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Voicing the Unspeakable in Alexandru Vona's Fiction

Abstract: Since 1993, when Alexandru Vona's novel *Ferestre zidite* [*Bricked-Up Windows*] has finally been published, critics and scholars have repeatedly tried to find the right frame for interpreting this exceptional work. Some of them insisted on those strategies that make it, to a certain extent, similar to Surrealists' writings; others found reasons to compare its bizarre atmosphere to that in Kafka's or Robert Walser's prose, while others noticed its affinities with the Gothic novel. However, most of them have acknowledged the uncommonness of Alexandru Vona's fiction, insisting on the writer's endeavour to reveal a strange sense of frailty. Written in the first person, *Ferestrele zidite* represents more than an attempt to harmonise memory and oblivion, writing and remembering, inner exile and mystery. It explores in depth one of the fundamental dimensions of human condition: its frailty in relationship with Death.
Keywords: Poetics of Silence; Spectrality; Inner Exile; Paramnesia; Memory; Space.

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Riddles of a Novel

In Romanian literature, which does not seem to exhibit a particular taste for the category of the fantastic, nor for related formulas such as the Gothic novel (in the past) or the horror, fantasy or science fiction literature of the contemporary era, the publication of a novel such as Alexandru Vona's *Bricked-Up Windows* may seem surprising. If we also take into account the fact that the book's inherent strangeness is mirrored by a tortuous editorial trajectory, compounded by the nebulous circumstances of the inception of the work (written, as the author confessed, during a bizarre state of arousal, as if he had been transcribing – in a trance – the words of an unknown visitor), then we realise that we are faced with a literary "case" that deserves careful investigation.

As is well-known, the novel, written in 1947, was only published for the first time in 1993, almost half a century after its completion[1], by Cartea Românească Publishing House, with a second edition printed shortly afterwards by the same publishing house.[2] Composed in Romanian, just a few years after the end of the Second World War, shortly before the author emigrated to France, *Bricked-Up Windows* may

serve, among other things, as a landmark in a potential counterfactual history of Romanian literature, prompting us to imagine what the Romanian literary landscape might have looked like in the absence of history's brutal intrusion.

Regarding the novel's inception and the circumstances of its composition, in the course of only three weeks in the spring of 1947, the writer offers some noteworthy details in a volume containing conversations with Irina Mavrodin and Irina Izverna-Tarabac:

> I wrote twenty pages that first night. Most of those pages were left untouched. I knew that until I finished it I wouldn't stop. I wrote every morning from nine to one o'clock. After lunch I would go on a stroll with Mira every day. They were endless, aimless strolls, but they were very necessary to me. I was in a state of permanent happiness that I had never known before.[3]

It is quite difficult to see – and the author himself acknowledges this paradox – how such a happy individual can spend twenty days writing a text "that does not give off the slightest whiff of happiness or fulfilment."[4] Quite the reverse. If we try to identify a thematic core (as far as a text which is coagulated in an area of indeterminacy will allow us), we come to the conclusion that what we are witnessing is basically a failed adventure, a fruitless quest, whose essence is not the end goal (the unravelling of the mystery) but the meaning of the quest itself. In a nutshell, a book of silences, of blank spaces, of absence. The opening sentence of the text encourages such a view, while warning the reader that the real stakes of the game lie outside the boundaries of known reality:

> I was sad, but not as I am every day, more precisely as I am at the beginning of every day, when I find it so difficult to detach myself from the fragile, submissive beings with whom I spend my nights, from the world that comes before, ever different, in which the smallest detail changes everything [...] This sadness, which children confess to when they wake up crying, then slowly recedes like the waters of the ebb tide; on the beach of the body, there only sometimes remain small pools of bitter fluid, as in certain cracks. Thus I know the days when my brain can't stand the noise, when I must draw the shutters and spend my time between the placid walls. The days when my hands can't do anything and until late at night, when they fall asleep exhausted beside me, I feel them trembling, coursing with an inexplicable restlessness.[5]

It is not difficult to perceive that the mysterious narrator's voice is a kind of testimony from another existence, from another order of things, from "the other outside" (as he puts it), from which there simultaneously emanate echoes of foreign voices, "additional vibrations of real events"[6], amplified by the resonance box of an overwrought sensibility.

