

Alex GOLDIȘ

## Post-war Romanian Literary Criticism under Communism. Short Overview.

**Abstract:** In the post-war Romanian context, one might conclude that theory-related scepticism was relentless. The language of New Criticism entered the Romanian discourse, emphasizing on the interdictions of the political system. Although Romanian criticism had been sceptical about aggressive import of Western Critical Theory, a few of its reforming consequences have been adopted.

**Keywords:** post-war Romanian criticism, socialist realism, the 1960s movement, G. Călinescu, "autonomy of the aesthetics", New French Criticism, structuralism, existentialism, post-theory.

During the Socialist Realism period, officially instituted in 1948, literary criticism was more damaged, in a way, than literature itself. Whereas one can still identify havens of uncontaminated literature for almost two decades, with criticism, nothing of what was written between 1948 and 1965 can be grasped in absence of the socialist realist equation. By cleaning the slate of an entire cultural tradition, Stalinism had carried Romanian criticism into a triple crisis: of the object (if the entire Romanian literature were prohibited, the critics would no longer have an object for their profession), of the institution (an oligarchic structure was governing, where the message would not matter, but rather the position from where it would be stated) and of the modalities of exercise: oral criticism was superior to written criticism, functioning as guiding principles for the writer on the path of socialist realism.

For texts written by critics such as Ion Vitner, N. Moraru, Mihai Novicov, Ov.S. Crohmăl-niceanu, Paul Georgescu, the

Alex GOLDIȘ

"Babeș-Bolyai" University, Cluj-Napoca  
Email: al3xgoldis@yahoo.com

EKPHRASIS, 1/2013

ON CRITICISM

pp. 81-92

focus is on their “impossible mission” to prove that political necessities are, in fact, a series of aesthetic principles, pertaining to the immanence of literature. This study is interested in the internal operational logic of socialist realism not because this is reliable or decisive for its establishment (undoubtedly, every detail was enforced from the exterior), but because the evolution of critic forms was carried out by the gradual exposure of such mechanisms. While the autonomy of the aesthetic was never confronted, throughout post-war Romanian criticism, with the major paradigm of socialist realism, its implied concepts, on the contrary, were questioned. We have identified this in terms of a metonymic logic of liberalisation. Because of such slow erosion, at the middle of the seventh decade, socialist realism does not appear overwhelmed from the exterior, but rather collapses from within.

Logical and theoretical absurdities, a series of phantom-concepts, contradictory in terms of matter and undecidable in terms of expression, the notions “specific”, “positive hero”, “realism”, “omniscience”, “contemplation” represent, sum total, attempts to legitimate an aesthetic of socialist realism that should obscure the founding lie of its birth: ideological coercion. Whereas until the beginning of the Sixties they are intermittently challenged (in several more intrepid stands of “Steaua” writers in the First Congress of the Writers’ Association in 1956 or in a famous issue of “Viața românească”, 1958), following 1961, when Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej states that the fight against reactionary movements is practically ended, several

positions emerge, ready to deconstruct them progressively. A new generation of critics, made of Eugen Simion, Matei Călinescu, Nicolae Manolescu, Valeriu Cristea or G. Dimisianu, will represent, during the first part of the sixties, the leading role of the so-called debates on “prose modalities”, on realism or on the Marxist-Leninist legacy.

While they do not argue directly in favour of eliminating the socialist realist model, starting from eccentric prose samples written by young writers Nicolae Velea, Fănuș Neagu or Ștefan Bănulescu, the critics do support, however, the broadening of the notion of realism. The argument in favour of the fantastic or of the oneiric, the shattering of the narrator’s omniscience in support of voice polyphony, the burdening of typical characters by the insertion of secondary traits, all these are flank turns with respect to the socialist realist monolith. The idea gaining increasing authority is that, as long as the message is ideologically correct, the writers are free to choose from a diverse range of procedures. The success would be considerable, because it would attack the very transitivity of this literature. The freedom of modalities calls for an increasingly sophisticated control, since ideologists find it necessary, in a way, to fight precisely against the fundamental ambiguity of literature. By making possible the diversification of expression, the officials opened an authentic Pandora’s Box, for, irrespective of the degree of refinement of ideological limitations, they could not anticipate the dispersion of meanings. More aware than

the ideologists of the fact that the literary form modifies inevitably the contents, literary analysts during the first half of the sixties hold a decisive role in the expansion of the criteria for the approach of literary works.

