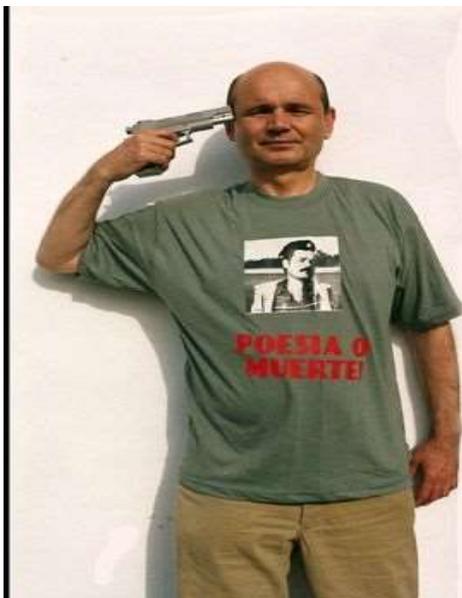
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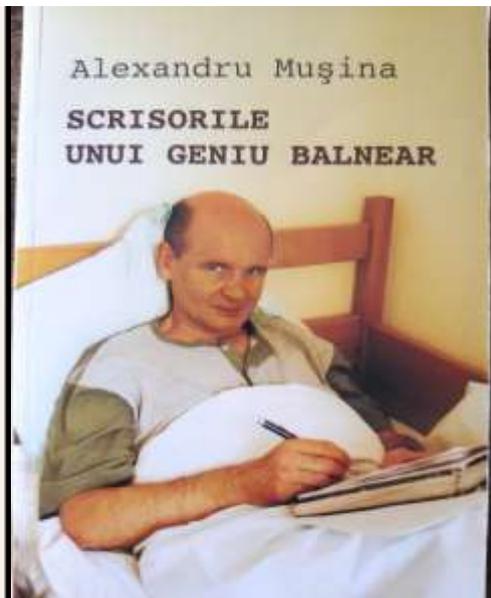
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ALEXANDRU MUȘINA BETWEEN THE BEAT POET
AND THE “BALNEAL GENIUS”*(Abstract)*

Redefining auctoriality involves both literary and extra-literary criteria. Relying mostly on Jérôme Meizoz's concept of posture introduced in *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*, the purpose of this article is to investigate or to (re)evaluate the ways in which the writer imposes himself on the literary scene through self-figuration, involving, at the same time, the reception process. I analysed, for instance, the different representations of Alexandru Mușina, a writer from 80s generation, from the collective corpus, defined in the group formed at Monday Literary Circle, to individual presence. I was interested in the position of the Romanian writer during the totalitarian regime and which were the alternative ways of obtaining visibility, taking into account the influence of rock star or the influence of Beat Poets. Another point of interest was the engagement that the writer adopts after '89, in his fiction and as a public figure.

Keywords: 1980s generation, totalitarian regime, Monday Literary Circle, literary posture, Beat generation, “Balneal Genius”.

ALEXANDRU MUȘINA ÎNTRE POETUL BEAT ȘI „GENIUL BALNEAR”

(Rezumat)

Redefinirea auctorialității implică deopotrivă criterii literare și extraliterare. Având în vedere mai ales conceptul de postură formulat de către Jérôme Meizoz în *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*, scopul prezentului articol este de a investiga sau de a (re)evalua modalitățile prin care scriitorul se impune pe scena literară prin figurarea de sine, implicând, în același timp, procesul receptării. Am analizat diferitele reprezentări ale lui Alexandru Mușina, un scriitor din generația '80, de la corpul colectiv definit în grupul format la Cenaclul de Luni, la prezența individuală. M-a interesat poziția scriitorului român în timpul regimului totalitar și care au fost modurile alternative de a obține vizibilitate, luând în considerare influența starului rock sau influența poezilor din generația Beat. Un alt punct de interes a fost modalitatea de angajare a scriitorului după '89, în textele sale și ca prezență publică.

Cuvinte-cheie: generația '80, regim totalitar, Cenaclul de Luni, postură literară, generația Beat, „geniul balnear”.

**“HE IS MR. NAUM, A DISTINGUISHED POET, I AM
CERTAIN YOU HAVE HEARD OF HIM...”**

In the first pages of *Zenobia*, following surrealism’s good tradition of derealization, there is a scene in which “Mr. Naum”, invited to the house of a certain Mr. Sima, meets a girl (who he falls in love with at first sight). There are two other young men in the house (apart from a man, dead or asleep, lying on the table), who, when “Mr. Naum” is introduced, ask for further clarification on the identity of the newcomer (“Naum who?”); after a curse uttered in his mind, “Mr. Naum”, already madly in love with “that girl”, replies, “You can call me whatever you want, it doesn’t matter”¹.

The denotative summary of the sequence cannot be taken seriously by an emancipated reader, but it is a good indication for understanding the game of metamorphic instantiations, of the entity who, in Gellu Naum’s texts, designates himself as “I” – and who “would appear” to be writing. The current study tackles the opening of a space for reflection on the postural in Naum’s works, by examining the way in which the play between the real author, the textual author, the imaginary/ imagined writer and other figures from the discourse scene is (self) represented.

It is well known that, for Gellu Naum, surrealism was an exemplary way of life, not just a mode of discourse. Each stage of Gellu Naum’s creation reveals an author-actor, who defines himself through isomorphic postures, images and significant events, sprung from a substantial identity of the relations with the world and language – that immense internal unity of which the poet himself speaks in *Diminețile cu Domnișoara Pește* [*Mornings with Miss Fish*] comes from the idea of poetry understood as a way of life. The beliefs that guided the poetic life of Gellu Naum are founded on the first person as an enunciative postulate. The self *in-grained* in the text is, therefore, an invariant that crosses and modulates the poetic work in its becoming; the poetic spaces – featured in life or in super-life – are substantiated by the textures and dissolutions of the subject, by the anamorphoses and thematizations with an estheticizing reflex, becoming meta/ fictional landmarks. This is, naturally, also a consequence of some po(i)etic(po)hetic(!) options: the self must be *there*, because, in the spirit of a revolute Platonism which surrealism has in common with High Romanticism, it is, by mediumistic disposition, the receptacle of voices from ideal spheres. Practising a phenomenology from which other forms of knowledge are born beyond subjectivity, the self that allows itself to be uttered by the voices interpolated with

¹ Gellu Naum, *Zenobia*, in *Întrebătorul* [*The Inquirer*], București, Eminescu, 1996, p. 11.

the immediate order of the world becomes a sounding board of the cosmic unconscious. Therefore, the exophoric/ endophoric relations of the “void” “self” sign with other signs must be understood in terms of a *fuzzy* logic. *The self* means, in a wide semantic-symbolic range: The Concrete Author; the one who makes poetry; the one who “commits” poems [*poheme*] and novels [*homan*]²; the one who experiments, who systematically disrupts his rational existence, yielding to discordant pulsations; the one who sees and reads himself from the outside (“it would seem that I am writing”), the first reader of his own text, an ironist who takes himself aside; the one who, instituted in language, separates himself from his own persona, and reifies himself, representing himself as the “Other” and as “for the Other”; The Other, the phantom double of the self.

In this paper, the postural in Gellu Naum’s poetic work is problematized by reference to *Zenobia*, a text which “works” as an interpreter. *Zenobia* is, indisputably, the best po(i)etic definition of Gellu Naum: the enunciative posture, the structuring of signifiers in the matrix of the poetic narrative, the modulation of the scenario through recurring events, symbolically invested, the de-realized, de-psychologized instantiations – all these identity landmarks are unraveled in this 1985 text, with a (meta)/ (inter) fictional vocation; its thematic structures “quote”, even if incomplete or sublimated, all the texts of Gellu Naum, within the coordinates of a diffuse isotopism³ described by the poet himself as a parallel semantics.

A review of the procedures by which the self is themed in the work of Gellu Naum begins, naturally, with observations on the identity between the name that signs the texts and that of some textual instances, pseudo-donors-pseudo-actors. In terms of the “classical” narrative, we would speak of autodiegetic narration. Here, however, in this hybrid text, the representation of the self becomes a negative device, a travesty meant to create and increase an intrinsic ambiguity. In de-realizing poetic prose, rhythmically structured, with symbolically overdetermined events, the self has a polymorphic identity and fortuitous names. The mystifying strategy is emblematic of *Zenobia*, but it can also be found in other texts. For instance, in *Zenobia*, the (pseudo)autodiegetic narrator denounces the names given by others as arbitrary. Some examples are relevant: “He is Mr. Naum, a distinguished poet, I am sure you have heard of him, Mr. Sima thought it necessary to introduce me. Naum who? asked one of the young men. [...] *You can call me what you want, it doesn’t matter. Then I will call you Constantinescu*”⁴; “The

² Gellu Naum’s invented terms of “pohem” and “homan” are untranslatable. He added/ replaced the letter “h” in two Romanian words: poem [*poem*] and roman [*roman*]. Their equivalent plural form in English would therefore be different, while the pun would also lose its meaning upon translation, as it is based on the French use of the letter “h”.

³ Ion Pop, *Gellu Naum. Poezia contra literaturii* [*Gellu Naum. Poetry Against Literature*], Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2001, p. 80.

⁴ Gellu Naum, *Zenobia*, in *Întrebătorul*, p. 11.

following events are different from the others, especially considering that *at that time my name was* Cornelius de Argint. Everyone called me Cornelius de Argint⁵, and it seemed so natural to me that I could not have answered to another name⁶; “Can I call you Mr. Albinos?” “*Call me whatever you want*, my companion whispered. You can even call me Ferdinand. It’s a name I’m often called, I don’t know why...” (emphasis added)⁷.

Ipse, the concrete self becomes, in language, *idem*, the fluctuating self, with multiple states⁸.

The tragic cleavage of the self and its consequences at the level of meaning mark the whole poetic path of Gellu Naum. The recurrent thematization of this separation and self-discovery is a symbolic axis of creation. A phrase from *Medium* is illustrative: “I know that I, *the other who is always me* (emphasis added) can only be found in the second of awakening⁹”. On the one hand, the self who assumes life in poetry separates itself from the one who records it, from the one who is captive in the textual net; the latter, who “commits” literature (poheme, rhomane / homane, etc.)¹⁰, is called a “pohet”. Through symbolic condensation, the grapheme h becomes the “unmistakable signature”¹¹ of Gellu Naum; h indexes the practice of literature, seen as enrolling in a coercive “cretinizing” system, infected with clichés: “I wrote a poem that makes us walk smoothly, look at everything in a frightening silence [...]. But let us not be mistaken: this is only the harrowing feeling that we have done nothing but poetry, that we have found only what is called beautiful, that we have solved only an aesthetic problem”¹².

In *Zenobia*, the constitutive status of the self is that of scission repeatedly staged:

I should have known from the very beginning, though, that I am defiling an area which, due to my structure and skills, allows itself to be transcribed, even quite vaguely, only through what I call “pohem”. I should not have forgotten that, otherwise, the temptation to describe it to some extent brings with it texts whose artisanal innocence has only one merit: that of placing me outside literature¹³.

⁵ “Cornelius de Argint” would be translated literally in English as “Silver Cornelius”.

⁶ Gellu Naum, *Cornelius de Argint* [*Silver Cornelius*], in *Întrebătorul*, p. 347.

⁷ Gellu Naum, *Poetizați, poetizați* [*Poeticize, poeticize*], in *Întrebătorul*, pp. 322-323.

⁸ See the definition of the binome *ipse/ idem* in Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, Paris, Seuil, 1990, or *Sinele ca un altul* [*Oneself as Another*]. Translated by Alina-Daniela Marinescu and Paul Marinescu, București, Spandugino, 2016

⁹ Gellu Naum, *Medium*, in *Întrebătorul*, p. 260

¹⁰ See note 2 above.

¹¹ Monica Lovinescu, *Est-etice Unde scurte IV* [*East-ethics/ Short Waves IV*], București, Humanitas, 1994, p. 203: “The exorcism of the letter h belongs to Gellu Naum, it is his unmistakable staple”. Priority of the process is given, as we know, to the “black angel” of surrealism, Jacques Vaché.

¹² Gellu Naum, *Medium*, in *Întrebătorul*, p. 238.

¹³ Gellu Naum, *Zenobia*, in *Întrebătorul*, p. 61.

The one who writes denounces writing as inauthentic: “When I evoke something, like that Bach on the doorstep, I feel like I’m starting to commit some kind of ‘homan’, and that appals me”¹⁴. The novel (“homan”) about to be produced exerts an irrepressible pull: “The physical mechanism of writing, which I had accepted for so long, penetrated my blood too deeply”¹⁵. However, the materiality of the written letter creates the possibility of “awakening” some pre-existing intuitions and knowledge, which are not allowed to be said, but only approximated:

As I am writing, because it looks like I’m writing, I regret the fact you don’t have the papers crammed into your fingers over the rain of black letters, I’m certain you would see Mr. Sima’s room with the table under the window overlooking the swamp and its dead man; and you would see us, each in our place, speaking in our mind or out loud; and you would understand that none of the states experienced so far are imagined, despite the fact that they all happened exactly as I relate them. Once here, I would advise you to pause for a moment and revise, lightly brushing over the pages with the tips of your ten fingers, with your eyes closed; once the words are relinquished, in the film of your own availability, you might find out the extremely important things which, no matter how much I would like to, are impossible for me to communicate. I would advise you, therefore, to practise this revision exercise whenever you are tempted by doubt as to the truth of my words; from where I stand, it makes no difference; you would be given the chance to enter only the place you think you find yourselves and so on...¹⁶.

The joined route of the writer and the reader is marked by mnemonic clues such as “please revise” or by recommendations such as “I would advise you to...”. The authorial instance declines the power that cultural tradition confers on it, retaining only the role of mediator towards a world that refuses immediate knowledge; the conditional regime of the discourse shows that the reader is faced with an open option; he/ she must take the creative initiative. The stakes of the text, the intrinsic condition for a successful reading (of the text and of the world), lie in what Claude Ollier calls the operative function.

The “dwelling” of the self by multiple instances is an interpretive premise verified throughout Gellu Naum’s poetic journey, from *Drumețul incendiar* [*The Incendiary Wanderer*] (1936) to *Discurs despre pietre* [*Discourse on Stones*] (2002). The identity of the self is aggregated through a multitude of staging instances, whose plenary significance is impossible to grasp, whose ambiguity is impossible to pinpoint.

In *Drumețui incendiar*¹⁷, the textual instances are gradually inserted in the text. The title of a poem, *Pot să-ți spun vorbe ca niște geamuri* [*I Can Tell You Words Like Windows*], asserts the self as an utterance; “I” is “melted” into “we” in *Vom*

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 86.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 148.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁷ Gellu Naum, *Drumețul incendiar* [*The Incendiary Wanderer*], București, s.n., 1936.

sări afară din noi uimiți [*We will jump out of us in amazement*], so that subsequently the role of the enunciating subject is blurred, because the poetic energy is oriented towards the female phantasm. The object of desire claims the poem, it is a double of the poetic experience/ discourse: “and you will ask me to write a poem about your water lilies/ corpse” (*We will jump out of us in amazement*); “we will not take into consideration the demand and supply/ in these walks on the peculiar tarmac of the poem”) (*Ghetele lui Gheorghe Lazăr* [*Gheorghe Lazăr’s Boots*]). “We” can point, in an immediate decipherment, to the meeting between writer and reader, or, more subtly, in the spirit of mystical doctrines, to the state of a consciousness which is no longer that of a particular being, but above multiple possible individual manifestations: *unum ego sum, et multi in me*¹⁸.

In the eponymous series¹⁹, Vasco da Gama is sometimes the writer’s *alter ego*, sometimes a hybridized pseudo-being, the ambiguity being caused by the co-marking of the enunciating self and the name that presides over the adventure. In *Culoarul somnului* [*The Corridor of Sleep*], the I is hidden, again, in a generic “we”, an icon of the case; the adventure of knowledge is placed under the sign of the epistemic modifier “It seems to us...”. Thanks to the poetic experience, the subject and the object are connected into a new being in order not to leave each other. The gaze is the privileged instrument that marks the possession of otherness, and that elevates the common meanings up to poetic dignity: “I see you looking at yourself in the retinal mirror” (*Spune-mi dacă vrei o pasăre* [*Tell me if you want a bird*]; “you watch with an alga covering your eyes” (*Corsajul pierdut* [*Lost Buccaneering*])).

*Athanor*²⁰ assumes the experiences of the ego as a fundamental dimension. In the series *Precision of the Shadow* [*Exactitatea umbrei*], the reduplication of the uttering self seems to ensure the original integrity of meaning: “with two mouths I spoke and listened to myself”. On different occasions, the poetic subject repeats the experience of St. Francis, writing in an ironic key: “We, man and bird on two chairs,/ talk for a long time” (*Vulturi în vacanță* [*Eagles on Vacation*])). In another parodic disguise, the self is the onomatopoeic, consecrating by name the existence of things: “I say table bed storage” (*Mama lucrurilor* [*Mother of Things*])).

*Copacul-Animal*²¹ invests the self with the charged dignity of wisdom, a position from which it would guarantee the truths of the world: “I spoke to them like an educated prophet/ I give you my word, I said, I guarantee you” (*Când acostam la țărmul lor* [*When I Was Docking at Their Shore*]); “then I talk about the meaning and use of structure so that we can stay together for a while/ and you

¹⁸ B. Valentin, *Aurelia Occultam Philosophorum*, apud Éliphas Lévi, *Marele arcan sau ocultismul revelat* [*The Great Secret, or Occultism Unveiled*]. Translated by Maria Ivănescu, București, Antet, 1995, p. 215.

