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OPENINGS



DESCHIDERI

# HISTORICAL TRUTH AND FICTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN WILLIAM STYRON'S *THE CONFESSIONS OF NAT TURNER*

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*Abstract: The Confessions of Nat Turner illustrates best the change of emphasis in the writer's fiction. His direct involvement with a controversial historical and political topic manifests itself in two ways: by his (re)telling the story in the first person, from Nat's perspective and by a specific use of language that would reveal the mind of the black slave and its motivations in a credible way. In Styron's own words, the novel is "a meditation on history" dealing with the specific issues of slavery and race and involving a historical figure, but it also tackles issues like fictional representation of history, authorial intention, or narrative reliability. My reading of the novel is both thematic and rhetorical, looking at how religious myth and specific cultural discourses may explain both the motivation and the downfall of the hero.*

Key words: American South, slavery, history, fiction, religion, whiteness, blackness

## Introduction

William Styron's beginnings are clearly under the auspices of modernism. His first novel, *Lie Down in Darkness* (1951) is a narrative of psychological experimentation, celebrating the "private, subjective experience over public experience", as well as "language and technique" at the expense of "traditional content". (Barth, 65-71). This story of private neurotic anxieties illustrates the modernist separation from history and the use of art as a means of ordering reality. With its themes of guilt, time and incest, the novel echoes William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*; the psychologically vulnerable Peyton Loftis and her alarm clock reminds one of Quentin Compson' watch, both marking their countdown into death. What may be less obvious in the novel is that Peyton's struggle to define her identity and understand the past- related through the use of stream-of-

# FEMININE CONFESSIONS. EXPOSING YOUR TRUE SELF

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*Abstract: The present paper intends to perform a sort of an x-ray on concepts such as: diary, femininity, feminism and then focus on the particular case of Simone de Beauvoir - woman and philosopher, by underlining both the singularity of her diarist voice and the daring attitude transpiring all over her philosophical texts.*

*Key words: diary, femininity, feminism, confession, marginality*

## Preamble

Nowadays we wonder sometimes whether more is written (rightly or wrongly) about meta-literature than about literature itself; and of course, many words are spilled (since ink is hardly around any longer!) on the legitimacy of such an approach. The fact is that among the many approaches to "marginality" at least one enjoys a long pedigree and has been debated for a good number of decades, perhaps centuries: *the diary*.

*Diaries* have been around in one way or another for a long while perhaps precisely because they involve so many kinds of *marginality*. The most important among these seems to be that diaries are somehow half-way between the oral and the written, partaking of features belonging to both. Almost as important is the symbiosis between the documentary and the fictional (or the "constructivist", not to say "the imaginary"). Finally, the broad aperture and communication between the literary-canonical on the one hand and the ordinary-colloquial on the other in the case of many diaries ought not to be overlooked.

The literary genre of the *Journal intime* / *intimate* came out in France in the 19th century. Previously, many diarists kept and left records of their daily doings and observations, which are of great interest to the historians. Most diaries, even those of writers, have been published

CONFESSIONAL  
LITERATURE



LITERATURA  
CONFESIVĂ

# OPERA REBREANIANĂ - O CONFESIUNE INDIRECTĂ

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REBREANU'S WORK – AN INDIRECT CONFESSION

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*Abstract: Liviu Rebreanu avoided first-person confession in his fictional prose, but this could not hide the confessional character of some of his writings. The author acknowledged in interviews or explanatory articles the autobiographical events which were at the basis of his narrative constructions attributed to his epic invention and imaginative speculation. In this way, the autobiographical sources are revealed, and Rebreanu's work very discretely shows its confessional side, in an indirect manner.*

**Key words:** Liviu Rebreanu, indirect confession, autobiographical fiction, hidden guilt, compensatory imagination

Explicațiile scriitorilor despre motivele prezumtive ale propriului scris sunt foarte diverse, aproape imposibil de clasificat. Câteva revin de la un scriitor la altul, dacă avem, totuși, curiozitatea să le clasificăm și dacă ne asumăm riscul să simplificăm. Unii invocă la originea actului de creație literară rațiunea supremă a existenței, un mod de răscumpărare a păcatului metafizic de a exista, o justificare abstractă, filosofic-existențialistă, a propriei existențe ca eșec. Alții gândesc și simt religios, așezând la originea scrisului literar o tentativă de înnobilare a omului, ca o formă de compensație a păcatului biblic sau de participare orgolioasă la creația divină. Pentru alții, conștiințe profane, creația literară e un joc superior, o formă de exprimare născută dintr-un spirit ludic, gratuit. În sfârșit, în cele mai multe dintre cazuri, creația literară se situează printre formele de competiție fie socială, fie estetică (afirmare a individualității, exprimarea unei originalități, dobândirea prestigiului și a succesului etc.). Știm din mărturisirile sentențioase din *Cred* (1926), așezate ca prefață la volumul testamentar *Amalgam* (1943), că Liviu Rebreanu opta pentru a doua variantă din cele pe care le-am particularizat aici. Arta – afirma

# LA POETIQUE DU JOURNAL DANS LA CONCEPTION DE MIRCEA ELIADE

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MIRCEA ELIADE'S POETICS OF DIARY WRITING



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*Abstract: As an author and a passionate reader of intimate diaries, Mircea Eliade was preoccupied with the poetics of this literary genre. In his opinion, two are the traits of an intimate diary: authenticity and intimacy. With a few interruptions, he wrote his diary during his entire life. He often used the material of the diary for his literary production. Writing this diary, he intended not to confess himself, but to save fragments of concrete time. Eliade believed that the diary would have a great future, because the new generations would love personal texts.*

**Key words:** diary, intimate, authenticity, confession, time perception

## La place du *Journal* dans l'œuvre littéraire d'Eliade

Dans la création littéraire de Mircea Eliade le *Journal* occupe une place à part. Au-delà du rôle de document ou de témoignage, qui fait que tout journal soit toujours actuel, dans le cas d'Eliade, celui-ci s'est constitué comme matière première, d'où ont jailli beaucoup de ses œuvres littéraires. Il y en a qui portent le titre de *Journal*,<sup>1</sup> d'autres, *l'Inde ou Chantier*, ont été rédigées sous forme de journal, et quelques-unes contiennent des pages de journal modifiées<sup>2</sup>.