The argument in favour of the aesthetic is brought cautiously, by a series of strategies and retractile actions. Liberalisation becomes apparent by a general attitude rather than by a consistent and individual, extremely daring action. Even those who may approach small licences in their relationship to the system end by paying through a series of conformities. While they were writing, in 1964-1965, promoting articles and reviews for the young generation, Eugen Simion or Nicolae Manolescu published studies tributary to socialist realism. Adrian Marino or Matei Călinescu may state the validity of the aesthetic criterion only by mitigating its effects by separation from the term, ill-famed from a Marxist-Leninist perspective, of aestheticism. For such reason, it would be more accurate to state that, at the middle of the seventh decade, we were dealing with an exclusively deontological liberalisation, pertaining to the reestablishment of a series of elementary regulations of the profession, rather than with an ideological one. For the explanation of the non-polemic, but corrosive strategy of the '60s generation, we have employed a series of illustrations of ambiguity, which render, to different degrees, the relationship between militancy and passivity: "Japanese strike, "trench warfare", "Cold War", "debate with gloves on". An interesting obser-

vation concerns the absence both of polemics with respect to socialist realism, and of a manifesto of the "autonomy of the aesthetic". The evolution of post-war Romanian criticism typifies the bizarre case of mutations lacking programmes.

A consistent chapter of the liberalisation of the forms of criticism is the direction established by Călinescu, the only possible direction and main "trebuchet" (N. Balotă) of the young critics against dogmatism. Owing to his privileged position in the system, Călinescu would be the perfect interface of broadening critic criteria. Since Maiorescu or Lovinescu are more difficult to retrieve ideologically – considered the intellectual authors of Junimea and inter-war reactionary trend the author of *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent* (1941) is deemed the absolute warrantor of the dissociation of the aesthetic from the other values. For this reason, Călinescu direction is mistaken for the autonomy of the aesthetic. Hence, the support created around him and the absence of any possibility of challenge. In *Principii de estetică* (1939), which had become an authentic Bible of the era, the '60s generation identifies all the principles of escaping socialist realism: removal of sterile erudition and of the historical perspective – where they would denounce, often obliquely, Marxist-Leninist determinism – in favour of a critical perspective relating to the possibility of value judgment, the argument for "talent", intuition or "vocation" ("creative criticism") or for the pure relationship, un-umpired by schemes and theories, between the interpreter and the work. Established in

the debates in "Steaua", year 1965, such principles constitute the hard core of the Sixties critic physiognomy.

While it has been often said that the Romanian phenomenon had relapsed during the fifties down to a prehistoric level of criticism, it has been hardly noted that liberalisation itself had rebuilt, on a small scale, the steps of cultural evolution; because an almost classicist first step, during which Romanian critics define their originality exclusively depending on the expanse and valour of references, is succeeded by a "Romantic" period, a period of stating one's right to "one's own voice". Nicolae Manolescu denounces his generation's apprehensive discourse, inspiring at the beginning of 1966, in "Gazeta literară", the most important debate on criticism of the era. Whereas until then criticism would be, following the positivist tradition – augmented by Marxism-Leninism – a secondary discourse, in 1966 and part of 1967, it would dominate the centre of the literary stage. The debates in "Gazeta literară" are an authentic explosion of statements of principles that would all target the reestablishment of a minimal critical deontology. Marked by ideological interferences, still confined in the ideology rhetoric, diverged by timidities and misconstructions (the critics would still be confused with the limits of liberalisation), the debate would nonetheless launch and establish several important themes: the right to subjectivity – which Manolescu would cautiously name "unilateralism" –, the necessity of diversifying means by "total criticism" (Eugen