¹⁹ Gellu Naum, *Vasco da Gama*, București, s.n., 1940.

²⁰ Gellu Naum, *Athanor*, București, Editura pentru Literatură, 1968.

²¹ Gellu Naum, *Copacul-Animal* [*The Animal-Tree*], București, Eminescu, 1971.

listen to me deeply impressed by the vastness of my knowledge in certain areas where we don't give a damn" (*Gardienii memoriei sunt [The Guardians of Memory Are]*); "we, who weigh precisely the nature of the signifier" (*Între bine și rece [Between good and cold]*). The act of poetization, which necessarily takes possession of the uttering being ("this morning I woke up a poet again") teaches us about the meanings of the world, so it has a kerygmatic valence which is permanently emphasized ("I spoke to you clearly"/ "and I speak as clearly in the racket as I can"). A strategy to be found in *Zenobia* as well, reiterating the signals that require the reader's attention is in fact a form of resignification, especially since "clear speech" does not mean transitivity; just as the sacred is camouflaged in the profane, so language that carries the truth is enciphered, pointing out the dazzling account of the apodictic manifestations of transcendence – "I wrote a poem in which I said something else but which expressed my soul and flesh with precision" (*Pohem, in Partea cealaltă [The Other Side]*²²). A poem with a metatextual value, *Dubla cunoaștere a pietrei plate [The Double Knowledge of the Flat Stone]* (in *Fața și suprafața [Face and Surface]*²³), induces the same meaning: "We speak another language with the same voice/ beyond the destitute borders of the forehead/and fascinated by our own voices/ we support our massive utopia/ on everything that is always superfluous". Surreality (that magical point where opposites merge) is always announced, but never enounced, hiding beyond the tumult of words.

Post-1990 poems are characterized by a "hiding" of the uttering self, as if the self were simulating its foreboding death in fiction. The subject is "diluted" in a plural, significant gesture, because "we" means both "I" and "he/ she/ it", as well as "I" and "you (sg)/ you (pl)", because, as we also know from Lautréamont, poetry must be created by everyone, not by one. By communicating mediumistically with the surreal, the one endowed with *logos*, the inquirer, disturbs the order of the world: "we were sitting quietly, nothing was moving, not a leaf was shaking/ when one of us, asleep, murmured *but why*" (*Întrebătorul [The Inquirer]*, in *Malul albastru [The Blue Shore]*).

Another series of instantiations that semantically and symbolically fulfil the "self" sign – as observed previously – is the representation of the Other. Otherness takes various forms; depending on the anamorphic multiplications of the subject, it is a woman, a part of the self, a phantom double, a word, surreality. The fundamental paradox is that all these manifestations prolong the utterance, but none exhaust its possibilities.

At the beginning of the current study, we noted that *Zenobia* is the self-text that most felicitously implements this scenario of separation and self-discovery. In this

²² Gellu Naum, *Partea cealaltă [The Other Side]*, București, Eminescu, 1971.

²³ Gellu Naum, *Fața și suprafața, urmat de Malul albastru [Face and Surface, followed by The Blue Shore]*, București, Litera, 1994.

novel, the Self/ Other relationship is the semantic-symbolic axis of the text. The beginning of *Zenobia* affirms a multiple subject, inscribes the writer and the reader together in the text:

1. Too many things are required of **us**, and, given the equivocal mechanism of solicitation, too many words pile up to encompass them, to hide them in their useless and deceptive labyrinth – which is why, perhaps, in some places, *I will say what should not be said*; however, I am convinced that everyone will meditate more on the surplus, leaving aside the state in which they float, underneath, like an underwater swimmer, *for example* (emphasis added AB)²⁴.

Standing in the wake of a state of grace, the writer aspires to presentify it through language and to impress it on the reader. The word offers visibility to the subtle relations of the being with the world, transmutes the life inside it, participates in knowledge by its power to communicate what is secret, camouflaged, forbidden. Therefore, through this warning, the writer does not seek to impress an image on the potential reader (because any of the possible linguistic representations is only a form of compromise), but rather an *effect-meaning*. Bachelard ratifies the power of this endeavour asserting that poetry is always vocative, belonging to the order of *You* before belonging to the order of *This*²⁵.

The writer “slips” from the realm of utterance into the realm of events. “Mr. Naum”, the distinguished poet, *names* the girl he sees for the first time; the random name seems to be waiting for a being: “because I don’t know your name, I’ll call you Zenobia”²⁶. This onomaturgic event opens a syntactic path with two positions, marked [+ masculine] and [+ feminine], which will be joining in a dialectical game. It’s hard to believe that Zenobia is an ordinary girl. She comes from the swamps (“*she’s a wretch, I found her in the swamps, almost unconscious* (emphasis added) while I was coming here, I also kicked her a few times then so that she would remember me, I would have left her there to give up the ghost in the water, among the reeds”²⁷, she knows how to fly, she is silent and her silences speak of something already known for a long time, something impossible to put into words, usually felt as a reconciliation, as a total and quiet science.

The naming (the same as the one on the cover of the novel) and the blurring, the rarefaction of Zenobia’s corporality are interpretive milestones for the emancipated reader. It is clear that the character of Zenobia becomes both *a vector of fiction*, determining the narrative mechanism to advance, and *an instrument of self-representation* by which the text is contemplated and explained. The encounter with Zenobia, the separation from Zenobia, the rediscovery of Zenobia are core

²⁴ Gellu Naum, *Zenobia*, in *Întrebătorul*, p. 9.

²⁵ Gaston Bachelard, *L’eau et le rêves. Essai sur l’imagination de la matière*, Paris, Le Livre de Poche, 1993.

²⁶ Gellu Naum, *Zenobia*, in *Întrebătorul*, p. 12.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

events determining the understanding of the text as a scenario of the unfolding and restoration of the self. Zenobia could be anything: the abysmal, original self, a kind of otherness essential for the world to make sense, a phantasmagorical elaboration, the *anima* of a dreaming *animus*, a “mother of mothers”²⁸, the Spirit-Woman, THE GREAT BELOVED (author’s capitalization), a transfiguring agent, a ferment and an instrument of metamorphoses, a token of Desire, etc.

In the stasis of the conjunction with the subject, Zenobia is characterized by systematic complementary gestures: “she flew, glued to my shoulder”²⁹/ “she spoke with my shoulders, with my mouth, with my knees”³⁰/ “I recited for hours and Zenobia accompanied me only by drumming two fingers on a small drum made of a piece of leather found on the water”³¹ etc. The solidarity of the self who dreams of the phantom incarnation is recurrently marked by the phrases: “shoulder to shoulder”: “and I went out, shoulder to shoulder, in the field”³²/ “I greeted them from a distance, myself waving my right hand, Zenobia waving her left hand because my left shoulder was glued to her right shoulder”³³ etc.

After worming together (“I don’t know for how long”³⁴) in the hollow of a ditch/ a tree hollow/ an alveolus, the rupture between “Gellu” and Zenobia occurs:

...with my shoulder detached from Zenobia’s shoulder, I was restless, I didn’t trust myself anymore, I didn’t trust anything I saw, I wanted to cry, to say to Zenobia: “Can’t you see how miserable I am, in this darkness and in this filth? Where is the love of the world, where is your love? Don’t you see that stinking plastic you’re wearing is cold and you don’t even love me, because if you did, you would do something to end the nerves of reason and this distrust, you would save me from this hollow, we would sit like regular people, next to a heated radiator, we would climb the elevator or enter a bright store, I would buy Irish tobacco for my pipe, not like this, in this grime, with broken boots and wet frozen socks, don’t you see? I’m not good at anything, it occurred to me that I’m predestined and so on, and that you, what can I say, what the hell, maybe you are, I can’t tell, but I’m good for nothing, don’t you see?”³⁵.

The “urban” adventure separates them (Zenobia had always been absent, she said she had to work too), but the story of the two ends happily with the reunion with the girl, who was waiting “patiently, with her hands on her lap”³⁶, her hair bleached, in front of the hole, on a mound of dry reeds. Does reunion mean returning home, as in the Odyssey myth? Or is it the reunion between Orpheus and

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 120.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 20.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 20.

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 22.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 19.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 31-32.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 232.

Eurydice? Is it the silence of the novice, of the ascetic who has reached the point of wonder? Is it the restoration of the original self? Is it impending death? Is it all of the above and more?

After reading Gellu Naum and examining postural variables throughout his work, a conclusion, an inevitably partial one, becomes relevant. We cannot separate understanding of Gellu Naum's work from its discursive basis of the first person. The intextuated self is not a contingent scaffolding, but the basis of an essential relationship of solidarity between the self and the world, the basis, ultimately, of any attempt at meaning and representation. But in the ideal surreality of poetic worlds, "I" is infinitely more than the sign of an utterance or a posture – it is, in fact, the sign pointing to the (interdiscursive) place where *coincidentia oppositorum* happens and the species finds its salvation.

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“HE IS MR. NAUM, A DISTINGUISHED POET, I AM CERTAIN YOU HAVE HEARD OF HIM...”

(Abstract)

My present study problematizes the postural variables in the writings of Gellu Naum, in an attempt to demonstrate that all his poetic texts are based on recursive enunciation schemata, rules of coding and thematic structures. The first person is the linguistic dimension where the poetic possible worlds are created and structured. The textual metamorphoses of “I” and the Other modulate all Surrealist practices; their multiple symbolic staging, followed along Naum’s poetic oeuvre, are emblemized by *Zenobia*, the (meta)/ (inter)poetic narrative.

Keywords: Gellu Naum, the postural, surrealism, *Zenobia*, meta/ interfiction.

„DÂNSUL E DOMNUL NAUM, E UN DISTINS POET, SUNT SIGUR(Ă!) CĂ AȚI AUZIT DE EL...”

(Rezumat)

Studiul de față problematizează variabilele posturale prezente în literatura lui Gellu Naum, încercând să demonstreze că textele sale poetice sunt bazate, în integralitatea lor, pe scheme enunțative recursive, reguli de codare și structuri tematice. Lumile poetice posibile sunt create și structurate în dimensiunea lingvistică a persoanei I. Metamorfozele textuale ale lui „Eu” și ale „Celuilalt” nuanțează orice practică suprarealistă; multiplele lor puneri simbolice în scenă, urmărite în opera poetică a lui Naum, sunt concretizate în *Zenobia*, narațiune (meta)/ (inter)poetică.

Cuvinte-cheie: Gellu Naum, postură, suprarealism, *Zenobia*, meta/ interficțiune.

MARICICA MUNTEANU

LIVING WITH IBRĂILEANU. HOW TO LIVE TOGETHER, HOW TO STAY ALONE

The present study aims to analyze Ibrăileanu's posture inside the Cenacle Viața românească, and the manner in which it shapes the collective life of the group. The rhythm of the community is regulated by the mentor's program, habits, and private space; the writers of the cenacle have to readjust their life to the life of the leader, to adapt to his personal rhythm¹. Moreover, his manner of living is associated, in their collective imaginary, with the vocation of literature. Constructed according to his way of thinking, Ibrăileanu's private space generates passions among the writers of the cenacle; his habits and obsessions, such as insomnia, hypochondria, or smoking, are often received as *behavior associated with literature*. Commenting on the individual posture of the cenacle's leader, the study aims to display a series of behavioral and corporeal techniques as well as collective representations of the entire group. For that purpose, the analysis follows two implications of the concept of *posture*: on the one hand, it considers the social aspect, taking into account the interactions between the leader and the members of the cenacle, and, on the other hand, it explores the discourse employed². The texts used to depict Ibrăileanu's postures are mostly memoirs of the group, some of them written at a considerable distance in time, after the cenacle had ceased to exist, in which case representation through discourse is essential when discussing the subject. At the same time, the image provided by the members of the cenacle is influenced by Ibrăileanu's writings, which the study frequently quotes. Where possible, the text refers to several literary works by writers associated to Viața românească which take elements of Ibrăileanu's life and turn them into fiction, thus contributing to the configuration of the critic's posture.

The Wild Yard and the Library

Analysis of the group's memories renders noticeable the fact that their descriptions of Ibrăileanu's house are quite limited, the writers of the cenacle

¹ For comparison, see Ligia Tudurachi's study discussing the "idiorythmic community" (Roland Barthes) of Sburătorul as a result of the formalization of criticism and acting as a favorable frame for the development of a collective lifestyle (Ligia Tudurachi, *Grup sburător. Trăitul și scrisul împreună în cenaclul lui E. Lovinescu [The Sburătorul Group. Life and Writing in E. Lovinescu's Cenacle]*, Timișoara, Editura Universității de Vest, 2019).

² The two implications employed here are widely discussed by Jérôme Meizoz, who speaks about the (self)representation of the author, referring to its social emergence through gestures, body movements, non-verbal elements, as well as to its construction inside the text (Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires*, Genève, Slatkine, 2007).

mentioning only a few objects and aspects of design. Nonetheless, two elements attract the visitors: the yard and the library. Octav Botez describes his first visit to Ibrăileanu's, referring to the same two spatial arrangements:

He welcomed me into a vast room, walls lined up to the ceiling with bookshelves, most of which I noticed were unbound and in some disarray. It was summer, and the wide opened windows led to a large but untamed and virgin garden, a setting, as I found out later, which pleased him³.

Mihail Sevastos writes that, although it was suitable for growing flowers, only knotgrass and mallow grew in the yard; Demostene Botez notices “a place plagued by weeds”⁴, and Ștefana Velisar Teodoreanu has to pass through a dark orchard of tall trees at night. Ibrăileanu purposefully leaves his yard untrimmed because the wild view delights him, its state of neglect a choice against organized aesthetics. A garden, which Sevastos imagines could replace the wilderness, is an aesthetically organized space requiring the re-arrangement of nature, a domestication of plants, and, therefore, an artificial composition corresponding to a specific representation of beauty. For Ibrăileanu, style is the exclusive preoccupation for execution to the detriment of thinking, while deficiencies in style, often frowned upon by his contemporaries, are a way of capturing the process of reasoning through compatibility of form and idea.

Nonetheless, examining Ibrăileanu's writing practice, it becomes clear that the so-called reasoning caught in the act is not at all the result of spontaneity but a conscious choice of form. The literary critic struggles with writing; he always revises his manuscripts and even with his published papers; he erases, rewrites, inserts large amounts of notes, trying to enrich the ideas, never to embellish the style. When not accompanied by a philosophy of life, talent becomes artificial; great writers, starting with Tolstoy (also criticized himself for not writing beautifully), do not need stylistic tricks to convince the reader, since they know how to create the impression of life⁵. Therefore, the wild yard is not only a random kind of circumstance, but also the materialization of Ibrăileanu's way of thinking, an arrangement of space according to his mental reflexes. When visitors spend time in the critic's office, their eyes rest upon the wild view they see through the windows. Sometimes, they take out the chairs to the terrace and engage in conversation facing the same disordered landscape. The cenacle is situated in a space deliberately organized against aesthetic rules. Although there are no testimonies about the effects the wild yard has on the collective perception, it can be assumed that, by associating his way of thinking with the natural décor,

³ Octav Botez, “G. Ibrăileanu. Amintiri” [“G. Ibrăileanu. Memories”], in Ion Popescu-Sireteanu, *Amintiri despre G. Ibrăileanu [Memories of G. Ibrăileanu]*, I, Iași, Junimea, 1974, p. 73.

⁴ Demostene Botez, *Memorii [Memoirs]*, I, București, Minerva, 1970, p. 365.

⁵ G. Ibrăileanu, “Tolstoi” [“Tolstoy”], in *Scieri alese [Selected Writings]*. Edited by Antonio Patraș and Roxana Patraș, Iași, Editura Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2010, p. 548.

Ibrăileanu creates a space in which the visitors recognize not only the image of the host, but also the image of the group. The spatial arrangement comes to endorse Ibrăileanu's idea of literature; the neglected style he recommends is carefully "cultivated" in the wilderness of the yard. Practically, there is a difference between discussing literature facing rows of flowers and doing the same thing watching a weedy landscape.

Far from being inoperative, the space is invested with instrumentality: arranged according to Ibrăileanu's taste, it conditions the collective existence of the cenacle. While the visitors find the place rather unpleasant (Sevastos would rather prefer a flower garden), the community identifies with the yard's wilderness, as it not only reflects the image of the host, but also creates a kind of material attachment and participation to his way of thinking. Analyzing the relationship between collective memory and space, Maurice Halbwachs believes that, when inserted in a certain place, the group starts shaping it according to their image, shaping the place in turn by the material features of the space they create:

The group not only transforms the space into which they have been inserted, but also yields and adapts to their physical surroundings. The group becomes enclosed within the framework they have built. The group's image of their external environment, and their stable relationships with this environment, becomes essential to the idea group forms of itself, permeating every element of their consciousness, moderating and governing their evolution⁶.

According to Halbwach, the group that shares a space negotiates its self-image through the characteristics of that particular space, adaptation to the physical environment affecting their physical interactions as well as their way of thinking. Although the space in which the community of the cenacle lives reflects Ibrăileanu's taste, it is accepted by the visitors as their own. The writers adapt their gaze to the wild surroundings, living their common existence according to the space they inhabit. At the same time, this space acts upon their mental forms by shaping the idea they have about literature. By organizing the meetings with his visitors in this natural, wild environment, Ibrăileanu manages to convey his anti-aesthetic conception to the entire group.