« Eliade considère son *Journal* comme l'œuvre la plus importante. On trouve cette information plusieurs fois dans son œuvre mémorialistique. Il traite son *Journal* comme un chantier, qui reflète la diversité des préoccupations de l'écrivain, de l'homme en chair et en os, avec ses faiblesses, ses nostalgies et ses

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<sup>1</sup> M. Eliade, *Journal, I-II*, Humanitas, 2006, publié à Gallimard, 1973, sous le titre de *Fragments d'un Journal*, dans la traduction de Luc Badesco; *Journal Himalayen*, L'Herne, 2013; *Journal portugais et d'autres écrits*, Humanitas, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> *Le Roman de l'adolescent myope*, *La Nuit Bengali*, *La Forêt Interdite*, *Océanographie*.



# LENA CONSTANTE. CONFESIUNE UNEI FIINȚE INDESTRUCTIBILE

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LENA CONSTANTE. CONFESSIONS OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE  
HUMAN BEING



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*Abstract: Lena Constante's post-carceral confession - "The Silent Escape" - remains one of the most shocking testimonies of the last century against totalitarianism. The writer (also a visual artist) x-rays the whole carceral metabolism from a unique perspective. Lena Constante, like most of the prisoners of Romanian totalitarianism, has undertaken three stages of temptation: doubt, freedom and suicide. The trauma renders the narrative voice a broken aspect in the first part, attenuated as the confession unfolds, able to be tempted by new zones: of style and of autofiction. Apart from political aspects, the most violent plot of the book is the bystanding of the separation from herself in the body. This is an experience more intense than torture, interrogations, hunger, or diabolic people. She learns how to renounce her body, how to dismiss it, as ascetics do, she redefines her body with the help of the mind. During the nine years of solitude in prison, she develops a therapy of the spiritual. She becomes a winner to the extent that she wins over her feeble-self, over that self afraid of death and agnostic. After going through all the circles of an inferno, in her expressionist poetry of writing, on the flesh of her youth there is an outgrowth of words, prolonged as painted images, either. Her story of words and painted images is the story of an indestructible being, who has overcome the absurd by assuming the costs of metamorphoses.*

Key words: confession, political prison, trauma, carceral feminine literature, body, femininity, totalitarianism, communism

## **O libertate discutabilă. Precauțiile libertății.**

Câte precauții la această scriitoare trecută prin toate cercurile infernului! Lena Constante notează la bătrânețe despre experiențele ei care preschimbă tinerețea fericită într-una asasinată. Peste carnea inutilă a tinereții a crescut sistematic una de cuvinte. Spre sfârșitul vieții, Lena

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A GENERATION  
AT CROSSROADS:  
*TIMPUL CE NI S-A DAT (THE TIME  
BESTOWED ON US)* BY ANNIE BENTOIU

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**Abstract:** *Born in 1927, Annie Bentoiu has the gift of turning memory into a flux of events where history is reconstructed along its interpretation. Her book is the autobiography of a generation. Timpul ce ni s-a dat. Memorii 1944-1947 appeared for the first time in the year 2000. A second volume, containing the years 1947-1959, appeared in 2006 (2009, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Annie Bentoiu is a prime witness of the communist takeover in Romania. Her book is a decipherment of the past in the light of memory entwined with ethics. The writer's memoirs are not merely an account of her own life story, but also the regain of dignity through writing, as a compensation for imposed years of silence during the Stalinist years of abuses in post 1947 Romania. The "autobiographical contract" (Lejeune) becomes, in her case, a pact to tell the truth, since there is no invented fact in her confessional writing. The conflict in this novel is that between free mind and abusive ideology, between an epoch that imposed lie as a norm and the previous education system when honesty was the norm, between conscience and its own limits.*

**Key words:** autobiography, Annie Bentoiu, communist takeover, diary, life under communism, confessional writing

**Imprisonment in history. Anchors and strategies of survival**

Born in 1927, Annie Bentoiu is a prime witness of the communist takeover in Romania. In 2000, irrespectively 2006, she published her book of memoirs, about fifty years after the narrated events.

Annie Bentoiu's book, *Timpul ce ni s-a dat*, reveals the evolving of the writing self from the cocoon of family life straight into the upheaval of history, in Bucharest and around, in 1944, trying to capture the movements of the coming years which will prove to be more dystopian. There is one element of choice that could prolong the

## MARIN SORESCU'S *CONFESSIONAL WRITING*

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**Abstract:** *The poet Marin Sorescu does not extricate himself entirely from the baits of literature in diarism but, aware of their presence, counters them off with irony and self-irony. More than a diarist, the writing self behaves exactly like a character of a novel. This very fluidity through space and time is that of a literary character more than of a diarist's voice. The narrator re-lives the history of the places he visits just like it was designed for a played part. It is his resort to imagination that helps him overlook the temporal barriers and have a dialogue with vanished people or with fictitious characters. He turns from a spectator into an actor. Sorescu's confessional writing encumbers a feeling that he must get off the stage, so powerful is the imprint of his inner spectacle. With such an approach, Marin Sorescu puts into a parodic subtle equation the above mentioned diary convention*

**Key words:** Marin Sorescu, diary, irony, travel writing, diary versus records

*"I would keep a diary myself but I fear that one will read it"*

Marin Sorescu

Marin Sorescu has a genuine feature of nonconformity. This renders to his texts an odd quality: they are not what one would expect them to be. For example, his theatre is poetry whilst his poetry is theatre. At the same time, his essays are poetry and his criticism is essay. Hence the title *Diary* for the only book of confessional writing signed by Sorescu, published so far, and the deterrent subtitle pretending to be elucidative, *Travel Novel*. The subtitle is as misleading as the writer's first-page warning, a played confusion, of course, blurring thus any clear-cut definitions of this genre: "diary-like" and "novel-like".

