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OPENINGS



DESCHIDERI

TYPES OF POLITICAL NOVEL. THE ROMANIAN POLITICAL NOVEL vs. THE IDEOLOGIZATION OF HAPPINESS


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Abstract: *In the Romanian literature of the 20th and 21st centuries, we can distinguish three types of political fiction: the pre-political novel, the unalloyed political novel, and the eudaimonic novel. The pre-political novel refers to the totalitarian reality that could not be modelled by words as the expression of genuine political desiderata. Violence grabs new functions. The unalloyed political novel is the genre focused on politics as the main theme, such as the dehumanization in political settings. The eudaimonic novel is centered on political freedom as the essential condition of happiness. Under communism, the oscillation between necessity and coercion was insignificant, aiming to reduce the whole society to a one-dimensional individual: the ideologized man. Loneliness was the suspicious, subversive, anti-system state of being. Considered obsolete, outdated, weak, revolting, the political novel of the first epoch socialist realism is replaced by the political novel of communism 2.0 (after 1960). Allusions or contrastive references to the "Bolshevik" times of the former epoch of the propaganda novel (the Romanian 1950's) were not only present, without fear, but became mandatory. After 1989, the political novel captures the simulacra of an alienated society. The new novels encapsulate the essence of freedom, democracy, and reality as unable to withstand the production of counterfeit values. In the vein of skepticism, these new political novels are permeated by the bitter feeling of having betrayed a historical moment.*

¹ Marius Miheț, senior lecturer at the University of Oradea, has won through national competition the tenure of Romanian lecturer at Comenius University, Bratislava <https://www.ilr.ro/category/corpul-lectorilor/page/3/>

POLITICS AND
LITERATURE



POLITICA &
LITERATURA

Traumas and Illuminations

MAGIC REALISM, TRAUMA AND POSTMEMORY IN JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER'S *EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED*



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Abstract: *Grounded in literature by Gabriel García Márquez and Salman Rushdie, Magic Realism is a literary genre of contradictions and paradoxes, in which two incompatible worlds co-exist. Due to its paradoxical characteristics, Magic Realism can be in touch with representations of traumatic experiences and events as the Holocaust. This paper aims to analyze how the contemporary Jewish-American writer Jonathan Safran Foer uses Magic Realism in his novel entitled "Everything is Illuminated" to talk about the intergenerational aspects of the Holocaust trauma. For this, the focus will be on the concept of postmemory and how this concept functions in the novel, enabling the author to recreate the past of his ancestors using a blend of imagination and fiction, of the reality and the fantastic.*

Key-words: trauma, Magic Realism, postmemory, past, the Holocaust, Jewish-American literature, Jonathan Safran Foer

Introduction

The experience of trauma, along with its representation and transposition into writing, can be considered a field of interest in the literature produced recently, not only by ethnic American writers but by different authors who have shown an interest in this particular topic throughout time. The concept of trauma is closely linked with the concepts of identity, the past, and memory. Lately, the relationship between trauma and literature has been researched by psychologists and literary critics as well. The recent literary theory focuses on the effect of

L'ÉCRITURE DANS L'ÉVASION SILENCIEUSE DE LENA CONSTANTE /LENA CONSTANTE'S AUTHORIZING AND ART OF WRITING IN *THE SILENT ESCAPE*



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Abstract : *Lena Constante (1909-2005) was an elite visual artist of Romania, also a theater stage designer and a distinguished folklorist. In January 1950, she was incarcerated by the Romanian totalitarian regime, whose general secretary was Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. The inhuman conditions in the political prison could not bend Lena Constante's will and her resistance. She had neither writing instruments nor paper in prison, as she was forbidden to write. Moreover, as a form of torture, she was forced to be completely alone in the cell for 3000 days (but in panoptic surveillance). The present article focuses on Lena Constante's authoring. This pursuit had started in jail when she was composing in her mind a unique testimony of endurance. The limits of this endurance are the limits of the body itself. The book "The Silent Escape", written in French first, takes the form of a prison diary with exact framing and real data. The present tense of writing, applied to the past, creates a hypnotic dimension of the visual imagery oscillating between two poles: life and death, power of mind vs. real walls, self-coherence (deliberate exercises of concentration, self-imposed efforts to train the mind) vs. self-fragmentation and distress. Primordial for Lena Constante is to share an ontological experience, rather than to be called a writer.*

