

## CUPRINS / TABLE OF CONTENTS

2016  ALLRO

### THE MYTH AND LITERATURE

#### OPENINGS /9

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TEODOR MATEOC – REFLECTIONS ON THE CONTEMPORARY  
CRITICAL DISCOURSE OF CULTURAL STUDIES / 11

STEVE BUCKLEDEE & DANIELA FRANCESCA VIRDIS - FROM  
INARTICULACY TO ART: NORMAL NON-FLUENCIES IN VERBATIM  
THEATRE / 20

#### THE MYTH AND LITERATURE/41

---

FEKETE TIBERIU - MYTHOLOGICAL DISCOURSE IN CONTEMPORARY  
ART AS REFLECTED IN THE WORKS OF *MATTHEW BARNEY*, *AI WEIWEI*  
AND *TRACEY EMIN* / 43

ION SIMUȚ - MYSTICAL BYRTH IN AN UNPUBLISHED POEM OF TUDOR  
ARGHEZI (DATED BETWEEN 1949-1950)/ 58

MARIUS MIHEȚ - AGLAJA VETERANYI AND THE MYTH OF ALL  
POSSIBILITIES / 64

DANA SALA - THE CREATION MYTH AND ITS PASSAGES INTO TIME  
LOOP TRANSGRESSIONS in CARTARESCU's *SOLENOID* / 69

CRENGUȚA GÂNSCĂ - INTERPRETATIONS OF THE AESTHETIC MYTH  
IN THE ROMANIAN DRAMA. ADRIAN MANIU AND MARIN SORESCU / 79

LEVENTE NAGY - UNDER THE SIGN OF THE RAVEN, OF THE RING AND  
OF THE DRAGON. THE MYTH OF THE CORVIN FAMILY IN ROMANIAN,  
HUNGARIAN AND POLISH HISTORIOGRAPHY / 85

**CONSTANȚA NIȚĂ** - THE BAROQUE TRANSFIGURATION OF NARCISSUS' MYTH IN RADU STANCA'S PLAY *OCHIUL (THE EYE)* / 98  
**DELIA RADU** - ON SALMAN RUSHDIE'S USE OF HINDU AND CLASSICAL MYTHS / 105  
**FLORICA MATEOC** - MYTHE ET IMAGE DANS *LA GOUTTE D'ORDE* MICHEL TOURNIER / 111  
**IOANA ALEXANDRESCU** - KOREAN DAPHNE: BECOMING A PLANT IN HAN KANG'S *THE VEGETARIAN* / 125  
**MAGDALENA INDRIEȘ** - LE MYTHE D'AMPHITRYON DANS L'INTERPRETATION DE MOLIÈRE / 133  
**ALIN ȘTEFĂNUȚ** - HORIA LOVINESCU'S ASHEN DESERT OR THE MYTH OF PERPETUAL DISINTEGRATION OF PARADISE / 142  
**IULIA NEDEA** - '60s ROMANIAN POETRY – BETWEEN MYTH AND HISTORY / 151

## **ARCHAIC RITES OF PASSAGE TODAY / 157** ---

**RUXANDRA CRISTINA SCRIDON** - LADS' FRATERNITIES – MYTHICAL AND ARCHAIC ELEMENTS OF LAD-BAND INITIATIONS / 159  
**IOANA LAURA CERGHES** - THE WEDDING FLAG IN OAȘ COUNTY – MYTH AND REALITIES / 168

## **BOOK REVIEWS / 175** ---

**MARIUS MIHEȚ** - MARGINALITY AS A LITERARY TOPOS / 177  
**IOANA ALEXANDRESCU** – A VISIONARY DUET / 181  
**TIBOR HERGYÁN** - TEACHING ROMANIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN FOREIGN ENVIRONMENT / 184  
**DANA SALA** - THE PHILOSOPHICAL OPENINGS OF THE STREET / 190  
**MARIUS MIHEȚ** - THE MIRROR OF RESTITUTION / 193  
**IOANA ALEXANDRESCU** - THE SPECULARITY OF TRANSLATION / 197  
**IOANA CISTELECAN** - STANZAS ON LIFE... / 200  
**DANA SALA** - THE MAP OF THE BEYOND WHILE READING JOYCE / 203  
**FLORIN CIOBAN** - THE FOLKLORE. THE MYTHS. THE CUSTOMS... WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THEM? / 206  
**MARIUS MIHEȚ** - THE LITERARY HISTORY FOR READERS' DELECTATION / 211  
**ANEMONA ALB** - PRIVY TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. AN APPRAISAL OF IOANA PÂRVULESCU / 214

OPENINGS



DESCHIDERI

# REFLECTIONS ON THE CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL DISCOURSE OF CULTURAL STUDIES

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*Abstract: Current debates on the evolution of the particular discourse of cultural criticism invites a double understanding of the concept: as general characterization of the critical schools that have marked the evolution of culture in time, and as a narrower trend that emerged in Britain in the fifties, crossed the Atlantic and came to be known as Cultural Studies.*

Key words: culture, civilization, society, literary discourse, ideology, politics, ethics

## Introduction

Contemporary *Cultural Studies* must now be taken as a particular critical discourse, different from previous discourses both in intention and methodology. Firstly, its practitioners share a certain suspicion of theory, of general discussions that may be too distant from the actual cultural contexts. Secondly, instead of proposing some new approach, it has intentionally borrowed from existing critical discourses and used them for its specific purposes. As a result, it displays a variety of theoretical orientations and its method is inevitably interdisciplinary and eclectic. In the words of Rob Pope,

"The emphasis [in Cultural Studies] is on what can be done with each theory rather than on what it is. There is also an insistence on a flexible yet principled plurality of approach: identifying models and methods appropriate to specific tasks and texts-not arbitrarily imposing one on all". (Pope, 42)

Cultural Studies began as a British phenomenon. In the 1930s, the tradition of elitist cultural criticism associated with Mathew Arnold in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was reconsidered by a number of critics, the most influential of whom was the Cambridge scholar F. R. Leavis associated with what has been called the *culture-and-civilization movement*, best represented in *Scrutiny*, the journal which he edited between 1932-1953. According to this