Reading the author's preface, we find out that the hesitation in defining his own book on the first page stems out from Marin Sorescu's

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<sup>1</sup> Marin Sorescu. *Jurnal. Romanul călătoriilor*, ediție îngrijită de Mihaela Constantinescu și Virginia Sorescu, Editura Fundației „Marin Sorescu”, București, 1999, p. 255. In the original: „Aș ține și eu un jurnal, dar mi-e teamă că se citește”. Translation mine, this and the followings.

# DE L'AUTOBIOGRAPHIE A LA FICTION CHEZ VASSILIS ALEXAKIS

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VASSILIS ALEXAKIS : FROM AUTOBIOGRAPHY TO FICTION



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*Abstract: A francophone writer of Greek origin, exiled in France after 1968 and the beginning of the colonels' dictatorship in his country, Vassilis Alexakis is concerned with the issues of identity and exile, the choice of language in which to write and with self-translation. These issues are present in his book Paris-Athenes, a remarkable autobiographic text. Our intention is to identify autobiographical elements in his novel La langue maternelle and to present various features of his Greek space of origin as well as of his mother tongue which the exiled author wants to regain.*

Key words: autobiography, fiction, identity, exile, mother tongue, native space.

## **Introduction. Séquences biographiques**

Vassilis Alexakis fait partie de la famille des écrivains partagés entre deux pays, deux langues et deux cultures. Né à Athènes en 1943, il quitte son lieu natal en 1968, après l'instauration en Grèce de la dictature des colonels. Il possède à cette date des connaissances assez faibles de français qu'il a appris, encouragé par sa mère, à l'Institut français d'Athènes. Mais c'est grâce au français et à sa vocation de langue universelle, de langue de la liberté qu'il a choisi la France comme terre d'asile. Il se confesse à ce sujet et montre son admiration pour les écrivains qui ont choisi une autre langue d'écriture comme Beckett, Nabokov ou Conrad. Vassilis Alexakis suit les cours de l'Ecole de journalisme de Lille, travaille ensuite comme dessinateur humoristique pour différents journaux français mais aussi à la radio France Culture, se remarquant par ses interventions à l'émission *Des papous dans la tête*. Il est à même d'employer le français d'une manière ludique tout en gardant la douceur de son accent grec.

## SUR L'AUTOBIOGRAPHIE BRÈVE

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*Abstract: The starting point of this paper is based on the observation that, despite the abundance of studies on autobiographical texts, there is a lack of research dealing with these texts from the perspective of their length. Filtered through this parameter, a separate category within the genre emerges: short autobiographical texts. This paper supports the usefulness of this kind of approach, proposes a definition of this category and an analysis of its features, using the example of other autobiographical forms in order to point out differences between these and short autobiographical texts. The paper provides several considerations that could trace a path towards a theorization of the short autobiographical discourse.*

**Key words:** short autobiography, theory of autobiography, autobiographical essay, autobiographical discourse

Le genre autobiographique est sans doute l'un des domaines les plus représentés aujourd'hui, autant bien dans ses aspects théoriques, d'analyse et de réflexion sur ses traits caractéristiques, que dans sa dimension créative, avec une abondance d'œuvres autoréférentielles sur le marché de l'édition ou d'autres espaces de diffusion.

Les chercheurs ont appliqué à ce genre plusieurs divisions et expansions, en essayant d'en explorer l'espace dans des perspectives très diverses. Cependant, on a moins considéré une autre division possible, ayant trait à sa forme, et selon un paramètre du plus « formel » et simple : la longueur. En filtrant les textes autobiographiques à travers ce critère unique, apparaissent des cas qui ne font généralement pas l'objet d'étude de recherches qui aspirent à les intégrer dans une catégorie à part: les textes autobiographiques brefs. C'est l'objet de l'étude de cet article<sup>1</sup>, qui cherche à apporter quelques considérations pour une possible théorisation de cette catégorie moins souvent analysée, mais point dépourvue d'intérêt.

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<sup>1</sup> Cet article représente une traduction adaptée d'une partie de mon livre sur l'autobiographie brève. Voir Alexandrescu (2013)

# CONFESIUNE ȘI ANTICONFESIUNE ÎN ROMANUL *CEI DOI DIN DREPTUL ȚEBEI*

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CONFESSION AND ANTI-CONFESSION  
IN THE NOVEL *CEI DOI DIN DREPTUL ȚEBEI*



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**Abstract:** *The novel Cei doi din dreptul Țebeș, published in 1973, reproduces Romeo and Juliet's story in a Transylvanian countryside surprised by the Communist regime. Dumitru Radu Popescu, one of the most important writers of the sixties, develops his epic text based on the formula of multiple epic. The confession is a masked one, a kind of confession in absentia or an anticonfession, linked to the theme of love. Each character has the role of confessing and ambiguating the epic. Characters neither stagnate, nor evolve, nor they engage; they do not change. Psychologically, they do not transmit any morality or immorality. Speech is the one that puts them in motion the chance to narrate and reveal themselves.*

**Key words:** D. R. Popescu, anticonfession, love, novel, communism

Romanul *Cei doi din dreptul Țebeș*, apărut în 1973, reproduce povestea lui Romeo și Julieta într-un cadru rural ardelenesc surprins în vâltoarea regimului comunist. Comunismul a reprezentat o pagină nefastă în istoria umanității, o forță totalitară care a subjugat societatea și fiecare compartiment al său. Există documente istorice, mărturisiri și înregistrări cu un impact emoțional puternic, însă cea care reușește să transmită omului secolului XXI ceea ce a însemnat cu adevărat perioada 1944-1989 este literatura. Să punem acest lucru pe seama paradoxului uman care rezonază mult mai transparent cu un personaj decât cu realitatea.

