
I.3. LE CLANDESTIN : DISLOCATION DE LA POLITIQUE

An Anti-Canon of the self-excluded writers Counter-discursive forms of Romanian prose*

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IN THE written Romanian literature from the communist regime the forms of distancing oneself from the official directives are multiple and interesting. From the experiment proposed by surrealist writing to the essayistic, allegoric novels, the contemporary prose achieved what was called “salvation through culture” which generated exemplary discursive models. Among those, the novels of Gellu Naum and Matei Călinescu, the writings of the School of Târgoviște, of Gheorghe Crăciun, Mircea Nedelciu, etc., are worth mentioning. These writings restore the condition of truth in the most authentic manner even though by means of transgressive, bookish languages where the intelligence of writing consists not only in encrypting the message, in its double communicative function which relied on concealing and revealing, but mostly in the audacity of some transparencies, in the ironic notes that are meant to restore a complex image of *clandestinity* in the official culture through the dissonant models of the contemporary narrative, through breaking away from the official principles and ideology. Forms of subversion, these literary works are reflective writings on the condition of history and of the individual under the oppression and terror of real time. Therefore the fragmented vision, the exile, the rupture of social bonds at all levels, the challenge of great themes and metanarratives, the art of rewriting and blaspheming the high codes are the strategies meant to redeem, in a transgressive manner, the lost coherence by means of refash-

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ioning major existential models such as *The Eros*, *The Revelatory Experience of Madness*, *The Truth of the Body* and *The Tensions of Freedom*.

Both for Gellu Naum and for the others, writing becomes an existential act in defiance of the absurd and derisory nature of the surrounding world. In Romanian literature, the writer is the representative of a type of surrealist poetics along with Paul Păun, Gherasim Luca, D. Trost, Virgil Teodorescu.

In *Zenobia*,¹ the surge of the oneiric, probing the depths of a reality that surpasses the contingency of the logical, of mechanical reasoning and decants into a fantastic prose in which, just as in *Nadja*, the creation of the mentor of French surrealism, André Breton, the biographic and the poetic become “the nuptial signs of the idea.” The narrative act which is scripturally guided through the auctorial theme, crosses paths with the reverie, merges with the existential notation and with the plenary instant of communication with an existence beyond the time of the historic and personal destiny.

The moment when love is encountered between the mires ironically represents the erotic experience by means of exile and the placing of the characters in a setting which is devoid of history but coded by a filthy topography with obvious references to the context. The stroll or rather the gallivanting of the narrator-witness who leads the course of the narrative from this double position, intimately subordinates not only the writing process but also the process of becoming by means of love of the character that asserts the onto-poetic identity of the author. Naum is the *alter ego* of the writer who, similarly to the Proustian mask, discovers himself in and through writing, in and through literature as an act of self-discovery and of profoundly ethical, erotic, ontic and poetic founding.

Being aware of the fact that literature continues to obscure not only the semantic blurring of the atmosphere but also a state of grace, Gellu Naum attempts from the very beginning to capture behind the “useless and deceiving” labyrinth of language, that state of floating (escape from history) that readers reject on account of their usual superficial reading of literature. Naturally, the writer provides instructions regarding the key in which the content of the novel was written thus inviting the reader to listen beyond the surface music. Although strange, the love story confined within the borders of narrativity makes us plunge into an “underwater” reality, a trans-reality in which the referential frameworks are engulfed, they come apart merging the interior with the exterior, the world of objects with that of embryonic subjective existences. “To swarm” becomes a synonym of “to abide”/“to live” or to allow oneself to be permeated by the essence of liminal experience.

Drawing on Novalis’s romanticism or continuing Breton’s surrealism, the world of the five characters defines itself at the intersection of rational–irrational, dream–reality, dream–action, dream–wakefulness. The dichotomies are dismissed in the dialectic manner of surrealist thought² which, as usual, is enacted by means of automatic writing which is in our case supervised by an auto-reflexive consciousness that leads the novelistic experience in a dualistic, methodical, unequivocally Rimbaldian manner.