# FROM INARTICULACY TO ART: NORMAL NON-FLUENCIES IN VERBATIM THEATRE

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*Abstract: This article begins with an outline of the characteristics of verbatim theatre. Section 2 then compares the normal non-fluencies of spontaneous speech with the contrived non-fluencies of fictional discourse. In Section 3 we analyze the non-fluencies evident in five extracts from a specific work of the genre: Alecky Blythe's Cruising.*

*While interpretation of the planned non-fluencies of scripted dialogue is usually straightforward, the authentic non-fluencies of verbatim theatre are difficult to interpret since they are indicative of complex emotional states. It emerges that normal non-fluencies are often not "normal" at all in that they are not the product of genuine inarticulacy. Sometimes they are verbal signals that a speaker consciously employs; on other occasions they are unconscious, but in these cases they seldom comply with the rather formulaic link between verbal stumble and emotional state frequently adopted in created dialogue. In the hands of a skilled verbatim playwright, these simulated or genuine non-fluencies can have great dramatic efficacy. Indeed, the naturally occurring speech of authentic communicative events has the potential to be as dramatically dynamic, as psychologically complex and as linguistically inventive as any script crafted by the most skilled of playwrights. In short, real or apparent inarticulacy becomes art.*

**Key words:** verbatim theatre, normal non-fluency, spontaneous dialogue, interviews, psycholinguistics, Alecky Blythe's Cruising

THE MYTH  
AND  
LITERATURE



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ȘI  
LITERATURA

# MYTHOLOGICAL DISCOURSE IN CONTEMPORARY ART AS REFLECTED IN THE WORKS OF MATTHEW BARNEY, AI WEIWEI AND TRACEY EMIN

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*Abstract: The presence of our mythological heritage of past ages is easily recognizable in many areas of today's culture and society. Over the past century, several social and philosophical theories have shown that the current collective knowledge of these pervasive invisible forces, premises from the past are distorting our relationship to our present in an unnoticed way, taking the form of false evidences. These theories highlight, among other things, that those patterns with which we grow up, are ensuring the integration of the individual, defining the frames in which he/she can define himself/herself and others, and his/hers position and his/hers relationship with society as a whole. But in the same time they select a predefined worldview for him/her, in an order in which he/she can get answers to the fundamental questions of life. In the contemporary art, both kinds of mythology are present in the manner described above. One of the contemporary artists in whose work the motifs borrowed from classical myths are directly recognizable, is Matthew Barney. The American artist's relationship with the mythos will be exposed mainly through the complex Cremaster Cycle, which is in its self a multi-genre: it is assembled from video creations, sculptures, photos, drawings, installations and even books, which are all approximating from various points of view a not easily definable content. The second artist, through whose work I will analyze a different form of connection to mythology in this study, is the conceptual artist and political activist of Chinese descent, Ai Weiwei, an artist who works in multiple genres. Another artist is Tracey Emin, with a focus on her own life, with a shocking sincerity. She processes her memories in different genres which, as she states, attract the most attention from her during their creation, in the form of installations, sculptures, drawings, auto-biographical texts and neon signs.*

*Key words: mythological discourse, contemporary art, post-structuralism, Roland Barthes, Matthew Barney, Ai Weiwei, Tracey Emin*

The presence of our mythological heritage of past ages is easily recognizable in many areas of today's culture and society. Most obviously

TUDOR ARGHEZI  
DESPRE NAȘTEREA MISTICĂ  
ÎNTR-UN POEM INEDIT  
DIN ANII 1948-1950

MYSTICAL BIRTH IN AN UNPUBLISHED POEM OF  
TUDOR ARGHEZI (DATED BETWEEN 1949-1950)



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*La Universitatea „Vasile Goldiș” din Arad există un corpus de manuscrise Tudor Arghezi, cu multe inedite databile din anii 1948-1953, perioada de interdicție a scriitorului, după instalarea regimului comunist. Între aceste manuscrise, se află și poemul religios cu titlul Acatist, o formă de adresare către Fecioara Maria. Situația lirică din poem pare una stranie: o tentativă de identificare a poetului cu aceea care l-a născut pe Iisus Cristos. Drama poetului constă în dificultatea, transformată în imposibilitatea de a-l naște pe Cristos – ceea ce înseamnă metaforic imposibilitatea de a-l mărturisi și de a-l recunoaște. Poemul Acatist este o rugăciune către Fecioara Maria de a-l izbăvi pe poet de această eclipsă a credinței.*

*Abstract: The University “Vasile Goldiș” in Arad holds a corpus of manuscripts by Tudor Arghezi, with many unpublished works dating from 1948-1953, the writer’s period of prohibition, after the installation of the Communist regime. Among these manuscripts there is a religious poem entitled Akathist, a salutation to the Virgin Mary. The lyrical situation in the poem seems a strange one: the poet’s attempt to identify himself with the one who gave birth to Jesus Christ. The poet’s drama lies in his difficulty, turned into impossibility, of giving birth to Christ – which, metaphorically, means his inability of confessing and recognizing him. The poem Akathist is a prayer for Virgin Mary to deliver the poet from this eclipse of his faith.*

**Key words:** Tudor Arghezi, religious poem, mystical birth, Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ



# AGLAJA VETERANYI AND THE MYTH OF ALL POSSIBILITIES

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**Abstract:** *Aglaja Veteranyi's short novel, Why the Child Is Cooking in the Polenta, shows the boundaries of a solitude assaulted from all directions. Only within the mirror-games of an improvised stage reality did she find the outlet to transfer her anguishes. An infantile narrator gets different distancing from the limits of the language and the limits of freedom. Aglaja Veteranyi lends the narrator her own mirrors. Unable to export feelings, she is aware that they return as fears and sufferings: "I don't scream. I've thrown my mouth away". Her destiny is, from this regard, under the sign of simulacrum. The circus is in itself a simulacrum of the world. It cannot change anything consistently in the people belonging to it. The mask of happiness becomes compulsory for the narrating self. Why the Child Is Cooking in the Polenta is a collection of impossibilities. Reading the story of Veteranyi one has the feeling of being captive into an orphanage that has replaced the world. The result is a tension that excludes any idea of a paradise.*

**Key words:** childhood trauma, circus world, exile, contemporary fiction, Veteranyi, simulacrum

Aglaja Veteranyi's short novel, *Why the Child Is Cooking in the Polenta*, shows the boundaries of a solitude assaulted from all directions. Veteranyi's life seems to have been taken out from a film noir. The storytelling in the novel is not connected to the universe of childhood; it acts more like the carcass of a grotesque fairy-tale. Deprived of the clouds of a cotton-candy story for children, childhood remains, for the writer, a captivity that has little to do with innocence.