Dincolo de formele pe care le ia literatura în epocă, confesiunile personajelor și formele pe care le ia adevărul în contextul romanelor sunt cele care atrag atenția. Vorbim în acest caz de o confesiune susținută atât de realitatea individului, cât și de realitatea colectivă. Tematica este permisivă și oferă posibilitatea scriitorilor de a da glas experiențelor prin propriile metode de construcție ale unei lumi. Personajele, întâmplările,

# CONFESSION AND FICTION IN THE ESSAYS OF ILEANA MĂLĂNCIOIU

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**Abstract:** *The aim of this paper is to emphasize the relevance of confession in the essays of Ileana Mălăncioiu. We have attempted to follow up in this article to what extent the confessional dimension takes a central place in Călătorie spre mine însămi (Journey towards myself). At the same time, in the following, we will analyze the style and the themes of the writer's essays.*

**Key words:** confession, memory, biography, self, otherness, autofiction.

Ileana Mălăncioiu's *Călătorie spre mine însămi* (Journey Towards Myself) collects several essays, layered around certain cores. In the first group of essays, Ileana Mălăncioiu becomes a memorialist, then prose writer and, sometimes, a critic. Within this essay, we will attempt to analyze some of Ileana Mălăncioiu's texts and assess to what extent the confessional finds its place within them.

The key to all essays is self-confession. Ileana Mălăncioiu states, in one of her essays, that she finds it impossible to speak of something that is not filtered through her own I, her own inner view. The essay is titled *Perpetua curgere* (*The Perpetual Flow*) and commences with a question that Geo Bogza once allegedly asked the writer („Do you love nature?"). Of course, the poet's question becomes a pretext for Ileana Mălăncioiu to analyze her self. The key, as mentioned above, shows itself in the following excerpt:

„Mi-aş dori uneori să pot avea şi eu durerea lumii luate în ansamblu şi un punct de sprijin în mine însămi din care să urmăresc curgerea lucrurilor dintr-unul într-altul [...] o iubesc (natura) ca pe mine însămi, dar eu fac parte din ea şi n-am să o pot privi niciodată cu seninătate de undeva de unde poate fi privită în întregime.” (Mălăncioiu 30-32).

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<sup>1</sup>„I would also sometimes want to have the pain of the world on the whole and a fulcrum within, upon which I may watch how all things flow one into the other [...] I love it [nature] as I love myself,

# VIRGIL TĂNASE: AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND LITERARY CREATION

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**Abstract:** *An autobiographical and true novel, Leapșa pe murite is a literary and detective story, a literary document. This book combines authenticity with literature, having its roots in the true life. The novel finds its place among autobiographical works, banking on the chronological presentation of the events and representing a retrospective story about human existence, told by a real person, emphasizing his own life and personality. Virgil Tănase is an author whose book is read for itself, not only as a document, being a testimony about courage, fear, cowardice, lies, betrayal and murder. Leapșa pe murite represents the novel of memory, confession and authenticity, delineating the protagonist's adventurous destiny during the Communism.*

**Key words:** identity, autobiography, (re)creation, fiction, memory, confession.

An autobiographical and true novel, as the author says – “my intention is, thus, not to create a book of memoirs, but to do my job honestly by providing you with a novel, a true one this time” (Virgil Tănase, 2011:7) – *Leapșa pe murite* truly represents a detective and literary work, coming to light following the request of The Romanian Institute of Recent History. Otherwise, we might have never found the real version of the events whose main character was Virgil Tănase himself, as the other versions, “lacking the protagonist’s testimony, are only a reflexion of the truth.” (Nicoleta Sălcudean, 2012:13) Why a detective story? Because it “narrates the avatars of the dead man without death, Virgil Tănase’s disappearance from public life and its echoes in the newspapers”. (Gabriel Dimisianu, 2013:23) Why a literary document? Because it evokes his childhood in his native Danubian province, and his youth spent in Bucharest, together with real characters such as Adrian Păunescu and Ioan Alexandru. It is a book mixing authenticity with



# GABRIELA MELINESCU. THE IDENTITY OF A WRITER IN EXILE

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*Abstract: The present work is a presentation of the condition of the artist in Exile, as well as of her/his new identities created in the adoptiv space. Melinescu's Swedish diary, published in five volumes, is a release of her soul, a confident to whom the diarist displays her feelings. It is written in Romanian language due to her belief that only those who speak the same language can confess to each other. The biographical context highlights the issue of the artist's identity in the adoptive country. Writing about past experiences can be a way of adaptation to the present self. The double identity of an exile occurs when she is required a certain identity, other than her own identity re-created. This is perceived as a tragedy by Gabriela Melinescu, a tragedy that can be avoided by refusing the external intrusion into shaping her own identity. The same work presents different types of identities such as: migrant identity, the artistic identity, linguistic identity, the identity of an artist who creates according to her own patterns and not to the preexisting ones in the literary world, the mother identity and last but not least, the identity of daughter. Each identity is significant because each one is a component of the puzzle that makes up an artist's being.*

Key words: exile, identity, artist, creation, country.

A Nefertiti of Romanian literature, Gabriela Melinescu belongs to those writers who chose the way of exile, settling in Sweden in 1975. Her decision to leave Romania was based on the common reason of all Romanian writers, the totalitarian regime, even if her departure was also subjectively motivated by her love relationship with René Coeckelberghs, a famous French editor. All people have many qualities, tendencies, or talents, but some of them remain passive, while artists have a wish to exploit everything that comes from within. In Communism, the artists who didn't observe the pattern imposed by the regime were condemned to death, and those who chose the way of exile were the artists who fled this condemnation.

TOUCHSTONES OF  
POST-WAR ROMANIAN  
LITERATURE



VALORI ALE  
LITERATURII ROMÂNE  
POSTBELICE

# ON THE CENTENNIAL OF HORIA LOVINESCU

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**Abstract:** *The hundredth year since the birth of Horia Lovinescu coincides with a rediscovery of the playwright and his dramatic work, a rediscovery that is unexpected especially if we take into account the time that has passed since the playwright's death, during which any mention of the author of Citadela sfărâmată (The Broken Citadel) has been scarce and mostly emphasized the compromises made by Horia Lovinescu the person, speaking less of his literature. There are clues that the centennial has created an opportunity to reconsider the way Horia Lovinescu's drama has been met, which is a fundamental necessity for any literary text. Another interesting aspect is the rediscovery by the theater troupes of plays like Moartea unui artist (The Death of an Artist), a drama which can be viewed this year (2017) at the National Theater in Iași, under the direction of Irina Popescu Boieru, or Karamazovii (The Karamazovs), an adaptation of the novel The Brothers Karamazov by F.M. Dostoyevsky, at Teatrul Mic in Bucharest, directed by Nona Ciobanu.*

