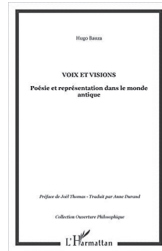


Book Reviews

Hugo Francisco Bauza,
*Voix et Visions. Poésie et
 représentation dans le
 monde antique*, traduit
 par Anne Durand, Paris,
 L'Harmattan, 2005



Sujet toujours d'actualité, la mythologie ne cesse de nous interpeller. En effet, nous pouvons nous interroger sur les liens qui se tissent entre la poésie, la musique, l'oralité et le sacré. Ce thème complexe est traité par l'ouvrage *Voix et Visions. Poésie et représentation dans le monde antique* écrit par Hugo Francisco Bauza. Rédigée dans un langage cohérent, l'analyse est accessible même aux lecteurs peu familiarisés avec les concepts de la littérature ancienne.

Hugo Bauza est professeur titulaire à l'Université de Buenos Aires et chercheur principal au CONICET. Il a été président de l'Académie nationale des sciences de Buenos Aires à deux reprises ; il est connu pour ses recherches dans le domaine de l'antiquité classique ; il a étudié également le domaine de l'« imaginaire ». Il est l'auteur d'une dizaine d'ouvrages sur le monde classique, dont *Le mythe du héros* et *Virgile et son temps*. De plus, il a traduit les œuvres complètes de Virgile, Tibulle, Terence et Propertius.

Dans *Voix et Visions. Poésie et représentation dans le monde antique* le chercheur nous propose un nouveau regard sur la poésie antique, explorant ses liens avec la mythologie et l'imaginaire par le biais de l'oralité. Qu'est-ce que la poésie ? Dès le premier chapitre, l'auteur examine la poésie antique. Il part de l'idée qu'on peut définir la poésie comme une forme de langage

riche en images visuelles et auditives mis en place grâce à un rythme et une cadence spécifiques. Pourtant, la poésie permet la création d'une réalité autre : une réalité plus mystérieuse que celle habituelle. Horace, Pindare ou Friedrich Schiller affirment qu'au cours de la création, ils ressentent la présence d'une muse qui les guide et les inspire, « l'inspiration, une présence toute intérieure de la 'musique' qui assiste au moment de la composition, l'invite à participer d'un rythme et l'inscrit ainsi dans une dimension poétique. » (p. 33) L'harmonie de la poésie est un processus complexe. Alors, premièrement, il faut tenir compte du rythme. On peut le considérer « le troisième temps, celui de l'art – plus proche du Temps métaphysique que du quotidien » ; en effet, le rythme représente, selon l'auteur, un moment unique de la poésie.

Ensuite, se pose alors la question de l'authenticité des vers. Les poètes moins doués cherchent à créer ce rythme, mais échouent souvent parce qu'ils n'atteignent pas la sensibilité poétique. Hugo Bauza définit sa vision poétique en citant Rilke qui considère que la poésie est « la substance de sa nature » (p. 41). L'harmonie de la création poétique obtenue par le rythme est visible lors de la lecture à haute voix.

Dans la Grèce antique la poésie était une forme de connaissance de la réalité immédiate et le poète était considéré comme un sage, un *sophos*. D'ailleurs, « le langage poétique est au-delà de la simple distinction entre rationnel et irrationnel car la poésie présente une identité avec l'être qui précède la distinction entre sujet et objet ». (p. 69) Dans l'imaginaire de l'antiquité, les muses jouent un rôle essentiel. Celles-ci sont les filles d'Harmonie (Uranus) et de Gaïa, représentations du Ciel

et de la Terre, autrement dit les muses sont transcendantes. Sous l'influence de l'inspiration divine générée par la muse, le poète est considéré comme un intermédiaire, il ne crée pas, il interprète un discours. « Pour les Grecs, dans le cas spécifique de la poésie, les Muses sont présentes dans cette possession, ou dans cette médiation. Au moment de la création, le poète devient un aliéné ; ce sont les Muses qui chantent à travers lui. » (p. 76)

La dimension célébratoire de la poésie dans le monde ancien est analysée dans un chapitre de l'ouvrage. L'homme éphémère atteint l'éternité grâce à la création artistique. « Toutefois, Pindare, conscient de sa condition de mortel et pour ne pas succomber à un orgueil – *hybris* pour les anciens – qui pût irriter les dieux, s'exclame : 'Ô mon âme, n'aspire pas à la vie éternelle, mais emploie tous les moyens qui la prolongent !' » La poésie embellit le réel.

Aussi, il est très important de noter que, dans la culture grecque, les poèmes homériques ont joué un rôle essentiel dans les fêtes communautaires ; souvent ceux-ci ont été l'attraction principale des événements. Les Grecs connaissaient l'impact des fêtes sur les gens alors ils cherchaient à proposer des spectacles moraux : « Usant d'une métaphore, nous pourrions dire qu'ils concurent l'art comme un texte. » (p. 149). De plus, les chants sont nécessaires pour qu'une fête soit agréable. La musique et les chansons créent une atmosphère stimulante, aidant les gens à s'évader du quotidien et à explorer une réalité transcendante. La poésie a souvent un aspect social, les *symposions* étaient un forum spécial où les gens pouvaient boire et écouter de la poésie, généralement accompagnée de la musique. Dans le cas de l'élegie, l'« aulos » (un type

de double flûte) ou parfois la danse créent un effet particulier.

Pour la culture grecque antique, la vie était associée à la lumière, tout comme la mort était associée aux ténèbres. Cependant, face à la mort, il reste une forme de survie conférée par les *kleos*, « fama » (le mot *kleos* est lié au *klyein*, « être entendu »). Dans l'ancien cosmos, rien ne pouvait être pire pour un défunt que de rester *akleôs*, « sans gloire ». Donc, une fois inscrits dans la mémoire des autres, les gens survivaient après leur trépas.

Dans le dixième chapitre est examinée la cosmovision grecque et le dionysisme avec ses traits principaux : « La dissolution des formes, l'effacement des limites, l'annulation du principe d'individuation et la liberté de flux de l'élan vital » (p. 181). La religion dionysiaque se présente de façon ambivalente : d'une part, elle conduit ses adeptes à l'extase et, d'autre part, elle les mène au calme. Tel est le double aspect du sacré, comme le montre René Girard, pour lequel le dionysisme peut être à la fois une bénédiction et une punition : « le sacrifice se présente de deux façons opposées, tantôt comme une 'chose très sainte' dont on ne saurait s'abstenir sans négligence grave, tantôt au contraire comme une espèce de crime qu'on ne saurait commettre sans s'exposer à des risques également très graves » (p. 180)

Pour ceux intéressés par la vision poétique de l'Antiquité, cet ouvrage est un excellent moyen de s'initier à l'imaginaire antique.

Mara Astalos

Corin Braga (ed.),
*Concepte și metode în
 cercetarea imaginarului 2:
 Invitații Phantasma, Iași,
 Polirom, 2021*



The Centre for Imagination Studies *Phantasma* brings out a second volume after *Concepte și metode în cercetarea imaginarului*. *Dezbateri Phantasma* in 2007. If the first volume embraced contributions of *Phantasma's* members which proposed for debate possible concepts and methods of research, the second one invited scholars outside the centre and the author Mircea Cărtărescu to respond to the same challenge.