The mires where Mr. Sima’s house is located are part of a reality that allows itself to be discovered not so much rationally as at a sensorial level, in the continuum of an existence situated at the border between the *oneiric* and reality. More than a textual and

contextual reference (compensatory, a reversed hybrid Arcadia that still bears the marks of mythological bliss but at the same time those of the menace of history) *the mires* become a substance whose contour can hardly be delimited but whose rhythms take hold of the reader and engulf him in that indistinctive “roar” of language that communicates more than the *melos* of narrative reason; it communicates the *melos* of the abyss, of retreat from the world but mostly of the Orphic experience. *Zenobia*, a romance novel and a novel on the experience of self-knowledge through love, reconstructs the mystical path of *erotic* and, why not, covertly *heroic* revelation. Thus writing acquires the meaning of an existential, non-cultural experience through which the world and its props could be revealed in their unaltered state:

*As I'm writing, because I seem to be writing, I regret that you do not have before you these papers on which these lines written in ink are crammed; if you saw them, if you closed your eyes and gently ran your fingertips over the rain of black letters, I'm certain you would see Mr. Sima's room with the table next to the window overlooking the mires and its dead man placed on it; and you would see us, each sitting on their own chairs, speaking silently or out loud; and you would realise that none of the previously described states is imagined, that all of them occurred precisely as I'm recounting them.*³

Hence writing is turned into a genuine manner of exploration both for the writer-diarist and for the reader. The letter comes alive, materializes, gains substance, envelops *reality* and becomes *reality*. The textual pellicle is no longer a coating for images and for events translated via a mediator—homonymous narrator with the author's identity—but accredits the existence and materiality of a living alphabet that determines *nominalia* to be *realia* (and the other way around). The novel's world has a material, empirical reality in which visions thrive but it also gains a trans-logical dimension: beyond words we are lured to discover “the extremely important things that—as the auctorial *alter ego* confesses—regardless of how much I want to communicate, I am simply unable to.”⁴ Sometimes the narrator's discourse becomes autoscopic and this analytical awareness generates meta-poetic loops in which personal lived/recorded experiences are commented. The written text weaves, records and evaluates an existence with the goal of self-defining:

*in the mires I had even been kicked in the stomach without any resistance, I was groaning then because I was supposed to and was waiting for someone to cringe for us all; but what was dominating me was the open evidence of the great rhythms that we lose, whereas in the city magma it is despair and fury, otherwise futile, that are harder to melt; nevertheless I like to claim that, even here, my deceiving bluntness and my apparent cynicism are but worthless blatancies of an underlying serenity, more resilient than all existing furies.*⁵

The auto-referential notes have a two-fold symbolic nature as they not only translate a personal onto-poetic experience but also one of collective resistance in the actual impris-

onment. In the writing of the orthonym the writer displays the existence within and beyond “the terror of history,” in and beyond the political, moral, rational or social dictatorship. The transition from the particular story of the *alter ego* to a common, universal experience is possible not only by means of the reading key connoted by the surrealist topic of the “subconscious ego”⁶ where *One* is identical to *All* but also through the perspective of a writing which is deeply anchored in the reality of the communist regime during which the book was published. In this context *Diversity* is reduced to *Sameness* and the individual and personality to anonymity and uniformity. It is clear that the manners of understanding the world are subtly depicted by Gellu Naum by overcoming that particular ideological background, beyond such categories as good–evil, right–wrong, acceptable–unacceptable. However, the ironic tones, the redundancies of rhetorical gallantry, the ambiguities and the metaphorical reveal more than the author wants to disclose.

The reading of the papers removes the narrative subject from the euphoric lethargy of pure rhythms, places him in the uncomfortable “vulgarity and monstrous pornography” of the language of official fiction, in the daily disgust: “this sporadic occupation didn’t take up too much time out of the hours destined for reading the tomes of the time, real solidly built urinals provisioned with subtle, ultra-perfected installations from whose taps poured the theory, gushed the poetry, you could virtually vomit, rigid and ready to grab you between their wooden jaws.”⁷ The compensations of misery, superficiality and “relaxing” stereotyping are a pretext for bitter irony and self-directed irony. The author delegitimizes official culture, implicitly accuses it of falsity and rejects it in the guise of anti-literary forms such as prosaic poetry, anecdotic-sensational news items obtained from recycling waste, “paddings” gathered in the artificial structure of collage-poems or “personal news bulletin”-poems in which the intertwining of functional and spectacular-ludic languages has a critical, dissolving effect.