PART ONE OF VALERIU ANANIA'S *MEMORIES* – A MORAL DEBT TO POSTERITY



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Abstract: *This article aims at offering a radiography of unexpected events in Romanian history through the eyes of a writer, Valeriu Anania (1921-2011). His volume of Memories is very unusual. Valeriu Anania's dream was to excel in writing poetry and theatre. He followed the religious path of becoming a monk. Later Anania became Archbishop and Metropolitan of Cluj-Napoca. His spiritual vocation was very ardent. His book, "Memorii", is a testimony of a man who chooses to be faithful to his conscience. He chose to tell the truth about his tribulations in prisons as well as about all his choices, bad and good. Anania willed special provisions about the publication of his manuscript only after his death. This way he was not tempted to embellish the truth about him. In his high-school years, Anania fancied the extremist "green shirts" youth "brotherhood" organizations because he liked their system of recruiting (faith in God, initiation, unavailability, and promised heroism). Anania never became legionary in any form of adherence. His rejection of the extremist group started in his youth. Even then, in his youth, because of his faith in God and of his deep desire to follow the path of devotion to God, he realized that he made a mistake trusting impetuosity. As a former prisoner, Anania was to suffer a stigma all his life. He had not been a follower of what was to become the extreme right. In the light of his wise age while writing the memories, this episode becomes an anatomy of a disenchantment but also a way to understand the tensions of a turbulent epoch. Instead of a pact with the reader, Valeriu Anania commits to telling the whole truth. As a genuine connector of people, more the cenobite type of monk, Bartolomeu Anania found his vocation in organizing the cultural life and education of Orthodox monasteries in Romania and U.S.A.*

Communities & Blueprints.

Policies vs Principles

WORKING WITH DIVERSITY: CULTURAL POLICIES



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Abstract: *The present paper selectively foregrounds instances of contemporary novelists' concern and reflection on the state-of-art examination of migration in the countries they belong to as a recognition of the condition of alterity and its effects on people's mental make up and individual identity. Multicultural social contexts bring forth situations, tendencies and necessities that have to be regulated by specific public policies so that individuals of different ethnic communities should be accepted in a spirit of freedom and equality.*

Key words: communities, policies, principles, everyday practices

EUROPEAN AMERICAN FICTION.

MARIO PUZO



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Abstract: *Lucia Santa identifies her American dream in purchasing a home in Long Island, moving the entire family there. The struggles have not ended for Lucia Santa, although the reader could argue that she and her family have basically accomplished their happiness. In this particular respect, Lucia Santa has in fact touched her American dream. With both excitement for her new location and sadness for leaving the place of so many memories, she is eventually living the American dream. The old matrons on the block give her a fitting and respectful farewell. This closes the chapter on Lucia Santa's urban tale and the life she has known for so many years: out on Tenth Avenue three women clothed in black waited for her with folded arms.*

Key words: American dream, American literature, realism, mob, immigration, Mario Puzo

In 1916, the critic Randolph Bourne posed the basic issue in his essay *Trans-National America* by citing the failure of the melting pot: "We are all foreign-born or the descendants of foreign-born", R. Bourne argued, assimilation has clearly failed; "Assimilation, in other words, instead of washing out the

WOMEN AT A TIME OF HARDSHIP: TWO ANTI-HEROINES IN ROMANIAN CONTEMPORARY FICTION



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Abstract: *The present study is intended to feature two representative characters in Ioana Nicolaie's recent novels Cartea Reghinei (2019) and Tot înainte (2021). Firstly the article describes in short the communist politics regarding Romanian women including some references to the traditional understanding of the gender roles, the patriarchalist mentality of the time in the rural areas, the feminine ideal proclaimed by communists, the pronatalist policy and the abusive measures. Second part refers to Reghina, the mother of twelve children and analyses how the writer manages to transmit through her character the stoicism as a way to deal with communist society. The third part analyses Arsenia, a character whose destiny is crushed by the communist system. Through these two characters, Ioana Nicolaie brought into the spotlight the destinies of the blind, of the mute and of the deaf women – the anti-heroines of the communist epoch. Finally, they have got a voice in the literary discourse.*