The centre is part of CRI2i (Centre de Recherches Internationales sur l'Imaginaire) which reunites centres studies from more than sixteen countries, with the main office in France under the direction of Jean-Jacques Wunenburger and vice-presidents in Romania (Corin Braga) and Brazil (Ana Taís Martins).

A laboratory of emerging ideas would be the best description of this theoretical book. Yet its orality based on tape's transcription of the debates almost gets the reader in the middle of every discussion. There are reflections on a large specter of contemporary theories and scientific debates: from the notorious Sokal hoax, to the canonization of comics, the history of the Amazons or the nowadays futurologies approached in concepts like *mythopia* proposed by Paolo Bellini, *cosmodernity* proposed by Basarab Nicolescu, *antropomorphine* proposed by Călin-Andrei Mihăilescu or *the heuristics of fear, new*

materialisms and *policies of desire* proposed by Laura T. Ilea.

Henceforth, the book may present interest from the very young students eager to get acknowledged with the new contemporary theories and concepts to the very scrupulous scholars eager to follow intellectual traces of ideas and concepts *in process* or simply to endorse in contemporary debates from the imagination studies point of view and not only.

Moreover, the value of the work is increased by the fact that some concepts were preceded or followed by the publication of books dedicated to them. *From Modernity to Cosmodernity: Science, Culture and Spirituality* (State University of New York, 2014) by Basarab Nicolescu was published after the *Phantasma* debate from 2006, there could be followed some accents of the discussion in the body of the book; for instance, the debate accentuated the religious tone of Nicolescu's discourse which was a surprise for him, we cannot but sense that something changed in his endeavour as the book brought in the title the word "spirituality", included a chapter named *Can science be a religion?* Then again, the book was included in SUNY series of esoteric western traditions. The ideas that triggered this plus of perspective could be found merely in the debate. *Antropomorfina* (trans. Corina Tiron, Ed. Curtea Veche, București, 2005) translated from the English version *Antropomorphine. Postmodern Philosophy in Fifteen Addictions* was published before the *Phantasma* debate and Mihăilescu tries to get his discussion partners *addicted* to his concept by extrapolating it.

Paolo Bellini's article published in the 2009 *Cahiers de l'Echinox* "Between myth and logos: The concept of Mythopia and

Technological Civilization” brought again in the context of Phantasma a multi-nyanced debate. Adriana Babeți’s book *Amazoanele. O poveste* (Polirom, 2013) proposed a plan before the editorial apparition that was encouraged and deeply welcomed at Phantasma. The book received since several rewards: “Premiul Uniunii scriitorilor din România” (2014), “Gala industriei de carte din România” (2014), “Cartea anului 2013” (România Literară). The old debates of new canonizations were relaunched by Ion Manolescu after his book publication *Benzile desenate și canonul postmodern* (Cartea românească, 2011). The main themes emphasized the debate between the need of including comics and graphic novels in a literary canon (Manolescu’s point of view) and the need of defining their own canon. Moreover, a special appreciation received the application on the graphic novel *Maus* by Art Spiegelman.

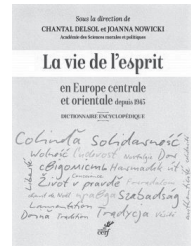
Last but not least, Laura T. Ilea gave a preamble of her new book that appeared also this year *Politiques du désir: pour une condition relationnelle* (Mimesis, 2021) and the discussion underlined the duality of position and the perplexity of confronting and of trying to reconcile new materialisms and the fears in the front of so many theorizations of possible futures: from the Anthropocene to necro- and bio-politics, Posthumanism and apocalyptic questions like: there is nothing left, but the messianic dimension of digitalization?

To conclude, the heterogeneity of the concepts presented in *Concepte...* reveals how imagination and literary studies keep the pace with such a fast globalizing and overwhelming world. In fact, the concepts are discussed in such a warm manner that the book does not give answers,

but increases the unspoken questions, and when “all ends in a book” as Ruxandra Ceresreanu closes the last discussion, possibilities of facing the new rhythm appear.

Georgiana Bodeanu

La vie de l'esprit en Europe centrale et orientale depuis 1945. Dictionnaire encyclopédique, sous la direction de Chantal Delsol et Joanna Nowicki, Les Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 2021



Après la fin de la seconde Guerre Mondiale, l’Europe a été divisée entre deux sphères d’influence qui ont suivi des trajectoires différentes. Tandis que l’Occident se développait du point de vue économique et social en touchant son apogée, l’Europe centrale et orientale expérimentait l’horreur du communisme. Le rideau de fer installé entre l’Est et l’Ouest a non seulement délimité une frontière politique mais a également obstrué la circulation des idées. La culture de l’Est n’a pas pu sortir du bloc communiste ; les occidentaux n’ont pas réussi à la connaître. Le volume *La vie de l’esprit en Europe centrale et orientale depuis 1945* paru aux Éditions du Cerf en 2021 essaie d’améliorer cette syncope en révélant la facette culturelle cachée de l’Europe centrale et orientale.

Chantal Delsol et Joanna Nowicki, coordonnatrices du volume, ont dirigé les articles d’environ 150 chercheurs français et est-européens (polonais, roumains,

hongrois etc.) qui, ensemble, ils ont réalisé un travail titanesque, un ouvrage monumental de 1000 de pages qui a comme le sous-titre « Dictionnaire Encyclopédique ».

La première moitié du volume comprend des articles sur différents thèmes (formes d'art, la dynamique des idées, modalités de dissidence, des réactions collectives aux phénomènes politiques, des absurdités du régime, des termes utilisés uniquement dans l'espace communiste, etc.). La deuxième partie présente une ample galerie de portraits des intellectuels de l'Est (des écrivains, des philosophes, des sociologues, des théologiens, etc.).

Dans l'introduction, les coordonnatrices soulignent le défi de choisir les personnalités les plus représentatives, ainsi que le domaine dans lequel les encadrer : « La principale difficulté [...] était de décider qui est penseur, intellectuel, idéologue, militant pour une cause, héros, martyr [...]. L'ouvrage n'est pas exhaustif et de nombreux portraits et doctrines pourraient y figurer encore » (p. 23). Cependant, malgré le fait que ce travail collectif n'est qu'un échantillon de la vie des idées pendant l'époque du communisme, cet ouvrage en offre une analyse détaillée et documentée, qui invite les lecteurs à aller plus loin.

Beaucoup d'articles traitent de la dynamique politique et des atrocités déclenchées par celle-ci : « Ceaușescu : la démolition des villes et de villages », « Censure, autocensure, masque, abolition de la mémoire », « Déportation communiste en Roumanie », « La Révolution hongroise de 1956 », « Fédéralisme en Europe centrale et balkanique », etc. On note également les études qui se penchent sur les réactions des opposants ; par exemple, l'article « Mouvement de résistance armée de Roumanie »

écrit par Octavian Roske identifie et examine la stratégie des ceux qui se sont opposés à la dictature communiste.