**Key words:** playwright, drama, rediscovery, communism, social being

A first-class playwright of the Romanian post-war period, Horia Lovinescu was, from a literary standpoint, for around thirty years, almost forgotten. This did not happen after 1989, but a few years earlier, around the time of his death. Natalia Stancu's monograph, *Horia Lovinescu. O dramaturgie sub zodia lucidității*<sup>1</sup>, the only one dedicated to Horia Lovinescu, was published in 1985, but, according to the author, was finished on September 16, 1983, precisely the day that Horia Lovinescu died. The book *Horia Lovinescu interpretat de...*, authored by Radu G. Țeposu, carries the year 1983 on its cover. Otherwise, there has been only silence, occasionally stirred by the rare review of the odd dramatic text of Horia Lovinescu's or by taking a stand against the public behavior and compromises of the writer, and less his oeuvre. Horia Lovinescu appears

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<sup>1</sup> Natalia Stancu, *Horia Lovinescu. O dramaturgie sub zodia lucidității*, Cluj-Napoca, Dacia Publishing House, 1985.

# CĂTĂLIN DORIAN FLORESCU – BETWEEN BIOGRAPHY AND FICTION

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*Abstract: Cătălin Dorian Florescu is a special figure in confessional literary landscape. The author's biographical data overlap, up to a point, those of the main character in the novel Vremea minunilor/The Time of Marvels. His superior intelligence, his refinement coming from simplicity and the joy of one in love with the words are obvious whether he talks about his relationship with the world, his motivation and passion for writing, his sources of inspiration or, simply, about himself.*

**Key words:** confession, biography, characters, novels, sources of inspiration

A writer of Romanian origin, settled in Switzerland and writing in German, mainly about Romania, Cătălin Dorian Florescu, who has recently turned 50, is a special figure in the confessional literary landscape.

The author's biographical data overlap, up to a point, those of the main character in the novel *Vremea minunilor/The Time of Marvels*. Just like Alin, Cătălin Dorian Florescu left Romania together with his parents in his adolescence. The departure is, for the writer, the chance to complete his training in the select space of German culture. He attends and graduates the Faculty of Psychology and Psychopathology at the University of Zürich. After five years of working as a psychotherapist in a rehabilitation center for drug addicts, in 2001 he becomes a freelance writer in Zürich. His first published novel, *Vremea minunilor/The Time of Marvels*, was received with enthusiasm by critics and readers and awarded several prizes. His following novels brought him the recognition he enjoys both in the German literary space (awards such as "One year paid for life" from the city of Zürich, Dresden Writer-in-Residence in 2008 and the Prize of Honour of the City of Erfurt (2010), and in the European cultural space (his books have been or are being translated into Romanian, French, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, Slovenian, English, Polish, Lithuanian).

# FILIP FLORIAN'S NOVEL *DEGETE MICI* AND MAGICAL REALISM IN ROMANIAN LITERATURE

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*Abstract: This paper aims at examining how prevalent of a category magical realism is in our Central-European environment. As part of a wider-scale work, it hopes to capture the results of international studies, contrast those with the viewpoints of both Hungarian and Romanian literary scholars and, thus, form a regionally recognized and internationally accepted definition for magical realism. The approach towards the genre is via postcolonial reading, however, with a certain extent of reinterpretation. The fruitful effect of the contemporary literary thinking's centre-periphery relation might be worth using when it comes to reconsidering the genre, thus extending the international thesaurus of magical realism. By agreeing with Bényei Tamás's views, however keeping, what is more, emphasising regional characteristics –, we stand for coming to consensus, i. e. creating a more exact and precise definition. The poetic approach then satisfies the pragmatic side of the question, aiming at making the analysing of the text easier. The second half of the essay wishes to prove the previously described by putting it into practice through one of Filip Florian's novels.*

**Key words:** Magical realism, contemporary literature, Hungarian literature, Romanian literature, postcolonialism

Magical realism is a genre of great significance within the contemporary literary discourse, however one about whose exact definition – despite the constant debates and disquisitions in the past 20 years – critical consensus has not been reached. Consequently, the topic itself poses to be worth of further research. This paper, however, aims at examining how prevalent of a category this is in our Central-European environment. As part of a wider-scale work, it hopes to capture the results of international studies, contrast those with the viewpoints of both Hungarian and Romanian literary scholars and, thus, form a regionally recognized and internationally accepted definition for magical realism. The second half of the essay wishes to prove the previously

CULINARY  
DISCOURSES  
& PRIVATE SPACE



DISCURSURI ALE  
ARTEI CULINARE  
& SPAȚIUL PRIVAT

# “VOT IS CUM'D TO MEIN KRAUT?” OR FOOD AND DRINKS IN POE'S SHORT STORIES

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*Abstract: Our paper focuses on some of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories with their Gothic touch, terror and bizarre mental states, and strange locations, commenting on the author's use of food and drinks in order to create or enhance the atmosphere he wished to create.*

Key words: Poe, short stories, food, drinks, atmosphere

## **Drinks and drinking scenes**

Around 1831, Edgar Allan Poe, unhappy at the Academy of Westpoint, where he had been sent by John Allan, started to seek refuge from his unhappiness in alcohol. With a brother dying of tuberculosis and alcoholism, Poe was, according to J. R. Hammond, “one of those unfortunate people upon whom alcohol, even in the smallest quantities, has a debilitating effect. The consumption of a glass or two of wine or brandy was sufficient to produce in his symptoms of drunkenness, even of temporary oblivion.” (Hammond, 1981:15) By 1847, after his wife's death, he became an unstable figure, turning more and more to alcohol in order to forget about his difficulties. This might account for the recurrence of drinks and drinking scenes in his short stories.