Key words: communism, women, socialist feminine ideal, pronatalist policy

THE POLITICS AND LITERATURE IN CARAGIALE'S CASE



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Abstract: *In almost all of Caragiale's work, literary fiction borrows models from contemporary political life that he develops and caricatures at the same time, in accordance with their own patterns. What could have happened, as today's Romanian literature would have shown, if the repeated loss and retrieval of the troublesome letter had sent this prototype of the letter as a political idea vehicle, to the trash of Romania's literary and political history? Caragiale is among the few valuable Romanian writers who did not hesitate to denounce, in almost all his writings, the vices of society. In this sense, he literally broke the veil of silence that covered the space of national literature.*

Key words: *I. L. Caragiale, politics, literature, model, context, caricature*

ETHOS & MYTHOS

A CASE FOR THE ADVENTURE STORY: "TO DREAM THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM"



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Abstract: *This article starts from the ideas of two critics, Jaques Arnould and Sylvain Venayre, who tried to redefine the literature of adventure. This genre is much used and very little thought about. The authors tried to give a sort of explanation as to what is attractive and how the adventure story has changed in time. My article focuses not on the historical, social, and political contexts as described by the authors. Its aim is to explore the core attraction of adventure: the capacity of man to go beyond what is considered possible, and - mainly - the attraction man has towards such exemplary stories and hidden mysterious adventures. To exemplify, we have referred to a rather long history of adventures, and contested the idea that they are dated, even though, of course, they are representations and illustrations of many ideas of their time. The adventure stories speak, – we think – about a permanent inclination of man to overcome his own limits, to go beyond the territory of the "possible", to find new resources and ideas in order that he might demonstrate his inner force and his lively spirit.*

Keywords: adventure, the impossible, mystery, hero

LA NOUVELLE DE MAUPASSANT – MIROIR DES ‘TABLEAUX’ NORMANDS/ NORMAND SETTINGS IN MAUPASSANT’S SHORT STORIES



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Abstract: This article has been written with the aim of drawing attention to Norman "paintings" surprised in the Maupassantian short stories, forming part of the writer's short prose. To better create a "completed" portrait of Normandy, it will be necessary to take into consideration aspects such as: the meticulous description of the Norman landscapes, the image of the traditional rustic house, the peasant and / or the peasant woman and their habitat, all complementing a complete and complex panorama which brings to life the Norman region of yesteryears. Our propose is to illustrate, first of all, the motif of Normandy as the main source of inspiration in the construction of Maupassant's literary creations and then, to consider, through a comparative analysis, the common niches which form the basis perfectly Norman images.

Keywords: analogy, Maupassant, motif, Normandy, painting, short story, 19th century.

CHRISTMAS FESTIVALS – A TRADITIONAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE



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Abstract: *Our article focuses on the rural Human Being, who has a sense of the sacred time, a sense that helps him be aware of the sacrality of the festivals in general, and of the Christmas festival - in this instance, a dynamic holiday, marked by traditions, songs, good wishes and joy, a celebration of the spirit, happiness, gratitude. Christmas festival is anchored in the traditions of the Romanian people, giving out a festive mutter of enthusiasm, it creates an opening to the transcendental, which brings to life the grace of a gentle and prestigious sublimation. It is an earthly anticipation of Heaven.*

Keywords: *festival, Christmas, Christmas carols, carolling, traditions*

Motto:

“Man seems to be one of the few beings endowed with a sense of time. It helps him become aware of the present by reference to the past and future, to perceive the determination and meanings of history. Time is an abstract and indivisible notion.”