The second spatial aspect of Ibrăileanu's house that holds the visitors' attention is the library. Similar to the wilderness of the yard, the library gives the impression of disarray: the books are scattered all over the room, piling up in the corners and on the furniture and forcing the visitors either to stand or sit on top of the stacked books; the majority of the books are not even bound, and there are many reading notes inserted between the pages. The library seems to borrow the idea of neglect from the outside garden, suggesting the same aversion to style that Ibrăileanu considers a shortcoming to creativity. Moreover, the disorder in the library speaks

⁶ Maurice Halbwach, *The Collective Memory*. Translated by Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter, New York, Harper & Row, 1980, p. 130.

about the literary critic's reading habits. Ibrăileanu's system is founded on a network of texts that refuses the finality of the reading act, a type of circular reading. The observations are written down directly on the pages of the books, the reading notes stick out between the pages looking like books inside books, and the notations are often rich remarks on the subject or even long personal meditations, suggesting re-reading as essential to the practice of literature. The book is a potential work that reveals its secret with each and every experience of reading, which makes it almost impossible to ever finish reading a book⁷. The literary critic arranges his library according to his reading practice: if a literary work is never completed because every reading is to reveal a new mystery, books have no determined place on the shelves and are abandoned wherever they have been browsed or read. Therefore, Ibrăileanu's visitors come into contact with a space that is dedicated not only to reading, as any library may be, but to a particular type of reading as practiced by the host. On this account, the library becomes, in the eyes of the writers, a space filled with meaning. In *La Medeleni* [*At Medeleni*], Ionel Teodoreanu depicts the disorder of the library by focusing on its spatial expressiveness, rather than its simple appearance:

The books were no longer inanimate papers. A sort of sagacity, a flight-like quiver vibrated inside them. And you could see them everywhere. From the floor to the ceiling along the walls, only long shelves curved under the load of the books. Between them, no rigid alignment, no organized constraint; a cheerful, exuberant disorder. They were all crooked, ruffled, tilted as if some wanted to clap, others to fall, and the rest to jump. From some, a long sheet was rising, so long that it disappeared upward like smoke. From others, colorful brochures were glimpsed. Others had a peeled notebook on top. Besides, not only the loaded shelves but the room itself was flooded with books. The stacks of the in-folio volumes, bound in leather, bordered the bottom shelves as the Chinese wall. Under the two windows, fortress upon fortress, *Viața contemporană* [*The Contemporary Life*] in hardcovers was rising. On the chairs – books again. A sofa was covered with magazines and brochures. On the floor, humps of volumes like a camel train were kept together by separate strings. All were browsed, opened, tilted, written over, their edges filled with annotations and the text underlined in red and blue. They were alive. A flock of tame books floated around this man. You were under the impression that he wasn't looking for them, that they were coming of their own accord and that a single sign was enough to call forth the yellow flock of French books or the red flutter of Dickens works⁸.

The library embodies the life of the room. The disorder on the shelves, defying "organized constraint", floods the entire space, the books populate the floor and the furniture, articulating the image of a house made of books. The chaos of the library

⁷ The idea is recurrent in Ibrăileanu's thinking. See, for example, G. Ibrăileanu, "Ana Karenina", "Creație și analiză", "Ape de primăvară" ["Anna Karenina", "Creation and Analysis, "Spring Waters"], in *Scrieri alese*, pp. 549-554, 612-617, 538-543.

⁸ Ionel Teodoreanu, *La Medeleni* [*At Medeleni*], III, București, Cartea Românească, 1927, p. 213.

is perceived by Dănuț as a form that comes to life: the books seem to gain an independent, fantastic existence, directed by a sort of a reader-magician who can control them with a single gesture. Ionel Teodoreanu explores this image of the library that wakes up to life (the passage is re-written almost word for word in his memoirs) not so much for the sake of describing the relationship between the host and his space, as much as to analyze the evolution of the main character, a young man who discovers his literary calling. The library represents, for Dănuț, a mystical space in which he ends up behaving exactly like the books themselves, taking part in the reading ritual as practiced by the host:

His presence deepens and distributes a trepidation of thoughts, a disorder that makes your soul look like the room you are in. You feel browsed, wielded, annotated. You are a new book tamed in this forest of books. And suddenly you feel, as you stand up not daring to shove the books off the chairs, that your soul is at home...⁹.

Creating a novel about the vocation of writing, Teodoreanu is first of all interested in the formative readings of the future writer, described as *corporal experiences of the book*. There are several passages in the novel in which the act of reading gains a materiality invested with erotic connotations. The book is read through multiple senses; the touching and browsing of the pages, precipitation followed by stagnation and meditation, the curiosity and satisfaction of reaching the end translate a form of physical affection felt in the act of reading. Therefore, the book is no longer inert matter but becomes body-like, able to generate desire. Dănuț feels he is part of the professor's library and that he is treated like the books on the shelves. The space he enters leads to a somatic experience, a bodily contact during which the writer is objectified, turned into the object of his desire. Before becoming a writer, Dănuț experiences the act of reading from the perspective of the book: he participates in the life of the library, he is "browsed, wielded, annotated" as the other books in the room and is "tamed" by a reader with magic powers. The end of *La Medeleni* suggests that Dan Deleanu is the writer of the novel that has just finished, inviting the reader to start it from the beginning. Teodoreanu may have imagined his book as part of Ibrăileanu's library, of that ideal library where books are never stuffed into the shelves, but always at hand to be read again.

The library also appears in Mihail Sadoveanu, in the description of Eudoxiu Bărbat's house from *Oameni din lună* [*People of the Moon*]. Sadoveanu writes the novel following a bet with Ibrăileanu that he can write in a style different from that of his former work. The bet inflames the media; the literary magazines talk about a new writer in Romanian literature, called Silviu Deleanu. Leaving aside the anecdote, the episode speaks about Sadoveanu's motivation to construct a new type of intellectual, opposed to the one he had explored before. If the inadequacy of the previous characters is socially motivated, the consequence of a hostile environment in line with the sămănătorist-poporanist movement, Eudoxiu Bărbat's inadequacy

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 214.

seems to be the consequence of a cultural-genetic predisposition. The novel remains an experiment; this new type of intellectual remains unique in the writer's literature, untraceable in its future embodiments. On this account, Sadoveanu develops his character by "copying" features and aspects from the writers he spends time with at *Viața românească*. According to Profira Sadoveanu, the portrait of Eudoxiu Bărbat is inspired by Axinte Frunză (the green round eyes, the thin mustache and the goatee)¹⁰, but he is not the only model for the writer's character. The study Bărbat is working is reminiscent of Radu Rosetti's interests, and the rich and disorganized library shows a striking similarity with that of Ibrăileanu:

From this almost empty room, they passed into another, full and loaded from top to bottom. It consisted solely of shelves of books. In the corners, stacks of brochures and magazines. The oak desk under one of the windows was full of books and papers. On one side of the desk, a little rotating library; on the other side, a narrow tall piece of furniture with a platform on the top and many drawers down to the floor. A couple of leather chairs were also loaded with books¹¹.

The shelves packed with books, the stacks of brochures and magazines, the furniture covered with books, the oak desk loaded with papers from Eudoxiu Bărbat's library replicate the disarray in Ibrăileanu's house. Sadoveanu forges his character by stitching together different features, preoccupations, and elements of décor borrowed from cenacle friends. Eudoxiu Bărbat remains a schematic character, limited to the few details Sadoveanu picks up from his companions. Equally, the plot of the novel has no epic development: the "weird" and awkward Eudoxiu Bărbat asks his nephew, a young lawyer, to handle a property coveted by various WWI speculators, but his mission is reduced to a few brief discussions at the town hall, and the fight seems to be lost before it begins. What is the motivation of Sadoveanu's work, then? The topic seems to be the relationship between master and apprentice, or the initiation of Traian Bălțeanu, the lawyer with a poet's soul, into the "cursed fellowship of the book", an adjacent bloodline genealogy with Mihai Eminescu as an ancestor establishing connections of a vocational nature.

Nevertheless, nothing, not even the interests of the two characters, coincide: the passion for writing cultivated by Traian Bălțeanu, although appreciated by his uncle, is not in any way nourished by his presence; Bărbat's study of archival documents puzzles the nephew rather than stirring his admiration. In this case, what is the explanation of their connection, and what is the vocation that unites them? The object of their passion is the library, an idea emphasized by Sadoveanu in the key-episodes of the novel. In their first meeting, the dialogue between uncle and nephew revolves around the library: Bărbat offers "his companionship and his library", and Traian Bălțeanu asks permission to research the library. For Bărbat,

¹⁰ Profira Sadoveanu, "Note" ["Notes"], in Mihail Sadoveanu, *Opere [Works]*, VII, București, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă, 1956, p. 760.

¹¹ Mihail Sadoveanu, *Oameni din lună [People of the Moon]*, in *Opere*, VII, p. 691.

selling the house is, first of all, connected to the danger of losing the library, and the issue of the inheritance is ceding the rights to the library: "I knew you are one of ours, and so I want to leave you everything I have. I especially want to leave you the library. I hope that you will not alienate this Nessus shirt. If you put it on, it will burn you as a felicitous wound, and you will receive into your being the shadow that is myself and everyone of our kind"¹². The "people from the moon" in the title of the novel form a fellowship of the book, and the passion that inspires them and is passed on from generation to generation is the library itself. When the concession of the house becomes imminent, Bărbat looks at the "shadow of the library". The end of the novel reiterates the same idea: the library is the legacy of this unusual book family. However, it is not so much the material asset that is passed on, but a space-vocation, capable of unleashing great passions. After Eudoxiu Bărbat's death, Traian Bălțeanu secludes himself in the library, replacing his mentor: "The young neurasthenic poet from Iași locked himself in the shadow of the library in the strange trust that he was the son of the dead, something that, in my opinion as a doctor, foretells nothing good"¹³. Exposing the nature of the narrator's occupation right at the end, Sadoveanu underlines his irony directed at a passion for books which can take clinical forms. It becomes obvious that the writer's irony transcends the frames of the novel to tease Ibrăileanu, his neurasthenic friend, locked within the walls of his own library, but also the young writers of the cenacle after the war, many of them lawyers with a vocation for writing (among others, Ionel and Al. O. Teodoreanu). Ibrăileanu's library induces passions, the cenacle writers are fascinated by this space where books are never finished, waiting to be browsed and read again.

The Need for Friends

A feature of Ibrăileanu's house is the relation between the private space and the outside world on the coordinates of semi-closure/semi-opening, describing, on the one hand, the host's isolation and, on the other hand, his need for the society of friends. Analyzing how the configurations of the three spaces changed over the years, what becomes noticeable is Ibrăileanu's gradual withdrawal from the dining room, pictured as a space for the cenacle's meetings, to the library in which he receives only a few friends of the household. The first house, at number 4 Română Street, appears as a permeable space that constantly communicates with the outside world:

It was an old, long and low house, as if sunk into the ground, with a large front yard covered in thick grass. The windows, with almost rotten frames, with no blinds

¹² *Ibidem*, pp. 694-695.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 754.

and no curtains, were wide and low. One could see the furniture as well as the people indoors, as in a window display. But the streetlight made it just as visible outdoors¹⁴.

The intimate space is, at the same time, an exposed space, with bright windows facing the street in order both to observe the outer world and to let the street and city invade the interior. The visitors see what happens inside the house, who the people present at the meeting are, and they are also watched in turn, recognized by their silhouette, gait, or coat:

Whoever arrived didn't even have to knock, first because the long squeak of the gate could be heard, and then their feet stomped on the wooden path as soon as they reached it. Their footsteps sounded rhythmically, closer and closer. Nobody came walking on the grass. They would have felt like sneaking in¹⁵.

Due to the bright windows, the noise of the gate and the footsteps on the path, the visitors inside the house can notice the newcomers. The ritual is strictly followed, and nobody walks on the grass to get in unnoticed. Although exposed, Ibrăileanu's house remains an intimate space of the cenacle as the visitors are only close friends, so the writers' parade on the wooden path is just an inside game for the benefit of a small community.

The next house, on Coroi Street, drops the scenario of the writers' parade, configuring an isolated space constructed according to a labyrinth pattern. The memoirs of the group focus this time on Ibrăileanu's office, dominated by the library. The windows here also face the street, but the front door is no longer visible from the house, so the host has no perspective on the visitors. On the other side, the guests' access is restricted by a series of obstacles. First of all, the visitor struggles to open the gate and then cross the wild yard in the dark, stumbling in the thick grass and on the bumpy ground. The front door is no longer lit, as at Ibrăileanu's first house, so the visitor is supposed to wait in the dark until the host opens it. It may take a long time, as Ibrăileanu puts on his raincoat, collects his disinfectant napkin and passes through a few rooms, opening and closing each door behind him for fear of draught. After the front door is finally unlocked, the host leaves a candle on a chest of drawers to guide the visitors in the dark and returns to his office in the same manner. The visitors wait until he gets back and then follow the ritual of the doors, like to a walk through a maze. The last house from Fundacul Buzdugan is even more isolated: it is a short building, hidden from view by the big orchard that surrounds it. The front door is always locked, and the visitors are received at the back door, forcing them to cross the dark orchard. Because of the host's insomnia, the bedroom windows are barricaded with boxes and barbed wire rolls, and the blinds at his office windows are always shut. Every time he changes

¹⁴ Demostene Botez, *Memorii*, p. 361.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

places, Ibrăileanu seems to get more and more isolated from the outer world, the bright windows being replaced by barricaded ones.

This retreat of the mentor from the life of the editorial office to the quietness of the library does not distance him from his cenacle friends. In fact, his misanthropy is articulated on the contradiction between his social inadequacy and the organic need to be in the company of friends. Although secluded, installed in a confined space and suffering from insomnia and neurasthenia, Ibrăileanu welcomes visitors. Petru Caraman remembers the mentor's emotion when he visits after a long period: "He told me he was lonely. That it had been a long time since he had any of the guests he wanted. And finally, that my visit was the most unexpected surprise... One more proof of his less common sociability; the guests were for him a necessity of the first order"¹⁶. Demostene Botez notes a similar reaction: "His greatest happiness was to talk to friends. When he saw you come in, his face would brighten and his beautiful eyes would smile. To him, friends were the whole contact with the world"¹⁷. When they come, the visitors are asked to tell anecdotes, speak about the social events in Iași or even gossip. A great deal of memoirs testify to Ibrăileanu's taste for this kind of stories, which he calls *vulgarisms*¹⁸. Otilia Cazimir notes that the mentor shows interest in the city scandals and that he is disappointed when the young writer has no stories to tell:

You have no idea how much it would amuse me if you told me now, for example, that a certain madam (whom I don't know) is cheating on her husband (whom I am not acquainted with) with a young officer (of whom I have never heard). I truly want to know who gets married in this city, what dowry they have, what engagement was canceled and who got divorced¹⁹.

This type of *vulgarisms* connects Ibrăileanu to the outer world; they are the isolated intellectual's contact with daily life. Repeatedly, the literary critic talks about the incompatibility of literature with life (but also about the way literature establishes forms of life), about the alteration of a man's ability to adapt because of literature, leading to isolation and failure. The visitors, bringing news from Iași, appear thus as emissaries of the outside world from which the host feels separated and which he, at the same time, keeps at bay. The need for friends is a chance to preserve simultaneously his solitude and his sociability, defining an indirect contact with the outside world. Secluded in his own house, behind blinded windows, Ibrăileanu eagerly awaits visitors, so his misanthropy, frequently commented upon in the intellectual circles of Iași, appears, in the collective representations of the group, as a sign of an unusual emotional and social state. In

¹⁶ Petru Caraman, "G. Ibrăileanu", in Ion Popescu-Sireteanu, *Amintiri*, I, p. 102.

¹⁷ Demostene Botez, *Memorii*, p. 354.

¹⁸ In Romanian, *mahalașism*, namely language used at the suburbs.

¹⁹ Otilia Cazimir, *Prietenii mei scriitori [My Friends, the Writers]*, București, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă, 1960, p. 12.

Privind viața [*Regarding Life*], Ibrăileanu ends his aphorisms with an urge to embrace the frivolous life that he knows from the stories recounted by his friends, even if by doing so he is mocking his own existential maladjustment: “Do not argue with life. Don’t be an abstract being! Join society, party, play cards, drink, get a girlfriend, and if you can’t, do what they say Sainte-Beuve did with servants of the opposite sex. Don’t argue with life; don’t act as an abstract chimpanzee!”²⁰.

The Insomniac, the Hypochondriac, the Smoker

In his portraits by members of the *Viața românească* Cenacle, Ibrăileanu is often depicted in three postures: as the insomniac, as the hypochondriac, and as the smoker. The pathology built around these states, seen as marks of exceptionality, holds little interest for the present analysis, the main idea being the emergence of a living regimen that impacts the interactions of the cenacle, as the members of the group are constantly compelled to adapt to the host’s lifestyle. On entering Ibrăileanu’s house, the writers seek to adapt their own lifestyle to a new *genre de vie*²¹, the life of the host, and to re-educate themselves to follow his routine, habits, or phobias.