*The Assignment* is an Arabesque tale written in 1833 or 1834 (both years have been mentioned by critical writings) and set in Venice. In the story, the narrator meets a young man, the saviour of a baby dropped in the water by his mother, the Marchesa Afrodite Mentoni, and is asked to pay him a visit. He is given a tour of the young man's Palazzo, in the vicinity of the Rialto bridge, and wonders at its “princely magnificence” and collection of art works destined only for the eyes of their owner. While showing him his paintings and wonderful tapestry, the young man seems to be alert and waiting for something. The last thing he shows the

# PARADIGMS (RE)-VISITED IN MARIUS CRISTIAN'S "*LEGENDS ON THE PLATE*"

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*Abstract: What I am looking at in this paper is the myriad configurations that the intermingling of fact and spin can take as regards food and cooking in the history of the western world. Indeed, it is Marius Cristian's endeavour (Cristian 2016) to delve into the intricacies of food and cuisine in several western civilizations, ranging from ancient Rome to the New World. Only once does he 'stray' from the geographically-prescriptive path - and he goes away to remote China to identify there yet another trail and origin of gastronomic relevance.*

**Key words:** fact or spin; cuisine; cosmopolitan gastronomy; modernity; ingredients and functional mechanism, capillarity

## **Cosmopolitan cuisine is modern. Or is it?**

Issues pertaining to the framework of modernity, or more specifically to plus/minus modernity crop up here; in other words, the question arises as to what extent is the cosmopolitan, non-monolithic nature of cooking modern? Is there mere isolation and non-capillarity at work, as it were, in pre-modern times? Or do contiguous - but also at other times remote - civilizations interact and intermingle in times of yore? Cristian seems to believe so, and he indeed substantiates his claim. He mentions, *inter alia*, that the use of mayonnaise - as a tribute to modernity, he claims - is only associated with yoghurt, in the sense that that association is only possible in modern times, when the preservation of yoghurt is possible, hence the combo is a modern one. Indeed tributes to modernity and the eclecticism thereof pervade the text under scrutiny here. In the same chapter, Cristian refers to some of the staples of modern / postmodern culture, *i.e.* pop culture, namely he refers to Mickey Mouse and Cole Porter, both iconic figures of American culture, albeit the former a figment of Walt Disney's imagination, the latter a real person. He associates elements of high culture in a famous cookbook (*The Cook Book by Oscar of the Waldorf*, published in 1896) with these pop icons:



# KITCHEN AND THE HEART(H)LAND OF A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY IN "THE FORTY RULES OF LOVE" BY ELIF SHAFAK

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*Abstract: The first reader of the novel on Rumi happens to be Ella Rubinstein, who has just accepted a part-time job for the literary agency based in Boston. Kitchen is Ella's most trusted place. She is not at ease in her own house as there is an older wound from her childhood, carefully buried. Twenty years into her marriage, kitchen has also become the place where her needs are neglected on a daily basis. Actually, kitchen symbolizes Ella's quest for spiritual nourishment. In the kitchen Ella becomes aware of her necessity of a spiritual master, whom she finds in Aziz. Here the process of reading and of dwelling in imagination is paralleled with her search for a channel through love, a channel which she finds in cooking. Apart from reading, it is in the kitchen that Ella discovers her greatest gift: the risk to love.*

Key words: kitchen, nourishment, spiritual journey, Rumi, quest

Motto:

You see, as remarkable and successful as he no doubt is, Rumi himself has several times confided in me that he feels inwardly dissatisfied. There is something missing in his life—an emptiness that neither his family nor his disciples can fill. Once I told him, though he was anything but raw, he wasn't burned either. His cup was full to the brim, and yet he needed to have the door to his soul opened so that the waters of love could flow in and out.

The whole city was a Tower of Babel. Everything was constantly shifting, splitting, coming to light, transpiring, thriving, dissolving, decomposing, and dying. Amid this chaos I stood in a place of unperturbed silence and serenity, utterly indifferent to the world and yet at the same time feeling a burning love for all the people struggling and suffering in it. As I watched the people around me, I recalled another golden rule: *It's easy to love a perfect God, unblemished and infallible that He is. What is far more difficult is to love fellow human beings with all their imperfections and defects. Remember, one can only know what one is capable of loving. There is no wisdom without love. Unless we learn to love God's creation, we can neither truly love nor truly know God.*

A parallelism between the 13th century and the 21st century generates the intertextual canvas of Elif Shafak's novel, *The Forty Rules of Love*. The narrative voices step back and forth linking Rumi's century with the contemporary year 2008. In the novel-within-the novel, a thirty-seven-

# IMAGES OF WOMEN IN ROMANIAN FILMS DURING COMMUNISM

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*Abstract: The present paper focuses on the ways in which some of the Romanian films released during the '70s-'80s displayed the images of the 'new woman'. It aims at illustrating the roles a woman had both in private and public spaces, in the context of a totalitarian regime.*

*Key words: 'new woman', film, communism, ideology, emancipation*

Many of the successful Romanian films of '70s and '80s were of great interest not only due to their relaxing, entertaining effect, but also because a large part of the audience could find themselves represented by the characters, typologies and situations which seemed to have their perfect correspondent in life. The political context of the '80s was not a happy one, the Communist party tightly monitored and controlled the cultural and artistic life, as well as all the other domains of life. It was the time when films 'had to' promote the image of the 'new man', devoted to the party's ideology; they had to comply with the principles of a totalitarian ruler who viewed every man as the obedient contributor to the building and development of the socialist society.

Films were seen as depictions of life, of society and as efficient means of spreading and subtly imposing the official authoritarian points of view. Thus, the "constant reference of the cinema to the present time, its forming and empowering ability determine the pressure of propaganda to distort the story, to use it as an ideological tool". (Ilieșu, 2013:7) The films of the last decade of Communism in Romania were mainly dominated by the obsession with the daily, ordinary life, the feminine characters being illustrated as individuals comprising a lot of strong features agreed by the Communist ideological line, according to which a woman had to be a good and loving mother, a careful wife, a restless housekeeper, a loyal, diligent and competent worker whose contribution to the development of the nation was enormous.