Only within the mirror-games of an improvised stage reality did Veteranyi find the outlet to transfer her anguishes. The author, a

# THE CREATION MYTH AND ITS PASSAGES INTO TIME LOOP TRANSGRESSIONS in CARTARESCU's *SOLENOID*

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*Abstract: Solenoid, Mircea Cărtărescu's most recent book (2015), is the universe of abominable rupture, a universe of the mind, of the lost connection with the myths of childhood and of the disenchantment of the myth of the self. Dream is the only possible escape from the prison of our mind, as the writer says. The main theme of Solenoid, Mircea Cărtărescu's newest prose, is finding the exit of human existence into another dimension. Solenoid gives the feeling that the limits of human pain are the limits of universe. The first attempt to find an exit is through the subcutaneous world, at the border between human and subhuman, in a world of impossible mirrors. Labyrinth is the secret place where life and death, mortality and immortality can be aligned in a tesseract, in an attempt of human being to transcend the three dimensions and find the fourth one, the perpendicular exit into the universe and the possibility to have our eyes in the eyes of our creator.*

**Key words:** time, myths, passage, contemporary fiction, Cartarescu, Solenoid, labyrinth, dream

MOTTO

*Eu, secțiunea prin timp a imposibilei persoane a patra*

## **The new cosmology. The solenoid and the ark of salvation**

*Solenoid*, Mircea Cărtărescu's most recent book (2015), is the universe of abominable rupture, a universe of the mind, of the lost connection with the myths of childhood and of the disenchantment of the myth of the self.

In *Orbitor (Blinding)*, the presence of butterfly as the symbol of psyche, of mortality and immortality, of past and future, of symmetry was also a way to build a labyrinth made of millions of other labyrinths and to build the escape from it with the grace of the butterfly wings. The



# INTERPRETATIONS OF THE AESTHETIC MYTH IN THE ROMANIAN DRAMA. ADRIAN MANIU AND MARIN SORESCU

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*Abstract: If Adrian Maniu isolates the moment of repeated collapsing of the walls in order to point to a conflict quite frequent in the expressionist theatre – the world of mythology versus the modern world, with implacable possibility of regression to the archaic, to the origin, Marin Sorescu brings about – within an expressionist vein arising from neomodernity – the ironical and tragical-ironical dimension in relationship to artist's/creator's role, harder to surface in a world indifferent to spirituality and sacrifice. This is how the popular ballad, a blueprint for the esthetic myth, gets enriched with new hues giving birth to more and more refined and unexhausted actualizations of its message.*

**Key words:** myth of creation, Master Manole, Lucian Blaga, Adrian Maniu, Marin Sorescu, aesthetic myth, masterpiece

George Călinescu, the prominent critic, established four myths, essential to Romanian literature: the myth of Mioritza, symbolizing Romanian people's pastoral existence, the myth of ethnogenesis, symbolizing the birth of Romanian people through the story between Trajan, the emperor, and Dochia, the daughter of Deceballus, the myth of Master Manole, the artist masterbuilder who has his wife walled up, irrespectively the erotic myth of Zburătorul (the flying lover). These four myths embody the starting point for the mythology of a national writer, since, according to G. Călinescu, they trace back to four fundamental questions: the genesis of Romanian people, the cosmic placement of man, the problem of creation and the question of sexuality.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Translation mine. In the original: [Ele înfățișează] „patru probleme fundamentale: nașterea poporului român, situația cosmică a omului, problema creației și sexualitatea” în George

# UNDER THE SIGN OF THE RAVEN, OF THE RING AND OF THE DRAGON. THE MYTH OF THE CORVIN FAMILY IN ROMANIAN, HUNGARIAN AND POLISH HISTORIOGRAPHY

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*Abstract: The present paper brings into discussion the origin and the truthfulness of the legend created around Negru Vodă. The purpose was not to find an answer or create a new version of it, but to gather together different sources and compare their hypothesis. What is for sure is the fact that each version had its beneficiaries even if not all the time material possessions were targeted, in that period of turmoil the sympathy of the crown or of the people was much needed.*

**Key words:** historiography, voivode, myth, raven, Corvin, Negru Vodă

In the year 1694 the imperial captain, Luigi Ferdinando Marsili (1658-1730) demanded by means of a letter from Constantin Cantacuzino some historical data about Moldavia and Wallachia. Marsili needed this information for his scientific paper about South-eastern Europe. Marsili's letter was kept only in the form in which it was referred back by Cantacuzino, who wrote his answers to Marsili's questions on the edge of the deathbed. In addition, he sent Marsili two catalogues, stringing the names of voivodes from Moldova and Muntenia<sup>1</sup>. One of the Romanian personalities, on which Marsili demanded information from Cantacuzino was Negru Vodă. It is clear from the letter that Marsili

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<sup>1</sup> Marsili's letter with Cantacuzino's answers edited for the first time by Nicolae Iorga: Cantacuzino, 1901, 41-54. Later, it was also edited by Ramiro Ortiz. The original manuscript is to be found at the se găsește at the Universitaria di Bologna Library, Fondo Marsili ms. 57, fol. 200-202.

# THE BAROQUE TRANSFIGURATION OF NARCISSUS' MYTH IN RADU STANCA'S PLAY *OCHIUL (THE EYE)*

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**Abstract:** *The theatre, in relation to poetry, does not represent for Radu Stanca but a different register to convert his obsessions sublimated on the stage. Additionally, the stage answers to the ideal "visual challenge" that the baroque brought, along with its unstoppable "passion for appearances". Within the play *The Eye* (a "tragic phantasm"), Radu Stanca stages a baroque character that fascinates by his oxymoronic, ambiguous, bipolar and mystifying nature. The central symbol of the play, the eye – as a mirror of the spirit and a divine sign – ushers in the facets of specularity, the motif of the mirror, considered the very "symbol of the symbolism". Stanca's character becomes an anti-Narcis through the baroque transfiguration of the well-known myth.*

**Key words:** mythos, archetypal model, anachronism, desacralization, *trompe l'oeil*, textual metaphor, *mise en abyme*.