Sabina Ispas

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POLITICS AND LITERATURE. THEATRE AND ITS CHALLENGES / Politică și literatură. TEATRUL SUB... VREMI



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Abstract : *The article gives two examples from Romanian history when politics interfered with literature, in this cases with drama or, more precisely, with the theatrical performances. The texts were censored, being considered inappropriate in the political context in which they were written, in fact not corresponding to the official ideology of the time. One example is from the Communist period – the best known for its censorship practices – but the other one belongs to a period usually considered a period of cultural, economic and democratic apogee. The conclusion is that in fact censorship has always existed in all ages, in various forms, coming mostly from the political sphere but not only, as demonstrated by many researchers of the topic.*

Key words : politics, literature, theatre, censorship, George Ciprian, Marin Sorescu

C. S. LEWIS VS BYRON. THE ART OF TEMPTATION



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Abstract: *This article focuses on the theme of the temptation that the forces of darkness exert on the human being pushing people towards evil and thus ruin their lives, along with the permanent loss of eternity. This theme, masterfully addressed in C. S. Lewis's "Screwtape Letters", has a notorious precedent in Lord Byron's dramatic poem "Cain". The parallel presentation of several similarities and, especially, differences between the two literary works is the premise of this article. The core of this article is understanding the fragility of solitary mind in front of temptation that comes from luciferic strategies.*

Key words: temptation, Byron's "Cain", devil in literature, tactics, strategies, stratagems.

COEXISTENCE WITH OTHERNESS IN THE TRIADS EMERGENT IN VARGAS LLOSA'S NOVELS



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Abstract: *Escape in the fiction of Mario Vargas Llosa turns out to be a perpetual fight with one's own demons against the background of the encounter with the other, in a universe marked by a bizarre relationship between civilization vs. barbarism and marasmus. The universe of the novel, for Vargas Llosa, nonchalantly reflects the monster, the deep human nature in the winding process of disaggregation under the lecturer's magnifying glass. Encounters with the alterity are disturbed and amassed again by the social frond, characteristic of the Latin American space. The world of Vargasllosian characters plays a dance of triadic reflections that radiates from a family axis: father - mother - child. The family triad is socially reflected by the institutions which interfere as a triad, apparently separated, but in fact influencing each other: army - church - brothel. The Indian, the white, the mestizo also form a triad like in a family axis. The spatial relationship contains the mountains - the forest - the coast, therefore it is modelled as well on the tripartite dimension of the world. In some exceptional situations the codes of the alter universe remain hidden. An allied alter can appear, too. In the jungle and in the mountains, an augmented reality takes place, where the real is intertwined with the magical and the mythical.*

ARMY FOLK SONGS. LYRICISM VERSUS WAR IMPACT



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Abstract: *The Romanian folklore, among its corpora of lyrical songs transmitted by word of mouth, contains a special category entitled “cântece de cătănie” (from Hungarian “katona”=soldier), modulated in Transylvania, at the intersection of Romanian traditions with the reality of the young lads being summoned to army service or even to war. What was the situation for Romanian ethnics who were under the ruling of Austro-Hungarian Empire? The analysis of these particular army folk songs unravels the subjective dimension of this topic, conveyed in a lyrical form. The army service was perceived like a forced seven-year-exile with dangers. The entire village community was present at the departure; therefore, the moment was deemed as similar to rites of passage. The lyrics associate the forced departure for army with a temporary death, the shirt is prepared as for the wedding ceremonial or for the funeral rites. This meant a way to foreshadow the integration of the specific ritual in case of sudden death. The rhymed verses of these folkloric songs testify the sufferings of young men taken to army, the longing of the lad after his sweetheart, but also the dramas of families left without financial support and without consolation.*

Key words: Romanian folklore, army songs, army exile, funeral rites, lyrical songs of sorrow, oral tradition, Transylvania, youths’ recruitment.

¹ Lavinia Casa is currently pursuing a Ph.D on Romanian folklore.