Simion), postulation of the "unseen reality" of the creation (Nicolae Manolescu, Matei Călinescu, Adrian Marino, Nicolae Balotă) and, last but not least, the need of synchronisation with the Occidental critical phenomenon. The critic who would best approach Călinescu's direction during the era, Nicolae Manolescu, is, furthermore, the only one attempting to separate, at least at the rhetorical level, from the model. Complementing the maître, the young critic does not adopt his terms (which is what the majority of Călinescu's followers would do), but chooses to apply his own language. The core metaphors of Manolescu's small "manifestos" do not bring up continuity, but rather they are illustrations of the opacity and rupture ("infidelity", "betrayal"). Language personalisation is significant during a time where any new perspective would be asserted by established terms, by "mythologems" of criticism. Encouraged by a Romantic inspiration, the phrase "unfaithful readings" is, for such reason, the most popular criticism phrase of the decade.

The prevailing ideological disturbance generated an almost instinctive reserve against any scheme superordinated to the living and individual literary fact. Philosophy, aesthetics, theory of literature are considered modalities of constraint *par excellence* and they are not, under any circumstances, manners of rendering flexible the critical principles. Thus, following 1966, the bases of a new Impressionism are created; a note should be made here, however: far

from reflecting the Epicureanism of reading, such Impressionism would bear a heightened militant degree. Sartrean accents of engaged freedom, identifiable in Manolescu's – and not only – discourse, settle the description of an inflexible impressionism, ready to reject on principle any idea that may threaten it. The positioning of the entire criticism in the same trenches would result in the blurring of differences between the ideas on literature, so that it is impossible to discuss a proper theoretical disagreement during this whole period. A real quarrel between Călinescu's followers and the detractors Nicolae Balotă and Ovidiu Cotrus is stuck because of the formers' fear that the introduction of more definite philosophical and theoretical criteria may revive part of the recently removed dogmatism. The distance of conception between young critics and the third post-Maiorescu generation – considered a vestige of the golden age of the autonomy of criticism –, again, is not illustrated in a direct confrontation, but rather implicitly, in a "conflict of interpretations": Manolescu, Raicu or Valeriu Cristea distort creatively, according to their own criteria, the works by Tudor Vianu, Vladimir Streinu or Perpessicius.

By wavering the postulate of the critic's "personality", Sorin Alexandrescu's, Toma Pavel's or Virgil Nemoianu's scientific (stylistic and structuralism) alternative does not yet have the opportunity of assertion in the Romanian context. This would occur partially because young structuralists are in a process of prepara-

tion, unable to thrust and parry. The premises of the Călinescu direction, as well as Marxist inertias, incessantly short-circuit their construction. We have noted their quarrels with the Călinescu-type impressionism to the extent where they lay a mirror on the outcomes of the period: the secondary effect of Călinescu's direction, identifiable in the complex of talent superiority over method, delays in an intolerable manner the adoption of certain paradigms and the specialisation of critical language. On the other hand, both the Sibiu Circle's anti-Călinescu direction, and the scientific one, would prove that any attempt at drafting a concrete programme would call for a direct link to the socialist-realist paradigm, which is precisely what Nicolae Manolescu, Eugen Simion, Matei Călinescu or Adrian Marino would attempt to avoid. The insuperable standstill of the entire period – which was not acknowledged by everyone from its very beginning – would be the fact that, actually, there was no alternative: you could be one of Călinescu's followers, which would mean subjective, impressionist, maintaining equidistance from any rules or norms, or you would have to flirt, one way or another, with Marxism. The perversion is inherent in the fact that, although the latter was practically removed, it would emerge again each time that the critics would threaten to group under a shared set of norms. The officials would prefer the impressionist temporality to an actual unity of ideas. In their turn, not wanting to lose so quickly the ground conquered with difficulty,

young critics would disqualify from the beginning, without weighing fine distinctions, any position that would attack the ideological innocence of impressionism.