Ce panorama socio-historique montre le contraste fort entre le bien-être occidental et l'état pitoyable des pays de l'Est. Toutefois, dans le bloc communiste l'art continue à se mettre en place et à s'affirmer. D'ailleurs, le recueil insiste sur l'idée de paradoxe, vu les conditions dans lesquelles la culture naît dans cet espace socio-politique. Le *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique* est construit aussi comme un monument qui rend hommage à tous les pays qui ont lutté contre le communisme avec les armes de l'intellect et qui ont réussi de contrebalancer ce pouvoir oppressif. La dimension subversive de la culture y apparaît clairement.

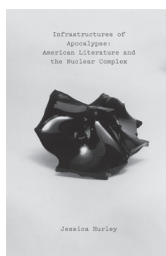
Comme l'objectif du recueil est de changer les parti pris des Occidentaux, les articles mettent l'accent sur les aspects orientaux moins connus dans l'Ouest (à cause de la censure et du manque de traductions). Si les productions cinématographiques ont circulé plus légèrement dans tout l'espace européen, l'activité des philosophes et des écrivains est restée dans l'ombre. L'article de Joanna Nowicki, „Incommunicabilité d'expériences Est / Ouest” synthétise parfaitement le drame de la séparation idéologique et culturelle entre les deux parties de l'Europe et justifie, en fait, la nécessité d'effacer les barrières qui sont plutôt d'ordre mental.

En guise de conclusion, le volume réalise une fresque politique, historique, sociale et culturelle de la société d'après-guerre dans les États dominés par le spectre soviétique. Grâce à cette synthèse on peut mieux identifier et surpasser les stéréotypes de cet espace géographique. Cet ouvrage

nous propose de relire l'histoire culturelle des pays où a régné le communisme.

Teodora Tămaș

Jessica Hurley,
*Infrastructures of
Apocalypse: American
Literature and the
Nuclear Complex*,
Minneapolis, University
of Minnesota Press, 2020



In an attempt to portray the world during the nuclear age, Jessica Hurley managed to create a unique analysis on the sociopolitical consequences that came along with the use of nuclear energy as a weapon. Her work eventually turned into a representation of life after the apocalypse as she states that “this book is for all those whose futures are impossible and who go on fighting anyway” (p. 243). *Infrastructures of Apocalypse* discloses realities such as white sovereignty, black futurelessness, racialization and radioactive waste that together might lead to an upcoming fall of the United States of America.

Organized into seven sections, the book starts with an introductory chapter in which the author gives us a brief overview of the contents that are about to be discussed in the next four main chapters. Hurley starts by evoking the question of the atomic bomb's genesis and the effects of the nuclear experiments carried on in the years following the end of the World War II. In doing so, Hurley takes over Lydia Millet's perception of the world described in her work, *Oh Pure and Radiant Heart*,

in which she imagines a world dominated by the desire of the United States to continuously evolve in the nuclear technology field to the point where any other national interest was inferior to the one of holding the nuclear power. By now, the reader might already seek the answer to why the atomic weapons were created in the first place. To give an answer to this curiosity, the author raises the topic of the so-called nuclear experiments as being purposely made in order to hurt people. She states that there is no way an atomic bomb detonation can be called a test as it is a fully controlled action, directed to a certain location or group of people.

The race issue is further discussed in chapter 1, where we come across the phenomenon of white sovereignty which implies that the white population is the ideal one, while the black one is rather a minority that sooner or later will have to disappear for America to become a homogenous community. Hurley's focus point in this chapter is Ayn Rand's 1957 novel, *Atlas Shrugged*, from which she starts her theory of whiteness being seen as a force that would help America avoid its classification as a racialized mass. She also brings up the topic of futurelessness for white people and futurelessness for black people. If whiteness comes along with futurity, blackness in the mid 1940s only brings with it the impossibility of having a future.

Continuing on this matter, in chapter 2 Hurley talks about the relationship between geography and fate when it comes to the black community. The issue of enslavement comes back as a painful memory for the black people in America who still feel mistreated in their now own country. For a more authentic perspective on this

topic, Hurley refers to two works written by queer African American authors, namely James Baldwin's *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* and Samuel R. Delany's *Dhalgren*. The goal in this chapter is to analyze the effects of the Cold War liberalism that brought with it the white supremacy, on one hand, and the civil defense, on the other. The idea of futurelessness that Hurley talked about until now suddenly turns into the act of living into an everyday apocalyptic scenario.

Taking an interesting approach on the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, Hurley finds Tony Kushner's play, *Angels in America*, quite useful as it brings back together two historical characters of the 1950s. In his last moments, Roy Cohn, an American lawyer suffering from AIDS, meets Ethel Rosenberg, the American citizen convicted of espionage that he sent to the electric chair back in 1953. The overlapping of these two characters that come together in one place raised nostalgia for the old 1950s America considered a better time for being alive. In chapter 3, the main topic is represented by the obsession with the 1950s in the 1980s America of Ronald Reagan. As the idyllic thought of the old times being more favorable spreads rapidly, the public faces a temporal containment that leads to disastrous results. In the years of the AIDS epidemic that was slowly killing the homosexual community, the world was promoting heteronormativity, and therefore avoiding the national issue disguised into a deadly disease.

The nuclear complex is better explained at the end of the book, in chapter 4, where Hurley talks about the radioactive waste that will continue to endanger the humanity for billions of years, making the

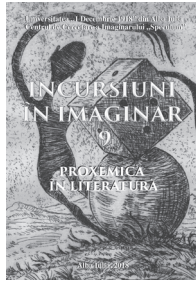
living tough if not impossible. She reads David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead* to support her theory of nuclear power being the end of the United States rather than the symbol of its continuous evolving process.

Making a comparison between the early days of the nuclear age and the present time, Hurley turns to the Fukushima Daiichi disaster from March 2011 in the brief coda that closes the book. She states the irony between the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombing at the beginning of the Cold War and the 3/11 meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. If the bomb detonation was an experiment meant to calm down the parties during the World War II, the existence of nuclear power plants in Japan was simply a decision made by the American politicians back in the 1950s with the purpose to promote the image of a powerful America.

The dedication Jessica Hurley put into the writing of this book is visible, as she makes sure to educate her readers beforehand with quite an impressive introduction, notes and also the acknowledgements compiled in the last section of her work. She confesses that *Infrastructures of Apocalypse* started as a dissertation that later on turned into a fruitful volume about the nuclear complex. At last, she does not fail to remember the people who fed her creative journey and changed its direction from a plain historical analysis to an inspiring guidebook for all those who lack hope in life.

Ștefana Rusu

Incursiuni în imaginar,
no. 9, *Proxemica în
literatură*, Editura
Aeternitas, Alba Iulia,
2018



Speculum Research Centre of Imagination (in Romanian Centrul de Cercetare a Imaginarului Speculum), was established in 2005 as a result of the keen interest of many professors and students of the '1 Decembrie 1918' University from Alba Iulia. Its main objective is the research of anthropological, social and cultural phenomena based on the science of the imaginary. The Centre has an annual journal of comparative literature named 'Incursiuni în imaginar' dedicated to social, historical, religious, literary studies and, of course, to imagination studies. To this day there have been published twelve volumes.