BOOK REVIEWS



RECENZII

MARIUS MIHEȚ

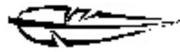
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***Critica de export. Teorii, contexte, ideologii***

by **Andrei Terian**

București, Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române, 2013

***(Criticism for Export. Theories, Context and Ideologies***

by **Andrei Terian**

The Museum of Romanian Literature Publishing House, 2013)

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**Romanian Literature as World Literature**

**Abstract:** *Terian's book, Critica de export. Teorii, contexte, ideologii (Criticism for Export. Theories, context and ideologies), answers a fundamental question that has not been included in a system for nearly 30 years after the fall of communism. The question is: what can Romanian literary criticism and Romanian literary history offer to a foreign specialist? What can Romanian culture offer to be valid as exportation, what models and openings can be proffered as to bring relevance internationally? The volume contains a series of incentive studies about how Romanian culture can escape the complex of periphery.*

**Key words:** criticism, cultural export, Romanian Literature as East-European literature, World literature, postcolonialism

Andrei Terian launches one of the most interesting volumes of autochthonous criticism after 1989. The book contains studies and articles aiming the most present day themes. These themes are still adherent to the debates of the

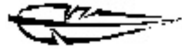
academic world in its most different parts.

With regards to Romanian literature, the critic pardons nothing. Andrei Terian criticizes the lack of essential translations, and at the same time, he does not pardon the

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***Instrumental. Memorias de música, medicina y locura.***

by **James Rhodes**

Traducción: Ismael Attrache. Barcelona, Blackie Books, 2015

***(Instrumental. Salvation through Music)***

by **James Rhodes**

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### **James Rhodes: la salvación por la música**

**James Rhodes: the redeeming power of music**

*Abstract: James Rhodes' autobiography, Instrumental, constructs the interplay between darkness and light, evil and good by accompanying the exposure of extremely traumatic events with the redeeming power of music.*

Key words: autobiography, traumatic, music, salvation, motivation

*Instrumental*, la autobiografía de James Rhodes (Londres, 1975), conocido pianista británico, se ha visto envuelta en el aire del escándalo desde antes de su aparición. La ex-esposa del autor intentó impedir su publicación aduciendo que esto pudiera resultar traumático para el hijo de ambos. El Tribunal Supremo del Reino Unido autorizó finalmente la publicación y este libro, que el autor dedica

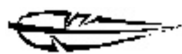
precisamente a su hijo, vio la luz editorial en 2015.

*Instrumental* es, en efecto, un libro de sensaciones fuertes, pero, sobre todo, es un libro desgarrador. La vida contada por Rhodes podría ser considerada una biografía de la herida: desde la herida central, la violación por parte de su profesor de boxeo a la que fue sometido repetidamente el autor desde los seis hasta los diez años, hasta las heridas autoinfligidas a través del abuso

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***Înscrierea pe orbită***

by **Vasile Spiridon**

Editura Timpul, Iași, 2008

***(Self-Writing on an Orbit,***

***Timpul Publishing House, 2008)***

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## The Seal of Criticism

*Abstract: For the critic Vasile Spiridon, literature inhabits naturally a mythical frame unaltered by history. Life and literature form together a palimpsest. Once explored, it gives the same satisfaction of deciphering as the access to a form of superior knowledge. The critic sees the mythos as the seal of a world. He also captures the disruptions brought by the anomalies of history in this mythical order.*

Key words: words: criticism, contemporary Romanian literature, prose, nostalgia, critical interpretation, ethos

For Vasile Spiridon, literature inhabits naturally a mythical frame unaltered by history. The purpose of literature is to enlarge existence. Life and literature form together a palimpsest. Once explored, it gives the same satisfaction of deciphering as the access to a form of superior knowledge. That is why the critic Vasile Spiridon is sometimes attracted by the interpretation of a literary work at the same pace with the

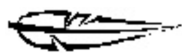
genesis of that work, as inferred from other sources (see the studies dedicated to Mihail Sadoveanu, Gellu Naum, Mircea Cărtărescu, Marin Mincu).

Sadoveanu is seen as living between theatre and temple, as a patriarchal personality with a nostalgic ideal, an explorer of collective memory and, at the same time, a man with the vocation of rituals, ready to translated into his life a way of living as the one preached

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***Caragiale după Caragiale. Arcanele interpretării, exagerări, deformări, excese***

by **Angelo Mitchievici**

(București, Editura Cartea Românească, 2014)

***Caragiale after Caragiale. Interpretation's arcanes, exaggerations, deformations, excesses.***

(Cartea Românească Publishing-House, Bucharest, 2014)

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## Caragiale and the Identity Complex

**Abstract:** *The putting under scrutiny of Caragiale's universe, as Angelo Mitchievici undertakes it, is dynamic and related to other texts from the literature of the world, as well as with other cultural spheres. The book recommends itself through its capacity to synthesize the features of the "worldly-world" of Caragiale (as defined by V. Fanache), features containing: the carnival, the excessive, the whim, the noise, the cliché, the indistinct mixture of tragic and comic, the deformity, the monstrous. Caragiale's actuality emerges as axiomatic, due to a continuity in type, not in time. An identity complex of the Romanians in connection to Caragiale is discussed.*

**Key words:** identity complex, Caragiale, carnival, values, mask, whim, hybris

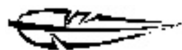
In his book, *Caragiale după Caragiale. Arcanele interpretării, exagerări, deformări, excese*, Angelo Mitchievici offers us a synthesis of major invariants in the works of a classical writer, but also a perspective on Caragiale's impact on contemporaneity.

As a man of letters, Mitchievici approaches the critical act in an open manner. Thus, we remark numerous intertextual references (from literature, essay writing, literary history and literary criticism) these are accompanied by observations on distinct

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### ***Basme și povești românești***

By Vasile Gurzău & Maria Gurzău Czegledi

Ediția a doua, adăugită, ediție îngrijită de Maria Gurzău Czegledi, Editura

Eurostampa, Timișoara, 2015

**(Romanian Tales and Stories of Vasile Gurzău adapted by Maria Gurzău**

**Czegledi**

Second edition, Eurostampa Publishing House, Timișoara, 2015)

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## Preserving the Art of Storytelling

*Abstract: Vasile Gurzau, born in 1898, was a gifted storyteller who mastered this (almost extinct) art of storytelling despite the fact that he barely learned to read and write. He was born in Micherechi, Hungary, in a small Romanian community. His themes come both from Romanian folklore and Hungarian folklore. His stories are gathered now in a book.*

**Key words:** Romanian folklore, folklore study in Romanian customs, Romanian community in Hungary, Romanian Tales, storytelling

From the Romanian narrator Vasile Gurzău (born in Micherechi, Hungary) we have over 40 unique fairytales and stories. Over half of them are presented and adapted in this volume by Maria Gurzău Czegledi - a prominent teacher of Romanian language and literature in Hungary, but also a

Phd. graduate in literary folklore. As the third revised and added edition, the collection of stories brings back to the readers on both sides of the border the sweetness of the Romanian archaic language and the everlasting charm of the popular stories.