A special chapter of this issue focuses on the relationship with Occidental – particularly French – theories and methods, to the extent where they explain the entire system of relationships of Romanian criticism during the period of “defrosting” – and not only. Undoubtedly, a decisive step of liberalisation is given by the contact with the New French Criticism, whose language is approached by the Sixties generation of critics. Apart from the vague feeling that both cultures were preparing, to a higher level than that of a mere generation handing of the torch, a modification of vision on literature, even discussion premises and themes appear to be the same: the retort against positivism, the relationship between criticism and creation, between criticism and literary history, between interpretive criticism and the valorisation one. On the other hand, the different “mission” as compared with the Occidental criticism deflects the schedule of autochthon debates. Whereas in France the abolishment of positivism would bear the significance of a revolution of methods and critical language, in Romanian context it would target primarily a reply to ideological clichés and the institution of specific norms of interpretation and valorisation of literature. Hence, after 1967, once this process is deemed closed, any protraction of the discussion on theory or criticism is seen not only as useless, but actually harmful. Almost all critics, from any genera-

tion, would denounce the self-reflexivity (“narcissism”) of Occidental criticism. It would be almost immoral to talk about methods when instead an entire literature ought to be rebuilt from the ground. The critical act as “authenticity” and as screening of values was experienced more intensely than the creation of a meta-language or the specialisation of instruments – topics of the great debates in French criticism. The autotelism of French criticism, emphasised along with the *Tel Quel* movement, would call attention to the fact that the new model was not the critic serving the literary object, but rather the theoretician being interested in the differentiation through discourse and method. Post-war Romanian criticism is, *par excellence*, an engaged and moral criticism, wholly providing for the autonomy of the aesthetic and the selection of values – hence rejecting both the amoral model of French “critical-centrism” and the inappropriateness to the aesthetic object or the lack of interest in delineating it from the other types of discourse. By favouring the straightforwardness and authenticity of the critical message after two decades during which it had been diverted by political misrepresentations, Romanian criticism considers at theoretical shades in the terms of useless complications. “Archisubtle criticism” in Valeriu Cristea’s phrase, or “Gongorism criticism” as suggested by Nicolae Manolescu, represents negative models.

The stakes of the general reconstruction of Romanian literature and the re-naturalisation of the live contact of the critic with the creation establish the lo-

gic of external adoptions. Because, rather than paradigms and major theoretical movements (such as structuralism, phenomenology, psychoanalysis) whose attempts of explaining globally the literary phenomenon are questioned, Romanian criticism adopted applied critical concepts or languages (which W. Iser calls "tools for processes of interpretation"). Contemporary Occidental methods are absorbed by a bizarre deal with the concepts of inter-war criticism. The weightiest peculiarity of the period is a general eclecticism in which Umberto Eco is assimilated to Tudor Vianu (M. Călinescu), Călinescu anticipates Roland Barthes (N. Manolescu) or Jean Starobinski is perceived as a furtherance of G. Ibrăileanu (E. Simion). Trimmed down to inter-war principles, the innovating impact of Occidental critical languages appears diminished most of the times. The Structuralist paradigm is rejected by almost everyone on Călinescu principles: ignoring the critic's "personality", the living specific traits of literature or "proliferation" of scientific delirium. Those who are the most interested in the phenomenon try to tame its postulations: Adrian Marino or Paul Cornea develop a structuralism bearing "a human face", which should not exclude the function of the subject and the value judgment. "Structure" is interpreted in Romanian context in the terms of an organic expression of the vitality of the creation, and not those of a model of machine mechanism, pure linguistic automatism. The structuralists' abstract system of relationships is translated in the metaphor of the spider-

subjectivity (A. Marino), which, from its absolute centre, creates its organic canvas.