This review is centred on the ninth volume published in 2018 titled *Incursiuni în imaginar 9 Proxemica în literatură* by Editura Aeternitas from Alba Iulia. The editor of this edition is Gabriela Chiciudean. Structurally, the volume has a Foreword followed by six sections: *Hybrid Spaces*; *From the Romanian Space*; *Spaces of Constraint*; *From the European Perimeter*; *Fairy-tale*; *Popular Beliefs and Science-Fiction* and *Varia*. Each of these parts has various articles ranging from two to five written in Romanian or in English.

In order to understand the aim of the present volume one must start with the Foreword written by Gabriela Chiciudean. The main purpose of this introduction is the definition of proxemics,

which represents the link between literary space and characters. Also, it manages to differentiate multiple types of spaces and dimensions.

Maria-Ana Tupan's article opens the first section, *Hybrid Spaces*. It starts with the main conceptions about space and more importantly the relations between humans and space throughout the history. Beginning with Plato's view and ending with the most recent theory about place, the non-place of Marc Augé, this article is complementary to the Foreword, bringing new theoretical concepts into discussion. Although all of the articles of this volume are valuable and bring new horizons of interpretation from the point of view of proxemics, due to the limitations that a review has generally, only a part of the articles will be approached in a more detailed way.

Moving on to another section, *From Romanian Space*, the article written by Liliana Danciu, *Valences of Erotic Proximity: Spiritualisation and Repudiation of The Flesh*, analyses Gala Galaction's novella 'De la noi la Cladova'. Starting with a brief contextualisation, it manages to carry the reader through the Platonic views on love, from which derive the two types of feminine images present in Galaction's novella. This paper can be a model of a comparative literary analysis because it draws parallels between the aforementioned work and other major European works (such as Goethe's *Young Werther's Sorrows*).

In the *Fairy-tale, Popular Beliefs and Science-Fiction* section, Cristina Ileana Ilea's paper, *Anthroponyms and Denominations of Scared Places in Romanian Folktales*, stands out. It looks not only into the archetypal vision of space from fairy-tales but

also manages to undertake a short overview of the main Romanian mythological gods. Besides these aspects, one last nuance would be that, in order to analyse the geography of the said literary genre, the author finds necessary the study of the characters' names.

The last section, *Varia*, has, along a well-documented article on Salman Rushdie's *Shame*, a paper by Nicoleta Mârza titled *The Work of Art in Jung's Approach*. One of the main ideas is the differentiation made by C.G. Jung regarding art works. From the psychoanalyst's point of view there are two kinds of works: the psychological one, which has only one purpose, and the visionary one, in which the subject of the work is not under the control of the creator's intention. Starting from this Nicoleta Mârza explains in more detail both types of art works.

To end, this ninth volume of *Incursumi* in imaginari brings many new elements to the study of the imaginary. All the articles have their own voice, their own theme, which does not interfere with other articles. However, this sum of ideas is moulded in a shape that is useful not only for the proxemics domain but also for anyone who works in the literary field (student or professor). Ultimately, the value of this volume can only be offered by each individual reader yet one thing that can be appreciated by all is the effort, passion and professionalism put in all these articles.

Ioan Streza

Constantin Ivanov, *Răul. Interpretări literare*, Iași, Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2022



E*vil. Literary Interpretations* is a synthetic and original study about the topic of evil in different cultural aspects. We are presented with four main parts, including the author's researching methods, the vision of evil in the autochthonous cosmogonic mythology, an analysis of Romanian works inspired from folktales and fairy tales, and how the devil is perceived folklorically. Moreover, at the end of the study there is a chapter about Evil seen as an ideological construct in Romanian dystopian novels.

Constantin Ivanov's study is innovative since it approaches Evil in Bessarabian and Moldavian literature, spaces which are often peripherally situated in our national culture. Interpretations are non-canonical and postmodern, focusing on the topic of evil in our geographical area rather than interpreting it as a historical or paradigmatic phenomenon. Ivanov follows the Jungian principle, analysing evil from its most emblematic expression in Romanian and universal culture, namely the Devil, and how he becomes the expression of evil, the Content of the Form, platonically speaking. Furthermore, the whole research focuses on the devil, as an archetype of the unconscious (according to Jung's theory). Therefore, there is little attention paid to Evil as pure Idea in the entire work.

In a professional manner, Ivanov introduces the reader to his researching

methods in the first chapter, *Beginnings of Evil Researching Patterns*, thus turning it into “preface” to the actual literary study. The author takes a few comparative concepts of the philosopher C.G. Jung based on archetypology, literary research and literary analysis, the literary work being treated as a *subject*, not as an object of study. He also writes a brief introduction into G. Durand’s research about mythanalysis and mytho-criticism, making a statement about the importance of mythocriticism over mythanalysis in his studies. Mytho-criticism is a concept of huge importance, as it overcomes Freud’s method, because it explains Evil as a psychoanalytical method with social and cultural effects, rather than its impact on the individual conscience.

The following chapter, *A vision about evil in Romanian Cosmogonic mythology: Representation and Interpretation*, contains details about evil manifestations in our mythology. It begins with “The ontological binomial” (p. 69), since the idea of God (*Fărtache/ The Brother*) and Devil (*Nefărtache/ The Non-Brother*) is perceived differently in relationship with Christian paradigm. According to autochthonous mythology, there is a cosmogonic binomial where evil participates in creation, being not only an error of the Good principle, but also an amplifier of it. Romanian Cosmogony has three stages of creation: the pre-cosmogonic stage (the negotiation between the two entities), the cosmogonic stage (the creation) and the post-cosmogonic stage (when antithetical elements are classified and divided according to their creator). After the creation, *Fărtache* is found in the *deus otiosus* state, the absence of divine participation facilitating evil to exercise its power. The universe is found in

an interesting statement: *ex ontion* (it has a form, it exists somehow before Divinity’s intervention), not *ex nihilo*, as in Christian cosmogony. However, *Non-Brother* offers existence a content/form in the absence of the direct divinity’s involvement, depending on the mythical variations. There are two categories of legends about world’s creation in Romanian cosmogony: those in which the idea of creation comes from the devil, and it is perfected by God afterwards, and vice-versa.

In the analysis of Creangă’s folktales inspired creations, more specifically in the chapter entitled *Evil’s Expression in Ion Creangă’s Work*, Ivanov has chosen a non-canonical interpretation in his study, offering a new perspective on stories that have become clichés for Romanian readers. In fact, Creangă’s characters are not so childish as one might think, and his works are not just “bedtime stories for children”. The protagonists of the three chosen stories become comic characters in relationship with evil. Dănilă Prepeleac from *Dănilă Prepeleac*, Ivan Turbincă from *Ivan Turbincă* and Stan Pățitul from *Povestea lui Stan Pățitul/The tale of Stan Pățitul* are characters in *homo religiosus* state, i.e., they have a strong relationship with the transcendental and the sacred. Because they have chosen evil in their lives, they will have an initiatory path to travel to be purified. They also play a part in restoring the cosmic balance.