Aesthetic consciousness doubled by the moral, unspoil one, renders Naum’s autobiographical prose worthy of the status of a protest which is to a greater or lesser extent hidden in the exercise of producing artefacts based on a Rimboldian verb alchemy consisting of valuing the marginal, the trivial, the grotesque and the aberrant:

*... I would only read the news articles’ titles and first words and if I suspected that something might have been of interest to me, I would cut out and glue the clippings on a white sheet of paper; therefore, once every few months, when several fragments saved from the unconscious-intentional pornography of the whole had been gathered, I could read an ad-hoc bulletin in which those news items, mostly used as paddings, became rather instructive because in them I could find things and facts one could reflect upon.*⁸

The arrows are more and more strategically directed towards the tons of mass-produced potboilers. In this cultural impasse the genuine writer can only draw attention to the symptomatic aberrations of a system of directives and to save himself from it by resorting to the game derived from the methods of the avant-garde. The news-poems that alternate with the evocative-oneiric or reflexive-theoretical sequences, illustrate the

reification, the categorization of the individual, the abolishing of their real freedom, the denial of public affirmation and creation in “dimness.”⁹

In *Zenobia*, apart from this reactive manner of writing literature, a new poetics is instated, one that is grounded on an original manner of understanding, on a comprehension force that is explainable through the mystery of the regenerating Eros. The laws of this existence are the rediscovery of ingenuity (acted, mimed), “the strange active-carelessness,” the abolished and regained wonder, childhood and play, “the fluid adaptation.” Hence the states and realities are redefined, objects capture energies and have a distinct name, lovers read each other’s thoughts. The crux of this communication between Zenobia and Gellu consists in the rediscovery of lost nature, in abandoning the search for meaning because existence doesn’t need to be explained but lived empathically in an androgynous and totalizing manner:

*Zenobia would get ahead of my thoughts and intentions; however, I don’t know if her point of view coincided with mine although one might say that we didn’t live individually; but our point of view, always coinciding, was anything but a coincidence. I lived under the impression that even her silences spoke to me about something that I had known for a long time, something impossible to formulate in words, usually felt as an appeasement, as a complete and serene science.*¹⁰

In Zenobia’s universe everything seems to be transfigured, eroticized, extracted from the necessity of providing an explanation or of logical reduction. Under these circumstances, knowledge becomes a manner of natural, organic, involuntary, trans-mental existence and Zenobia becomes a principle of Gellu Naum’s personal gnosis, just as Beatrice was for Dante. Not a single element from her cosmos is insignificant and not one of the lovers’ gestures is ever secondary or unmotivated.

With all the struggle of the diarist who doses his memories, Naum retroactively scrutinizes himself through day-time consciousness which is however integrated into trans-logic coherence and a trans-personal consciousness. By means of a sort of a reversed paranoid-critical method according to which genuine reality is the one of the existence from beyond the pellicle and the regular world is the dimension in which all motivations, all correlations between things, all causalities are nothing but arbitrary, the writer sets his characters in a dimension of transparencies, in an autarchic cosmos “each of us was lived by our common universe, we got along just fine, without much talking.”

From this world that, by means of living experience, sets itself apart from the habitual-trivial one, the writer prepares the passage towards a confining space called “The Corridor” (the third section) and eventually opts for the progressively-ascending symbolism of “The Stairway” (the fourth section). The ordering pattern of the visions is thus replicating the Dantesque, initiating, Nervalian prototype and the semantic polyvalence of language acquires complex, Orphic motivations. Gellu and Zenobia reiterate the pre-modern tensions of transcending the mundane condition of love. Their book assimilates and melts down all contradictions that usually stand at the basis of knowledge/dual existence, oscillating between reality and dream, day-time and night, residual and pri-

mordial, rational and trans-rational, finally choosing that untranslatable *something else*. Childhood and play have an anti-destiny value as it euphemizes the methods of mechanical knowledge. The oneiric visions instate a new reality that comes alive irrespective of the wish of the narrator; the dreaming of the living dead and his essential reality endowed with the pure, naïve conscience of child-Dragoș, actually reveals the same Naum—the character who subsumes through experience the different facets of *Sameness*, of identity in plurality: “they bore an uncanny resemblance to me.”¹¹ The subject discovered himself in an *undefinable communion*, in the plenitude of the irrational that had become a source of accession to the unspeakable truth. Under these circumstances, *game* (of ambiguities and of the child-poet-senile old man-living dead identity) and *art* (as strategy of postponing/abolishing death) become the forms in which the pure spirit manifests itself.