MARIUS MIHEȚ

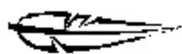
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***Un secol al memoriei. Literatură  
și conștiință comunitară în epoca  
romantică***

By **Doris Mironescu**

Iași, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2016

***(A Century of Memory. Literature and Collective Conscience in Romanticism, by  
Doris Mironescu, Iași, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University Press, 2016;)***

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**Post-canon memory. What can survive in it?**

**Abstract:** *The volume Un secol al memoriei. Literatură și conștiință comunitară în epoca romantică (A Century of Memory. Literature and Collective Conscience in Romanticism) follows the way in which different poetics are the outcome of different epochs. Doris Mironescu analyses the openings of literature in its questionings of the society. He insists on those mechanisms that transmit the feeling of a power of literature. This power can overcome the un-literary problems of an epoch. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the problems of literature announce the failure of their contemporary ideologies, whilst the Romantic ideas, reinvented, put the post-canonical memory at an advantage.*

**Key words:** literary canon, postcanon memory, Romanticism, cultural memory, rereading;

As a critic whose main natural advantage is evenness, Doris Mironescu is convincing. His critical verdicts are not at random. He is applied, full of

rigor, he knows how to self-correct when necessary, in a graceful language. His readings are sophisticated, that is why he insists on literary poetics of

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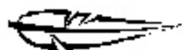
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By **Mircea Cărtărescu & Luisa Etxenique**

San Sebastián, Erein, 2016

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### Encuentro en el camino intermedio

### Encounter on the Middle Way

Abstract: *Emerged from the project San Sebastián-European Capital of Culture 2016, Correspondencias offers an epistolary dialogue between Luisa Etxenique and Mircea Cărtărescu.*

Key words: Mircea Cărtărescu, Luisa Etxenique, epistolary, dialogue, contemporary literature

El proyecto Chéjov vs Shakespeare fue impulsado por Donostia / San Sebastián-Capital Europea de la Cultura 2016 y consistió en el encuentro epistolario de dieciséis escritores, de los cuales ocho vascos y ocho internacionales (siete europeos y un colombiano). A estos escritores se les propuso reflexionar, en un intercambio epistolar por parejas, sobre la relación entre la literatura y la realidad social, más precisamente

sobre la vertiente conflictiva de esta. Una de las ocho parejas participantes fue la formada por la escritora vasca Luisa Etxenique y el rumano Mircea Cărtărescu, y su correspondencia fue publicada en 2016 por la editorial donostiarra Erein.

El libro reúne las diez cartas de esta correspondencia, en una edición trilingüe (castellano, rumano, euskera) que ha contado con un equipo de cinco traductores para su

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### ***Fericirea în contextul social al tranziției postcomuniste din România***

by **Sergiu Bălțătescu**

Editura Eikon, Cluj-Napoca, 2014;

***(Happiness in Postcommunist Transition in Romania,***

by **Sergiu Bălțătescu**

Cluj Napoca, Eikon Publishing House, 2014)

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### **Happiness as a Social Construct**

*Abstract: In a huge enterprise that has undertaken visible metamorphoses from one stage to another, Sergiu Bălțătescu has elaborated a necessary instrument able to restore as in a mirror the image of Romanian society in its post-communism transition. This mirror is contained by people's own assessment of their degree of happiness. Equipped with the methodology of a sociologist, with the patience of a lover of philosophy and with the readings of a man dedicated to culture, Sergiu Bălțătescu has written an extensive monograph on happiness and its perception in Romanian post-totalitarian society. His book combines empirical data, statistic analysis, with the perception of happiness in philosophy, in politics, in sociology and psychology, reaching surprising results.*

Key words: happiness, wellness, culture, society, paradigm

Fascinated by the relationship between sociology and culture, Sergiu Bălțătescu has resorted to a new challenge of combining the two domains. This time, the researcher's purpose is to explore and to reflect the significant correlations

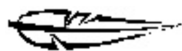
between happiness and society.

In a huge enterprise that has undertaken visible metamorphoses from one stage to another, Sergiu Bălțătescu has elaborated a necessary instrument able to restore as in a mirror the

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**Gabriela Adameşteanu. Monografie, antologie comentată, receptare critică**

By Şerban Axinte

Bucureşti, Editura Tracus Arte, 2015

*(Gabriela Adameşteanu, Monograph, commented anthology, critical reception by Şerban Axinte, Tracus Arte Publishing House, Bucharest, 2015)*

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### **Gabriela Adameşteanu. The Monograph of Provisionality**

*Abstract: The monograph dedicated to the writer with the highest aesthetic value among contemporary female writers follows as closely as possible a literature in movement. The writer is very active, she continues to publish, so her work can undertake any changes. Şerban Axinte takes an enormous risk by publishing a monograph. But he establishes coordinates; he synthesizes and refers to the positions within literature canon without being intimidated by the fact that a future book of Adameşteanu might be different. His method of research is iron-clad, is applied with care and his critical esprit is always wakeful.*

Key words: Gabriela Adameşteanu, contemporary Romanian novel, femininity-feminism, provisionality, reactualisation of the past

Şerban Axinte knows how to take winning risks at the stakes of the Romanian literature canon: among contemporary female writers, Gabriela Adameşteanu is indeed the writer with the highest aesthetic value of her oeuvre. She is translated and enthusiastically received also

in other languages. She is a symbol of civil society. She cannot be missing from any serious study dedicated to contemporary literature.

The contemporary histories of Romanian literature, all, take Gabriela Adameşteanu as a pattern-creator. So do the