A poet, an essayist and a playwright, an aesthetician and a journalist, as well as a theatre critic, Radu Stanca (1920-1962) illustrates the total writer category in Romanian literature. Poetry, theatre, essay, stage directing and even acting have been experimented by Radu Stanca. In a famous poem, entitled *Buffalo Bill*, Stanca used to call Time "the special gentleman", a person "of consequence", "the mannered thief": „domn de seamă”, „călător de vază” și „hoțoman de soi” (Radu Stanca, *Versuri*, 1980). Should Time, this man of consequence, have been more generous with him, all the started trajectories would have reached perfection.

Originating in the inquietude permanent quest, the poetry, the theatre and the essay become for Radu Stanca just one encompassing creation, with infiltrating interstices in all dominions of spirituality. His literary work is par excellence an act of conscience. This intellectual scattering has been nourished, in his case, by an inner need of commitment to acts tragic in their absolute, matching his exceptional dramatic temperament.



# ON SALMAN RUSHDIE'S USE OF HINDU AND CLASSICAL MYTHS

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**Abstract:** *Born in Bombay but mainly educated in the UK, Salman Rushdie is at ease juggling with myths from both classical, western beliefs and from Hindu tradition. Just as he plays with allusions to writers, works or characters, myths allow him to build his fictional worlds. The article aims to discuss how he deals with myths in two of his novels, "Midnight's Children" and "The Ground Beneath Her Feet".*

**Key words:** myths, reinterpretation, Rushdie, Ganesh, Shiva, Orpheus, Vina

"Other men have recited stories before me; other men were not so impetuously abandoned. When Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana, dictated his masterpiece to elephant-headed Ganesh, did the god walk out on him halfway? He certainly did not. (Note that, despite my Muslim background, I'm enough of a Bombayite to be well up in Hindu stories, and actually I'm very fond of the image of the trunk-nosed, flap-eared Ganesh solemnly taking dictation!)" (Rushdie, 1995:87)

According to Hindu tradition, the elephant-headed god Ganesh likes literature so much that he is ready to sit down at bard Vyasa's feet and write down the whole text of *Mahabharat*, from the beginning to the end. At some point in *Midnight's Children*, Saleem makes a reference to this old tradition, but his version is slightly different, as he writes that it was the poet Walmiki transcribing the *Ramayana*, a mistake he makes right after boasting with his own erudition.

Ganesh is a god of beginnings, a protector with the power to do away with obstacles. Writers often evoke his name at the start of books because he is a god of wisdom and is also renowned as a skilled scribe (see Littleton, 2002:379). The story of Ganesh's elephant head is mentioned in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, as well: "Shiva, suspecting that the new-born Ganesh might not be his son, struck off the baby's head; then remorse set in, and in a panic, he replaced the

# MYTHE ET IMAGE DANS *LA GOUTTE D'OR* DE MICHEL TOURNIER

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*Abstract: Michel Tournier's originality consists in re-writing and re-interpretation the great myths of humanity. He's concerned with "a bricolage" of myths whose initial meaning he re-interprets in an idiosyncratic manner in his work. He also gives to his mythological novels a dimension of reality which make them an instrument of knowledge. In «La Goutte d'or», Tournier uses the Roman myth of «bulla aurea» that he opposes to that of the modern image of the Occident. In fact, as he says, the novel shows the meeting of two cultures: l'Islam which values the sign and the Occident which cultivates the visual. Our article intends to focus upon some aspects of this myth and on the different « facettes » of the image which mark the heroes's trajectory in France. In effect, one can speak of conflict of values between the mythical space of the desert and the modern western world.*

Key words: myth, image, desert, sign, "bulla aurea"

## Tournier et les mythes

L'originalité et la profondeur de l'œuvre de Michel Tournier résident dans les mythes fondamentaux qui sont actualisés car pour lui, «cette histoire fondamentale» a la fonction d'éclairer les aspirations secrètes et confuses de l'homme. Sa passion et son intérêt pour le mythe s'épanouissent au Musée de l'Homme où il suit les cours de Claude Lévi-Strauss, le Maître qui lui a éveillé la vocation d'écrivain. Dans le cas de Tournier, il s'est créé un lien entre l'ethnologie et la création littéraire, la première lui fournissant un langage, celui des mythes, concret et transcendent en même temps. Dans son essai, une véritable autobiographie intellectuelle, *Le vent Paraclet*, l'écrivain définit le mythe comme un « édifice à plusieurs étages », aux « niveaux d'abstraction croissante » dont « le rez-de-chaussée est enfantin » tandis que « le

# KOREAN DAPHNE: BECOMING A PLANT IN HAN KANG'S *THE VEGETARIAN*

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*Abstract: The novel The Vegetarian by Han Kang is probably the most successful example of Korean literature on the international scene nowadays. The strangeness of its main character, a woman to whom we have access mostly through the vision of the other characters, drew the attention of readers and critics worldwide, playing a part in the success of the book. In this article, we aim to follow the process through which the protagonist breaks off from mainstream attitude, imposing her point of view over what people expect from her, while also sliding towards madness. Decided to transform herself into a plant, she becomes an actual avatar of the mythological figure of Daphne, the nymph who was loved by Apollo and was metamorphosed into a laurel tree.*

**Key words:** Han Kang; The Vegetarian; Daphne; Becoming a plant; Woman-plant association

*The Vegetarian* (2007) is Korean writer Han Kang's third novel, after *The Black Deer* (1998) and *Your Cold Hands* (2002), and the first to be translated into English. Received by critics as a powerful and disturbing novel, and meant by its author as a questioning space on violence and salvation<sup>1</sup>, *The Vegetarian* has won Han Kang several literary prizes, the most recent being the Man Bookers Prize (May 2016) for its English version by Deborah Smith. It was also adapted into a movie in 2008, under the direction of Lim Woo-Seong and bearing the same title.