Such misinterpretations and misconstructions are coherent, but only following the logic of the Romanian phenomenon, because the distance between structuralism and our criticism is a distance of perceiving the entire literature. By exposing the naturalisation of institutions and the postulation of language artificiality, structuralism was actually completely out of touch with the ideology of our literary men during the sixties. During a stage chiefly optimistic, of reconstruction of the literary institution, the dissolution of the subject, of the author or of literature itself had no meaning. Following a period of profound "conventionalisation" of the literary (all possible "deconstructions" of the literary field had been undertaken with us, as concretely as possible, during the fifties), Romanian writers will not try to render it relative, but, on the contrary, to stimulate it superiorly. The main, almost instinctive target was to rebuild the vital, quasi-natural relationship between culture and subject. Hence, the metaphors of deconstruction, mortification, decline or inkhorn sterilisation ("death", "dissolution", "decentre") are left in favour of the expressions of organicism, of the auroral, the unlimited possibilities ("total criticism", "open work", "necessary polyvalence"). Radically linguistic movements resulting from the "New Criticism", during the second part of the sixties, would stand no chance at striking roots precisely because they would postulate the decentring of li-

terature itself in favour of the term “text”. The ’60s culture – and perhaps the entire culture under communism – focuses around the former humanist tradition, recently revived, of the “literature” and of the “book”. A subsequent study should clarify whether names established during the seventies, less engaged in the canonical battle of liberalisation, such as Eugen Negrici, Marin Mincu, Ioana Em. Petrescu or Livius Ciocârlie, or reformed Sixties representatives, such as Adrian Marino and Paul Cornea, would manage to create (convincingly) within critical paradigms different from Călinescu’s.

Closer to the field of the Sixties representatives is the so-called thematist group of the New French Criticism. Georges Poulet, Jean Starobinski or Jean Rousset (preceded by Marcel Raymond or Albert Béguin) would postulate the immanence of literature without asserting violently its separation from the subject. The focus on the subtle relationships between conscience and creation, the preference for an “analytical criticism”, paying attention to text inflexions without slipping on the side of linguistic technicalities, the search of signification in what is hidden in the creation (fascination with the underlying layer) constitute renewing principles that, nonetheless, do not shatter the traditional manner of criticism. Hence, they will be received almost unanimously by the Sixties representatives.

The miraculous civilisation of the critical book, which emerges starting with 1967, constituting the zero time of an actual “criticology/ science of criticism” (C.

Regman), is founded on a *sui generis* composition of Călinescu-type approach and the New French Criticism, together with its existentialist or thematist group. After almost two decades during which the elementary idea of critical op had been destroyed (i.e. trimmed down to a collection of articles or to a study in which traditional historiography positivism would be a shield for Marxist-Leninist determinism), it re-emerges under the general programme of the “essay”, now theorised by the entire Romanian criticism as an absolute form of the freedom of interpretation. The “essay” opposed to the ideology-impregnated monograph would denote a different order and other priorities in the rhetoric of a volume, favouring the “pure criticism” had in view by the Sixties generation, but on which they could not talk freely. The central principle of the reconstruction of a monograph vision purged by ideological mechanic features, partially taken over from Călinescu, but augmented by French thematism, is that each author is the owner of an original and autonomous “universe” or “cosmos”, opposing reality, but ready to compete against it at any time. According to Negoïțescu, Raicu, Manolescu, Balotă or Petroveanu’s opinion, our classic writers are the creators of autonomous worlds, holders of certain fundamental experiences. The results of such decisive, radical options, their works, bear primarily the value of confession. After twenty year during which literature had been downsized to a practice or to a slogan, we would see it rebuild, in the enciphered ideology of such

monographs, as an integral expression of the writer's existence and as an example of profound commitment to "reality". In the opinion of Romanian criticism, the autonomy of the literary creation does not stand on a stylistic or structuralist criticism, focusing on language or text individuality, but it is lighted from within by an existentialist philosophy, of the ontological fullness and of the idea that literature, to its highest degree, is life.

In the post-war Romanian context, one may conclude that theory-related scepticism was relentless. The language of New Criticism entered the Romanian discourse, emphasizing on the interdictions of the political system. Even after 1965, not all Western critics could be cited – and when it did occur, it was not in any context. This somewhat exterior fact in this anti-theoretical setting is joined, on the other hand, by the traditionalism of the Romanian critics, who are interested in resuming with the inter-war period rather than in finding new critical instruments. Maiorescu, Lovinescu and Călinescu are the critical paradigms on which the emergent generation of Romanian critics has relied since the 1960s. But this doesn't mean that synchronization with the Occident was entirely absent; it only means that influences followed a specific path.