² Florin Cioban has won through national competition the tenure of Romanian lecturer at ELTE University, Budapest;

see <https://www.ilr.ro/category/corpul-lectorilor/>

FACING HISTORY. RADU ȚUCULESCU'S MUSICAL GRAND REHEARSAL



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Abstract: *The novel „Femeile insomniacului” (“The Insomniac's Women”) by Radu Țuculescu interweaves contrapuntally two basic themes against a background of vital rhythms, erotic quests, culinary incentives, jazz and luxuriant sensoriality. They are the ethos created for and modelled by the main character, the insomniac. The novel is interwoven from two aspects: the unravelling of life with its inherent illusions in counterpoint to the gravity of death. Radu Țuculescu is a writer who can be both sincere and versatile, cynical and naive. He has the power to keep himself in perfect equivocity. Paradox becomes a caveat of the text. The fragile essence of human ambiguity is always well expressed in Tuculescu's writing. It is never flattened into one-dimensional thinking.*

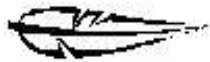
Key words: music in literature, novel as an art form, politics, aesthetics vs. moral, arts under totalitarianism, storytelling

Speaking about the transformations encumbered by narratives, T. Todorov establishes two possible ways of "judging transformations: according to their formative power or

BOOK REVIEWS

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Poeți români de azi. I (The Romanian Poets of Today, I),
By Răzvan Voncu,
second edition, revised and extended,
Cluj-Napoca, Școala Ardeleană Publishing House, 2020.

THE UPDATED CANON OF ROMANIAN POETRY

Abstract: *The literary history projects of Răzvan Voncu, spread across three decades of activity, are starting to look more and more like the profile of a future History of Romanian literature. "Poeți români de azi" is the contemporary side of his preoccupations. Because, for the better part of his writing, R. Voncu faces the past. Răzvan Voncu is an archaeologist of the counterpoint in poetic systems. An industrious critic concealing great sentimentality. For him, almost all eras contain their counterpoint. That is why his first preoccupation is to identify, in the packs of writers, those who went in the opposite direction.*

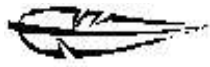
Key words: *contemporary Romanian literature, literary criticism, canon, poetry*

The literary history projects of Răzvan Voncu, spread across three decades of activity, are starting to look more and more like the profile of a future History of

Romanian literature. *Poeți români de azi* is the contemporary side of his preoccupations. Because, for the better part of his writing, R. Voncu faces the past. The book he

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Les antimodernes

By Antoine Compagnon

Gallimard, 2016//

Antoine Compagnon: "*Anti-modernii*".

Editura Gallimard, 2016

REVERSALS OF PARADIGMS: HARBINGERS OF POSTMODERNISM

Abstract: *It is with exceptional critical acumen and insight that Compagnon (2016) looks at all things modern in their 'vulnerable' stance. Indeed, it is the very array of instances of debunking of the myths of modernity and myriad facets of critique that he delves into with gusto. With Compagnon, locating the loci where modernity dissipates into the postmodern becomes programmatic. It is this very capillarity of the modern into the postmodern that he labels subversive 'anti-modernism.'*

Key words: *postmodernism, reversal, paradigms, canon*

It is with exceptional critical acumen and insight that Compagnon (2016) looks at all things modern in their 'vulnerable' stance. Indeed, it is

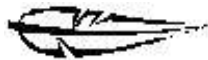
the very array of instances of debunking of the myths of modernity and myriad facets of critique that he delves into with gusto. With Compagnon,

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Reforma la români – un fenomen de transfer cultural în secolele XVI – XVII
(*The Reformation Among Romanians – a Cultural Transfer Phenomenon During*
the 16th and 17th Century)

by Nagy Levente,

Ratio et Revelatio Publishing House, 2021

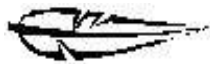
ON THE REFORMATION AMONG ROMANIANS – BETWEEN HISTORY, CULTURE AND POLITICS

Abstract: *The work "Reforma la români – un fenomen de transfer cultural în secolele XVI – XVII" ("The Reformation Among Romanians – a Cultural Transfer Phenomenon During the 16th and 17th Century"), written by Budapest academic Nagy Levente, PhD habil, arrives with a very well argued overview of the Reformation, recently celebrated not just in the clerical field, but also especially through abundant rigorous research.*

Key words: *Reformation, religious movements, Romanian culture, history, cultural transfer, politics*

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The Politics of Literature in a Divided 21st Century