The second Adamic state can be found especially in *The tale of Stan Pățitul*, where there is also a reconciliation between the devil and God and where, through cosmogonic myth inspiration source, the devil appears as a weak imitator of God. An original aspect Ivanov observes in *Ivan*

Turbincă is the fact that here man becomes the initiator of the pact, and the devil is the one accepting the offer, the Faustian myth being thus reversed. In these three stories the devil is found as a playful being who serves the man. Due to his role in Creation, he is somehow useful for mankind as necessary evil, Ivanov reminding us of the famous Romanian proverb *Tre' să te faci frate cu dracul ca să treci puntea/ You must become brother of the devil to cross the bridge*. Therefore, evil is found in a ludic state which has an apotropaic sense in Romanian literature. Ivanov observes that Creangă never "speaks of the devil" directly, using instead a series of euphemisms that are meant to neutralize the functions of his name (*Ucigă-l toaca, Scaraoțchi, Michiduță, Agbiuță, Necuratul, etc.*). Laughter and humour become weapons of Romanian conscience against evil, that ends up being humiliated.

Furthermore, Ivanov comments upon is the relationship between characters and the damned space. In the Romanian folklore, crossroads, bridges, caves, mills or abandoned houses become spaces corrupted by evil. It is interesting that places located far from patriarchal civilization or rural communities (e.g., *La Hanul lui Mânjoală/ At Mânjoală's Inn* - I. L. Caragiale) become corrupted by evil. In *Dănilă Prepeleac*, the monastery (a Sense space) must be built in the wasteland corrupted by evil (a Nonsense space), to purify the commonplace. In *Ivan Turbincă* Ivanov compares the structure of the abandoned house with Dante's Inferno Circles. Ivan as *homo religiosus* will purify the place with his presence. The sacred-profane dichotomy prevents antithetical principles from living in the same place, a reason why *Turbincă* will not be able to go in Hell as a *homo*

religiosus entity. These aspects emphasise the connection between the characters, writers and the collective unconscious, which contains the autochthonous cosmogonic myth as an archetype.

Another interesting factor that Ivanov comments on is the devil-woman relationship: the woman always ends up being victorious over evil due to its "even more diabolical" nature, and here we can observe the perception of the female archetype in the patriarchal folklore imaginary. Caragiale's female characters (grandmother Acrivița or Kir Ianulea's wife) triumph over evil in some totally comic situations for the readers, but terrible for the devils.

A different topic of the evil debated by Ivanov is the transcendental evil, discussed in the chapter entitled *Evil as a distortion of the world and its artistical representations*. The main role of this type of evil is that it destroys the inner balance of the individual. Ivanov has explained this concept by using the theory of the Romanian philosopher Lucian Blaga. According to Blaga, once he tries to reach the cryptic component of existence's mystery, man crosses the limits that leads him to excess and sin. In *Sărmanul Dionis/ Poor Dionis*, written by Mihai Eminescu, the monk Dan wants to reach a "numinous living" (p. 199), a form of sacred living that lacks moral dimension. Transcendental evil is also presented in Eliade's fantastic short stories. In *Șarpele/ The Snake* story, the character Sergiu Andronicus becomes a demonic instance that tries to corrupt the rest of the characters through the figure of the snake. The marriage of Andronicus suggests a return to Eden and a sort of redemption of the devil through love. In the short story *Isabel și apele diavolului/ Isabel and the Devil's*

Waters, the main character will push his mortal limits by trying to reach absolute knowledge.

In the final chapter, *Evil's ideological expression*, we are presented a political debate on evil. Ivanov analyses Evil's manifestation in totalitarian regimes in literature works from his geographical area. Ivanov observes that ideological evil, including the figure of the devil, is found in the totalitarian regime through the dehumanization of man as God's creation. Therefore, the political system manifests a form of *hybris*. Manipulation of destiny, annihilation of free will, human beings seen as ideological mechanisms, but also presence of Mephistophelian good (evil disguised as good) – these are all elements of ideological decay. Antonie Plămădeală's dystopian novel *Trei ceasuri în iad/ Three Hours in Hell* presents the damnation of Anton Adam's character, whose identity has been destroyed by being forced to turn into Peter Gast. In Vasile Vasilache's *Povestea cu cocoșul roșu/The Story with the Red Cock* there is an identity dissolution ideologically implemented in schools by using the appellative "we" instead of "I". At the same time, the feeling of guilt and oppression of the system to create obedient people contains a devilish pattern, since the devil is "The One that accuses". Ivanov observes a relationship between Serafim Ponoară, the main character of Vasilache's novel, and the savage from Huxley's *Brave New World*, as his innocence and his natural environment have been collectivized. Ivanov associates collectivization with colonialism, since the majority good leads here to the destruction of a cultural identity as well. The *homo religiosus* state has ceased to exist in this type of literature, being replaced by *homo*

sovieticus state. The idea of creating a New Man could be represented as a revolution against God's creation. There is also a particularity in Ivanov's study, his vision being powerfully influenced by Christian perspective in his analysis on the topic of evil.

The author's interpretations on evil topics presented in Romanian literature create a clear perspective on our culture itself; his non-canonical analysis and research methods are essential when it comes to debate mythological, folkloric, and religious subjects.

Andreea Nagy

Andrei Lazar,
*L'autobiographie entre
texte et image*, Casa
Cărții de Știință,
collection « belgica.ro »,
Cluj-Napoca, 2021



Le questionnement identitaire constitue un thème cher aux écrivains de tous les temps et cela peut-être parce que le discours sur soi équivaut à une recherche de la vérité : une vérité fragile, instable, mais qui peut offrir une image plus claire de la manière dont le « moi » est articulé ; sonder son histoire, examiner son devenir, voire essayer de comprendre son trajet existentiel, ce sont des opérations qui aident les écrivains à mieux voir et à mieux se voir. En effet, l'autobiographie est un exercice qui fait appel à la vue, à une vue profonde, à un regard aigu, interrogatif, sans cesse attentif aux moindres détails. En outre, à l'époque de la naissance des médias, ce regard sur

soi se multiplie : des photographies et des vidéos semblent jouer un rôle essentiel dans la manière des écrivains français du XX^e siècle de se raconter ; autrement dit, les images et les sons multiplient le sujet qui était déjà, malgré lui, brisé, éclaté en morceaux.

Le livre d'Andrei Lazar, *L'autobiographie entre le texte et l'image*, paru aux éditions Casa Cărții de Știință (en 2021, à Cluj-Napoca) « se propose de réévaluer les rapports entre littérature, photographie et cinéma dans le cas spécifique de l'autobiographie et de mettre en question les délimitations théoriques et génériques qui s'y rattachent » (p.30). Issu d'une thèse de doctorat, l'ouvrage représente un travail créatif, nourri de vastes lectures, appartenant à plusieurs domaines tels la photographie, la littérature, le cinéma. Le corpus de l'ouvrage est constitué des textes autobiographiques de cinq écrivains français emblématiques pour la littérature moderne – Jean-Paul Sartre, Marguerite Yourcenar, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida et Hervé Guibert. Les œuvres abordées jalonnent l'intervalle 1964–2002 ; d'ailleurs, la période choisie est représentative pour la reconfiguration du discours sur soi ; il importe de rappeler que 1964 est l'année de la publication des *Mots* de Jean-Paul Sartre, et qu'en 2002, a été réalisé le film *Derrida* par Amy Ziering Kofman et Kirby Dick.