The narrative core of the novel seems rather thin on the surface, but its apparent simplicity does not clarify anything, rather it introduces further ambiguity. This is also due to the fact that the only point of view we are given access to is that of an

eminently unreliable narrator, who knows less than his characters and deliberately muddles the story by inserting dreamlike sequences and by overlapping time planes, thus shifting the centre of gravity inwards, towards the place where fantasies, hallucinations and fears are born. The quality of indeterminacy is also heightened by the fact that the characters (with one exception) are not named. Only one proper name (Kati) is mentioned over the course of the novel's nearly three hundred pages, but this insertion of concreteness does not halt the obliteration of certainty. The setting for these forays into "immediate unreality" (to borrow a phrase from the title of a well-known inter-war novel)[7], is a town in Transylvania (maybe Braşov, maybe Târgu Mureş), which can be only vaguely identified by its topography and a few (Gothic) architectural landmarks, while the characters, just as in the prose of Max Blecher[8], H. Bonciu[9] or Bruno Schultz, are barely sketched (a tailor and his daughter, an accountant, a barber, a stranger in a black dress and some supposed relatives). All of these traits may justify an analysis of the novel from the perspective of a poetics of spectrality, as outlined by Julian Wolfreys in an essay on neo-Victorian fiction.[10] Noticing that the image of an undead past, returning in revenant form, is recurrent in contemporary historical novels, Wolfreys' article extends the notion of spectrality to the process of reading the past more generally. Focusing on collective past, the critic highlights fiction's potential to vivify in phantasmatic form voices suppressed by the historical record. In other words, the literary text "makes an apparition that serves as a memory"[11]. Although in Vona's novel the spectral return of the past is rather a matter of personal *anamnesis,* yet – not otherwise as in the case of neo-historical fiction – re-presentation places a burden on the reader to bear witness to the unnamable Other's coming to light. The atmosphere in particular, as it proves ambiguous, confounding, murky induces the reader to drift over the dividing line between the visible and the invisible, into the realm of entities that do not live but will never die.

Under the Sign of Paramnesia

In the volume of conversations mentioned above, Alexandru Vona makes an interesting remark that deserves careful consideration, as it concerns the commentators who endeavour to decipher the meanings of his book. The writer is willing to give a helping hand, reminding them of a crucial statement uttered by his character in the very first pages:

> The narrator says: Whenever I want to imbue a memory with the quality of eternity, I pluck it out of the run of ordinary life. So, I can only ensure this quality of eternity for those things that I have deprived of a normal life. For example, with regard to the citizen who occasionally writes letters or postcards, I don't want to know the truth about where he is and what he is doing. So I can make him send any kind of postcards.[12]

In the second chapter of *Bricked-Up Windows*, one can clearly see this two-step process at work, as well as how the intertwining of "events and non-events"[13], as the author puts it, generates a kind of

second-degree world, an underlying fiction in which the narrator-character converses unhindered with voices from the past, he being the only one with the ability to conjure them. The impulses which guided him somewhat resemble the symptoms of paramnesia, since he deliberately conceals certain aspects in favour of those that are no longer part of life and are, therefore, no longer destined to perish. As psychiatrists know, the term "paramnesia" designates several types of memory disorder, consisting, broadly, in misidentification of persons, events or places. Especially the symptoms of the so-called reduplicative paramnesia (which has many features in common with confabulation and with Capgras syndrome[14]) can be easily identified in the case of the first person narrator of *Bricked-Up Windows.*