By Katharina Donn

New York, NY: Routledge, 2021

DIATOPIA AND THE RENEWAL OF FICTIONAL WORLDS

Abstract: *Katharina Donn's book, "The Politics of Literature in a Divided 21st Century", is an impressive research made with the aim of exploring fictional worlds from an ecocritical perspective. Providing a diatopian literary politics, the research reconfigures the notions of political agency, voices, bodies and borders, tackling issues of current interest, such as migration, biopolitics, metamorphosis, terrorism, trauma. Fictional worlds are perceived as containers of transgressive and interrelated realities, militating for humans to become active, interconnected and future-oriented participants.*

Key words: *diatopia, agency, voices, bodies, topos, metamorphosis*

Equating politics with art has always been tempting, but, throughout the years, such an endeavor has oriented its needs towards the 'depths of texts' rather than standing

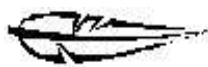
at the foreground of revolutionary manifestations. Starting from the assumption that 'words matter', that fiction knows better ways to express the realities, the author searches for a

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Writing in the Dark. Essays on Politics and Literature

by David Grossman,

Translated from Hebrew by Jessica Cohen,

Ebook Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014

POLITICS AND LITERATURE. THE BALANCED PATH OF "WRITING IN THE DARK" BY DAVID GROSSMAN

Abstract: *David Grossman, Israeli writer, does not deal with the trance-like process of inspiration, so well-revived in the Romantic age. On the contrary, as suggested by the title, he tries to find his meaning into the darkness in a way that this meaning communicates to all literary ages known to him. Grossman does not write against his father, but towards him. David Grossman has the opposite relationship with his own paterfamilias, who is unlike Kafka's father.. Literature is the common ground of father-son relationship.*

Key words: *literature and politics, pacifism, war, Europe, culture, Judaism*

The first chapter of the book *Writing in the Dark. Essays on Politics and Literature* by David Grossman is entitled "Books That Have Read Me". At a first glance, this is an impossible passive voice. According

to one of the passive voice definitions, the subject is *acted upon* by somebody else.

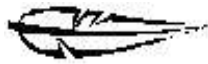
Why does David Grossman change the position of the writer ? Is it not strange that the books become " performer(s)" of the verb "to read"?!

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Modern Times. The Biography of a Hungarian-Jewish Family. By Stephen Pogany

Brandram: Exeter 2021

“KISEMBEREK/LITTLE PEOPLE...”

Abstract: *The book "Modern Times. The Biography of a Hungarian-Jewish Family" is a family memoir written by Stephen Pogany, Professor Emeritus. The major challenge for Stephen Pogany was finding the proper voice "unencumbered by either academic jargon or sentimentality". One of the narrative strategy employed by the author consists in placing the histories of his family members in parallel with those of (in)famous people who either had roots in the same community or lived in the same period. Another strategy is combining humor and self-irony with deceptive accounts from unreliable narrators, accounts enhanced by the author's guesses. Readers come experience emotional proximity when hearing about the tragical destinies of the deported Jews in the family and the hidden emotional marks of the survivors.*

Key words: family tree, family memoir, humor, self-irony, tragic destinies, Holocaust survivors, family history, everyday life ,Hungarian-Jewish families.

One of the funniest and most illuminating episodes in Stephen Pogany's very recent book is about the Christmas Day of 1975, which the author spent in the house of his future in-laws in Croydon, UK. Also present were his parents and his

Hungarian-Jewish maternal grandmother Etelka. The latter did not seem impressed at all by the "bland and unappetizing English foodstuffs placed before her: pork sausages, slices of dry roast turkey, stuffing, roast potatoes" (Pogany 2021, 127) etc. The author's

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Etnogeneză și țuică (Ethnogenesis and Tzuika)

By Vintilă Mihăilescu

Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2018

JOURNALISTIC ANTHROPOPROSES

Abstract: *The first part of the book, Etnogeneză și țuică (Ethnogenesis and Tzuika) by Vintilă Mihăilescu is the journalistic diary of an undercover sociologist. The meditations and demonstrations regarding the state and authority, the proximity of the authorities and the construction of nations, paternalism and the juvenilization of the population introduce the reader to a cultural dance from which little is left out. With humor and irony front and center, Vintilă Mihăilescu treats the reader with narrative ingeniousness, resorting to the eternal sensibilities of Romanians. Some known, some less known, but all bearing correspondences in concepts and expressions that, sadly, do not pass the sociologists. The gain of philologists would be that much more significant. For example, why does our public discourse slip with predilection from history to myth? the anthropologist wonders.*

Key words: anthropology, Romania, prose-writing, irony, agency, politics, humor, dilemmas.