While Romanian criticism was borrowing the French theory rhetoric, it chose to remain attached, at core, to G. Călinescu's impressionistic model. The main features of post-war Romanian criticism are: the rejection of methods in fa-

vor of close and comprehensive readings; the concern with the truth of the work to the disadvantage of the methodological validity; the distrust of the scientific approach, even when it yields results; the quest for the irreducible individuality of the work, rather than of its position in the system.

Truth be told, although the "methodological terrorism" of French criticism in the same period is firmly rejected, the language of Romanian criticism becomes somewhat scientific in the '70s and '80s. The greatest urge of this process originates in the need to update the critical perspective on the classics. From this point of view, the two above-mentioned decades are really prolific. One cannot identify an important Romanian writer who doesn't become the object of a consistent monographic study. That's why, re-reading the same authors in a new light would be indicative of a hidden interest in renewing the critical approach. Romanian essayists did not praise theory as such, but they did use it in order to re-interpret classic authors. At the beginning of the 1970s, Eugen Negrici sets an authentic record regarding the cultural distance between the object of the analysis and the novelty of the "critical methodology". The studies on Antim Ivireanul, Dosoftei or Miron Costin can be considered the most violent updating of classic Romanian authors. In *Antim. Logos și personalitate* (1971) or *Narațiunea în cronicile lui Grigore Ureche și Miron Costin* (1972), the notes on language and rhetoric prevail over the study of the individual au-

thors. Like in the Russian formalists' or structuralists' books – whom Negrici praises –, the focus is on the mechanism of the literary itself. It's obvious that Eugen Negrici's re-readings have a theoretical hidden agenda as he attempts to endorse the concept of "involuntary expressiveness" – understood as a way of freeing the reader from the passive and traditional reception process: "We should encourage a new type of reading which would claim adversities rather than confirmations", he states.

The studies of Al. Călinescu, Mihai Zamfir or Paul Cornea in the same period are not innocent re-readings either. In *Anton Holban. Complexul lucidității* (1972), Al. Călinescu annihilates the idea of authenticity – ever so current in the period – in order to reveal the narrative convention behind it. Authenticity in *Ioana* or in *O moarte care nu dovedește nimic* is created by complex literary mechanisms. In *Caragiale sau vârsta modernă a literaturii* (1976), borrowing some of Shklosky's postulates, Al. Călinescu shows that the secret of Caragiale's work resides in the literary transfer of the various journalistic genres, minor *par excellence*. Therefore, Caragiale becomes a trendsetter in the field of literary forms.

A whole study could be dedicated to the concept of "diachronic stylistics", as proposed by Mihai Zamfir. In *Cealaltă față a prozei* (1988), the critic is interested – apart from the revaluing excentric writers like Max Blecher – in the generative nucleus of the work, understood linguistically. The "stylistic cypher" of writing, the "hidden image" represents its ulti-

mate reality.

Finally, Paul Cornea's evolution in the same time span is quite interesting from a theoretical point of view. From *Originile romantismului românesc* (1972) to *Regula jocului* (1980) or *Introducere în teoria lecturii* (1988), the critic makes room for the theorist. Topics relating to the institution of literature, to its sociological aspects or to the aesthetics of reception provide a particular vision on criticism.

Most surprisingly, though, even critics who had stated, midway through the 1960s, that they were firm followers of Călinescu (hence, suspicious towards Theory) like Nicolae Manolescu or Eugen Simion provide interesting re-readings of classic authors. The former reveals, for example, a psychoanalytical approach on Maiorescu (in *Contradicția lui Maiorescu*, 1970). Although Nicolae Manolescu doesn't acknowledge it, *Arca lui Noe* (1980-1983), his most famous book, uses a typology that relies on the conceptual core of the French New Criticism. The themes of the interpreted works are revealed by the microscopic analysis of their formal aspects. As to what Eugen Simion is concerned, the volume most openly situated in the wake of French New Criticism is *Dimineața poezilor* (1980). The Geneva School critic Jean-Pierre Richard provides the framework for analyzing the forty-eightier poets. The experimentalism of the method – approaching old writers with new methods – is openly stated in the preface.