On remarque d'emblée la structure cohérente et équilibrée du livre : la démonstration s'étale sur trois grandes parties rigoureusement agencées (« Première partie : L'autobiographie au miroir de la théorie. Rhétorique de l'objectivité », « Deuxième partie : Postures et impostures autoréflexives. Poétiques de la subjectivité » et « Troisième partie : La traversée des

miroirs. L'espace autobiographique inter-médial ») ; chaque étape de raisonnement étant structurée, selon le modèle ternaire, en chapitres, sous-chapitres (pour la première partie, « Chapitre I : Institutionnalisation du genre autobiographie », « Chapitre II : De la page à l'écran », « Chapitre III : Hybridations génériques » ; pour la deuxième partie, « Chapitre I : (S')écrire et (se) dire », « Chapitre II : Déconstruire l'écriture, façonner l'image », « Chapitre III : L'autre regard ») et pour la dernière partie, « Chapitre I : Réinventer le *speculum* – décadage et écholalie » et « Chapitre II : Pour une autobiographie intermédiaire »).

La démarche critique débute par une synthèse fort documentée de l'état des lieux des théories contemporaines de ce genre littéraire métamorphique, à savoir l'autobiographie. L'auteur ne se limite pas à un simple survol des opinions de certains théoriciens post-lejeuniens (Serge Doubrovsky, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarraute, William Cliff), il ouvre un vrai débat : problématise, s'interroge, examine les limites et les points faibles des alternatives proposées au terme d'« autobiographie » : « automythobiographie », « prose de la mémoire » ou « otobiographie ». La prise en compte de l'histoire du genre, de son institutionnalisation, permet de mieux souligner les modifications que celui-ci a subies au cours du temps : « ces changements topographiques du champ littéraire et de ses institutions nous obligent à un autre constat. La reconnaissance de l'iconographie de l'auteur en tant que 'chose littéraire à part entière', le rehaussement de son statut considéré, il y a assez peu, trop périphérique pour le monde institutionnel, sont une confirmation de plus de la modification du statut de l'auteur, qui monte sur

les plateaux de tournage pour se mettre en vis-à-vis de lui-même et qui devient fasciné par sa propre mise en scène » (p. 106). C'est ainsi que la littérature commence à dépasser les frontières qui lui ont été imposées : si l'auteur garde son statut littéraire devant les caméras, l'autobiographie se redéfinit à son tour.

Le passage des œuvres autobiographiques vers les médias est analysé dans la deuxième partie. Le dialogue entre les médias (photographies, cinéma, littérature) qui se tisse chez Sartre, Yourcenar, Barthes, Derrida et Guibert, constitue le point de départ de l'interrogation sur les raisons et les conséquences de l'intertextualité et de la transposition du texte et de l'image. Du refus de Yourcenar de livrer au public sa vie privée, préférant reconstituer sa vie telle qu'elle se l'imagine, « femme exilée, altière, érudite, préoccupée plutôt par la nature et l'essence de l'humanité que par tout ce qui signifie le quotidien » (p. 229), on arrive à Guibert qui, dans ses écrits, se propose « de faire le lien avec la photographie ou le cinéma » (p. 359). En effet, l'univers de Guibert ressemble à celui du « rhizome où les parties constituantes s'influencent réciproquement et donnent naissance à de structures arborescentes porteuses de significations nouvelles » (p. 370).

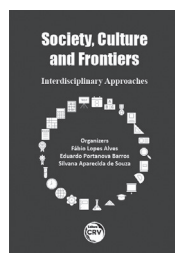
La troisième partie est consacrée à l'examen des films *Sartre par lui-même*, *Derrida* et *La Pudeur ou l'impudeur* ; l'objectif principal de cette dernière section est la mise en place du devenir de l'autobiographie intermédiaire. D'ailleurs, « l'automédialité aurait supposé une possibilité de construction de soi radicalement autre avec chaque média adopté et un certain refus du 'moi' tel qu'il avait été façonné par l'écriture » (p. 374). Les enjeux du

discours sur soi dans la modernité semblent dépasser l'espace clos du livre ; le dialogue, non dépourvu de tension, entre le texte imprimé, les photographies, les rythmes et les timbres de la voix, les images filmiques, participe à la constitution d'un moi fragmenté, pluriel, qui essaie de se recomposer. L'autobiographie prend la forme d'un discours qui échappe à l'analyse : chaque geste, chaque regard, voire la manière de parler pouvant « sur-imprimer au message que le lecteur-spectateur est en train de recevoir » (p. 438).

Originale, cohérente, convaincante, l'étude d'Andrei Lazar réussit à offrir une nouvelle perspective critique sur le genre de l'autobiographie ; dorénavant, on ne pourrait plus lire des discours modernes sur soi sans se rapporter à des concepts comme « intermédialité », « automédialité » et « médiamorphose ».

Anamaria Lupan

Fabio Lopes Alves,
Eduardo Portanova Barros,
Silvana Aparecida de
Souza, *Society, Culture and
Frontiers. Interdisciplinary
Approaches*, Editora CRV,
2020



The collective volume at hand, published by Editora CRV in 2020, is both methodologically and thematically heteroclitite, encompassing of a wide array of issues derived from the research efforts of the Postgraduate Program in Society, Culture and Borders of the Western Paraná State

University (UNIOESTE). The numerous individual contributions map out three intrinsically related research areas, labeled by the editors as follows: 1) Territory, History and Memory; 2) Language, Culture and Identity; 3) Work, Politics and Society. As is apparent from this concatenation of knowledge fields, the volume emerges at the polyphonic intersection of history, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, and literary theory, among others. Thus, it arrogates a heteroglossic ethos which is exhibited linguistically, seeing as the book contains chapters in multiple languages (English, French, Italian, Portuguese) that handle issues native to various regional and national spaces. Such intentional diversity proves paradigmatically significant, for, as the editors put it, “it is from this pluralism, both epistemological and hermeneutic, that perhaps we can, in what concerns us, leverage scientific knowledge, within an open and, consequently, cosmopolitan (or global, if you prefer) perspective” (13).

Beyond exemplifying the breadth and reach of such pluralism, the volume does not commit to a singular cohesive argument, rather reading as an anthology of vaguely thematically consonant essays, seemingly in line with Edgar Morin’s manifesto: “Simplifier c’est sacrifier” (17). If its first half is primarily dedicated to sociological issues and the geo-political coordinates of the South American context, the second half mostly engages questions of intersectionality, identity politics and religious studies. In line with other recent attempts at worlded, interdisciplinary theorizing (such as the 2021 *Theory in the “Post” Era* and the 2022 *The Bloomsbury Handbook of World Theory*), the volume is framed by a socio-aesthetic context in which “con la

complicita dell’industria culturale e delle scene urbane, le istituzioni artistiche non detengono piu il monopolio della bellezza” (36), as Vincenzo Susca phrases it in the introduction to his chapter. Consequently, contemporary cultural discourse (as reflected here) is predicated on a self-conscious post-aestheticism, and thus coherently encompasses a wide range of barely tangential topics, from border politics and migration to the usage of translanguaging practices in the prison system.