A visit to Ibrăileanu takes place at night, because of the critic’s insomnia. The group’s mentor wakes up at three o’clock in the afternoon, spends time between four and nine at the editorial office, and receives visitors after ten o’clock in the evening, or even at midnight. In any case, the group gathers at Ibrăileanu’s house only at night, so they are bound to adapt their life rhythms to the nocturnal existence of the host. Their own insomnia is felt, at first, as an abnormal kind of behavior, but with time it turns into a habit: “But those who nagged him gave up over time; whatever was abnormal became, by habit, normal in the eyes of the others”²². After somatic and mental readjustment to the nocturnal rhythm, the cenacle writers accept the deviant nature of insomnia as a form of interaction specific to the group. Night becomes the time for literary activities; writers divide their hours between social duties and their artistic vocation, sleep deprivation being associated with creative status. Ibrăileanu often writes about his insomnia in the correspondence with friends, describing it as a form of inadaptation to the social mores (in a letter addressed to Brătescu-Voinești, the critic confesses that sleep is

²⁰ G. Ibrăileanu, *Privind viața* [*Regarding Life*], in *Scieri alese*, p. 712.

²¹ The concept is borrowed from Roland Barthes, who uses it in his lectures at Collège de France between 1978–1979 and 1979–1980 to explain the split in a writer’s existence whenever she/he begins to work on a new work of art, a change that implies not so much an intellectual process as a new experience of life. The writer who prepares to write needs to organize not only the material of her/his future work but also her/his daily activities such as food habits, clothes, working hours, space, and, concurrently, to educate his/her body – the hand, says Barthes – to accept the new conditions that come with the creative state – see Roland Barthes, *La Préparation du Roman*. Edited by Nathalie Léger. Preface by Bernard Comment, Paris, Seuil, 2003.

²² Demostene Botez, *Memorii*, p. 363.

possible only in “extra-social” conditions, namely in the absence of any thought of human interaction²³). However, while it is seen as inconvenient in the context of social interactions, insomnia is appreciated for its artistic qualities. Writing about Proust, the critic insists on the relation between the nocturnal lifestyle and introspection, referring to social abnormality in contrast to artistic normality:

Lacking interest in the exterior world, protected from the duties of diurnal life, Proust, already naturally inclined to introspection, had to turn his whole powerful intelligence to contemplation of his soul. There was no other abnormality about Proust. As social transactions go, yes, it was abnormal to visit and receive visits only after midnight; as an instrument of human analysis, it was perfectly normal for him to do so. Moreover, unfortunately for the animal inside him, he was thus best placed to practically create modern psychology²⁴.

Diurnal life is associated with the social, the time of human relations, while nocturnal life is seen as the period of a writer’s isolation from the outside world, as a catalyst for self-analysis. Ibrăileanu’s insomnia provides the image of a particular emotional nature that exceeds diurnal and social normality, inclining towards a type of nocturnal and artistic abnormality that indicates the difference between everyday space and literary space. In his novel *La Medeleni*, Ionel Teodoreanu chooses to describe the arrival of Dănuț, a writer *à venir*, at the professor’s house as a liminal experience that marks the transition from the diurnal regime of “life in Iași” to the nocturnal regime of the host’s life: “A simple wooden door separated the Copou from the blue gulf floating over Ceahlău. Just as sudden appeared, for Dănuț, the transition from life in Iași – the one he knew during the day – to the atmosphere of the room in which the director of *Viața contemporană* lived”²⁵. “Life in Iași” represents, for the young writer, his career as a lawyer, meaning his social role, while the professor’s house becomes the space of his vocation, an isolated and secure space dedicated to literature and imagination (the writer even forgets he has to plead a case in court the next morning). That is why Dănuț writes his novel at night, imagining a city enveloped in dreams, as opposed to the intellectual environment of Iași, corresponding to an obsolete image of the city.

The second posture of Ibrăileanu that shapes writerly togetherness is that of the hypochondriac. Beyond anecdotes built around Ibrăileanu’s fear of germs, his phobia and hypochondria bring into question issues of contact and distance, but also of human fragility, engendering a particular way of relating to the host. Ibrăileanu is always depicted, in the memories of the group, wrapped in an overcoat. He wears a wide-brimmed hat that shades his face and which he pushes back only when he is content. In the editorial office, he keeps all these garments

²³ G. Ibrăileanu, *Opere [Works]*, VI. Edited by Al Piru and Rodica Rotaru. Preface by Al. Piru, București, Minerva, 1978, p. 344.

²⁴ G. Ibrăileanu, *Creație și analiză*, in *Scrieri alese*, p. 611.

²⁵ Ionel Teodoreanu, *La Medeleni*, pp. 208-209.

on, sinks in his armchair and listens to the conversation of the others, only getting up and starting gesticulating when the subject interests him. When he receives visitors, Ibrăileanu dresses the same: he abandons the coat and the hat but keeps on the overcoat, which wraps almost his entire body. Similar to the costumes used in the *commedia dell'arte* to indicate social status and define characters, the overcoat seems attached to the body of his wearer, practically becoming the surface of contact with the others. Ibrăileanu's clothing creates the impression of distance; the overcoat that covers his entire body and the hat that clouds his face, blocking any facial expression, allow only a secure kind of contact with the outside world. At the same time, Ibrăileanu protects himself from germs by permanently disinfecting his hands. He keeps "little flasks of alcohol and other disinfectants"²⁶ in the drawer, opening the doors with his elbow and always carrying in his pocket a piece of cloth soaked in a disinfectant solution. The objects he uses are passed through a candle flame, he avoids shaking hands, and whenever he is bound to follow this ritual, he disinfects his hands. The overcoat folded around him and the permanent gesture of hand disinfection determine a regime of isolation inside the community: physical contact is avoided by all means so that, in spite of their need for proximity, the *Cenacle* writers have to keep their distance and follow a set of rules around Ibrăileanu. To get to his office, they have to wait until Ibrăileanu opens and closes a series of doors to give them access into the house and follow the same ritual when they enter; the door handles are wrapped in cloths soaked in sanitary alcohol; newcomers are educated not to shake his hand, and if Ibrăileanu makes the gesture, they look blank, hesitating between this restriction and accepting the privilege bestowed on them. George Lesnea remembers his first meeting with Ibrăileanu at the Teodoreanu family, where he is instructed regarding the professor's phobia. Ibrăileanu puts out his hand for a shake, and the gesture disorients the young writer:

"Mister Ibrăileanu, allow me to introduce you to George Lesnea".

He stopped in front of me and examined me with his penetrating eyes. And suddenly, I saw a white, almost surreal, hand extended to me. Embarrassed, I didn't know what to do. Ionel poked me in amusement, and only then I shook mister Ibrăileanu's hand, understanding that he was doing me a favor²⁷.

The gesture remains singular; Ibrăileanu doesn't repeat it in subsequent meetings, so the handshake becomes a mark of exceptionality that acknowledges a writer's vocation. George Lesnea published his poems before his encounter with Ibrăileanu, the gesture coming therefore as a confirmation of his talent.

Although his germophobia is perceived as an expression of intangibility, the writers of the *Viața românească* *Cenacle* often see it as a sign of human frailty.

²⁶ Ionel Teodoreanu, *Masa umbrelor* [*The Table of Shadows*], București, Forum, 1947, p. 21.

²⁷ George Lesnea, "Un favor" ["A Favor"], in Ion Popescu-Sireteanu, *Amintiri* [*Memoirs*], II, Iași, Junimea, 1976.

Despite the distance it creates, it arises compassion. Germophobia gets to be connected to Ibrăileanu's old age way of thinking, seen mainly as corporeal decrepitude:

Old age is old flesh, unaesthetic and impure. It is disgrace, for it is the remains of a body defeated by nature. Sickness, when it is not acute and temporal, shows the same deterioration, the same disgrace; it is premature aging. And death, the final victory of nature against man, is the supreme disgrace²⁸.

The old body or the sick body represents, for Ibrăileanu, an indecent kind of exposure to the others' gaze, a "disgrace" in the biological sense of corporal nakedness that appears, with the aging process, as shameful and "unaesthetic" to the eye. Nonetheless, at the cenacle, Ibrăileanu is perceived as a vivacious personality who speaks passionately (I.D. Suchianu characterizes his manner of speaking as adolescent-like), as if he discovers certain ideas for the first time. The image contrasts clearly to that of the host eternally wrapped in his overcoat for fear of a draught. However, while volubility is connected to the spirit, frailty is derived from corporal degradation. Ionel Teodoreanu reveals this dual image of Ibrăileanu:

He would get inflamed, gesticulate, jump off the chair, weigh in with arguments, pace nervously and engage with hot-blooded intensity. [...] And suddenly he would collapse into the armchair, exhausted, afraid for his health, weary of germs and draught (he was as afraid of draught as card players are of bad luck), weary of the sharp pains in his leg, of old age, overwhelmed with irreparable pessimism²⁹.

His mood is changing rapidly: enthusiasm and verve are replaced by fear and degradation, his vigorous speech fades away into weariness and reluctance, so Ibrăileanu seems to grow old instantly, right under the eyes of his cenacle friends. In my opinion, this quick change from the image of a vivacious Ibrăileanu to that of a man fearful of aging might have appeared in the eyes of the companions as his highest form of vulnerability. As a matter of fact, Ibrăileanu is frequently seen as a fragile human being who needs the care of others: his companions respect all the rituals meant to prevent germ infestation, they educate newcomers about Ibrăileanu's phobia, and they react to his hypochondria with great awareness. Therefore, his intangibility turns into vulnerability. As the central figure of the cenacle, the magnet (the word "magnetism" is often used to describe the critic) that draws together different tempers and personalities, Ibrăileanu leaves the impression of one that needs protection himself, his fragility menacing the existence of the entire cenacle. Apparently, it is the deterioration of Ibrăileanu's health that leads to the dispersion of the community: the magazine relocates to Bucharest, but the cenacle does not, as if it doesn't manage to survive its mentor.

²⁸ G. Ibrăileanu, *Privind viața*, p. 702.

²⁹ Ionel Teodoreanu, *Masa umbrelor*, p. 21.

The last posture to be analyzed is that of the smoker. Entering Ibrăileanu's house, the first thing the guests feel is the smell of tobacco impregnated in books and furniture. The host frequently welcomes them reading and smoking. In fact, at the *Viața românească* cenacle, smoking is a current habit, the conversations accompanied by the lighting of cigarettes, but Ibrăileanu's way of smoking looks like a ritual due to his germophobia: "He smoked enormously but with long pauses conditioned by a ritual of his own. Before lighting the cigarette, he would burn its paper at length over the flame of the match until it carbonized into strips and the intense flame would burn his fingers"³⁰. Interrupted only by his "disinfection" ritual, Ibrăileanu chain smokes, his face bearing the signs of this specific manner of smoking: burnt lips and a yellowed beard. The ritualization of smoking creates a distinctive pattern that becomes easily associated with the act of reading, especially since Ibrăileanu is often seen smoking while reading. The idea is explored at large in *Adela*, where the act of reading is assimilated to the pleasure of smoking³¹. On the other hand, on analyzing the critic's reading practice, the cigarette appears as an instrument of reading in a technical sense, that of a tool or machinery for taking notes. Speaking about his first visit to Ibrăileanu's, Ionel Teodoreanu remembers seeing reading notes written on cigarette packs, and Demostene Botez is asked by the mentor to lock in the drawer all materials susceptible to become manuscripts:

While he was preparing to smoke, my eyes spied on top of the cigarette pack some notes on Samuel Butler. He spied my gaze with the corner of the eye, as he had the plural attention women do. He combed his fingers through his hair, smoking like an idol:

"Mister Teodoreanu, I am doomed to Satan's flames. Look at what I have become: a hand yellowed by tobacco and a passionate pencil. The rest is no more. I write, write, and write again. I am a note on the margin of a book. And don't you think I haven't tried to cure myself! One day I locked in the drawer everything that might have become a manuscript. I gave the key to Mister Demostene Botez, asking him to keep it for seven days: as long as God needed to create the world, including the day of rest. I wanted to recover my life. And what do you think happened? Look: I write on cigarette packs! I forgot to lock in the pencil"³².

The hand that writes turns yellow, and the cigarette packs are transformed into writing sheets, thus turning smoking into an instrument used in the act of reading. As discussed before, Ibrăileanu reads with a pen in hand, writes on the things at hand, and his reading notes are not at all simple notations, but complex reflections, idea associations and rich comments on the subject; his own articles and books are full of insertions, erasures, corrections and interpolations, resulting in an intricate web of printed and handwritten passages, sometimes in different graphic styles. In this context, writing on the cigarette packs is not at all coincidental, as it might

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 77.

³¹ G. Ibrăileanu, *Adela*, in *Scieri alese*, p. 714.

³² Ionel Teodoreanu, *Masa umbrelor*, p. 77.

seem, but part of a complex system in which the objects that surround the critic may become a manuscript. In this network of texts, the critic himself seems to morph into a “note on the margin of a book”, so while the objects around are used as writing instruments, the writer’s body becomes, in turn, a tool, not necessarily an indispensable one, but an accessory at life’s edge. To be a note on a book means to miss your existence.

In fact, the idea of failure through literature is current in Ibrăileanu’s thinking. Although able to sustain a social form of education, literature also leads to the maladjustment of the intellectual to society by making him look ridiculous. Therefore, the theme of the maladjusted intellectual doomed by some exceptional features is revised by Ibrăileanu almost in a Darwinian sense: inadequacy to the environment is a sign of infirmity, not exceptionality, literature being a passive and secondary preoccupation, at the margins of life. However pleasant it may seem, the companionship of books is a vicious habit that poisons one’s existence just like smoking. He who is addicted to tobacco and literature lives indirectly, placing himself as a spectator of the world. In the episode written by Teodoreanu, literary vocation shows all the signs of an addiction: the body is reduced to a yellowed hand, an extension of the “passionate pencil”, the addict tries to save himself from his vice by removing all temptations and even delegating a person to control his addiction, but in the end he relapses and gets back to his vicious habit. Abandoning literature is just as hard as smoking one last cigarette.

Ibrăileanu’s lifestyle, his habits and obsessions depicted in the portraits dedicated to him by the cenacle writers, go beyond simple biographical reconstructions meant to describe relationships with a literary community. The mentor’s life becomes the life of the writers that frequent his house. They remember small gestures, pieces of clothing, fears and vices because they assimilate his life with a manner of living literature. Ibrăileanu’s behavior is seen as *literary* behavior.

Delicacy: une qualite maîtresse

In *Privind viața*, Ibrăileanu defines delicacy as a monadic quality that integrates a series of noble virtues, the absence of one endangering the whole:

Delicacy is the supreme and rarest quality of the human soul. It implies all the others: intelligence, kindness, altruism, generosity, discretion, nobility etc. A person lacking a single quality of the soul has delicacy incomplete. Then it has lapses and blockages³³.

Delicacy functions, in Ibrăileanu’s view, as an ethical and social conduit engaging a permanent negotiation with circumstances. Therefore, more than a quality *per se*, delicacy is a relation that raises the question of degree in human

³³ G. Ibrăileanu, *Privind viața*, p. 707.

interactions. In his definition of communitarian “phantasm”³⁴, Roland Barthes appeals to the word delicacy in order to describe a form of “distance and respect” that does not exclude emotion, since it is the distance that triggers the desire of living-together. Delicacy becomes, for Barthes, a way to regulate solitude and the social, distance and emotion, so that relationship between individuals can escape manipulation through the imaginary understood as any type of individual or collective representation that influences human interaction³⁵. Ibrăileanu carefully studies the mechanisms of society and is constantly preoccupied with the problem of degree, since rules of conduct are never prescriptive, but always require nuances and discernment according to circumstances.

In this case, sincerity may become vulgar, as it alters tactfulness and is detectable as a form of abusing the others. Concurrently, discretion, praised by the critic, may have adverse effects when used excessively and, under certain circumstances, is an indication of emotional sterility: “Sometimes, by an excess of discretion, we signal, through our reserve, what the other wished passed unnoticed, and we become indiscrete as a result. In some other cases, we manage to play our role perfectly, and the excess of discretion makes us appear insensitive”³⁶. The danger of manipulation, to which Barthes counters delicacy as an ethics of distance inside the community, also concerns Ibrăileanu, who writes about the mask of modesty hiding vanity, about politeness as a defensive strategy, or about intelligence as domination attitude. The tendency to manipulate the other is so strong that one’s actions and opinions are distorted according to one’s self-image: “You act, and I assume the reasons why I would have acted if I were you. You utter a sentence, and I give it the meaning I would have put in your words. Then how do you want me to understand you? How are we to understand each other?”³⁷. If the mask is necessary in society to perpetuate conventions and so preserve its mechanism (for Ibrăileanu, excessive sincerity can lead to the destruction of society), in the intimate circle of friends relationships are even more difficult, not only because of possible misunderstanding, but also because of lack of discernment:

If you have close friendships, you participate in a collective soul and you no longer have your own, meaning a defined personal soul for observation. And, unable to understand one’s soul, your own, you cannot understand anyone else’s. Hence the paradoxical fact that only the isolated understand the human soul well³⁸.

³⁴ For Barthes, living-together is the result of a physics and ethics of the distance that allows preserving one’s solitude inside the community without eliminating affection – see Roland Barthes, *Comment Vivre-Ensemble. Simulations romanesques de quelques espaces quotidiens*. Edited by Claude Coste. Preface by Éric Marty, Paris, Seuil, 2002.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 179-180.

³⁶ G. Ibrăileanu, *Privind viața*, p. 708.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 706.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 705.

Therefore, the strong intimate connections end up manipulating others on the grounds of the solidarity they incorporate. Singularity fades away in favor of commonality and, with personality, the capacity of analysis is also diminished. Isolation seems to be more conducive to knowledge than friendship, and the distance is necessary to understand the other since it escapes manipulation. Delicacy is, for Ibrăileanu, the right way to regulate the social mechanism so that discretion meets affection, and, at the same time, emotion avoids manipulation by preserving solitude. In the intimate space of the cenacle, Ibrăileanu appears as an exuberant, social, and extremely vivacious person, friends frequently depicting his ample gestures, mobility, verve and enthusiasm. At the same time, however, companions keep in mind his reservations that force them to decode gestures, body movements, and face expressions in order to understand his actions and attitude. Living with Ibrăileanu is clearly a subtle relationship of opening and closing, of affection and distance, in which delicacy plays the central role.