The novel contains three parts: "The Vegetarian", "Mongolian Mark" and "Flaming Trees"; these blocks narrate the story

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<sup>1</sup> "I wanted to raise a question about human violence and innocence. That is, I wanted to ask if it is possible for a human to completely reject any kind of violence and become a flawless, innocent being. This question rang my mind" said Han Kang in an interview. (Shin June-Bong)



# LE MYTHE D'AMPHITRYON DANS L'INTERPRETATION DE MOLIÈRE

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*Abstract: In this study, we tried to illustrate Molière's original interpretation of the myth of Amphitryon. We took for analysis only four moments of the play: the prologue, the second scene of the first act, and two scenes, where Jupiter meets Alcmene, the wife of Amphitryon. We have contrasted them with Plaute's play, Amphitruo. Molière modernizes the subject and desecrates the myth; the characters are gallants and precious in the spirit of the XVII century. The French playwright is a great connoisseur of human soul which he describes masterly, using all the resources of the comic.*

Key words: Amphitryon, myth, imposture; adultery, jealousy, subterfuge

## La légende antique

Selon la légende antique, Amphitryon était le fils d'Alcée, roi de Tirynthe, et d'Astydamie ou Lysidicé. Amoureux de sa cousine, Alcmène, la fille du roi d'Argolide, Electryon, il la demande en mariage. Son oncle lui impose une condition: la vengeance contre les Taphiens, les habitants de l'île de Taphos, qui avaient tué ses fils et avaient volé ses troupeaux. Du retour avec les troupeaux, Amphitryon voulant frapper une bête, tue son oncle. Banni de laïcité, il se réfugie avec Alcmène à Thèbes, auprès de son oncle maternel, Créon, qui lui pardonne le meurtre. Pour épouser Alcmène, il doit lutter contre les Taphiens. Aidé par ses oncles: Créon et Céphale, par Héléios, Panopée et des Locriens il déclare la guerre aux habitants de Taphos. Pendant qu'il était à la guerre, Zeus séduit Alcmène. Du retour de la guerre, Amphitryon est étonné que sa future femme n'est pas surprise de le voir, par ce que, disait-elle, il venait de la quittait, ayant passé la nuit précédente ensemble. Alors Amphitryon va consulter le vieux prophète Tirésias, qui lui révèle le secret : c'était Zeus qui avait passé la nuit avec Alcmène, ayant pris l'aspect d'Amphitryon.

HORIA LOVINESCU'S JOCUL VIEȚII ȘI  
AL MORȚII ÎN DEȘERTUL DE CENUȘĂ  
OR THE PERPETUAL DISINTEGRATION  
HORIA LOVINESCU'S ASHEN DESERT OR THE MYTH  
OF PERPETUAL DISINTEGRATION OF PARADISE



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*Abstract: The present paper brings into discussion Jocul vieții și al morții în deșertul de cenușă (The Game of Life and Death in the Ashen Desert), play that is a reference point in Horia Lovinescu's drama, having many symbols, metaphors and labyrinthine characters. Having a starting point in the Biblical myth of Cain and Abel, Horia Lovinescu imagines a complex universe which, in order to survive, requires the presence of both brothers. The created universe appears more like an evil, backwards clone of the Biblical Eden. The general sensation is that of suffocation, of isolation oscillating between the end and the beginning of a world. It is an uncertain situation maintained along the action of the play going even beyond it.*

Key words: play, Biblical myth, disintegration, family, apocalypse, ashen desert

Published in 1968, Horia Lovinescu's play *Jocul vieții și al morții în deșertul de cenușă* (*The Game of Life and Death in the Ashen Desert*) depicts the image of a universe that is just about to collapse, a universe facing ineluctable disintegration, as it is marked by the heavy seal of efemerity. It is a fight with no chance of victory, enterprised by the individual against himself, others and, as the title of the drama also suggests, with the hostile environment represented by the ashen universe.

The action takes place in a postapocalyptic landscape, where the ash ensures the absence of any horizon and the platitude of the environment in which a family comprised of three men and one woman try to get by. Nicolae Manolescu considers the play to be a family drama,

# '60s ROMANIAN POETRY – BETWEEN MYTH AND HISTORY

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*Abstract: The aim of this essay is to underline the relevance of the concept of myth for the Romanian poets of the '60s with a closer look on the poetry of Ana Blandiana, Gheorghe Pituț, Cezar Baltag and Ileana Mălăncioiu. The first part will follow the concept of myth as defined by Paul Ricoeur and Mircea Eliade, while the second part of the essay will examine the creations of the poets above mentioned.*

**Key words:** myth, history, ethics, subjectivity, poetry, reinterpretation, biography, irony

This paper will examine the creations of a number of poets belonging to the '60s generation (Cezar Baltag, Ana Blandiana, Gheorghe Pituț and Ileana Mălăncioiu), poets who will be seen through the lens of myth. We will also have a closer look at Ileana Mălăncioiu's poetry in the final part of this essay, in order to see the extent to which the poet's creation leans on the construction of a personal mythos in her first volumes and on a poetry that remythologizes history towards the end.

The myths and parables of '60s poets gravitate around an ethical dimension. The myth, a parable written in a double language, traces the ethical component of history. As a result, the history converted into myth will be, for the poets of the '60s, as Baudrillard also defines it, a sum of images of the tragic. The myth will be a subjective reinterpretation of this history. As a reinterpretation of the world, with a tragic foundation and an ethical dimension, the myth has a subversive nature.

Two approaches concerning history and myth will be of interest within this paper. The first belongs to Paul Ricoeur, who discusses the importance of history as a reinterpretation of reality. The second belongs to Mircea Eliade, who defines myth as a retold history that makes a return to an initial state of the being. Paul Ricoeur speaks of the incomplete objectivity of history and the search through and of history as a search through and of humanity. The whole matter of the myth-

ARCHAIC RITES OF  
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# LADS' FRATERNITIES – MYTHICAL AND ARCHAIC ELEMENTS OF LAD-BAND INITIATIONS

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*Abstract: The areas this phenomenon and its archaic aspects are best preserved are the central regions of our country, namely Transylvania. The geographical location also brings about a certain level of simplification of the ritual, a sort of dilution, up to the point of its disappearance. Nevertheless, the custom is also disseminated in the old historical provinces of Moldova, Oltenia, Muntenia and Dobrogea. Throughout these areas, the fraternity between young men from the rural community played the role of a Romanian traditional institution, comparable to the "witenagemot", the gathering of the elderly, or to the "women's bands". The common elements of these customs are the leader, the group carolling and the gathering of gifts after singing.*

*Key words: band of lads, initiation rituals, inheritance*

From a structure and status-related perspective, the ritual crystallized and strengthened itself by taking over and adapting the Dacian-Latin and eastern Latin content. In one of the oldest writings, the master man watching the ritual dance of the *Salii* - priests of Mars - was called *vates*, possibly an etymon of the Romanian word *vătaf* (bailiff). In time, this term was taken over by Slavonians and sanctioned by use with the meaning of *leader of a group* of soldiers, clerks, rulers or guardians, women being excluded.