In the scene I am referring to – incidentally, a rich one in terms of narrative resources – we start by witnessing a teenage romance, inevitably followed by the shattering of illusions (the girl with whom the young man would go walking in the woods, near a former hunting lodge, informs him that she is getting engaged). From that moment on, the lover decides to put an end to his walks ("I no longer waited for her in the afternoon, and only saw her at lunchtime, sitting stiffly between her parents, who have since seemed very imposing to me"[15]). By isolating the episode of the shattering of illusions from the flow of ordinary existence and by extracting the image of the girl from all the events that have taken place, the narrator makes room for latent, unrealised possibilities and manages to endow the inflections of lost voices with a new life, even if a spectral one. A strange emanation of the real past, the scene discussed above also seems to confirm the axiom, posited elsewhere by the writer, that "our memory uses the past not only directly, starting from facts, but also uses it *en tant que générateur de phantasmes.*"[16] The very appearance of the stranger in the black dress a few pages later seems to be the result of paramnesiac confusion, the manifestation of a perceptual delusion (or more likely the delusion "of meeting oneself"[17], of which Ramón Gómez de la Serna spoke):

> The girl had passed by me, with unreal swiftness, like the pictures slipped by the class jester into the magic lantern [...] I think I had opened my eyes just at the instant when her profile was sliding past me. Maybe it hadn't been just a coincidence, the light from her cheek had forced the barrier of the blackness in which I was floating. Beyond this blackness I was again infinitely sensitive and had received her with all my being at once [...] Then this undifferentiated vibration had stilled like the ripple of water around the place where a stone has sunk and I saw her, the pale forehead barely discernible among the strands of blond hair, the eye as it appears on some ancient profiles, depicted from the front, the expression hopeless and at the same time inscrutable [...] It had all lasted but a moment. I thought I didn't know anything more and rejoiced like I did in years past upon finding an unread story in a storybook, when I discovered after a few steps that I had retained the fragile curve of the neck and the almost imperceptible roundness of the chest.[18]

This first appearance of the stranger (which calls to mind the daydreams of the Romantics, but also Baudelaire's poem *À une passante*), has two striking attributes: its volatile, ghostly look and the ambivalence of the echoes it stirs within the viewer (as if it were the actualization of a hieratic and secret image, perhaps that of a feminine archetype, a kind of *anima* floating from the mists of memory, leading to instant recognition). Just as it could be, equally, a false recognition, an anomaly of the senses or a hallucination. No matter which it is, reading such passages leads the reader to assume that, just as in fairy tales or nightmares, the characters are in the grip of a heavy spell, of their unconscious nature or the forces of the other world, a spell that generates confusion and loss of willpower. The intrusion of such forces is, of course, also due to the often surprising or shocking associations that the narrator establishes between certain events, objects, states and the characters around him. The fascination he feels for the unknown girl he meets on a solitary walk is matched by the aversion he feels (equally strongly and, in some ways, equally inexplicably) for her mysterious "family" (in particular her supposed "brother"), all of whom are touched by the decrepitude of the house with the bricked-up windows.

As can be seen, all the symbolic levels of this strange fiction come together to embody a thanatic obsession: both the characters and their memories, the decors and the objects that compose them, delineate a realm where ambiguity reigns and confusion opens up the prospect of a *sui generis* Hades. Most of the "actors" conjured are mere hallucinations or projections of projections, while most of events are misremembered in some act of induced paramnesia.

The Silent World of Objects

According to Vladimir Jankélévitch, modern man lives trapped in an inextricable *imbroglio*, in a web of uncertainties, since he "senses the definitive confusion in which no rational order appears, a nameless abyss that does cannot be counted even as the germ or promise of a cosmos."[19] Under these circumstances, the mysterious and unsettling objects which feature in the prose of authors such as Alexandru Vona, Max Blecher, Bruno Schultz or Ramón Gómez de la Serna (to name but a few of the writers who are representative of what might be called the "tragedy of confusion"[20]), play a crucial role in that they chart the meandering course of inner adventures. A genuine tragedy that shatters both, the foundation of indvidual self and the coherence of the world. In effect, this formula brings up the gap between an utterly opaque universe and a tormented self (which acts often as a disembodied voice lost in a neverending nightmare). The only certainty left for the "man who is immersed in immanence"[21] is that the whole universe cheats, that reason and the senses deceive each other, and that objects and events are complicit with each other, intertwined in a web of ominous, if not downright diabolical relationships. Such a vision is not very different from what Julio Cortázar considered to be the essence of the true fantastic, which consists not so much in the obligatory ingredients of the story, as in its pulsating resonance, in the projection of an order that is alien to us, but which can appropriate us at any moment in order to create one of its mosaics.[22]