Defining delicacy as a matter of tactfulness, Ibrăileanu is trying to attribute it a specific behavioral form by assimilating it with femininity. For the literary critic, delicacy is a feminine manifestation of organic intelligence as opposed to intellectualism, considered a simulacrum of intelligence and specific only to masculine behavior. Therefore, a woman is more subtle in her social interactions than a man, and more able to observe human nature and select partners according to the degree of intimacy she seeks. Also, in literature, women's superiority lies in "the delicate attitude to the subject"³⁹, a moral rather than aesthetic quality referring to women's empathetic capacity towards vulnerable beings. In the cenacle's memoirs, Ibrăileanu is portrayed as a feminine figure that exerts considerable influence on the companions and shapes their behavior. The *Viața românească* Cenacle is mostly a group of men (the presence of women is rarely recorded in the memoirs of the group) where Ibrăileanu's feminine presence regulates the social interactions and shapes a particular relationship based on attraction rather than camaraderie. In *Masa umbrelor*, Ionel Teodoreanu explains the mentor's magnetism on the cenacle writers as a consequence of his femininity that captivates while simultaneously influencing collective behavior:

There is something feminine, from this point of view, in his being. He enforces tact, decency, good will, delicacy, mutual respect as certain women have the gift to inspire the men around them, pacifying, disconnecting them from themselves and perhaps giving them a feeling of liberation from heavy clay into spirited light⁴⁰.

Further on, Teodoreanu underlines Ibrăileanu's feminine delicacy that impacts the relationships inside the cenacle, showing that, unlike an erotic relation in which men only simulate delicacy to appeal to the woman they love, in the interaction with the leader, delicacy is subtly educated in the absence of constraints. In this

³⁹ G. Ibrăileanu, *Creație și analiză*, p. 624.

⁴⁰ Ionel Teodoreanu, *Masa umbrelor*, p. 36.

way, although it sustains a relationship based on charm between the cenacle partners, femininity also carries a form of intimacy that dissipates the possibility of manipulation. Looking at the configuration of the aristocratic salons, it is noticeable that the interactions between writers are organized around a woman, distinguished by intelligence and charm, the sensual atmosphere maintaining the smooth interactions of the literary meetings. Ibrăileanu's posture inside the cenacle is similar to that of the women of the literary salons: writers gather together to listen to the mentor; they visit him because they are charmed or mesmerized by his presence. Connections in the community are welded due to this almost erotic stimulus Ibrăileanu instills. Based on intellectual and vocational affinities, the life of the cenacle is articulated, however, on a collective passion triggered by the fascination for a person.

In the end, I would like to comment on the function of Ibrăileanu's image for the memory of the group. First of all, the common point of the memoirs rests on the writers' need to give a meaning to the intimacy they share with Ibrăileanu, reflected in behavior, gestures, habits, or space. This interest in such signs of physical presence is related to the feeling of loss, activating the affective memory of the witness. They become precious because they are fragile, subject to momentariness and familiar only to a small community. Therefore, the memory of Ibrăileanu is constructed on an emotional pattern stimulated by the awareness of loss. In an article entitled "Celor care nu l-au cunoscut" ["To Those Who Haven't Met Him"], Profira Sadoveanu speaks about an ignorant posterity that, having access only to Ibrăileanu's written work, will conjure the false image of a "rigid, sterile" critic⁴¹. In fact, the memory of Ibrăileanu is related to a community of intimates that is seen not only as a witnessing public, passively recording the traces of the mentor, but as a living work of art shaped by Ibrăileanu. On the other hand, intimacy with the mentor has a collective significance. Ibrăileanu's portrait describes not only his biography but also the relationships formed within a community of writers. Therefore, remembering Ibrăileanu is remembering the cenacle. By focusing on the same gestures, habits, expressions, spatial elements, the lives of these witnessing writers acquire a certain similarity, the memory of the mentor acting as a cohesive element for their collective memory.

⁴¹ Profira Sadoveanu, "Celor care nu l-au cunoscut" ["To Those Who Haven't Met Him"], in Ion Popescu-Sireteanu, *Amintiri*, I, p. 103.

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LIVING WITH IBRĂILEANU.
 HOW TO LIVE TOGETHER, HOW TO STAY ALONE
 (Abstract)

The article investigates different postures of G. Ibrăileanu, the leader of the Viața românească Cenacle, and the impact his manner of living has on the collective existence of the group. First of all, I am interested in how the writers' lives get accommodated to the life of the mentor, how they manage to adapt their rhythm to his habits, gestures, obsessions, or spatial configurations. Secondly, I analyze the way Ibrăileanu's life is invested, in the collective imaginary, with a vocational component. Therefore, the host's gestures become gestures with literature, while his lifestyle, and the space he inhabits end up producing passions among the cenacle writers.

Keywords: postures, cenacle, gesture, delicacy, G. Ibrăileanu.

CONVIEȚUIREA CU IBRĂILEANU.
TRĂITUL ÎMPREUNĂ, TRĂITUL SOLITAR
(Rezumat)

Articolul investighează diferite posturi ale criticului G. Ibrăileanu, liderul Cenuclului Viața românească, și impactul pe care stilul său de viață îl are asupra existenței de grup. În primul rând, mă interesează modalitățile de ritmare a vieții scriitorilor la viața mentorului, felul în care aceștia se adaptează în funcție de obiceiurile, gesturile, obsesiile sau configurațiile spațiale. În al doilea rând, urmăresc modul în care viața lui Ibrăileanu este investită, în imaginarul colectiv, cu o componentă vocațională. Astfel, gesturile amfitrionului devin gesturi cu literatura, în timp ce maniera de a trăi sau spațiul pe care îl locuiește ajung să producă pasiuni printre cenuclști.

Cuvinte-cheie: posturi, cenuclu, gest, delicatețe, G. Ibrăileanu.

COMPTE RENDUS / BOOK REVIEWS

CAMELIA DINU, *Cazul Daniil Harms. Supraviețuirea avangardei ruse [The Case of Daniil Kharms. The Survival of the Russian Avant-Garde]*, București, Tracus Arte, 2019, 477 p.

Owing to a host of extra-literary factors, the Russian avant-garde has a very difficult position in the Romanian literary culture. For one, even though constructivism was the main avant-garde movement in Romania in the 1920s, its autochthonous development can be traced to Central European influences rather than to its source. Therefore, even though Russian constructivism was born out of futurism and suprematism, the origins of Romanian constructivism have little to do with the movement's Russian counterpart. This phenomenon could be explained partially by the anti-Soviet stance taken by Romanian officials, and the cultural blockades instituted thereafter. Another reason concerns the relatively rich connections established between the Romanian and Hungarian, Czech and Polish avant-gardes, all of which had stronger ties to Russian literature. These connections caused a lateral transfer of influence between the Russian and the Romanian avant-gardes that are as interesting as they are unexplored by literary criticism. Even though Camelia Dinu's volume focuses on one Russian author, his indirect ties to the Romanian literary tradition merit further attention, as they are entirely relevant to the question of Russian influence on the Romanian avant-garde.

The first part of the volume traces the literary roots of Daniil Kharms following the formation of OBERIU, a literary movement that has many affinities with Russian futurism and European Dada. In order to better contextualize Kharms' artistic development within OBERIU, the author proposes a brief and concise chronology of Russian modernism, beginning with the so-called "Silver Age", through the October Revolution, and all the way up to the 1950s. In the grand scheme of things, OBERIU, founded by Kharms and Alexander Vvedensky, is a rather late emanation of Russian futurism, a movement that had its fair share of complicated relationships with both the political establishment of the 1910s and the Soviets. It is a period when powerful conflicts, both political and ideological, took place camouflaged as literature, and the Russian avant-garde as a whole was a willing participant.

Before delving into the intricacies of Kharms' poetics, Dinu first establishes the biographical profile of the author. The author traces Kharms' early life and his first forays into literary creation, his youth as a Russian poet with post-futurist extravagances, his conflicts with the Soviet power in the 1930s as an author frequently accused of "anti-Soviet sentiment" and a promoter of "mystical-idealist thought". In minute detail, Dinu deftly unearths reports by the Soviet secret services that contain Kharms' testimony on his artistic activities. In more than one reports, the author finds that Kharms' testimonies contain some of the most authentic artistic creeds. As an absurdist author, Kharms was accused of anti-Sovietism even in his children's books (these accusations represent a good occasion for Dinu to evaluate Kharms' children's literature and its subversive potential in one section of the book). Kharms' biography ends tragically during the siege of Leningrad. The trajectory of his oeuvre, however, was further complicated by Soviet censorship. It wasn't until 1974 that Kharms was introduced to the Western community through George Gibian. The recovery of Kharms' writing in the 1970s and subsequent critical accounts in the 1980s and the 1990s offer Dinu a pretext to engage into a fertile dialogue on the reception of Russian absurdist literature, especially in the West. This is particularly significant when taking into consideration the increasing interest in absurdist theatre over the same period, but also in the context of Romanian culture. As a culture with a fairly rich absurdist tradition (with representatives such as Urmuz and Eugen Ionescu), Romania is a very interesting case in which the reception of a forgotten absurdist author like Daniil Kharms can benefit from a relatively rich critical reception. This, however, was not the case, as the first translation of Kharms in Romania in 1982 was met with minimal critical reaction.

One of the stronger points of the volume concerns Kharms's role in the development of absurdism in the European culture. As a late manifestation of the Russian avant-garde, Camelia Dinu believes it is worth considering that OBERIU is the basis for the poetics of the absurd in European culture. But maybe the most important role of OBERIU resides in its ability to preserve the avant-garde tenets that later provided the basis for Russian postmodernism and neo-avant-garde. In one of the final chapters of her volume, Dinu pursues the trajectory of Kharms' ideas within Russian literary tradition and the way in which these ideas and representations paved the way for the development of Russian neo-avant-garde and postmodernism. Here is where one of the main theses of the book lies: Kharms' and OBERIU's role in *the survival* of the avant-garde in Russian literature. This survival, Dinu writes, "translated into an impulse for different creative directions that, at least in their early stages, attempted to resurrect modernism and the avant-garde rather than moving away from them". Moreover, OBERIU functioned as a missing link between the historical avant-garde and the neo-avant-garde, and Kharms should be related as much to the underground movements of the period 1960-1980 as he is to the first avant-garde.

Using copious amounts of historiographical data, while also providing much needed contextualization on Russian literary culture of the twentieth century, Camelia Dinu's volume is a welcome addition to the history of literary scholarship on Soviet literature in general and on Russian avant-garde in particular.

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COSMIN CIOTLOȘ, *Cenaclul de Luni. Viața și opera*
[*Monday Literary Circle. The Life and the Work*], București,
Pandora M, 2021, 464 p.

The language of literary criticism is dominated by a series of generic phrases used to describe the distinctiveness of the poetry hatched in Romania in the 1970s and 80s: "the intrusion of biography, ordinary emotions, minimalism, baroque magnitudes, the promise of the ludic, ironism, self-referentiality, [...] the abysmal consciousness of a crisis" (p. 9). The accuracy of these terms is indisputable, says Cosmin Ciotloș, literary critic and professor at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Bucharest, while enriching the descriptive pattern. Through astounding detective's intuition, the critic emphasizes the primordially of "a particular group sensitivity" (p. 9). This sensitivity is the kernel that reunites otherwise incongruent temperaments and distinctive writing styles, which are organic extensions of a well-defined artistic awareness. *Cenaclul de Luni: Viața și opera* [*Monday Literary Circle. The Life and the Work*], a volume published in 2021 by Pandora M Publishing House, is the mature version of the doctoral thesis of the author from 2013, an embryonic project that contained only fragments from the last chapter, "Situatii tactice" ["Tactical Situations"]. Interest in these poets, identifiable as „lunedisti”, who are still in the forefront of the Romanian poetry scene, is resurrected. The three constitutive chapters of the final version of the book are intended to be reunited, initially, under the title "Formăm testudo" ["We Form Testudo"], a phrase inspired by Romulus Bucur's poem, *Arta războiului* [*The Art of War*]. The phrase describes a battle formation, which is constituted by merging the shields and creating a powerful visual representation whose appearance resembles the shell of a tortoise. The solidarity between the members, the intertextual networks, alongside the honest and savoury commentaries fuelled by the mature critical spirit of the authors (although biologically very young individuals) create a cultural shield against the

obtuse and benighted forces of the *Săptămâna* magazine. The members of the cenacle need to successively reinvent a cultural shelter, even though this shelter is, simultaneously and permanently, threatened by its inevitable disintegration. All these aspects crystallize the engines of the exceptional durability of the members' unique sensibility and their outstanding critical and artistic formation. Moreover, the perpetuation of the critical and artistic finesse among the members of the cenacle was stimulated by the major role of the commentary, of the debate, something that has kept the poetic organism alive and relevant even today.

The first chapter follows the coordinates of the genesis, evolution, and dissolution of the cenacle. Cosmin Ciotloș makes not only a radiography of the main events that determined the development of the cenacle, but he also investigates forgotten documents that provide an interesting and, moreover, captivating insight. He presents the preliminary phases that had led to the formation of the cenacle, simultaneously immortalizing the collaboration of the members of the future cenacle with the *Amfiteatru* magazine. The context created was fruitful, as it allowed the popularization of the young poets. At their first meeting, on March 3, 1977, many of the members were already recognizable due to their well-defined artistic identities emerging from their previous publications. Cosmin Ciotloș reproduces fragments that are traditionally embedded in the dynamics of the meetings, while highlighting the crucial attention that the members used to dedicate to the commentary. The commentary was even more popular than the actual readings that were hosted in the Edgar Quinet building. The interpretive approaches, although endowed with critical spirit, are said to have been vivid performances, an aspect that maintained the popularity of the group. Equally, the members of the cenacle contributed to the progressive mythologization of the group. They kept blurring the temporal coordinates, having as a template the example of Junimea and Iacob Negruzzi's enigmatic description: "the origin of the group has been lost in the mists of time" (p. 56). Concerning the name of the group, the author exposes Matei Vișniec's comic confession: while he assumes the paternity of the name (Cenaclul de Luni [The Monday Literary Circle]), he admits that the meetings used to take place on Thursdays. The cenacle abolition, in the fall of 1983, caused by the politically and morally dysfunctional background, stimulated symptomatic unrest. In a letter addressed to Viorel Marineasa, Mircea Cărtărescu protests that "there is something bad, harmful, despicable in today's cultural life" (p. 62) and that "literary life has become hell" (p. 62), attributing catastrophic tones to the disintegration of the cenacle. Not only did the members adopt an apocalyptic outlook, but they also refused the dissolution to become definitive. The Rapid sports club phase, an alternative, camouflaged existence eventually suppressed at the order of the State Security, constitutes the following reincarnation of the cenacle. The connection with the sports club, and especially with the Rapid fanbase, is interesting and is, evidently, revealed by Cosmin Ciotloș's detective approach. Both the cenacle and the fanbase of the sports group were animated by remarkable dissident attitudes that became a bonding agent against the common disrupter of harmony and liberty of cultural expression, Eugen Barbu. The final regenerative phase is constituted by the Cenaclul din Tei [Tei Literary Circle], where poetry was not so well represented, due to prejudices circulating at the time. These prejudices devalued commentary on poetry, considered dull and not interesting enough.

The second chapter is dedicated to the catalyst for the collapse of the cenacle, the inhibitor of the innovative spirit, the obtuse voice that condemns the so-called "poetry in jeans", the accomplice of the State Security and the executioner of aesthetic autonomy. All these phrases reproduce the approach of the magazine subordinated to Eugen Barbu, *Săptămâna*, with an attitude that was refractory to novelty and a circulation that left no room for competition. This suppressor of creativity used to have boundless influence in Romania's cultural space. Cosmin Ciotloș records, by means of thorough documentation, the antagonism between the camps, while correcting a series of preconceptions. For example, he clarifies the confusion regarding the column of literary chronicle held, by rotation, by Corneliu Vadim Tudor, C. Sorescu, and M.N. Rusu, denying the fact that their focus was exclusively the 1980s generation. Eugen Barbu's figure is, of course, central, regardless of the avatars that his attacks incarnate: "Barbu is not even the ironic prose writer of yesteryear. He is now only a mechanized robot programmed to destroy and smear" (p. 140).