When analysing the magical and pedagogical elements specific to these fellowships of young men (dates of the year, group structure, the masks' role-play, "the house of lads" "the host", the whole ceremony of carolling, etc.), researchers T. Herseni and O. Buhociu point out these customs share in a large amount of Geto-Dacian inheritance. The annual gathering of the lads' band is based on sequences of ancient initiation rituals in which the novice was attempting to achieve a superior status within the group or society. Furthermore, in accordance with most researchers' opinions, T. Herseni identifies "the relics of ancient masculine initiation rituals and of some so-called clubs for bachelor

# THE WEDDING FLAG IN OAȘ COUNTY - MYTH AND REALITIES

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**Résumé:** *La coutume du drapeau de mariage connaît des variations dans tous les villages du pays de l'Oaș, cet ouvrage présente la fabrication du drapeau de mariage dans la localité de Comlăușa, au département de Satu Mare. Un ouvrage important, achevé en réunion dans la maison du jeune marié est le spectacle de la fabrication du drapeau de mariage. La responsabilité de l'initiative et de l'organisation de la fabrication revient directement au stegar (celui qui porte le drapeau) ou stegaș (la personne de sexe masculin qui porte le drapeau de mariage) l'un des cousins dulci (= doux, se dit du cousin de premier rang du jeune marié). On travaille en commun (réunion) seulement chez le jeune marié, pendant cinq ou six heures à la veille des noces et pendant autres cinq ou six heures pendant la matinée du jour des noces. Le processus de la création se déroule dans une atmosphère de gaieté, de jeunesse. Afin d'achever la multiplicité des actions comprises dans ce processus de la fabrication du drapeau, on pratique la division du travail au sein du collectif, avec des tâches réparties selon la force physique nécessaire et selon les compétences acquises des expériences antérieures. Vers le final, le drapeau est soumis à l'examen de son aspect général, lorsque l'on met en œuvre quelques petits ouvrages de retouche. Plein de tant de décorations et chargé d'une immense valeur symbolique, on peut conclure que le drapeau et le "stegaș" deviennent un personnage tout aussi important que les jeunes mariés, c'en étant la raison pour laquelle, il y a beau temps, la jeune mariée n'était pas volée, mais il y en avaient des tentatives pour le drapeau.*

**Abstract:** *An important part of the wedding customs, the manufacturing of the wedding flag is a collective work done only in the groom's house, for six hours on the eve of the wedding and for other six hours in the morning of the first wedding day. The wedding flag carriers, the stegași, must be the groom's dulci cousins (first cousins). They must involve through jokes and ceremonial actions the help of the young girls with a special part in the wedding ceremony, the druște. Therefore, the wedding flag is prepared in an atmosphere of hilarity and general jubilation, with dances and țâpuituri. The wedding flag has a powerful symbolic charge. On a thick bat, branches are tightened in successive stages with ropes braided by girls, with furgalaua, with embroidered chișchineuțe, with perti and flowers with a symbolic meaning. The flag is shaken by lads with all the power to check the resistance of the decorating items. The last shake is done on the beat of ceterași music, in an attempt to harmonise the tickle of thirty bell-shaped or globular ciungaua made of bronze*



with the beat of the folk music. The paper is documented from informers and direct participation into the nowadays wedding customs in Comlăușa village, Satu Mare county. In the past, the custom of stealing the bride was not popular, but there used to be many ventures to steal the wedding flag.

Key words: wedding flag, manufacturing show, dances

“Nobody is ashamed to love in Oaș. When the lad laid eyes on a girl in the village it is seen, everybody knows. At *danț* (popular dance from Oaș) the lad dances with his girl more than with others, he goes with her to the gate, where they stay for a long time to talk ...”<sup>1</sup>

The custom of the wedding flag knows variations in all villages of Oaș Country, this paper presents the manufacturing of the wedding flag in Comlăușa Locality, Satu Mare Country.

An important work, done collectively at the groom’s house is the manufacturing show of the wedding flag. The task of the initiative and organization of execution is the responsibility of *stegar* or *stegaș* (male person who carries the wedding flag), one of the *dulci* (first cousin) cousins of the groom. In many cases, there are two, three or even four *stegași*, lads which are cousins of the groom, first of all, but also of the bride when they are many. Among them, one has the primary responsibility. Helped by others, he prepares the necessary materials and invites *druștele* to work.

They constitute a variable group of 6-12 virgins, between 15-19 years old, friends or relatives of *stegaș*, chosen by him according to the beauty, honest, skills and with a good moral reputation in the village. ‘Those who sew flags – *druștele* – at the most honest place, most popular in the village! Girls with kindness, relatives with the lad making the flag. If she is *hâdă* (ugly), he doesn’t call her!’ The ones called cannot refuse the invitation to participate in the work. Otherwise, they risk to be denied access to the wedding, measure applied uncompromisingly by the lad making the flag, as master of ceremonies. The girls called gather in evening at the groom’s house, only accompanied, to not be exposed to the public’s blame that they are out alone in the night.

In order to manufacture the flag, *stegașul* procures a bat, greenery, crepe paper, balls of thread of hemp and cotton, some metal nails, two collars with ten *ciangaua* or *furgalaua* each (bronze bells attached on belts, from the ones worn at the horses’ neck and some tools – hammer, scissors). *Druștele* in their turn bring: one or two big *chișchineaua* – female hair shawl – industrial fabric of wool, with

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<sup>1</sup> Informer Paul Ana, 72 years, Comlăușa, Satu Mare

## BOOK REVIEWS

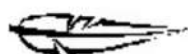


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*Toposul marginalității în romanul românesc. Vol. I. Dimensiuni ale  
marginalității*

by Dan Țăranu

București, Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române, 2013

(The Topos of Marginality in the Romanian Novel (Volume I)

by Dan Țăranu

The Museum of Romanian Literature Publishing House, 2013)

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## Marginality as a Literary Topos

*Abstract: Dan Țăranu's book on marginality uses this concept to reinterpret, from this point of view, the whole Romanian novel from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in an interdisciplinary study. His interpretations on marginality cover areas tangent to literature, such as sociology, anthropology, semantics and linguistics. The book is a synthesis with essential openings and changes of perspective.*

Key words: marginality, marginal man, interdisciplinarity, topos, Romanian novel

Within the history of  
modern literature, the  
relationship of the marginal

man on the outskirts with the  
world he imagines is, probably,

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### ***Assedegats. Dos poetes transsilvans***

by **Ion Mureșan & Ioan Es. Pop**

Translated by Xavier Montoliu Pauli. Adia Edicions. Col·lecció Ossos de Sol #23.