Summing up, it's obvious that, although Romanian criticism had been sceptical about aggressive import of

Western critical Theory, a few of its reforming consequences have been adopted. New interpretations generate changes in the literary canon. Thus, in the first half of the 1980s, when looking back, Nicolae Manolescu can conclude that "In the last decade, the metamorphosis of criticism calls forth a metamorphosis of classic literature". And that, although "the trend of structuralism has passed, this doesn't mean we are back to the innocent impressionism". In fact, Nicolae Manolescu is happy to note, with the decline of French New Criticism, the (paradoxical, I would say) synchronization of the Romanian and Western contexts. The rejection of structuralist premises in 1980s France – the starting point of the post-theoretical climate – resembles the Romanian critics' scepticism towards theory. *Întoarcerea autorului*, the most representative volume in this respect, belongs to Eugen Simion. Since the renewal of the critical discourse is an "access way" to literature rather than an object in itself, it is only natural that the parameters of this renewal be contemplated somewhat prudently. This distrust is perhaps the main characteristic of the post-war Romanian criticism. Mircea Martin's *Critică și profunzime* (1974), Ion Pop's *Ore franceze* (1979), Eugen Simion's

*Întoarcerea autorului* (1981), although assimilating the contemporary critical discourse, share the feeling of a permanent distance from it.

Consequently, if we take a closer look, Romanian scepticism towards theory can only artificially be linked to the post-theoretical era in Western criticism. While the former is the fruit of the traditionalist structure of our culture, the latter stems from a modern overemphasis. In Romanian context, the anti-theoretical movement hindered any debate on the methods of criticism and on the possibility of fine-tuning its instruments. Once the influence of French New Criticism on Romanian culture stops, the impressionistic perspective arises again, in the late eighties and early nineties. That is exactly why the intensely discussed reassessments and re-canonizations after 1990 no longer benefitted from analytical instruments sufficiently flexible and creative to become credible. It may well be that the false synchronizations of the 1980s produce their damaging effects only in the last twenty years, when the lack of theoretical horizon became evident for whomever is concerned with the history of ideas in Romanian thought.

### Bibliography

- BRATU, Savin, *De la Sainte-Beuve la Noua Critică*, Editura Univers, București, 1974;  
 CĂLINESCU, G., *Principii de estetică*, ediție îngrijită și prefațată de Al. Piru, Editura Scrisul românesc, Craiova, 1974;  
 HABIB, M. A. R., *A History of Literary Criticism. From Plato to the Present*, Blackwell Publishing, 2005;  
 IOSIFESCU, Silvian (ed.), *Analiză și interpretare. Orientări în critica literară contemporană* (coordonator:), Editura științifică, București, 1972;

- ISER, Wolfgang, *How to Do Theory*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2005;
- HAYWARD, Max, Labedz, Leopold, *Literature and Revolution in Soviet Russia, 1917-62*. A Symposium, Oxford University Press, 1963;
- MARINO, Adrian, *Introducere în critica literară*, Editura Tineretului, București, 1968;
- MARTIN, Mircea, *Critică și profunzime*, Editura Univers, București, 1974;
- MARTIN, Mircea, *Explorări în trecutul și în prezentul teoriei literare românești*, ediție îngrijită de Laura Albulescu, Editura Art, București, 2006;
- MIHĂILESCU, Florin, *Conceptul de critică literară în România, I-II*, Editura Minerva, București, 1976-1979;
- MIHĂILESCU, Florin, *De la proletcultism la postmodernism*, Pontica, Constanța, 2002;
- MIHĂILESCU, Florin, *Semnificațiile criticii contemporane. Perspective ideologice*, Editura Eminescu, București, 1976;
- POULET, Georges (ed.), *Les chemins actuels de la critique*, Union Générale d'éditions, Paris, 1968;
- VITNER, Ion, *Critica criticii*, Colecția Contemporanul, București, 1949;