Not only is the last chapter the most voluminous, but it is also the most enlightening. Even though, apparently, each chapter is dedicated to the work of a single writer, what is crucial is the network that encompasses the lyric individualities, melting them into a unifying rhythm. Cosmin Ciotloș brings to light one of the recurring habits at the core of the cenacle: if a text written by any of the authors is more compatible with the aesthetics of another, the paternity of the text is surrendered. Traian T. Coșovei is represented by his “immense voluptuousness of empathetic writing” (p. 156), while his text, *1, 2, 3 sau... [1, 2, 3, or...]* nourishes symmetries with Florin Iaru’s *High Fidelity* or with Matei Vișniec’s *La noapte va ninge [Tonight It Will Snow]*. For Coșovei, says Ciotloș, the act of writing becomes “an instrument of oblivion” (p. 175), while “the human condition is preserved only in its embryonic phase, not having the time to develop” (p. 175). About Mariana Marin, the author states that she represents “a moral, non-concessive voice” (p. 177) and that she became the emblematic figure of “the tragic version of our dissidence” (p. 177). Alongside the ethical qualities, her stylistics is also admired because it consistently transmutes the truth into parable. What is interesting in Romulus Bucur’s poetry is the revival of intimate literature: “Before others in his generation, Bucur collects mundane facts and passing echoes without interest in formal qualities, and he gives a voice to the otherwise muted sequences of life” (p. 206). Florin Iaru prefers independent poems while staying faithful to the belief that “poetry can be experimental, as long as the result remains impregnated into the emotional memory of the reader” (p. 210). In his case, intertextuality becomes a form of communication, although his assemblage of sources is still undeciphered. Ion Stratan stands out through *The Globe*, a collection that rewrites some Shakespearean texts that surprisingly favour a less popular method of reading – the diagonal reading. In Alexandru Mușina’s poetry, Cosmin Ciotloș identifies the adaptability of some of his verses, gracefully dislocated from their original context and integrated into distinctive works. A subchapter is dedicated to the *Echinox* member Ion Mureșan, whose poetry is analysed simultaneously with some of Marta Petreu’s works. This process reveals the existence of a perpetual dialogue between two opposite literary voices. Bogdan Ghiu is considered “the most heretical member of the cenacle, whilst being their most creative reader” (p. 285), while Ion Monoran’s “compensatory sensitivity” (p. 290) is exposed. Viorel Padina was the one to influence Mircea Nedelciu and Cristian Popescu, due to his discovery of “a new Romanian style of expression” (p. 306). Daniel Pișcu keeps his “emotional and mental coherence” (p. 319) balanced, while Ileana Zubașcu is deprived of the title of forerunner of the cenacle. By far the most uplifting part is reserved for Mircea Cărtărescu and his *Levantul*, which resurrects multiple influences from Romania’s literary context. Cosmin Ciotloș identifies the existence of three bibliographical layers which bring to life a unique and inimitable piece of writing remarkable through its cultural density and exhaustiveness: “several centuries of Romanian literature survive forever, even if no longer frequented” (p. 378).

What gives cultural priority to the cenacle, in addition to the talent encapsulated in samples of exemplary lyricism, is the moral alliance against an ideological model that brutalizes artistic autonomy, the wide dialogic network among the writers as well as the remarkable specificity of the cenacle commentary: “Romanian poetry has never had a more intense parliamentary undertone and has never been more tolerant of the idea of debate than in the nineties” (p. 241).

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MARIN IONIȚĂ, *Kiseleff 10. Fabrica de scriitori* [*Kiseleff 10. The Writer Factory*], revised and extended edition, București, Corint, 2018, 376 p.

Having already been published in three editions, Marin Ioniță's book, *Kiseleff 10. Fabrica de scriitori* [*Kiseleff 10. The Writer Factory*] has two major merits: on the one hand, it is among the few first-hand accounts about "Mihai Eminescu" Literature and Literary Criticism School, the most important institution for training a new generation of literary agents during the 1950s run according to the principles of ideology imported from the USSR. On the other hand, the inside perspective of the author, himself among the school's students, provides material that comprises not only a radiography of this politicized school of writing, but also accounts for all aspects of the life of young writers in this period, starting with intimate anecdotes and continuing with their odyssey of becoming important figures on the temporal literary scene. Classifiable more into the genre of memoir rather than in that of rigorous survey, *Kiseleff 10...* could be read in this key: firstly, as an exhaustive journal of the social, professional and literary trajectory of many writers who attended "Mihai Eminescu" Literature and Literary Criticism School, starting from Nicolae Labiș to Gheorghe Tomozei or Florin Mugur; secondly, as a precious testimonial not only of the politicization of literary discourse, but also of the gross ideologization of the process of forming young authors, and finally of the bureaucratization and institutionalization of the writers and the route to publication.

The literary phenomenon of the 1950s has not been remembered, not even as a compromised or unsubstantial phase, in post-war literary history, mainly because, beginning with the changing ideological frame of the 1960s, politics and literary practices from the previous decade were defused by strong criticism and opposition, and the stage of the sovietisation of literature gradually tended to remain an unknown and shameful experience for the domestic literary route. Therefore, although "Mihai Eminescu" School... gave many writers who have continued to operate in the literary field throughout the post-war period, no actual archival documents originating from the institution remain, as the author of *Kiseleff 10...* mentions at the beginning of the book.

Set up in the 1950 and located at the eponymous 10 Kiseleff Road, right next to the USSR Embassy, the purpose of this school of literature, like that of the Superior School of Social Science "A.A. Zhdanov", has been to form the new progressive generation of intellectuals and writers who would create their work in perfect agreement with the Social Realist aesthetic and, moreover, who would form an "avant-garde" group irrigated by Soviet Marxist-Leninist values and replacing the previous literary models based on the bourgeois and imperial culture. Thus, more than mere competence, the most important criterion for admission to "Mihai Eminescu" School was a *healthy* social origin, understood as provenance from among the proletariat, the sole social class considered eligible to disseminate the socialist doctrine. However, cynical nuances about the operating school admission criteria are not left out either. So, the concealment of personal dossiers was a common practice, and biographies were routinely forged to ensure the successful admission – Marin Ioniță's accounts on this matter are exemplary: "But it happened that both of us, my colleague Lucia and I, had some unusual biographies. On our teacher's advice, we omitted the most inconvenient parts. Thus, Lucia's father was only a pensioner, her mother was a housewife, without wealth and no other income, so she forgot about the estate, her governess, the piano teacher, the servants and so on" (p. 36). With the same cynical nuance, Marin Ioniță points out the eclectic properties regarding the social and educational profile of the school members: "I woke up in a very motley world, from students like me to graduates from several faculties, or a writer with three bachelor degrees from Cluj, the author of an exemplary novel for the new direction that was imposed on Romanian literature; many other students, but also many party activists, trade unionists, members of women's organizations, officers, foremen, workers, journalists, in short, all social and professional categories, save for priests and theologians" (p. 18).

The political apparatus had strongly embedded itself in all activities of the institution, and the level control over students' life reached a peak: "if the rosters drawn up at the School of Literature

had been kept, they would have made an archive of many cubic meters [...]. Also by roster we went to the bathroom for a week, by roster we washed our clothes, by roster we bought blades and shaving foam, toothpaste, soda, socks. Lists of people asking to go to the polyclinic or the dentist, lists of recommended books for additional reading or as obligatory bibliography” (p. 92). However, Bacchic escapades are not left out either, as in the words of the author, the love affairs between students and other intimate events are what truly constitutes the gravitational centre of the book, along with some characterizations and explanations of personal aspects of colleagues’ life, such as for example the description of Gheorghe Tomozei’s unhappy romantic pursuits as well as his repulsive personality, the personal life ended in failure of Florin Mugur, one of the great and dedicated men of letters of the period, or the anomic behaviour of Nicolae Labiș, the most eccentric personality from “Mihai Eminescu” School, and so on.

Among the many names that the book evokes, by far the most frequently mentioned and having the most pages dedicated to is that of Nicolae Labiș, who died in a tragic accident only 21 years old. His privileged status in the book is due not so much to the sympathy and close relationship he had with the author (while they were room-mates at the boarding school), but especially because Labiș was one of the best and most charismatic poets of their generation of “young wolves” (p. 82) and, similarly, one of the school’s most appreciated and admired students. So, at the beginning, his literary performance allowed Nicolae Labiș to succeed in obtaining both the respect of political commissars in charge of the school, and to frequent the company of systematically unseemly authors, such as the banned author Tudor Arghezi. Moreover, through his well-established position in the literary field, Labiș honours the inertia of his congeners: he reveals to them the lectures of the effervescent professor G. Călinescu and puts them in contact with the literary life running parallel to the ideologization at “Mihai Eminescu” School of Literature, also by informing them of the literary models destined for clandestine emulation.

However, the school’s incongruent features also announced its imminent end, as after only five years since setup, “Mihai Eminescu” School of Literature and Literary Criticism on 10 Kiseleff Road closed its doors, proving to have been a rather unsuccessful project on the political agenda, as the author himself mentions: “its great failure of forming cadres was the bankruptcy of the school of literature [...]. The party’s children, raised according to its principles and armed with the ideology of the working class, were meant to sing the triumphant march of the work of making a new world, but from the hatched eggs placed in this incubator different chicks came out” (p. 214). The school hadn’t succeeded to form the greatest author or the triumphant works of Communism, but it was rather an institution that satisfied the professional nomenclature of the system via its production of literary goods, as in the case of Marin Ioniță. Finally, regarding the book, it must be admitted that the most serious weakness of the work may be the lack of exhaustive historical contextualization, though it must also be said that Marin Ioniță’s volume lays no claim to being a rigorous study eligible as a working tool. Even so, it remains among the select few books dedicated to “Mihai Eminescu” School of Literature and Literature Criticism, and to the literary agents who have left the classes of this institution, even if the analysis is based on a subjective perspective and anecdotes, lacking a critical apparatus and a rigorous approach.

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ȘTEFANIA MIHALACHE, *Copilăria. Reconstituiri literare după 1989* [*Childhood. Literary Reconstructions after 1989*], Pitești, Paralela 45, 2019, 372 p.

Originally a doctoral thesis, the work of Ștefania Mihalache manages to highlight, in an integrative manner, the “strengths” of childhood literature. Its innovative character is ensured by the method it uses, a method based on a considerable number of recent studies essential in a society like the current one, so concerned about the dual relationship inclusion-differentiation, in which truth and reality are perceived as labyrinthine in the extreme. In this representation, childhood gains autonomy and becomes an essential factor in the construction of the personal universe, the writings that approach it thematically managing to overcome the minor status that had previously been imposed on them.

Therefore, the way in which the notions by which childhood and the construction of a child’s identity were defined until the 1970s, by associating the child’s actions to race, gender, social class, thereby to heredity and environment, are complemented by two new tools: a child’s voice (p. 63) and ability to act (p. 64). In order to describe a child based on these factors, the study proposes four metaphors that envisage the essence, the body, the mechanism and the context, and that combine in different proportions the heredity, the environment, the voice and the action that dictate the child’s evolution. Based on these metaphors, the author identifies two groups of childhood writings: a first category that revolves around children that are inclined to interpretation (“the action of interpreting the world”, p. 72), and children that are fully dedicated to action through direct participation (“action as participation in the world”, p. 72). These two landmarks are inevitably mixed with key elements of the childhood universe such as language, literature, music, family, society, street, neighbourhood, nature, etc.

The complexity of the study called *Copilăria. Reconstituiri literare după 1989* [*Childhood. Literary Reconstructions after 1989*] is also ensured by the assimilation of these writings to a very sinuous social and political context, which starts in 1989 and extends until the end of 2020. Childhood and the way the narrator child are related and develop around these elements, the way in which an essential part of what represents the identity of the individual is shaped at this stage of life, change their valences and acquire a special significance in the period after the fall of the communist regime, a temporal space dominated by profound individual, social and political changes which profoundly mark not only man’s relationship with himself or with his fellow men, but also that of the writer with his work and with the mechanisms and institutions that contribute to its emergence and circulation. After 1989, as presented in detail in the first part of the paper, there is a crisis of literature in Romania, against the backdrop of major political changes. The population, awakened from the shock of communism, needs a period of respite, of recovery. Therefore, at a literary level (and not only), a tendency can be noticed towards stagnation and reorientation to social problems; if there are literary debates, the discussions among writers focus mostly on issues that do not go beyond politics.

Following the subsequent stage, the rediscovery of literature and arts reveals, however, another way of producing: eager to transpose into fiction aspects of the immediate reality, eager to free themselves from the traumas of the totalitarian political regime, but also to render the truth of this period, the writers adopt a very introspective, very personal and, to the same extent, a very “angry” (p. 11) writing manner.

Recalling as a form of recovery is related, from a Freudian perspective and given current experiences, to the present rather than to the past. Its therapeutic purpose is the healing of the “restricted self” (p. 41), as Brîndușa Palade calls the concept of the self in a totalitarian society. If recollection aims at the possibility of reviving the past, actuality aims at correcting the grid through which it is viewed. The individual who lived and grew up in communism is the bearer of a type of “childish” behaviour; this is an “aged child” (p. 43). In this sense, the return to childhood is a social-therapeutic responsibility (p. 44). Given that images that illustrate the childhood stage are filtered

through a traumatized self, they are not always cohesive, but rather show a fragmentation depending on the social context and on the context of memories.

Fiction, in this context, is not only a solution to filling in the blanks, but also a solution for rediscovering the truth. In order to highlight the idea that truth is found in fiction, the author refers to the Freudian distinction between the latent and the manifest content of memory. Because key memories are hidden behind the least important, the most irrelevant ones, literature aims precisely at identifying the screened truth behind fiction. It has, in this sense, a cathartic role.

In Romanian literature, interest in the childhood theme, as mentioned by Mihalache in chapter four, has old foundations; originating at the end of the 19th century, it extends to the present day; it generally revolves around topics such as the village life and the child's access to education, running in parallel with a negligible number of representations of urban situations. With a few notable exceptions, such as the case of Max Blecher's novel, pre-1989 literature is built around the essentialist metaphor which assumes that child characters are gifted with *a priori* traits, one of which generally prevails, being dictated by the environment or the village community; this confers universality on the childhood world, overshadowing, however, the abilities of the child character and his development in relation to himself and the surrounding world. The essentialist metaphor is complemented by the mechanistic one, by the importance of the way in which the adult operates on the formative universe of the child.

The novels after 1989 are analysed by focusing on two categories of texts which envisage the way in which a child's formative actions focus on interpretation and / or participation. Broadly speaking, they approach a contextualist metaphor; most of them create images of children endowed with strong capacities to deconstruct and build their identity and reality, children who analyse in depth the world around them, whether it is about books, the writing process, language (Mircea Cărtărescu, Simona Popescu, Gheorghe Crăciun, Ștefan Baștovoi, T.O. Bobe, Ovidiu Popa), music (Ovidiu Verdeș, Radu Pavel Gheo), family relations (Ana Maria Sandu, Corina Sabău, Șerban Anghene) or politics, the totalitarian regime (Cezar Paul-Bădescu, Dragoș Voicu, Călin Ciobotari) and children who participate fully either in the surrounding society (Florina Ilis, Radu Aldulescu) or in the miraculous (Filip Florian and Matei Florian, Bogdan Popescu).

After 2010, childhood as a Romanian theme is generally aimed at remembrance. The context of these writings is, however, no longer the communist period, but that of the transition, which leaves room, of course, for equally complex realities. This period, like the totalitarian one, participates in the formation and deformation of the personality or the self, but the child character no longer has a direct role in the action, watching reality from a witness position.

Whether the literary works she considers are chosen from the pre- or post-1989 context, Ștefania Mihalache succeeds in her interdisciplinary project of mapping and offering a completely innovative view of the Romanian novel that takes up the topic of childhood.

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LAURA PAVEL, *Personaje ale teoriei, ființe ale ficțiunii* [*Characters of Theory, Beings of Fiction*], Iași, Institutul European, 2021, 338 p.

Recent comparative studies are gradually departing from close reading, while distant tools are growing in popularity at a fast pace in the domain of literary and cultural studies. In Romania, a new *querelle* is emerging, since the past decade, between the "traditional" criticism's representative figures and the scholars of the new digital and quantitative approaches. This is the general

background in which professor and researcher Laura Pavel publishes her latest volume that has a unique perspective that aims to alleviate these heated debates. The author is trying to make sense of these new orientations, both (very) close and (very) distant, and latest debates in the literary and intermedial fields of studies by carefully examining gains and losses of the numerous methodologies and approaches to literary and artistic objects and productions, while maintaining a balanced stance on each of them. Her analyses start from a democratic position – an attempt to investigate her chosen topics from a clean, unprejudiced standpoint.

In the very introduction to her volume, the author makes clear the fact that her book is a marriage of theoretical thinking and subjective style as the “collection of essays” (as the author herself calls it) proposes a complex network of *metacritic* and *infracritic* inquiries that target literary and visual works such as novels, paintings, or digital installations. Investigating the ekphrastic phenomenon is one of Laura Pavel’s main goals in the more consistent chapters of this book. The author is rather interested in what a literary or artistic object *can tell us* and how literary and visual culture interact with one another than in the rigorous ways of dissecting these cultural artefacts. By doing so, Laura Pavel proposes a one of a kind research approach that represents a much-needed alternative to the dominant paradigms of interpreting authors and their works. The present volume aims to let “the voice of the texts” be heard. The close reading here is not your usual analytical “intrusive” investigation, but a fine and gentle analysis that strives to merely observe the meanings that let themselves be observed.

As the title announces, the volume revolves around a number of important figures both for the fields of studies that the author targets and for her personal academic interests, as Laura Pavel notes in the introductory segments of her book. Her aim is to work in the zone of post-theory, of *new aestheticism*, an ongoing debate that tries to depart from critical theory and go back to the aesthetic roots of literary and artistic theory, where ideological, ethical, or ecological aspects to be found in the works of art or literature are secondary interests.

The first chapter of the book is dedicated to Bruno Latour, an “oscillatory, explorative presence, like a fragile appearance with an equally responsible look” (p. 30). The author is examining as much as she is using this “character” – not only is she retracing Latour’s contributions with a thorough exploration of some of his texts, but she extrapolates Latour’s vision and tries to employ it in the context of the new “ontological turn” she is interested in placing her further investigations.