In *Bricked-Up Windows*, silence and solitude most often favour this confusion and the implicit stripping away of meaning from things ("silence descends between us from another plane of unreality, in which everything has lost all meaning, and frees things that are otherwise in thrall to their usefulness"[23]). Afflicted, like the Romantics, by melancholy, world-weariness and an objectless nostalgia, Alexandru Vona's character seems doomed to wander around, surrounded by a motley assortment of objects that have lost their purpose and meaning (a bottle of iodine, two walnut-wood globes at the head of the bed, the menacingly-clawed chair's legs, a velvet chocker for pendants, the yellow snakes woven into the design of a frightening carpet, etc.)

Among these odd things, most of them freed from the burden of their usefulness, the drawing in the carpet deserves special attention, as it gives the impression that it is trying to communicate an essential message, which, however, is not easy to decipher, as its signs are constantly making reference to other signs, just like in those nightmares in which the masks fall off only to reveal other masks:

> Yellow snakes coiled among the lotuses and leaves of imaginary plants appeared on the carpet. It was a terrifying carpet, the snakes seemed to move, the green of the plants seemed scorched by tropical heat [...] The drawing in the carpet sank into its mystery, just as from the rushing sound of the waters beneath the bridge there remains only a murmur, increasingly confused if you listen to it for a long time [...] "– Really, what are these yellow strips?" The old woman also leaned over the arm of the high-backed chair and looked at the carpet. "–They're snakes." I wished I hadn't said anything. "–Where do you see snakes? Where do you see their heads?" She looked at me suspiciously. "–What an imagination you have!"[24]

The carpet is a world in itself, possibly a map which provides guidance within the fictional world, but it is a map that leads the observer to lose his bearings more than anything; it also demonstrates the magical powers that it possesses as a threatening, malicious object which seems to be involved in an implacable tangle of evil complicities, just like the other things that make up the strange decor of the house with the bricked-up windows.

We can readily select a number of other episodes in which the strange relationships between objects, events and moods help spring the "trap", facilitate the entry into a kind of no man's land of fear from which one can rarely find one's way back. The symbolism of the bricked-up windows represents, *per se*, an edifying example in this regard. Essentially ambiguous, the title formula acquires, in addition to its outward funerary significance, a series of weird connotations, as it happens in the case of other ordinary objects deprived of their functionality. Consider the web of strange associations which the narrator spins starting from the image of a harmless garter dropped by the foot of a bed, or from the entirely unremarkable buttons sewn on a coat sleeve:

> I remember a garter that lay curled up at the foot of the bed like a flatworm with a cold mouth and two thin metal

> teeth. Objects are too intrusive. I don't know the purpose of this intrusiveness, but it is interfering with my actions. I had also noticed the handkerchief that hung out of the pocket like a broken pigeon's wing, the three white buttons slipping silently down the sleeve of the coat on the chair, like the paper steamers we used to float on the lake. There was a coalition of things around me, barring my way back.[25]

As far as imagination is concerned, objects serve not only to trigger certain inner states, often tumultous, but also as secret vehicles enabling passage to other worlds (some betraying nostalgia for a lost paradise, as in the case of the string of pearls, "the mysterious grains whose pale smile hides the silences of underwater gardens"[26]); but more often than not, the worlds that are explored are nightmarish tableaux with infernal undertones, the suggestiveness of which is amplified, as in Gustav Meyrink's *Golem*, by the infusion of mystery (often esoteric or dreamlike in nature), giving a distinctive flavour to this strange book, with its wealth of poetic and unsettling visions:

> Among the few events from a distant era that have stuck with me, there is also a dream that I remember in my sleep, and by constantly replaying it, I have come to no longer know what it was like in its original form, to no longer be able to locate its beginning [...] Two old men had come into my bedroom and were talking about the journey I was going to embark on. In my hand I had to hold a parchment and not take my eyes off it. If it happened to start changing colour, I had to tear it up immediately, otherwise... and here there followed the image of a terrible threat, of falling head first down an infinitely long vertical tube, with my hands glued to my body.[27]

Such nightmares, betraying the anguish of the final collapse into the abyss, are usually associated with "the feeling of an overwhelming and unending loneliness"[28], being the consequence of one's sinking into immanence, into an universe of dismantled meanings in which even the trivial bottle of iodine acquires – as if by magic – an unsettling quality. Vladimir Jankélévitch was right when he said that it was the crumbling of the reference system that was truly maleficent. Confusion then takes hold of man, turning him into a sleepwalker, and his life becomes a nightmare:

> Like a patient in a state of hypnotic suggestion, the dupe who sleeps and believes he is in a waking state, is engulfed in his own dream from head to toe; he lacks the transcendent criterion which would allow him to distinguish the dream from the waking state, delusion from the truth [...] However, the cataleptic state is defined by reference to waking states and to the magnetiser's own will, which acts as a solid reference system and allows control over the dream: confusion would be a kind of catalepsy that is coextensive with the whole of life and whose magnetiser would be the devil.[29]

There is plenty of horror, but also a kind of morbid fascination in this unmasking of the world, whereby it is shown to

be nothing but a huge trap, where there is nothing for the individual to do other than accept his condition of victim and, potentially, to scrutinise the ambiguous clues that feed his anguish. From here to the state of generalised confusion that Jankélévitch spoke of, in which the imaginary and the real form a continuum, there is only one more step, which the narrator takes whenever he experiences the state of inverted grace that reveals the world as a huge theatre where the performance is staged by a diabolical director. There is a paragraph in the last chapter of the novel that can be used as an argument in support of such a hypothesis. The narrator evokes an apparently insignificant incident which occurred to him during an opera performance. The background of the scene, occupied by the choir, depicted the indistinct crowd of guests attending a ball in an ancient castle. Among them, an evil messenger of the subterranean realm is instantly recognized by the vigilant observer:

> The choristers looked placidly towards the audience, while I could only see the gloomy face, with dead eyes, of the one who did not sing. The entire lodge was invaded by the suffocating smell of old rubble which absorbs like a sponge the breath of generations; I knew where the smell was coming from. None of the choristers was aware of the intruder's presence [...] The air, more and more foul with the underground stink was annoying me alone in the lodge. Indeed, to me alone this message was addressed.

In other words, for a tormented self, the universe is nothing but a sinister trap (or rather an absurdist farce) while inward disquietude is experienced as outward atmosphere, submerging the world in indefinable strangeness and mystery.

Conclusion

It doesn't take great powers of perception to notice the recurrence of the motif of silence in *Bricked-Up Windows*, serving as an amplifier of anguish and as a backdrop to alienation and death. Clearly the coherence of the novel is ensured – in the absence of real narrative coherence – by a particular kind of synaesthesia, by the visions' hallucinatory force, by the poematic polyphony of the discourse, by the immersive concreteness of the phantasms and obsessions, the most prominent of which are the obsessions of illness and death. Death, however it may make its presence felt, exerts on the narrator-character the attraction of the ultimate unanswered question, just as the strange illness (epilepsy) is simultaneously a gateway to other worlds and a symptom of the diffuse Evil that permeates the entire novel. In the same vein, the objects seem destined to account for a reality that resists or defies naming; their presence is unsettling, spectral as if on the brink of decomposition, they are drawn into the labyrinth that shelters them and tends to suck them inside, at the risk of falling apart itself.