The meaning of the entire exploration that Naum proffers is overcoming the labyrinth, the illusion of salvation through the paradoxically-assumed action of wandering about, of peregrinations in the mundane and beyond. His character’s journey presupposes the failure and cleansing of the senses, surpassing the liminal states and the borders between the rational and the trans-mental, between the known and the unknown—“and you are not aware that it is precisely what you do know that prevents you from knowing.”¹²

Learning how to die or discovering oneself in those rhythms of absent-mindedness, “immersed in an intense and gentle melancholy,” this is the lesson of the ultimate experience of lost and found love, fulfilled then and there, in the reality of the primordial memory of “the mires.” *Zenobia* is the novel of the rediscovery of androgynous unity that would recover, in the *Eros-Thanatos* dialectics, the original condition of the human being.

Beyond the exploration of such diverse cultural codes of love, beyond the residues of the bookish and the writer’s substantiated anti-literary revolt, we discover a refreshed language of truth, of incongruous, non-conformist views which are atypical for the laws, canons and strategies of the narrative of the Eros. Gellu Naum, the character and author, builds himself with his narcissistic writing—reflecting a particular destiny in the context of 20th century Romanian literature—“a novel that mirrors both his revolts and essential ambition. Denial is directed towards literature, the ambition is that of bringing about life changes.”¹³ The mixture of hallucinatory images and of liminal experiences are illustrated in the oneiric-evocative dimension of language with critical-ironic representations. These are adorned with a tint of dark humour and of absurd, with the charm of stereotypical associations in “the universal feature report.” In the economy of the novel, all these trigger both a rhetoric-poetic variation as well as a variation of perspective, of (re)positioning of the love theme in *another circle* of sensitivity, in *another universe* which is within and outside history at the same time, a frame that renders “voluntary blindness” possible due to the accession to *transparency*.

If Gellu Naum wrote an esoteric novel in which love is the only manner of escaping from the mundane and eventually of expunging the evil of history, Matei Călinescu chooses salvation through writing by inserting his character’s experience into the fragmented, lyrical-essayistic diary of a mad prophet, a beggar that eradicates all rationally

governed systems and models. The subversive character is more prominent in *Viața și opiniile lui Zacharias Lichter* (The Life and Opinions of Zacharias Lichter), and the discursive forms of *clandestinity* are not hidden from the attentive eye of political censorship. The pressures of the communist regime that allowed no one to have *opinions* and the liberty of expressing them, are avoided by choosing the *morosophic* model of existence that allowed the author, according to the tradition of the *carnavalesque*, to leave the common order. Therefore Matei Călinescu feels guilty on account of his novel escaping censorship, in spite of the oblique writing and in spite of the fact that the censorship mechanism had been fooled. The discourse of resistance was formed of marginalization and self-marginalization, of insubordination and trivialization, of demystifying the grand narratives of communism in which the voice of Zacharias Lichter became a sort of “operator of clandestinity.”¹⁴

However, apart from the symbolic localization and the national historical contextualization, Matei Călinescu’s character seems to be an “offspring of Rimbaldian descent, destined to illustrate the interrogating mind across epochs, across historical and political contexts, is a projection of an ethical consciousness that adopts atypical modes of existence which are incompatible with the norms and habits that define a life merged with or subdued to public space, common morals or official directives. In his peculiarity, Lichter can only define himself through rupture, through ironic disdain towards the sociality of the world.”¹⁵ He is the prophet who takes his role very seriously, identifies himself with this mask and lives as a misfit, as an ex-centric.