The second chapter is dedicated to Marielle Macé, who’s working concept of “stylistics of existence” in the field of social sciences Laura Pavel is transplanting into the field of literary and cultural criticism. Pavel calls this repurposed method “a supple mechanism of interpretation” (p. 54) and further engages in analysing Romanian author Mateiu Caragiale’s works (memoirs and fiction alike).

One of the chapters that stands out the most is the third one, dedicated to the literary bohemia of the 1960s and 1970s in Communist Romania. Making use of French literary sociologists’ propositions such as Jérôme Meizoz’s observations on literary posture, Laura Pavel treats the bohemia as “the private life of fiction” (p. 77), as a “co-fictionalization phenomenon” (p. 77), meaning that the works of the writers she targets gain as much from the social lives of their authors as the authors themselves, as individuals and as public figures. Even if she tries to avoid the ideological implication of the literary production she follows, the author observes how the bohemian life was a form of escapism for these writers (such as Nicolae Breban or Dumitru Țepeneag, quite remarkable figures for the Romanian literary culture).

Equally important, the next and forth chapter of the present book continues exploiting Meizoz’s notions and observations. The author is interested in a “privileged social posture” (p. 100) of a number of canonical Romanian writers who dealt with the communist censorship. Her investigation is as elastic as it is careful not to delve too deep into the ideological implication of the conversation she initiates. Her main thesis revolves around the idea that the posture of a (canonical) author is, undoubtedly, in a dependent relation with the success and position on the literary market of his or her books (novels, especially). Furthermore, Laura Pavel investigates the notions of *roman total* and the *fascination for totality* of their authors, one that surpasses fiction and becomes life: “Surrendered to his

own god like power fantasy in the matters of fiction, *l'écrivain total* aims to author a literature that is no longer subordinated to, but parallel with the ideological discourse of political power [...] the socialist “total novelist” cultivates a sort of compensatory bovarism” (p. 110). The “total novel”, therefore, creates a “total novelist”. Among these novelists, Laura Pavel is especially interested in Marin Preda, Nicolae Breban, and Constantin Țoiu.

The second part of the book is dedicated to intermedial objects. Building on post-humanist and post-theoretical vocabulary and working concepts and integrating a new aestheticism perspective in her analyses, the author interprets visual objects like paintings and digital installations. These chapters are not at all in a discordant note with the first part of the volume; on the contrary, they serve the author's main thesis concerning the intricate relationship between different artistic environments.

The present volume is a much-needed contribution in a growingly polemic field of national literary studies. Laura Pavel tries to bring together multiple figures, methods, and parts of any artistic discourse or object. By choosing a theoretical framework while still acknowledging the benefits of the others, the author creates a platform that brings together different perspectives, as a reminder that all our efforts, regardless of their particular nature, are pieces of the same puzzle.

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MIRUNA RUNCAN, *Teatru în diorame. Discursul criticii teatrale în comunism. II. Amăgitoare primăvară 1965–1977* [*Théâtre en dioramas. Le discours de la critique dramatique pendant le communisme. II. Le printemps illusoire 1965–1977*], București, Tracus Arte, 2020, 578 p.

Après un premier volume qui dresse une image compréhensive de la rupture idéologique dans la vie théâtrale roumaine d'après l'instauration du communisme (*Le dégel fluctuant 1956–1964*, Tracus Arte, 2019), Miruna Runcan, enseignante à la Faculté de Théâtre et Film de l'Université Babeș-Bolyai de Cluj-Napoca, continue son effort de rendre visible le trajet historique d'une réalité discursive à part : la critique dramatique, dont le fonctionnement s'articule entre l'attention professionnelle à la production artistique et le service public d'informer le spectateur. À cette difficile articulation vient s'ajouter, pour l'intervalle chronologique choisi dans le volume de 2020, le biais de la contrainte idéologique – fluctuante elle aussi, mais inscrite dans des paramètres complètement différents du petit dégel d'avant 1965, et cela puisque l'on est devant une libération idéologique à deux temps : dans ses premières années, cette désidéologisation vient remplir le champ théâtral d'un désir presque frénétique de renouvellement – des formes du spectacle, du discours, de la production dramatique – qui se retranchera, après la fracture des Thèses de juillet 1971, dans un effort de conserver ses conquêtes de pratique, menacées par le retour du contrôle du Parti.

Ce mouvement en deux temps, avec toutes ses inconsistances, se retrouve, à quelques différences près, dans d'autres champs artistiques de la Roumanie communiste : on l'a vu, par exemple, dans (le peu d') histoires institutionnelles dédiées aux associations professionnelles des artistes roumains (l'étude monographique de Octavian Lazăr Cosma sur l'Union des Compositeurs et des Musicologues, 1995, et celle de Valentina Sandu-Dediu sur la musique roumaine d'entre 1944 et 2000, paru en 2005 ; l'étude de Lucia Dragomir sur l'Union des Écrivains, 2007 ; le projet de recherche sur la filiale de Bucarest de l'Union des Artistes Visuels d'entre 1950 et 2000, dirigé par Caterina Preda, 2015–2017). Afin de rendre manifeste ce même trajet de fracturation et de

négociations prolongées et irrésolues, Miruna Runcan choisit une lecture assez différente par rapport à l'histoire institutionnelle : à travers la continuation de la radiographie thématique du mensuel *Teatrul* [*Le Théâtre*] – publication (fondée en 1956) dédiée aux phénomènes de la vie théâtrale contemporaine, roumaine et universelle –, l'auteure rend visible une reconstitution des réalités du champ théâtral pendant cette douzaine d'années très mouvementées. De ce que l'on peut voir dans cette reconstitution minutieuse, c'est une période riche en repositionnements esthétiques, en débats sur la pratique de la mise en scène et sur le rôle actif de la critique dramatique, en présentations de nouvelles formules théâtrales étrangères, surtout occidentales.

Mais l'image de ce paysage de « normalité » culturelle, conséquente aux changements idéologiques d'après 1965, resterait partielle et biaisée elle-même si l'on ne prend pas en compte la présence, variable mais continue, de la contrainte politique. Tout au long de son ouvrage, Miruna Runcan articule les manifestations spécifiques de l'autonomie relative du champ théâtral – formes concentrées dans le projet artistique de l'esthétisme socialiste (selon la formule de Mircea Martin), projet consensuel au niveau du discours critique – aux mécanismes de contrôle exercé sur la production culturelle par les instances idéologiques. Loin de transformer ses « dioramas » en petites scènes mécaniques construites sur le principe simpliste d'action (politique) et réaction (culturelle), l'auteure fait un découpage nuancé de cette articulation, en choisissant attentivement ses regroupements et variant ses teintes selon les degrés de reconfiguration du contrôle politique dans les décades, structurellement différenciées, de la période prise en compte. L'intervalle 1965–1971 (prolongé, dans certains segments du champ théâtral, jusqu'en 1974) est naturellement plus ouvert et bénéfique, à travers cette ouverture, au processus de synchronisation et d'esthétisation ; tandis que la dure reprise de l'idéologisation après les Thèses de juillet 1971 produit un virage de plus en plus accru vers les formes du spectacle de propagande, en privilégiant les modèles d'épopée nationale et les productions de théâtre amateur. Dans l'étude de Miruna Runcan, ces vérités factuelles (et qui ne sont que des variations spécifiques d'un trajet temporel présent également dans d'autres champs artistiques, y compris celui de la littérature) assurent la toile de fond objectivante (par un appel constant aux documents officiels de l'époque – lois et décrets, résolutions des congrès du parti communiste, collections de documents d'archive etc.), mais également explicative. Plus que le scrupule d'exactitude scientifique, c'est une volonté de rendre la démonstration compréhensible qui fait que, par exemple, le chapitre dédié à l'enseignement théâtral (pp. 197-262) soit muni d'une très attentive reconstitution historique des modifications subies par les domaines humanistes et vocationnelles de l'enseignement supérieur roumain.

Et c'est toujours la même volonté de rendre plus visibles les réfractions de l'idéologie dans le champ théâtral qui nourrit les cinq études de cas du volume (chacune introduite par le surtitre *interlude*), où la lecture de reconstitution choisit des séquences doublement et simultanément significatives – pour l'histoire réflexive du champ théâtral roumain, et également pour une histoire des rapports entre la contrainte idéologique et la production artistique. C'est le cas de l'interlude dédié au « Scandale du *Revizor* » (p. 130-158), spectacle légendaire de L. Pintilie, resté dans la mémoire collective avec l'imbattable auréole d'avoir été interdit après seulement trois représentations, en septembre 1972. En conjuguant des sources de presse, des documents d'archive politique et des témoignages d'après 1990, Miruna Runcan met de l'ordre dans cette tourmente (où Ceaușescu lui-même a son mot à dire) et récupère parmi les multiples contrecoups du « scandale » la germination d'une mesure dont les terribles effets seront ressentis tout au long de la dernière décennie communiste : celle de l'autofinancement des institutions culturelles. C'est ici, dans cette attention à la mise en contexte et aux modèles explicatifs pluriels que l'enjeu fondamental de ce volume semble se préciser : il y a toujours cet « autre versant » de la contrainte, insidieux ou bel et bien envahissant, qui doit être mis en compte, sans le transformer tout de même en justification passe-partout, et qui rend plus compréhensive une période où coexistent la négociation réciproquement arrangeante, d'une part, et l'effort de garder la production artistique à l'abri de la montée des pressions idéologiques, de l'autre. Pour Miruna Runcan, cette coexistence constitue l'axe de son modèle de restitution compréhensive : « après 1964, un pacte s'institue entre les artistes, les critiques et leur public spécialisé : éviter, dans la mesure du possible, les discours de propagande, en faveur des structures

esthétiques plus marquantes, de type moderniste, à l'intérieur desquelles on peut glisser de temps en temps des traces d'une critique envers le système, traces qui seront perçues par les deux camps comme autant de signes de dissidence » (p. 29). Dans cet effort de perpétuelle (et, tout au long des décennies, épuisante) esquivance, l'étude inclut également le rôle d'une catégorie d'agents dont l'historiographie (même récente) dédiée aux phénomènes artistiques se méfie encore – et dont l'auteure reconstruit pertinemment les nuances : celle des responsables culturels, cadres du parti aux niveaux intermédiaires de décision, « accommodés à la vie culturelle réelle et à ses valeurs [...] qui fonctionnent comme filet de sauvetage » (p. 158). À leurs côtés, se mobilisant dans presque les mêmes circonstances de nécessité, le groupe de critiques qui ont traversé – dans des positions dominantes – « les années du jdanovisme pur et dur, comme [Valentin] Silvestru ou [Andrei] Strihan [...] parfaitement adaptés à l'ouverture d'entre 1962 et 1971 et qui se réjouissent, à la fois, des privilèges d'antan, mais également des avantages d'une atmosphère culturelle beaucoup plus respirable, devenus maintenant [...] défenseurs de la direction esthétique de l'œuvre théâtrale » (p. 307).

La dernière partie du volume, *Analyse rhétorique et archéologie critique*, déplace l'accent de la reconstitution socio-historique vers la mise en lumière d'un modèle pluristratifié (en six dimensions, v. p. 513) de l'écriture critique ; à travers une analyse limpide et gratifiante, qui porte sur quelques chroniques publiées au début des années 70, Miruna Runcan y réussit l'exercice d'un *master class* complet sur le sujet « comment bien écrire une chronique de spectacle ». La griffe du vrai prof se fait visible partout, du choix des morceaux à analyser jusqu'au diagnostic ferme et tranchant dans l'admiration comme dans le rejet (le dernier interlude du volume porte d'ailleurs le titre *Une chronique exemplaire* – celle de Ileana Popovici pour *Elisabeth I* de Paul Foster, mise en scène par L. Ciulei en 1974, au théâtre Bulandra). Dans une logique didactique sans faille, l'analyse s'achève par le retour vers le présent de l'enseignement : « les critiques de théâtre, combien ils en restent, devraient donc prendre garde : au fil du temps, le tissu mou de leurs jugements de valeur tend à se momifier, tandis que le squelette solide des descriptions pleines de détails reste une source toujours renouvelable » (p. 564).

La séquence finale n'est pas du tout la seule apparition de la puissante voix de l'auteure – l'intégralité du volume est traversée par ses insertions réflexives, sous la forme de plusieurs témoignages directs (en tant que spectatrice – p. 547, ou secrétaire littéraire de théâtre – p. 99) ou, très souvent, sur la tonalité amère d'une chercheuse passionnée qui constate la pérennité des difficultés et des failles dans son domaine. Parmi maints exemples : l'absence d'une tradition de recherche collective (« après 1975 [l'apparition du volume *Le théâtre roumain contemporain*] les traités collectifs sombrent dans le néant. Un néant qui perdure encore aujourd'hui », p. 231) ou d'un intérêt pour les études sociologiques des publics – le chapitre sur les contributions de Pavel Câmpeanu, seul intéressé à l'époque par ce sujet, porte justement le titre *Sociologie et théâtre, un début trop raccourci* (pp. 451-506). L'amertume semble se changer parfois en révolte sèche : le commentaire sur la réponse de V. Mândra à une enquête de *Contemporanul* (*Sur la nécessité de l'activité de recherche*, 1968, où le professeur de littérature dresse l'inventaire de tous ses rêves scientifiques – études monographiques, travaux théoriques des metteurs en scène, anthologies de la critique dramatique roumaine du XX^e etc., etc.) s'achève net : « Logiques et alertes, ses propositions nous donnent à penser même aujourd'hui. Mais elles nous gênent, également » (p. 423). Ce serait peut-être abusé, mais on ne s'empêche de saisir un certain rapport entre cette tonalité d'amertume et d'embarras et l'initiative de ce projet de recherche invraisemblablement large, tout à fait individuelle, sans précédent et sans peur, de Miruna Runcan.

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IULIAN BOCAI, *Filologii (Instituționalizarea studiului literar în Europa)* [*Philologies (L'institutionnalisation des études littéraires en Europe)*], București, Tracus Arte, 2020, 379 p.

Ces dernières années, dans le champ des études littéraires en Roumanie, où la tendance est d'adopter les méthodes les plus récentes et de les appliquer à des sujets contemporains, l'étude réalisée par Iulian Bocai est individualisée par le thème choisi : à partir de l'histoire des grandes universités européennes, il essaie de reconstruire la manière dont la philologie et les études littéraires ont été *institutionnalisées* au fil du temps. Le volume se concentre sur la période 1780–1900 (même si, en explorant les origines du phénomène, il traite également des siècles précédents) et suit la manière dont l'étude littéraire est *définie et légitimée* dans les grandes universités de France, d'Angleterre, d'Allemagne et de Roumanie. Ainsi, à travers une approche comparatiste, l'auteur tente de voir comment les changements de paradigme au niveau *global, central*, en ce qui concerne le statut de la philologie, se reflètent dans l'espace *local* et s'adaptent aux besoins et réalités contextuelles.

Pour Bocai, « la philologie moderne est un ensemble de pratiques qui préserve le passé et instruit le présent » (p. 10) et, par conséquent, son étude cherche à refaire une histoire intellectuelle afin de découvrir comment ces pratiques sont apparues, comment elles définissent « la validité pour l'étude littéraire » du « jugement scientifique », quand et de quelle manière les études littéraires entrent en tant que discipline dans les universités. Tentant de répondre à ces questions, l'auteur porte son attention sur les programmes universitaires, analyse les pratiques universitaires, l'évolution démographique des étudiants pour les périodes visées, les effets et les échos de certains changements de centres d'influence, mais aussi les politiques sous-jacentes à certains changements institutionnels.

Comme l'auteur le constate, une histoire des universités est aussi une histoire des relations entre *l'université* et *l'État*. C'est pourquoi il n'est pas rare que les universités occidentales soient un espace instrumenté politiquement et économiquement, même si elles se veulent des centres d'activités intellectuelles. Le volume interroge précisément ce que signifie cette activité intellectuelle : à l'époque prémoderne, le rôle de l'université était plutôt de *préserver* certaines connaissances que de *produire* réellement des connaissances, c'est-à-dire de représenter un centre de *recherche* et *d'innovation*. C'est le rôle de conservation qui explique la résistance des universités à l'idée du nouveau. Jusqu'au début du XIX^e siècle, en Angleterre, en France et en Allemagne, « littérature » signifiait littérature classique et il n'y avait pas de distinction claire entre les différentes disciplines du champ littéraire. Le siècle des Lumières apporte quelques réformes, l'État s'implique plus activement dans l'organisation de l'enseignement, les facultés de théologie commencent à perdre du pouvoir, car l'Église n'est pas un agent social si influent dans ce domaine. Néanmoins, les universités restent bloquées dans une inertie curriculaire classique. D'une part, le grand défi est la distinction disciplinaire entre *sciences* et *humanités*. D'autre part, cette séparation est difficile à réaliser car en Europe domine encore l'idéal d'un enseignement complet et universel qui donne à l'étudiant une appréhension totale du monde.

A la fin du XVIII^e siècle et surtout au XIX^e siècle, il y a eu de véritables changements dans l'étude de la littérature. Tout d'abord, le romantisme présente un intérêt tout particulier pour le contexte national et l'histoire. Ainsi, si jusqu'en 1800 la philologie était étroitement liée à la linguistique, il y a maintenant un intérêt marqué pour l'histoire. Bien que le concept de littérature soit encore très laxiste, faisant référence à tous les produits culturels écrits qui ont eu une certaine influence (même dans un domaine comme la science), il approfondit certaines questions théoriques et pédagogiques. De plus, il existe « un vocabulaire littéraire complet que les nouvelles disciplines utiliseront pleinement, mais avec certains termes – 'comme histoire', 'critique', 'littérature' – qui subiront des changements de sens et de méthode » (p. 135) et un intérêt pour les littératures nationales.