An eloquent example of such derivative, transdisciplinary methodology is offered by Lionel Obadia’s chapter, “Delineating ‘religious’ subdivisions in domestic spaces: a comparative view of Asian religions”, which approaches the religiousness of territoriality, conducting an engaging analysis of the presence of sacred symbols in domestic interiors, that ultimately points to the increasingly private nature of Western religion. Echoing Obadia’s reformulating attempts, Corin Braga proposes a new typological network for the disciplinary evolution of ethnography. Based on the position the researcher adopts towards their subjects and materials, the author distinguishes the essential features and faults of three distinct, mutually substitutive methodologies: 1. positivist anthropology, characterized by compilatory ethnographic efforts and generally premised on Western interpretative hypotheses (thus bound to distort and downgrade the experiences it describes); 2. phenomenological anthropology, which, albeit set on neutralizing the socially embedded position of the researcher, ultimately constitutes a methodological utopia; 3. experiential anthropology, which entails the researchers’ direct participation in the phenomena they study, thus placing

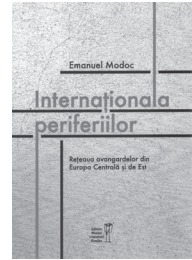
them in an irreconcilable double-bind: “The main problem is how to tackle scientifically phenomena that do not fit into the frame of our explanation of the world. Until we have a final truth about the nature of reality [...] a programmatic and professional modesty obliges anthropologists to accept the world-view of their informants without depreciating or explaining them away” (264).

Adopting a thematically disparate position, one which is more obviously entrenched in issues of sociology and politics, chapters such as “Waste Management in a Global Circular Economy Context” and “Migration and Identity on the Brazil-Paraguay Border” push the conceptually reformulating efforts of the previously analysed sections beyond the domain of discourse. As such, they trace the ways in which reframing our collective understanding of globally significant issues (migration, waste, inadequate consumption, social unrest) is the first stage of uncovering their potential solutions (the notion of circular economy and its pragmatic advantages is the best example in this sense).

To conclude, *Society, Culture and Frontiers* captures the expansive panorama of contemporary humanities, exhibiting the epistemic openness of a disciplinary cluster aiming to traverse (and make sense of) our tumultuous contemporaneity. Thus, it makes for a thought-provoking and substantial read, despite the often erratic trajectory of its central arguments.

Ana-Maria Țăranu

Emanuel Modoc,
*Internaționala periferiilor:
rețeaua avangardelor din
Europa Centrală și de Est,*
București, Editura Muzeul
Literaturii Române, 2020



Emanuel Modoc’s volume underpins our understanding of the way in which the regional avant-gardes were shaped throughout the very volatile 20th century in Central and Eastern Europe, without neglecting the global context. Also, we can sense an emphasis on the dialogue between these avant-gardes that further contributed to a transfer of influences and to the enrichment of the regional cultures.

Internaționala periferiilor: rețeaua avangardelor din Europa Centrală și de Est commits to exemplifying exhaustively and analytically, drawing from a vast number of theoreticians, what the avant-garde was in this normally forgotten “island” of literary theory, namely Central and Eastern Europe, and how its creation was possible thanks to constant interchanges between different kinds of literature. The artistic peripheries, claims Modoc, with their literary endeavours, have been often disregarded as the need for an official and national literature, and thus identity in the newly formed countries has always been a bigger imperative. As a result, we are usually biased to read literature based on the well-known trope East v. West, from a postcolonial perspective. The volume pleads instead for a transnational reading of the avant-gardes, seen as an organic network that communicates and reinforces an international identity.

The author strives to give a comprehensive account of how these regional peripheries were structured and how they shifted and influenced one another outside and respectively inside their nations. We learn early on that even the concepts of *avant-garde* and *modernism*, often being unjustly associated with negative connotations, have many more definitions depending on each national development and are not to be taken in the usual temporal order. These avant-gardes function internationally, meaning that they never cease to borrow from other cultures, at the same time juggling with nationalism. How does this happen? Modoc believes Edward Said's *traveling theory* is predicated on a *misreading* of ideas that eventually take on new meaning and uses. Like telephone charades, to put it in a nutshell.

Hence, thanks to internationalism, the four main avant-garde movements, namely futurism, surrealism, constructivism and dada have travelled to the Central and Eastern European states, where the peripheries have adopted and appropriated them. Paradoxically, in a later chapter, we learn that even though those avant-gardes seemed to be ever-changing, there were some specific movements, with well-defined programmes and names that somehow found a common ground. The local avant-gardes quartet that consists of Hungarian activism, Polish formism, Czech poetism and Romanian integralism are strangely similar in that they share almost the same stages in the process of forming their identities.

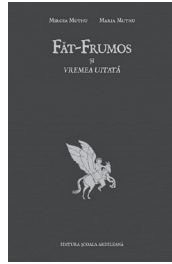
Special attention is also given to the Romanian avant-gardes and the latest attempts of the Romanian scholars to link them to an international context,

relinquishing somehow a very restrictive national perspective, as they can be better understood on a global scale and within a network of influences. Modoc undertakes a dissection of the concept of *World Literature* that has been imposed upon Romanian literary criticism and overseas and argues that it faces a phase of vulnerability, as the socio-political shifts demand new approaches. Thus he tries to elucidate dilemmas such as *What is national literature?* and *What is the position of Romanian Literature in the realm of World Literature?*

Throughout the entire volume we see the Sisyphean research that Emanuel Modoc has done on a rather niche subject that has not been explored in its entirety, reinforcing a new way of reading the peripheral avant-gardes as co-existing and always communicating. After reading *Internaționala periferiilor* one has to get to the core of understanding the Central and Eastern European avant-garde and that different kinds of literature are no longer to be seen through the East-West dichotomy or read in a nationalistic fashion, but rather as a cultural dialogue that borrows and does not steal.

Daniela Bezuhanic

Mircea Muthu, Maria Muthu, *Făt-Frumos și vremea uitată*, Editura Școala Ardeleană, Cluj-Napoca, 2022



Mircea Muthu is a professor at the Department of Romanian Literature and Literary Theory of the Faculty of Letters, Babeș-Bolyai University, in Cluj-Napoca. He has authored 26 volumes and contributed to 14 other collaborative works. In 2022, he published, together with Maria Muthu, a literary researcher at the same university, a reinterpretation of the fairy tale *Youth Everlasting and Life without End*, by Petre Ispirescu, under the title *Prince Charming and Forgotten Time*. In the study, the authors undertake a symbolic exegesis of Ispirescu's myth.

At a structural level, the volume contains three parts: "Exegetical interpretations", which includes direct commentaries on the fairy tale, "Critically interrogative reflections", and the translations at the end. The glossary of criticism in the second part of the book reviews the commentaries on the fairy tale over the course over the course of a century, comments that follow the same direction of interpretation as that of the authors, as Mircea Muthu also states: "The bio-bibliography rounds off our annotated edition by inventorying, starting with 1872, all the editions of the fairy tale and by recording the main critical texts" (p.11). For example, the sumptuous dinner in the timeless world may recall the magical islands of Irish mythology. In this sense, the critics' interpretations

complement each other: Mircea Muthu analyzes this episode, but does not make a direct reference to the Irish legends. On the other hand, Călin Teuțișan, whose critical approach is included at the end, finds certain links between the two directions. In the preface, the author summarizes his study through examples of certain key phrases that are interpreted in the actual content. The edition of the "Transylvanian School" Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2022, proposes at the end of the book three translations of the fairy tale, into French, English, and Spanish.