In conclusion, we can say that Alexandru Vona's novel is representative of that direction seen in Modernist literature in the first half of the 20th century that does not exclude, but actually favours, an openness towards the symbolic, the mythical and the archetypal. A direction that takes the novel out of realm of *mimesis* and has it embark on a veritable

rollercoaster of transformation, in which the "illusion", even if it does not disappear, is constructed and undermined almost at the same time.

All in all, the impression the reader is left with at the end is that he has witnessed an act of exorcism, one that preserves the essence of the mystery intact. A feeling not much different, after all, from the one the author confesses having felt after writing the last sentence: "How can I tell you, I felt as if I had been the object of a visit, a citizen, who is the narrator of the novel, paid me a visit and told me something. At some point the story ended and then he left."[30] Apparently – on privileged occasions – the unspeakable finds peculiar ways to materialise.

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Notes

1. Ovidiu Constantinescu, a friend-writer of Vona's, played a very important role in the difficult process of the novel's publishing (see *Ferestre întredeschise. Alexandru Vona și Ovidiu Constantinescu*, ed. by Marta Petreu and Ion Vartic, Cluj-Napoca, Biblioteca Apostrof, 12/1997).

2.As far as one can infer from Alexandru Vona's confessions, only the second edition of *Bricked-Up Windows*, published in 1997, is thoroughly authorized by the writer, since in the previous edition (issued in 1993) Ovidiu Constantinescu had made some small changes, without asking for his friend's consent: "I tried to work on clarifying it a little. The architecture hadn't been touched, but the drawing was too steep, too sharp. This is actually my first proofread manuscript. The version corrected and redone by him had a certain softness that didn't correspond at all to my style." (*7 zile cu Alexandru Vona.Convorbiri cu Irina Izverna-Tarabac* şi *Irina Mavrodin*, translated from French by Alina Ioniţă, Iaşi, Timpul, 2011, p. 121).