The novel is part of a paradigm that the European history has termed as the *allegoric*¹⁶ or symbolic-euphemizing narrative in which we can include Franz Kafka, Ernst Jünger, Albert Camus or Herman Hesse. The novel-reply to the “terror of history,” to the requirements, contentions or directives of certain regimes or ideologies, sublimated throughout the 20th century, various forms of detachment and of the subversive in which ambiguity, the contradiction of voices, fragmentariness, ruptures of meaning, slippage from the real towards the surreal or towards the *infra*-real are strategies of the author’s “exposure” to the receptors and the real history. Thus, the most relevant and “the most powerful form of resistance that Matei Călinescu’s text displays, is the sincere expression of “exposed” introversion, of anguish and of forcefully induced depression—contextualized and politically sustained.”¹⁷ It is worth noticing that in spite of exposing the anguish which is rendered by discontinuities and slippages from the narrative to the lyric, from the prophetic to the essayistic, between the constituents of the novel there is a subtle internal coherence supported by the binders of a non-dictatorial logic, by the architecture of the thought that protests, turns on itself, questions itself and eventually devours itself through contradiction and paradox. These strategies of dissolution of the Romanian epos’s traditional coherence and of the institution of habitual thought, voluntarily provides an echoing manner of reading that attracts an accomplice namely the reader who is free to assume, to decrypt, to fill in the blanks.

By being forced to back out of the tyranny of the derisory, the mundane itself is reinvented as/through liminal experience (at the limit and beyond the edge of the precipice that provides the exit from The Empire of Stupidity). The banal and the congruous,

the common and the derisory, the marginal and the liminal, the normal and the public all become categories that can no longer be defined as such. In the context of Matei Călinescu's novel, they are the strings that order, orchestrate the character's "life and opinions" but moreover, in a radiating manner, they end up modulating the reader's "life and opinions," the same reader that according to the text's implicit principle, becomes an authentic conscience that surpasses the reasoning, cultural, moral and religious automatisms to which he had always been subjected.

In the preface to the 1995 second edition, the author critically evaluated his work and situated the euphemizing manner and the allegorical weaving of the novel into the context of the *subjection mode*, specific for the respective period. But apart from this stylistic aspect that allows for the possibility of the novelist's blaming and self-blaming with regard to "his concessions and cowardice from back then,"¹⁸ this type of discourse was not accessible to the censorship committee of the communist regime. The success of the book was not therefore due to its going past the official barriers but to the fact that it was precisely this formula of its intentionally constructed *ambiguity* and *obliqueness* that managed to transcend its subversive-allegorical stance and be remarked; to be fair, this can be considered a unique style and mark of the literality and unparalleled poetic character of Matei Călinescu's writings.¹⁹ The novel is also a sort of reversed "political" manifesto, a text of resistance in and through culture because the theme of the freedom of human beings is recurrent. The theme silently returns in the guise of the refrains that accompany the main character and in the dialogic form of his few friends' interventions. Either expressed more obliquely in the paradoxical negativity or more directly, freedom is always prepared by the singular moments of escape from the ordinary, from the social and from history.

The prophet's condition is that of leading the way, of transposing himself into a spiritually formed but still materially unformed reality; therefore *freedom*, as a theme which is not literally expressed,²⁰ but only manifested in the whisper of a *logos*-specific language, is but one of those states, realities, pre-formal or latent forms that can only be identified and defined by a mediated reading performed as a *hermeneutics of gaps*, of absences, as a *hermeneutics of implications, of elliptical and cryptic meanings*,²¹ as the author himself stated in the above mentioned preface.

Who is in fact Zacharias Lichter and what does his revolt demonstrate?; again the answer leads to the realm of implications, of silent meanings because the autobiographical core of the novel is concealed in the interplay of fiction, in the tension knots of ideas, in the feverishness of visions. Hence, we could consider *Viața și opiniile lui Zacharias Lichter* a historic document but "not necessarily on account of what it says but mostly because of what it silences ... but its silence is eloquent precisely through what lacks from the furious discourses of the prophet, through the omissions that soundlessly shout his revolt but not less intense than his fiery words."²² The meaning of the assumed and *mute-ly* acclaimed freedom becomes much more profound and acute on account of mostly being heard from within the communist bloc. Constructed by means of that threshold of depersonalization and re-personalization into a narrative mask, the novel finally unveils the identity/the merging of the character's identity with that of the biographer's, the auc-

torial *alter ego*. Therefore the soundless experience of revolt, “shouted” between the lines, in the sub-text, fuels that revelatory experience of heavy silence as it incorporates horrors, trauma, frustrations that tried to annihilate social liberty but hadn’t succeeded in annihilating the spiritual one. The revelatory silence is outlined both as a theme and as a discursive practice, as image and event of enlightenment.