As the title suggests, the analysis emphasizes the temporality of the "myth treated with the fairy tale technique (Aura Matei-Săvulescu, p.80). 'Forgotten time' is an archaic time that needs to be recovered, a World of Ideas, in a Platonic spirit. The hero brought to life through a magical rite, as an 'exception to the order' (C. Noica), has 'awareness of the copy' and wants to regain the paradise from which he was ousted. The authors define the state of Prince Charming as a 'boredom of anonymity', so the individual, by transformation, ends up being only a component of the collective. In the case of this fairy tale, overcoming the condition entails the pursuit of individuality, towards the source of being.

Even if we are talking about a timeless being which, by displacement, tried to overcome 'earthly' time, space does not completely lose its importance, being interpreted by the authors in a psychoanalytical manner. For example, the forest, as a space of infinity, causes the character anguish and peace at the same time.

The authors also analyze the role of the animal beings present in the fairy tale. The horse is an essential element in this

literary genre; its psychopomp function, that of moving the character in the two worlds through an atypical, 'on top' movement – which, in the view of the authors' critics, is an illustrative image for its timeless journey – is being emphasized here. The horse is considered a *daimon*, the being that connects the upper and lower worlds. The rabbit appears as a 'funeral agent' that awakens the human side of the timeless being and causes his desire to return to the World of Forms. This anamnesis, 'reverse ascension' (as the authors quote I. Barbu, p.17), becomes the initiating target of the character. In this fairy tale, the actual transition from one world to another is more important than the worlds themselves. The incompatibility between the two timeless spaces is rendered by the rapid aging of Prince Charming, who exits paradise in the same way as Aeneas, allowing him to recognize himself and restore his memories.

Moreover, the study, together with the glossary of criticism, emphasizes the atypical character of this fairy tale as well through the lack of a specific happy ending. In this case, the wedding episode and eternal happiness turn into the scene of death and eternal sleep. Another non-specific characteristic of the fairy tale is the lack of antagonism between good and evil, which here turns into the life-immortality opposition that guides the entire narrative. According to the rules of the fairy tale to which we are accustomed, the title should have anticipated the meeting of the mortal with eternity, but all it provides is that there can be no youth without old age, and no life without death, namely, that immortality is impossible.

In this way, the reinterpreted study offers an overall view, common to several

critics who analyze *Youth Everlasting and Life without End* by abandoning the school clichés that limit the reader's perspective. This volume stands out especially for the accessibility of the language and the concise way in which it captures complex, comparative analyses. In addition to its importance at an academic level, I think it could be a very useful teaching aid for pre-university teachers, as such an interpretation key is much more attractive to students. Moreover, the introduction of such an exegesis in school textbooks would not constitute a scandalous deviation from the "dogmatic" norms we are used to, but would complement the classical schemes of analysis of the fairy tale through the symbolic, psychoanalytical, or mythological meanings that the authors highlight in *Prince Charming and Forgotten Time*.

Irina-Teodora Gorgan

Călina Părău, *Discursul incomplet: Uitare și rest*, București, Editura Tracus Arte, 2022



If knowledge production operates at the discourse level within the grand narrative of various literatures, then the rhetoric of existence and plenitude is condemned to ultimately re-trace a politics of abundance, addressing effortlessly the ontology of being and discussing the instant result of perception. However, if the purpose of such discourse is to offer a complete rendition of knowledge production, be it real

or fictional, then the entire project is already starting on the wrong foot, as the incompleteness of discourse is a necessary detour that must be taken into consideration at the same time. This is what Călina Părau is proposing in her 2022 book *Discursul incomplet: Uitare și rest*: an overhaul of the forms of knowledge that are built into the inconspicuous empty spaces within literature. As a result of Părau's doctoral research, *Discursul incomplet* demands from the reader to be attentive to everything that is not there, or rather, to forswear the cornucopias encountered in the narrative and to focus on the "culturally inassimilable" (p. 39) as a means of discovering absences, rests, forgotten meanings or traces that would articulate a different sense of being.

Divided into twenty-three chapters, *Discursul incomplet* presents within the first twelve a theoretical overview of the mechanisms through which literature can be interpreted at the hand of the "non-memorable and non-representable in order to think of the subject in relation to a logic of trace, residue and incompleteness that reaffirms the function of a 'beyond' the subject that takes us out of the 'possessive individualism'" (p. 59). The following eleven chapters delve into the analysis of certain literary creations that perform along the lines of those mechanisms, demonstrating how fiction makes a turn towards "the pursuit of a super-individual that is written through the enactment of our own limits" (p. 359).

Informed by philosophers such as Jean-Luc Nancy, Jacques Derrida, Giorgio Agamben or Gianni Vattimo, the author begins to build a cartography of temporal distances in order to enunciate a milieu of narrative dissonances that reflect upon the very mechanisms of forgetting, amounting

continuously to a multiplicity of rests, while simultaneously withstanding the test of time. In this respect, the dissection of memory's anatomy exposes the "historical costumes" (p. 44) that are to be renounced. It is here where the "non-" begins to assert its dominance over the representable, implementing as its vanguard the process of forgetting, which is meant to have as a function "the possibility of a birth from the unknown, an emergence through a rupture with historical continuity and 'inertia'" (p. 64). Also, the author proves that where there is abundance, there is waste, so as to continue along the same discursive track that has been implemented already throughout her theorisation, but not without discovering a "new politics of the remainder" (p. 100) that shifts the focus towards the subject. Confession, trauma and forgetting are all becoming mechanisms through which Parau exposes the frugality encountered in narrative spaces, be they bound by time constraints or found to wander in "a world scheme in which eternity is separated from the world" (p. 136). One most important aspects of such retrieval of meanings is given by the analysis of absences within history: "Memory is not written by the mimetic desire of knowledge, but by the reconquered forces of non-knowledge. [...] Thus, memory seeks to recapture areas of non-knowledge or absences in order to contain them at the symbolic level. What is lost is what is continually retrieved" (p. 152).

In this respect, thinking of absences as the facilitators of memory and possible meanings gives way to the exploration of alterity in its multi-faceted and radical presence. Consequently, having alterity at the frontispiece of her demonstration and

following the writings of Michel de Certeau, Părău constructs an entire theory for the “mute body” (p. 164) and the “literature of the ruins” (p. 190), concepts that she will later use in demonstrating how fiction is regeneratively uncovering images and events that go beyond the hermeticism of the past.

Analysing the prose work of authors such as W.G. Sebald, Andreï Makine, Colum McCann and many others, Părău is applying a supply of theoretical impressions that are meant to creatively deterritorialise their narratives in order to prove how most of these texts have already abandoned a chronological project, choosing to focus on experience rather than representation. Finding empty spaces, mute bodies, ruins, traces and a sort of hauntology that

is meant to serve as a radar for our “repositioning in relation to otherness” (p. 276) is what the second part of *Discursul incomplet* manages to accomplish.

Părău’s project is a necessary addition to the field of literary theory. The scope of her work proves to become a hermeneutic lens that will certainly be useful in our further readings. In this respect, the position in which literature is encountered in *Discursul incomplet* marks the renunciation of representational approaches in favour of a narrative that is admittedly aware of that which it does not declare. We ought to pay more attention to the possibility of non-being within the text so as to get a grasp of the intimacies that the narratives have to offer.

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