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UBÚ, una lectura del monstruo

By Ioana Alexandrescu,

Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2019.

THE UBUESQUE MUSINGS OF CONTROL

Abstract: *Ioana Alexandrescu's book, "Ubú- una lectura del monstruo", lets the world of Ubú unravel organically in its monstrousness. Jarry's Ubú speaks of the family relationships and their perpetuation of cycles of destruction, containing life and destruction of life in a mixture, not in parceled out ways. The Ubú family is monstrous in its habits, in digestion processes and incorporation of strange elements and in crimes. But we, human beings, cannot be without families after all, even the absurd in the family relationships is preferable to no kinship ties. The book is a thought-provoking reading not only through its subtleties, but also through its powerful intuition, thus becoming a fundamental milestone in the academic research on Ubú. The method employed to decode the family Ubu is mainly through phenomenology and dialogism. Also post-modern "teachings" on deconstruction and absurd are taken into account, along with psychoanalytical findings.*

Key words: *Ubú, Jarry, monstrous, deformation, illusion, control, power, hermeneutics*

Is Ubu a political monster?

Definitely, he is. But he is more than that. He is the very monster through whom we can understand our epoch better and the path of literature, its irreversible route once it got into pre-avant-garde and absurdism.

The road taken by Ioana Alexandrescu in her approach is that of understanding the ontological dimension of Ubu.

We live in the age of a maze of interpretations. It is easy to get lost in front of so many concave mirrors, plunging in the deformity of truth. However, what is deformation, after all?

Ioana Alexandrescu's essay, "Ubú- una lectura del monstruo" subtly responds to this question. She creates a hermeneutic circle with the purpose of coming closer to the truth. She employs all the necessary concepts for such an encounter. And she limits everything to the reading of Ubú, in

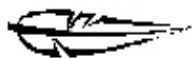
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Primăvara de la Praga. Ghid politic, cultural și turistic (The Prague Spring. Political, Cultural and Tourist Guide),
by Paul Magheru

Editura Neverland, București, 2020

THE HERMENEUTICS OF PRAGUE. THE PRAGUE SPRING AS A CULTURAL BRIDGE

Abstract: *As a graduate of the faculty of Slavic Languages, Paul Magheru came into direct contact with the events surrounding the Prague Spring. Now that the history had its course, he can understand better the mysterious network of events that preceded it. The book is a cultural and personal voyage, a subjective history written as a homage to the exploration of friendship in our age and in the past.*

Key words: *Prague Spring, subjectivity, mentalities, change, cultural bridging, Czechs and Slovaks relationships with Romanians*

Professor Magheru's book, appeared at the Neverland Publishing House in Bucharest, is a cultural and personal voyage into another European space, whose main incentive is the political phenomenon entitled the *Prague Spring*.

As a graduate of the faculty of Slavic Languages, Paul Magheru came into direct contact with the events surrounding the Prague Spring. Now that the history had its course, he can understand better the mysterious network of events that preceded it.

The spring in Prague was occasioned by the World Festival of Youth and Students in Sofia in 1968, when, at the proposal of the Faculty of Slavic Languages of the University of Bucharest, which he had just graduated, Magheru was recommended as the official translator.

Little was known in the central press of the time. Nothing was transparent from the authorities to the public in the countries under the grip of the Soviet Union. It was hard to distinguish rumours from facts.

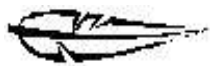
The author of the book confesses that he was surprised to

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Lumea ca literatură. Alte amintiri
(*The World as Literature. Other Memories*),

By Ioan Groșan

Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2017.