Calonge, 2016

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### **A Visionary Duet Un dueto visionario**

*Two of the most important Romanian poets are translated into Catalan by Xavier Montoliu Pauli. The poems are displayed as two contrary forces: centrifugal for Ion Mureșan, centripetal for Ioan Es. Pop.*

En catalán, se pueden leer poemas de Ion Mureșan y de Ioan Es. Pop juntos, en el mismo libro. En rumano también, pues se trata de una edición bilingüe. Dos poetas, dos lenguas: ya alicientes importantes para un libro, *Assedegats. Dos poetes transsilvans*, logrado en su totalidad. Xavier Montoliu Pauli nos presenta una muy acertada

selección de poemas<sup>1</sup> y la bella traducción catalana de este dueto visionario, acogido en el espacio editorial de la mallorquina Adia Edicions.

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<sup>1</sup>Los poemas de Ion Mureșan recogidos en esta antología pertenecen a los libros *El llibre d'hivern* (1981), *El poema que no pot ser entès* (1993) y *el llibre Alcohol* (2010), mientras que los de Ioan Es. Pop a *el leud sense sortida* (1994).

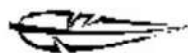
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***Elemente de metodică a predării limbii și literaturii române,  
Elements of Methodology – Teaching Romanian Language and Literature***

by Florin Cioban

Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, ELTE Budapest, 2015

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**Teaching Romanian Language and Literature in Foreign Environment**

*Abstract: The book Elemente de metodică a predării limbii și literaturii române by Florin Cioban addresses the teachers of Romanian language in other countries. The innovatory aspect of this book is the focus on core-objectives. The author of the book suggests adoptions of alternative and appropriate solutions that would result in a certain autonomy of comprehending any type of text and developing interpretation and communication skills. The relationship between the available textbooks, the curricula, and the methodological guide is extensively covered.*

Key words: curricula, methodological guide, communication skills, teaching

The course shows that the key component of the curriculum that deals with the educational finalities of the Romanian Language and Literature Course in middle school and high school is

represented by core-objectives. The objectives of reference derive from core-objectives and represent a concrete notion in the sense that they define learning situations specific to the level of instruction set at the



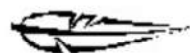
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***Strada. Loc de trecere și petrecere***

by **Monica Săvulescu-Voudouri**

București, EuroPress Group, 2007

**(The Street. Passage or Timepass by Monica Săvulescu-Voudouri**

Bucharest, EuroPress Group, 2007

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## **The Philosophical Openings of the Street**

**Abstract:** *The book Strada. Loc de trece și petrecere (The Street. Passage and Timepass) is intended as an essay stemming from a sociological perspective on this space at all crossroads and confluences, i.e. the street. Actually, this booklet is more than that, it is a readers' blast. The author, Monica Săvulescu-Voudouri, is a gifted prose-writer, a poet, a doctor in philosophy, a theatre critic and a full-time sociologist. One can never look at the street in the same manner before and after reading Săvulescu Voudouri's book, as it has the quality of mirroring all visible and visible structures related to the street. Imagination, writing style vivacity, metaphysical questions, openings of the self through memory, exile reconstructions, imaginative recollections of great fictional characters map together the urban spectacle, creating a palimpsest where the self and the world are intimately engraved on each other.*

**Key words:** sociology, street, philosophy, spectacle, subjectivity, timepass

The book *Strada. Loc de trecere și petrecere* by Monica

Săvulescu Voudouri has the appearance of an essay and the



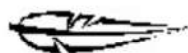
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***Imaginea evreului în cultura română. Studiu de imagologie în context  
est-central-european***

by **Andrei Oișteanu**

Iași, Editura Polirom, 2012;

(**Inventing the Jew** by Andrei Oișteanu.

Romanian third edition, Iassy, Polirom Publishing House, 2012)

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## **The Mirror of Restitution**

*Abstract: Andrei Oișteanu undertakes a research in ethnical imagology in his book on Inventing the Jew (Romanian third edition). Due to the tabooisation of the subject under communism, such investigation was completely missing from Romanian bibliography and from the East European one, being a vital restitution. The book x-rays all the aspects through which Europeans had perceived the Jews and their mythology, as well as the mythologized image of the Jew.*

**Key words:** the myth of the Jew, ethnical imagology, anthropology, identity, stereotypes

The volumes belonging to Andrei Oișteanu have intrinsic qualities that have proven their permanence in

creating the stamp of their author (a historian, an essay writer, an anthropologist and a prose writer all together): they

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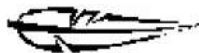
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### *El ojo castaño de nuestro amor*

By Mircea Cărtărescu

Translated by Marian Ochoa de Eribe. Madrid, Impedimenta, 2016

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## The Specularity of Translation El doble de la mirada traducida

*Marian Ochoa de Eribe has translated into Spanish another of Mircea Cărtărescu's books, El ojo castaño de nuestro amor, allowing Spanish readers to have a glimpse into the laboratory of his writings.*

*El ojo castaño de nuestro amor* de Mircea Cărtărescu fue publicado por la editorial Impedimenta de Madrid en 2016, cuatro años después de que viera la luz *Ochiul căprui al dragostei noastre*. La artífice de la versión española, Marian Ochoa de Eribe, se ha convertido ya en la traductora *en titre* de la obra cărtăresciana al castellano, tras haber traducido *El Ruletista* (2010), *Lulu* (2011), *Nostalgia* (2012), *Las bellas extranjeras* (2014) y *El Levante* (2015), todos bajo el sello de la editorial Impedimenta. Ya ganadora de

varios premios por su impecable labor traductora, Marian Ochoa de Eribe continúa mostrando excelencia también en esta ocasión, lográndose apegar a la voz cărtăresciana en el fluir de las frases.