3. *7 zile cu Alexandru Vona. Convorbiri cu Irina Izverna-Tarabac şi Irina Mavrodin*, *op.cit*., p.159.
4. *Ibidem.*
5. Alexandru Vona, *Ferestrele zidite*. *Ediție definitivă,* București, EST- Samuel Tastet Éditeur, 2001, p.9.
6. *7 zile cu Alexandru Vona. Convorbiri cu Irina Izverna-Tarabac şi Irina Mavrodin*, *op.cit*., p.128.
7. This phrase appears in the title of Max Blecher's volume, Întâmplări în irealitatea imediată [*Occurrence in the Immediate Unreality*], translated in English by Alistair Ian Blyth, Plymouth, University of Plymouth Press, 2009.
8. Max Blecher (1909-1938), prose writer, poet, translator and essay-writer, was born in the town of Botoşani, as the son of a well-to-do Jewish merchant, who was the owner of a porcelain shop in Roman. After secondary school's graduation, Blecher left for Paris in order to study medicine. At the age of nineteen, being dignosed with spinal tuberculosis (Pott's disease), he is forced to abandon studies. Shortly thereafter he went to seek treatment to a sanatorium in Berck-sur-mer, on the French shore of the Channel. For the remaining ten years of his life, he was confined to his bed and practically immobilized by the disease. In 1930 he made his début in Tudor Arghezi's literary magazine *Bilete de papagal,* with two sketches and some aphorisms. In 1934, after returning to Romania, he met Geo Bogza in Braşov and subsequently published a booklet of poems, entitled *Transparent Body*. Between 1934 and 1935, he wrote his best known novel, *Occurrence in the Immediate Unreality,* published in 1936. Simultaneously he writes essays for various literary magazines (*Frize*, *Vremea*, *Azi*), preparing also his second novel, *Scarred Hearts,* which appeared in 1937. His third novel, *The Lighted Borrow. Sanatorium Journal*, was published posthumously, in part in 1947 and in full in 1971. Dying at the age of twenty nine, after ten years of sufferings, Blecher let behind a remarkably coherent (yet uncanny) fictional universe, showing affinities not only with Surrealism, but also with some outstanding writers of Central and East-European literatures, such as Franz Kafka or Bruno Schultz. All these authors (comprising Al.Vona), have in common the propensity for investigating "immediate unrealities" and finally finding similar creative responses to tormenting existential crisis.
9. H. Bonciu or Horia Bonciu, also known as Haimovici or Hieronim Bonciu (1893-1950), was an atypical figure of his country's avant-garde scene. He used to sign his texts with different pseudonyms, among which "Sigismund the Absurd" and "Bon-Tşu-Haş". His work, comprising several volumes of poems and two short novels (*Luggage* and *Mrs. Pipersberg's Boarding House*), blends various influences from the different literary schools of European Modernism, and – above all – borrows largely from German movements, such as Jugendstil and Expressionism. The autofictional cruel details in Bonciu's narratives, as well as his manifest erotic subjects aroused the indignation of the establishment's leading figures. Further marginalized for his Jewish origin, Bonciu was even prosecuted in 1930s on grounds of pornography.
10. "This invention – writes Julian Wolfreys refering to neo-Victorian textuality – does not produce anything new or novel, but causes the apparition to come according to a process of finding what was always already there, but which had remained occluded and silent until the moment of conjuration, a ghostly entity possibly misremembered in some act of cultural, ideological or historical *paramnesia,* or otherwise forgotten, partially or wholly." (Julian Wolfreys, "Notes Towards a Poethics of Spectrality. The Examples of Neo-Victorian Textuality", in Kate Mitchell and N. Parsons (eds.), *Reading Historical Fiction. The Revenant and Remembered Past,* UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p.154).
11. *Ibidem*, p.164.
12. *7 zile cu Alexandru Vona. Convorbiri cu Irina Izverna-Tarabac şi Irina Mavrodin*, *op.cit*., p.126.
13. *Ibidem.*
14. For an accurate definition of "paramnesia" see Carol Turkington and Joseph R. Harris, *The Encyclopedia of Memory Disorders,* Second Edition, New York, Facts on File, Inc., 2001, p. 175. As far as "Capgras syndrome" is concerned, the authors propose the following definition: "One form of reduplicative paramnesia, this is a delusional condition also called the syndrome of *doubles,* in which a patient fails to recognize well-known people or places, believing that doubles have replaced them." (*Ibidem*, p. 48)

15. Alexandru Vona, *Ferestrele zidite, op.cit.*, p.28.
16. *7 zile cu Alexandru Vona. Convorbiri cu Irina Izverna-Tarabac și Irina Mavrodin*, *op.cit.*, p.128.
17. Ramón Gómez de la Serna, *Omul pierdut*, translated from Spanish and notes by Radu Niciporuc, with a foreword by Ioana Zlotescu-Simatu and an afterword by Vera Șandor, București, Editura Fabulator, 2004, p. 35.
18. Alexandru Vona, *Ferestrele zidite, op.cit.*, p.46.
19. Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Pur și impur,* translated from French by Elena-Brândușa Steiciuc, București, Nemira, 2000, p.112.
20. *Ibidem.*
21. *Ibidem.*
22. Julio Cortázar, *Ocolul zilei în 80 de lumi,* translated from Spanish by Marin Mălaicu-Hondrari, București, Editura Art, 2014, p. 115.
23. Alexandru Vona, *Ferestrele zidite, op.cit.*, p.119.
24.*Ibidem*, pp. 139-140.
25.*Ibidem*, p.39.
26.*Ibidem*, p.62.
27. *Ibidem*, p. 154.
28. *Ibidem*, p. 275.
29. Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Pur și impur, op.cit.*, p.122.
30.*7 zile cu Alexandru Vona. Convorbiri cu Irina Izverna-Tarabac și Irina Mavrodin*, *op.cit.*, p.161.