Zacharias Lichter is a character of social Memory,²³ of the memory of a political regime, a phantasm of freedom, a tragic mask of the negative act of experiencing freedom. Hence the way in which his face is described as one “of an uncanny hideousness,” exaggerated, transfigured by “fears and ecstasies,” deformed by “marginal but tenacious memories that, in spite of having been long covered by shadow, could at any moment return with amazing freshness and precisions.”²⁴

Furthermore, Zacharias Lichter is also a witness of cultural Memory as he lives out of the collective experiences of certain reversed revelations that he himself experiments, the revelations of human misery, of the clutter of meanings, of language, of moral, symbolic or religious values. This is a character that, through its exemplarity, should become a lesson of remembrance in the context of guided oblivion, in the context of the tyranny of historical time that engulfs and erases by euphemistically annulling the pain and deforming of the truth.

The portrait of this tormented being does in no manner illustrate the incandescent image of the avant-garde prophetic in its vigorously optimistic sense but attests the silent revolt, the courage of demystifying a utopia and the responsibility of assuming such an awkward position with all the motivation involved. Hence the cultural reverberations linked to the paradigm of agony, to the Jobian identity which also defines Lichter’s personality, reverberations that mirror the avatars of the Rimbaldian damned human being and the monstrous conscience that chose the path of denial, of demythologising and demystification in order not to fall into the night and death of the spirit and in order not to lose the meaning of the human being’s authentic freedom.

Matei Călinescu turns his writing into a *testament*, which he signs three times: first *officially*, transparently, superficially (in the etymological sense), second as a fictional writing of an author who doesn’t really need a pseudonym or a heteronym to publish a novel of ideological disenchantment, third and most importantly *existential* and *spiritual*, in the sense of assuming the writing process as a manner of resistance/existence, as a revelatory experience that afterwards triggered the cultural display/expression of the creative subject’s traumas.

By way of conclusion we might claim that these Romanian models illustrated by Gellu Naum and by Matei Călinescu resonate to the theme of History both as works of fiction and as discourses of subversive exclusion. They covertly attack the formulas of writing to order by means of a bookish or mythological encoding. Therefore writing becomes a legalizing/legitimizing act of an illegal experience namely that of disguising the truth in borrowed vestment adequate to the rhetoric of the autobiographical that is reflected in the deforming mirrors of the poetic lochs.