El índice de *El ojo castaño de nuestro amor* le puede causar cierta perplejidad al lector. A raíz de la superposición perfecta del título sobre *Ochiul căprui al dragostei noastre* y de la mención, en la página correspondiente a la información editorial en la versión española, de que, en efecto, el anterior es el título

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### *Puțin sub linie*

by **Robert Șerban**

(București, Editura Cartea Românească

**A Little Bit beneath the Line**

Cartea Românească Publishing-House, Bucharest, 2015)

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### Stanzas on Life...

*Abstract: Robert Șerban's most recently published poetry volume, Puțin sub linie/ A Little Bit beneath the Line is a very generous book, still revealing and exploring the inner self, a self who might seem quite familiar to the modern reader due to his common spaces, such as: loneliness, fear of losing the loved ones, fear of death, nostalgia, missing the lost paradise; it is also a charming and convincing poem on life, as simple as that.*

Key words: inner self, death, anguish, loneliness, every - day life.

There is one undeniable  
certainty      stamping      Robert

Șerban's poetry: his poem very  
much resembles a continuously

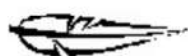
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***Ulysses, 732. Romanul romanului*** by Mircea Mihăieș,

Editura Polirom, Iași, 2016;

**(Ulysses, 732. The Novel of the novel** by Mircea Mihăieș,

Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2016

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## The Map of The Beyond while Reading Joyce

*Abstract: To give substantiality to this adventure into nowhere on Joyce's footprints, Mihăieș organises his book on Joyce's Ulysses, entitled Ulysses, 732. Romanul romanului. (Ulysses, 732. The novel of the novel), with the help of geographical landmarks: the peninsula, the archipelago, the island. Mihăieș's book totally changes the role of the critic. It challenges what we know about criticism, about what the criticism ought to do. Mihăieș's extended essay does nothing more but show how a great book of mankind can transform a man.*

Key words: Ulysses, criticism on Joyce, Joyce's reception, literary spaces

Mircea Mihăieș, a non-conformist among critics, has recently published a gigantic

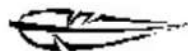
work on Joyce's Ulysses, entitled *Ulysses, 732. Romanul*



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***Folclorul. Ce facem cu el?***

By Otilia Hedeșan

Ediția a doua, adăugită, Editura Universității de Vest, Timișoara, 2015

**(The Folklore. What Should We Do With it?**

Second edition, West University Press, Timișoara, 2015)

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**The Folklore. The Myths. The Customs... What Should We Do With Them?**

*Abstract: Otilia Hedeșan, the author and initiator of the volume, renders it an extraordinary value by using the gathered information in a new form and by focusing in the chapter Numărătoarea Mare, (The Big Numbering) and the following ones, on the multiple roles held by Baba Ruța from Topolovău Mare: she is at the same time the death-washer and the rascal witch, the seductress in her youth and the blackmailer of some powerful members of the communist party, the profiteer and the fortune teller, the folklore keeper and the folklore creator. All these features make of her a local personality. Her extended knowledge as far as the sacred domain is concerned reveals her as somebody who is a treasure for the others. Apart from the ritualistic context and the meta-text represented by the very bibliography of the theme, the Big Numbering opens new territories.*

Key words: folklore, folklore study in Romania, interview, customs, rites of passage, folklore informer, contemporary sorceress

Throughout years of research, Otilia Hedeșan has published several volumes attesting an intense, passionate focusing on the Romanian folklore, besides her academic

teaching: „Șapte eseuri despre strigoi” – “Seven Essays on Werewolves” (2000), „Pentru o mitologie difuză” – (“Towards a Diffuse Mythology” (2000), „Angoasele cititorului de

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***Puntea artelor***

by **Nicolae Bârna**,

București, Editura Ideea Europeană, 2015

**(The Bridge of Arts by Nicolae Bârna**

Ideea Europeana Publishing House, Bucharest, 2015)

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## The Literary History for Readers' Delectation

*Abstract: Nicolae Bârna is a specialist in the literary history of Romanian prose. He has published many volumes dedicated to this genre. In Puntea artelor (The Bridge of Arts) he examines closely the canonical books of Romanian contemporary literature, identifying with precision their most important features. The critic is a perspicuous specialist and a sagacious literary historian who can offer a clinching reading of the Romanian novel, both for the Romanian reader and for the readers abroad, with maximal results.*

**Key words:** contemporary novel, Romanian literature, literary canon, critical approaches

One of the most professionalist and perspicuous literary historians of Romanian literature is Nicolae Bârna (born 1950). He is a researcher at „G. Călinescu” Institute of Literary History and Theory in Bucharest. Some landmarks of his chosen themes of research are so well grounded that he

comes back to them, from time to time, regardless the subject of his other books. This is the case of his recent, ample volume, *Puntea artelor (The Bridge of Arts)*.

The title of Bârna's book suggests, in a poetic way, the convergence between arts, the interferences stemming from

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*În intimitatea secolului 19*

by Ioana Pârvulescu

Editura Humanitas Bucuresti, 2013

(*Privy to the Nineteenth Century* by Ioana Pârvulescu

Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2013)

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### ***Privy to the Nineteenth Century. An Appraisal of Ioana Pârvulescu's Take on the Nineteenth Century***

Abstract: *Ioana Pârvulescu's book În intimitatea secolului 19 / Privy to the Nineteenth Century (2013) is a comprehensive study of the socio-cultural atmosphere of the pre-belle époque. Not only is it all-encompassing, it is also subtly underpinned by an astute, in-depth knowledge of the intricacies of Romanian social life in the 19th century, all doubled by effective eloquence.*

Key words: panorama, fabric of society, fictionalization of sociological discourse, absence vs. presence

What is, then, life in the 19th century like? As Pârvulescu's extensive study yields, a life riddled by class rift, by gender-driven imbalance in what the public-private ratio is concerned, to say the least. But equally a progress-ridden life. In point of form, perhaps to

ideologically mirror the prevalent genre of the age - i.e. the novel -, Pârvulescu's narrative is thus forged as to mimic that genre; hence it begets novel-informed instantiations with the occasional climactic high-pitch in the narration of apparently