STUDIO-FLASH MEMORIES

Abstract: *Memorialistic fiction finds an ingenious follower in Groșan. For Ioan Groșan, unlike for the poet and philosopher Lucian Blaga, it is not eternity that was born in the village, but its apparently unserious siblings – irony and humor. In "Alte amintiri", the frivolous discourse highlights faces and memories that are attractive by virtue of their inner charm and comedy potential.*

Key words: *memoirs, flah-backs, proses, confession, comedy, contemporary Romanian literature*

In the same way as with the first volume of *Lumea ca literatură*, in *Alte amintiri*, we read the biographical flash-proses of a top-notch cheapskate. Nothing is lost, all (re)becomes literature. Even if Ioan Groșan does not believe it all the way to the end, what he writes proves that the biography of a writer is, first of all, the core of their literature. But let us say it is not so. The author of *Caravana cinematografică* (*Kino Caravan*) aspires – secretly, of course – that we always forget a remnant outside of fiction. That authentic lives keep a shrouded layer even after their transformation into literature.

Consequently, he writes parsimoniously about anthological moments in life. It is constantly the reader's feeling that there would be more to add, except that the narrator always stops right as the going is at its best. Stingy or secretive? Ioan Groșan writes little that we can see, and his creative slowness has become, for some time, a form of superior bohemia. The contagion, unfortunately, affects not just a few of his generational peers. The wasted lives of the talented who write little due to a comfort of rhythm, and not due to mandatory hiatuses for inspiration exasperate. In the same way as with the first volume, he has in

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Critici români de azi (Present-Day Romanian Critics),

By Răzvan Voncu

Cluj-Napoca, Școala Ardeleană Publishing House, 2020

THE ELITE OF ROMANIAN LITERARY CRITIQUE

Abstract: *Talented, thought-provoking and without a single nuance escaping him, Razvan Voncu, in his book "Critici români de azi" has assumed the work of an archivist, documentarian, and competent researcher, all of these encapsulated in the portrait of a literary historian who does not lack irony, humor, sarcasm – wherever the situation calls for them. In all texts, Răzvan Voncu admires and sanctions with an appetite for critical debate.*

Key words: *criticism, impact, politics, freedom of speech, canon, contemporary literature*

In post-communism, the literary criticism of Romania lost its audience. On the one hand, the new social transformations drew all of the attention, while literature found itself isolated, as were all arts. And when the new freedoms brought literature as well to the forefront, its role no longer had the authority of yesteryear. Readers were no longer taught how to read veritable oeuvres, ones that were not influenced ideologically or propagandistically.

Moreover, now, names with the greatest authority, like Nicolae Manolescu, prefer to practice the art of literary critique free to explore other social undertakings. Even

though there was an explosion of studies and research related to literary history due to doctoral schools, the prestige of the literary historian dwindled even harder than the prestige of the literary reviewer. And so it is that, today, we are living in a paradox: the more literary history centers we have, the more the prestige of the literary historian has not added extra fame.

Among the few literary critics and historians specialized in veritable Romanian literature, Răzvan Voncu has published a volume that others would not write. Because they have not read the critics' books, many published in confidential runs and by smaller

FEELING
OTHERNESS.
LITERATURE &
NEW ART FORMS

REFLECTIONS AND SHADOWS OF THE IMAGE. THE QUEST FOR SELF IN MICHEL TOURNIER'S "THE GOLDEN DROPLET"



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Abstract: *The novel "La Goutte d'or" ("The Golden Droplet") by Michel Tournier deals with the multifarious reality of image and with the fascination it stirs in us, as well as with rediscovered concepts about alterity and the decline of image centeredness. They are all at stake in the novel, re-interpreted from the genuine initiation raised by the quest of the identity "stolen" by a photograph. Idriss goes through several stages, that enclose him like the walls of several Russian nesting dolls, the goal being to find himself and recompose himself, a gradual and turbulent action. All these stages of understanding, acquired through unique experiences, guide him through a labyrinth of lenses where the reflections and shadows of his image are the blind spots and the peak challenges of the quest for self. His blind spots are his human attachments. Photography becomes a leitmotif of the journey.*

Key words: art, photography, illusion, truth, Michel Tournier, sign, image, philosophy, Orient vs. Occident, oasis, shadow, reflection

¹ Iuliana Pană, well known as the poet and prose-writer Iulia Pană, is pursuing a doctorate at The University of Bucharest, CESI.