□

Notes

1. Gellu Naum, *Zenobia* (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1985).
2. Adrian Marino, in J. Weisgerber, ed., *Les avant-gardes littéraires du XX-e siècle* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984), stresses the fact that this conflict is „not only epistemological but also ontological” and is asserted as a point of crisis between the passive and the active state of *the objective consciousness of reality* and of its *internal development*, of the object and subject as instances integrated into an older, rather romantic process of dialectic reconciliation.
3. Naum, *Zenobia*, 13.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., 48–49.
6. Alexandru Mușina, *Paradigma poeziei moderne* (Bucharest: Leka Brâncuș Publishing House, 1996), 95–98.
7. Naum, *Zenobia*, 52–53.
8. Ibid., 53.
9. An example: “Marc de Maere, who spent 105 days in an especially arranged coffin, at a depth of 1,50 m, is preparing to spend another 206 days in similar conditions,” Ibid., 57.
10. Ibid., 59.
11. Ibid., 78–79.
12. Ibid., 99.
13. Monica Lovinescu, *Est-etice. Unde scurte IV* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1994): „On the contrary, it seems to us that Gellu Naum is a veritable surrealist who offers, by his total and seemingly youthful adhesion, one of the few prose writings that this literary current, rich in picturesque and poetic exemplifications, has ever generated in our country. Apart from the automatic dictation—to which, nevertheless, surrealists were not always faithful—all the lacks, accomplishments and idiosyncrasies of surrealism can be encountered in this novel or, if the author prefers, in this love Pohem that is *Zenobia*” (6 septembrie 1985).
14. Simona-Ioana Cucuian, “Suprarealitatea s(c)ăpând (de) Canalul Decriptării,” in *Cărțile supraviețuitoare*, ed. Virgil Podoabă (Brașov: Aula, 2008), 201.
15. Rodica Ilie, “Prezență și transparență. Experiența revelatoare a iubirii,” in *Cărțile supraviețuitoare*, 203.
16. Cf. R-M. Albérès, *Istoria romanului modern* (1962), trans. Leonid Dimov (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură Universală, 1968), 359–376.
17. Cucuian, “Suprarealitatea,” 201.
18. Matei Călinescu, *Viața și opiniile lui Zacharias Lichter*, 3rd edition (Iași: Polirom, 1995), 5.
19. Ion Bogdan Lefter attributes the distinctive note of “enigmatic essay writing” to the novel thus placing it “somewhere at the limit between modernist psychology and the postmodern comedy of literature” along with Virgil Nemoianu’s *Symptoms*, Toma Pavel’s *Fragments on Language*, Vintilă Ivănceanu’s novels (*Until the Disappearance* and *The Extraordinary Exploits of Milorad de Bouteille*). On the other hand, from the perspective of the sociology of reception, Ștefan Borbély (*Matei Călinescu: monograph* (Brașov: Aula, s. a), 43–44.) points out that the success of Matei Călinescu’s novel is due to “the subversive solidity that the book generated,” to the exquisiteness of “the solidary and symbolic illicit” sustained by the configuration of the character’s philosophy. Due to its gnostic configuration, the novel legitimized “the ‘gothic’ mystical, un-Western, unorthodox surge from the period of the 1967–1972 cultural liberalization” thus becoming much more than a manifesto of subversion.
20. Only two paragraphs explicitly contain the term: “My freedom is a paradox, an *irony*, a paroxysmal form of irony (a question that might receive any answer). And then I feel compelled

to answer: *I*,” Călinescu, *Viața și opiniile lui Zacharias Lichter*, 62 and 96: “it is clear that we will only be able to define *freedom*, by remaining, of course, on the same level of the social, as an escape from history and as *oblivion*.” (the author’s emphasis).

21. *Ibid.*, 11.

22. *Ibid.*, 10.

23. In the sense of the models of memory listed by Paul Ricœur, *Memoria, istoria, uitarea*, trans. Ilie Gyurcsik, Margareta Gyurcsik (Timișoara: Amarcord, 2001).

24. Călinescu, *Viața și opiniile lui Zacharias Lichter*, 15.

Abstract

An Anti-Canon of the self-excluded writers.
Counter-discursive forms of Romanian prose

In this research our aim is to pursue the Romanian case through the renovation of cultural codes by means of the voluntary action of engaging “inner frontiers,” considering this action as being relevant for unofficial literary practices, for both the phenomenon of salvation through culture during the communist regime—when literary experiments were a form of escapism from political censorship due to the euphemistic discourse, and also for the affirmation of an identity cultural model which did not eliminate the dilemmas and controversies despite the assertion of the national-communist ethos of that time. We thereby propose the study of the canonical writers of the period from the perspective of the history of ideas thus aiming to show that the canonical selectivity can choose works by Romanian writers which have not only the merit of founding an anti-canon and an autochthonous ethos, but should also be valued in the dynamics of a European, cosmopolitan ethos. We shall try to go beyond the theoretical patterns that marked the literary expression of Romanian writers during the communist regime, as singular and symbolic actions defying political power. Our goal is to determine a literary meta-model of “*Clandestinity*” by drawing upon the paradoxical revolution of artistic codes (e.g. the contributions of Gellu Naum, Matei Călinescu, etc).

Keywords

Romanian prose, salvation through culture, “revolution” of the artistic codes, euphemistic discourse, symbolic actions in communism.