Revenant à l'espace roumain, Iulian Bocai constate que les dynamiques sont complètement différentes : tout d'abord, l'instabilité politique et sociale dans les deux principautés roumaines rend la vie culturelle tout aussi instable. Deuxièmement, l'auteur s'oppose à l'idée qu'il y aurait eu un humanisme, au vrai sens du terme, bien que les langues anciennes soient connues et les classiques lus, sans qu'une communauté intellectuelle se réunisse dans les académies. Cependant, un certain lien avec l'Occident est maintenu, ce qui rend possibles quelques influences. Il existe peu d'informations sur les écoles roumaines des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles. On connaît l'activité de « l'académie » de Kiev, fondée par le Roumain Petru Movilă et qui était un collège de cinq ans, organisé sur un modèle humaniste. Un autre « centre » important est l'Académie royale *Sfântul Sava*, qui, comme d'autres écoles, est l'espace où une forme d'enseignement secondaire est pratiquée, bien qu'elles soient appelées « académies ». Les choses commencent à changer une fois avec l'influence des phanariotes : un cycle d'études plus complexe apparaît après 1700, et la langue d'enseignement devient le grec ancien. En Transylvanie, les choses évoluent différemment du fait de Școala Ardeleană [L'École de Transylvanie], le plus important mouvement d'émancipation socio-politique du XVIII^e siècle, construit sur le modèle des Lumières. Les représentants de ce mouvement invoquent l'importance de l'histoire, afin de légitimer l'origine latine des Roumains et l'existence d'une culture roumaine. Ainsi, dans l'espace roumain, il n'y aura pas d'admiration « programmatique » pour les anciens, comme en Occident. L'invocation de l'Antiquité est instrumentalisée par l'école de Transylvanie à d'autres fins, beaucoup plus politiques et sociales. Les représentants de cette école font des efforts considérables pour légitimer l'idée et faire prendre conscience que les Roumains sont les successeurs de l'Empire Romain. En ce sens, ils écrivent des grammaires et des dictionnaires pour normer la langue roumaine et ils essaient d'expliquer l'histoire des Roumains en montrant les connexions avec d'autres espaces culturels. Cette communauté intellectuelle bien formée et éduquée en Occident s'est engagée à *vulgariser* ces idées culturelles politiques : leur mérite est considérable dans le développement des écoles.

Dans les grands centres universitaires occidentaux, la littérature commence à s'identifier à la *fiction* au XIX^e siècle. Il y a des changements majeurs dans l'étude de la littérature, mais une autre mutation se produit au niveau pédagogique : le savoir commence à être largement instrumentalisé par l'État et commence à être pensé comme le « résultat d'un processus de production » (p. 202). Une conséquence négative de la professionnalisation des disciplines que Iulian Bocai observe est la distance qui se crée entre le « chercheur universitaire » et le « chercheur public ». Les études littéraires universitaires semblent rester dans une sorte d'isolement, ce qui conduira, au XX^e siècle, à une crise. Après l'analyse de l'évolution de la discipline dans les grands centres universitaires, l'auteur revient sur le contexte roumain, où le XIX^e siècle apporte aussi « l'obsession » de l'éducation. Le contexte des changements est différent, car, en l'absence d'une tradition universitaire très longue, la modernisation se produit, comme Iulian Bocai l'affirme, extrêmement rapidement. Cependant, les difficultés économiques, sociales et politiques conduisent à l'impossibilité de créer immédiatement une communauté intellectuelle capable de produire une culture philologique ou scientifique. Bien qu'il y ait de l'optimisme et de l'idéalisme des « débuts », en réalité, les premières universités roumaines, à Iassy et à Bucarest, fondées en 1860 et respectivement en 1864, manquent d'étudiants et de professeurs spécialisés. Un rôle symptomatique est joué par *Junimea*, un mouvement culturel et littéraire qui s'est également formé à la même période, dirigé par Titu Maiorescu et d'autres jeunes intellectuels Roumains formés à l'étranger. Cependant, bien que les junimistes fassent des efforts considérables, ils restent plutôt « des critiques publics et des célébrités politiques » (p. 264). Le véritable corps académique est formé à peine avec la prochaine génération de professionnels. Comparant l'évolution de l'université roumaine à l'université occidentale, Iulian Bocai observe trois types de « conflits épistémiques » : les nouvelles disciplines ne doivent pas gagner leur autonomie face à la théologie, car dans l'espace roumain l'Église ne joue pas un rôle fondamental dans la formation des universités; il n'y a pas de conflit entre « l'ancienne philologie » et la « nouvelle philologie », l'idéal de la connaissance universelle, encyclopédique, si promue dans l'espace allemand, n'est pas aussi prononcé dans l'espace roumain ; les études littéraires ne mènent pas une lutte aussi forte pour la spécialisation et la légitimité face à la science.

Par conséquent, l'étude de Iulian Bocai tente de restituer le chemin insidieux des études littéraires à travers l'histoire culturelle de l'Europe, jusqu'à présent. Son travail n'est pas seulement une histoire de la discipline ou de l'institutionnalisation de cette discipline : c'est en même temps une revue de l'histoire des idées et des mentalités, symptomatique de l'évolution culturelle de l'Europe. Il prouve que, s'il existe des lacunes considérables, l'évolution des disciplines littéraires roumaines suit la même évolution qu'en Occident. Son étude reste aussi une histoire d'influences et d'interconnexions entre les espaces académiques et les centres culturels.

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ANA SĂNDULESCU, ed., *Prietenii și Literatura. Club 8, OuTopos și invitații lor* [*Friends and Literature. Club 8, OuTopos and Their Guests*], București, Casa de pariuri literare, 2019, 320 p.

The volume coordinated by Ana Săndulescu is part biography, part interview book, part history of literature. Tracking the path of literary groups of the 1990s in Iași, Club 8 and OuTopos, Ana Săndulescu gets to cartography the history of a generation that left an important imprint on contemporary Romanian literature. *Prietenii și Literatura. Club 8, OuTopos și invitații lor* [*Friends and Literature. Club 8, OuTopos and Their Guests*] does not propose a strictly academic approach, even if the questions are meticulously composed and the documentation is seriously carried out. As the title says, this book proposes a bridge between people and literature, between people of the same generation, and between old generations and new ones.

The connections between Ana Săndulescu and the two literary groups from Iași are due to the curiosity of a young mind, but also lie in Ana Săndulescu's literary beginnings (the literary group *Junimea*, coordinated by Mirel Cană, and Literary Salon *Zero+*, coordinated by the poet Paul Gorban). The first steps towards this project were taken in 2017, during Ana's FILIT residence (a few interviews with representative writers of that generation). On October 15, 2018, the first interview was published in the online publication *Prăvălia Culturală*. Starting from there, the project committed itself to more content and curious views than previewed and the project took shape resulting in the book published in 2019.

Prietenii și Literatura. Club 8, OuTopos și invitații lor is an album of 24 voices (or, let's say, 25 because Ana Săndulescu's voice is an important part of the dialogue). One could say "mirrors" and not an "album" but keeping in mind that the majority were recorded (and there are also two photo sections: *Galerie foto Club 8* and *Galerie foto OuTopos*), the word "album" seems to be the perfect one to describe how this literary community of the early 2000s was founded, the path it follows and its collapse, alongside the lives of the people involved. There is no dirty laundry washed in public, there are no recollections of rivalries, but there is nostalgia, there is still the spirit that brought all those people together, the dream of a better system, of better Romanian literature and a better place for it. There is no hierarchy revolving around these two groups, nor is one seen as more important than the other. The message remains the importance of living literary groups, of hearing and being heard (in order to promote valuable Romanian literature, and to have someone guide young and not so young writers into writing their best texts).

Constantin Acoșmei, Radu Andriescu, Michael Astner, Gabriel H. Decuble, Dan Lungu, Liviu Mățăoanu, Antonio Patraș, Dan Sociu, Cerasela Stoșescu-Nistor, Ada Tanașă, Chris Tănăsescu, Otilia Vieru-Baraboi (Club 8) and Șerban Axinte, Savatie Baștovoii, Bogdan Crețu, Cătălin Crețu, Livia

Iacob, Florin Lăzărescu, Lucian Parfene, Florin Dan Prodan, Adrian G. Romila, Lucian Dan Teodorovici, Codrin Dinu Vasile, Briscan Zara (OuTopos) are the ones that answered Ana Săndulescu's call for this project. At a time of struggle for Romanian literature, they were the ones who fought to give it meaning and true value. Their battle was not against the system. Instead, they were hungry for more and better literature, so they did it themselves (inside literary circles, magazines, publishing houses, books). In a place/ a society where they did not belong, they built their spot. This could be seen as the former communist dissidents' strength transferred into the exuberance of a new beginning.

After more than 20 years, Ana Săndulescu puts together pieces of memories that in the end form a whole picture. Ana Săndulescu aims for a true spirit of that time by trying – alongside the people involved in the making of the book – to reveal the stories as they happened. By preserving the structure of a memoir, the book showcases the writers that founded the two groups, but also guests – writers discovered and promoted by the members of the groups –, photos and pieces of literary texts, internal struggles, but also social and economic ones, unexpected friendships.

The book has two parts: *Club 8* and *OuTopos*, which are also the names of the literary groups. Both parts record names (of founders, friends, guests, of *the ones that stayed and the ones that left*), biography boxes, stories (happy ones or less happy than we thought), events (personal, social, literary), common stories and friends or fewer common traits, poems, notes or pieces of journals from back in the day. The structure is the same for both parts (the presentation of the writer, the majority of the questions, poems or fragments of journal or prose). The two groups tend to be opposed: Club 8 (1996–2005) an elitist, pragmatic, closed club, of higher purposes, whose members were well-known in the Romanian literary field; and OuTopos (1995–2000) an open club, less pragmatic, whose majority of members were mostly unknown, students, young enthusiasts animated by revolutionary spirit. However, their desire for better Romanian literature trumped the differences, resulting in a strong ground for future generations. Their goal was accomplished: important books, articles, magazines, public readings and anthologies were published and publicised at the time. They managed to promote valuable writers and establish a quality stage for literature.

All in all, they seem to consider themselves lucky to be able to encounter such friends and to start movements that can still influence young minds today. A common feeling is that the young generation can write its history at any time, given the massive digital opportunities today. Why is it still interesting to learn about these groups? Because of their young enthusiastic spirit, their need for something else, their reversal of the system, their taste for an accomplished dream, their more or less nomadic life, their rebellion, their courage to change what is not right – the same spirit in every generation, never getting old, lying there until it's time to re-emerge.

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EMANUEL MODOC, *Internaționala Periferiilor. Rețeaua avangardelor din Europa Centrală și de Est [The International of Peripheries. Avant-Garde Networks of East-Central Europe]*, București, Muzeul Literaturii Române, 2020, 277 p.

This study is based on Emanuel Modoc's PhD thesis and it starts from the premise that any literary phenomenon from the first two decades of the 20th century (which also corresponded with modernism and its propagation throughout Europe) is conditioned by an internal network of transfer

and on a bilateral transformation, which ultimately determines and helps develop the particularities in a given literary system. The author wants to make way for a new perspective on the already established relations between two or more national literatures and to accentuate that in the case of the avant-garde in the Central and Eastern Europe, the traditional scope center-periphery/East-West can be broadened.

What follows is a sort of ripple effect, which is centered around the most recent World Literature studies. "World Literature" is a term broadly used to designate a global conceptualization of canonical literature in relation to the world's different spectrum of literary and cultural traditions. World literature does not encapsulate the conglomeration of all the literary works in the world, but rather only the very best works from the world's different literatures, especially those which have not been thoroughly studied beyond their native scope. It incorporates not only the "major" literature belonging to Western Europe, but also the "minor" ones which have been overlooked, or superficially studied, as they pertain to Europe and North America.

The idea of *Weltliteratur* came as a result from adjoining the Enlightenment cosmopolitanism with Romantic cultural nationalism and, since around the 1800s, it has established a growing system of transnational circulation of texts, beyond their linguistic barrier. Romania, on the other hand, is still considered to be a "peripheral" culture, along with several others which are explored by the author. Modoc generally follows a transnational perspective and, in particular, the model framed by the network.

Historically, what triggered the formation of new geopolitical establishments was the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and thus, the dominant newly-formed nations (fashioned through the conceptualized phenomenon known as *nation building*) came across and recognized other nations and their literary potential, which was fueled by the existent multicultural and multiethnic intrinsic aspect assimilated in the process of forming these nations. The entire continent was caught between an artistic crossfire as some wanted to cling onto the traditional literature which was meant to consolidate the national identity, while others wanted to overrule those artistic movements which were solidified by tradition. However, the avant-garde movement across Central and Eastern Europe managed to find a space in-between, a third path: "a cosmopolitan identity in conduct, and respectively constructive, edifying and finally, affirmative, in *praxis*".

The study is comprised of two parts: the first part centers on the three directing concepts of this study: space, community and network. When tackling space, the author focuses more on the validity of a choice when it comes to the geo-cultural segmentations of some parts as opposed to others. On the other hand, community refers to the coarse nucleus of the avant-garde formations and the way in which they were structured, as well as their principles and the justifications for their unification. Last, but not least, the mobility of these communities, which can be easily tracked through the main mechanism that governs their progression, comprises the network. The second part puts to the test the theories selected for investigation and a chapter in this part is dedicated to Edward Said's theory regarding his "travelling concepts" in order to pursue the dissemination of the West-European avant-garde art movements from the periphery and the effects that they would cause on the local avant-garde particularities. The final part of the inquiry focuses on a short metacritical panoramic view through which the evolution of the avant-garde is perceived in the Romanian critical and historiographic discourse.

This review will shortly focus on the first two chapters as those are the ones that best present the endeavor at hand. The first chapter, entitled "Space, community, network", is subdivided into smaller parts, addressing mainly the three categories listed in the title of this chapter. When it comes to space, Modoc proposes the superiority of space over time, as it is "a prime organizing factor in the analytical frame", but this supposition comes with consequences. One such consequence would be that "a transnational history treats the cultural/literary event according to certain inherent geopolitical criteria of a region" as it focuses more on the common aspects of two or more literatures, but most of all on the regional intersection over hegemonic influences. The author approaches the literary transnational history project edited by Marcel-Cornis Pope and John Neubauer for it proposes a useful geo-literary

segmentation and Modoc wants to suggest a few solutions regarding the project's methodological shortages.

The following part of this chapter deals with communities and Modoc introduces two new concepts: Benedict Anderson's *imagined communities* and Dionýz Ďurišin's *interliterary communities*. The former was firstly used as a "conceptual model for discussing nations in general and nationalism in particular", it was then employed when discussing generally *intraliterary* communities. The latter was used by Ďurišin as a "networking model between two cultures" and the basic principles with which he operated were geographical proximity, affinities, historical events and cultural or political experiences that are shared between two or more cultures. The two aforementioned concepts provide basic models for identity in order to study the multiple literary phenomena which have evolved in a "distinct relation of co-evolution". The network, to which another part of the chapter was dedicated, represents the "general mechanism through which the Central and East European avant-garde has developed its entire interface of transnational negotiation from a (double) peripheral position and within a counter-public sphere". This has led to a "system theory", which is presented by Modoc as "the ability to visualize patterns (both diachronic and synchronic) along a corpus which can give way to new perspectives".

The second chapter, entitled "*Intranational, international and transnational*", focuses on case studies analyzed thoroughly by the author and which expose, in the initial stage of the investigation, the local-global system, "the intracultural dynamics between the Central and Eastern European avant-garde movement". Further on in this chapter, Modoc presents the four artistic movements which represent the avant-garde: futurism ("the formation of consciousness"), dadaism ("the destruction of consciousness"), constructivism ("the social law of consciousness") and surrealism ("the doctrine of consciousness").

Futurism pursued a central-peripheric type of model in the attempt to disseminate its artistic program. The *Futuristic Manifesto* was published in 1909 and this year marked the emergence of the manifesto as a self-conscious and founding literary genre as it was adopted as a textual model by all the national avant-garde movements, while dadaism opted for "a type of decentralized, non-rational and antirational internationalism, founded on a capitalist logic of the networks". Constructivism originated in Moscow in 1921 and unlike futurism, dadaism or surrealism (as all three were theorized "from the source") the journey of constructivism in Europe depended on what the European artists saw in this artistic movement; we can say that the Central European filter modulated the entire absorption of constructivism. Thus, beyond its Russian origins, constructivism is a European art movement *par excellence* so it was rapidly adopted by all the avant-garde movements. Last, but not least, the surrealist internationalism "was founded on the idea of the socialist revolution, which may explain the delayed permeation in the Central and Eastern European space".

Internaționala periferiilor proposes, as it had been briefly outlined, the identification and description of certain mechanisms which generated the existence of networks, invariably interliterary. The results obtained in this investigation were confronted with a series of theoretical models, historically organized, which started from an inductive reasoning of explained phenomena and a series of interpretative clichés; because of this a hegemonic relation propagated between a centre (or a culture source) and a periphery (or a target source). *World Literature* studies were of essential importance, as they enable this endeavorment which had the purpose of investigating the relations between the avant-garde movements of the countries belonging to Central and Eastern Europe. The multifaceted approach gives way to a comprehensive overview of this challenge and development, which proves to be important for future research and reflection.

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