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Ileana Galea



ILEANA GALEA (1938–2002)

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THE VOLUME *De la victorianism la postmodernism: In memoriam Ileana Galea* (From Victorianism to postmodernism: In memoriam Ileana Galea) (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2013) is dedicated to the memory of Ileana Galea (1938–2002), professor at the English Department of Babeș-Bolyai University, philologist, researcher, essayist, translator and lexicographer. Seventy-six years after her birth and ten years after her death, Ileana Galea has by no means been forgotten. This is largely due to the editor of this book, the essayist and translator Mihaela Mudure, professor at Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, a feminist “voice” who is nationally and internationally known and appreciated.

The memorial volume is a welcome and successful initiative to present posterity with the image of a multifaceted personality. The portrait, initially sketched through the papers presented at the Symposium *In Memoriam I. Galea* (15 November 2012) organized by the English Department of Babeș-Bolyai University, is completed by M. Mudure in the preface to this volume through an exhaustive bibliographical record which defines the contribution of I. Galea to the devel-

opment of Romanian Anglistics. This anniversary book includes nineteen essays outlining I. Galea's intellectual portrait, written by former colleagues and students, academics, young Ph.D.s, Anglicists or lovers of literature: Rodica Albu, Carmen-Narcisa Braşoveanu, Bianca Doris Bretan, Ruxandra Bularca, Rodica Dimitriu, Marius Jucan, Tamara Lăcătuşu, Octavian More, Mihaela Mudure, Amelia Nan, Adriana Neagu, Claudia Novosivschei, Ştefan Oltean, Alina Pamfil, Oana-Meda Păloşanu, Adrian Radu, Ioana Sasu-Bolba, Virgil Stanciu, and Sanda Tomescu Baci. They discuss the human profile of Mrs. I. Galea (generous, elegant, distinguished and warm, sociable, encouraging and dedicated to her craft), her philological contributions (translator of H. James, interpreter/essayist of Victorian British literature, author of modern and contemporary textbooks), as well as the high-interest topics she addressed in her work (such as the dual perspective on a literary text, melodrama and modernity, tradition and modernity, Victorianism and passion, intellectual fetishism and the Victorian spirit, Victorianism and Bakhtinism, Victorianism and Modernism). The original portraits of I. Galea, her translator's creed, and her text annotations raise a full range of emotions in the readers. Ileana Galea, the translator, engages in a dynamic and pluralistic dialogue with the text, which she approached as an active and inquisitive reader.

The very title of the volume, *From Victorianism to Postmodernism*, suggestively selected by M. Mudure, indicates an arch over time as well as an opening of the author I. Galea towards the *new*. Hence, we have the dual prospect of recycling tradition as a way of thinking and feeling through new theories and interpretations which go beyond the antinomies of Victorianism (tradition) and modernity (innovation), to entwine the two in a dynamic link which must be exploited with introspective finesse and critical honesty.

I met Professor Galea many years ago. She was my teacher in college and then a member of my doctoral committee. I admired her humaneness and kindness in dealing with people in a straightforward manner and without any academic sophistication; I cherished her innate teaching qualities and the total dedication to the courses she taught. Ileana Galea was also a special mentor who imposed scientific rigor, and today I continue to apply many things I learned from her in my own teaching. Her mentorship qualities are also evidenced in reverential essays by other former disciples as well (M. Mudure, R. Albu, R. Dimitriu, T. Lăcătuşu, A. Neagu, etc.): to love your job, to be interested in new theories, to come to class with a smile, to instil courage and confidence in students. Today I feel extremely honored to have the opportunity to write a review on a volume in memory of this distinguished lady. For purely subjective reasons, I will proceed by pointing out those things that I believe are worth highlighting from the

articles, in a thematic order chosen for reasons connected to my own memories about Professor I. Galea.

The teacher I. Galea is remembered nostalgically by former apprentices. Ioana Sasu-Bolba remembers her continuous concern for improving the teaching system, her didactic, analytical, and ordered approach to her courses (231). She was always open to dialogue, dismantling the premise according to which the text is immutable; she was never content to summarize established opinions; her model of interpretation was dynamic, inviting the student to internalize, compare, and perform. Full of introspective insight and critical honesty, supplemented by an on-going appetite for the new, she made her students realize the need to get away from arid patterns by exposing new ideas and arguments (Neagu 159).

As a matter of fact, the textbooks devoted to the study of English that she wrote alone or in collaboration with other academics (V. Stanciu, I. Criveanu, A. Ivaş, M. Voia, I. Sasu-Bolba) confirm this didactic dimension. Former disciples, now teachers, speak in their essays about the textbooks and anthologies she edited as indispensable tools used today to achieve language proficiency. In this respect, the articles by B. D. Bretan (27) and I. Sasu-Bolba (231) are quite illustrative. On a market saturated with textbooks dedicated to the learning of English, they are now re-edited and/or advertised on the Internet, and represent a serious alternative to the many copy-books and textbooks that might have a more attractive design, but do not show that original lexical, stylistic, and grammatical approach to the text. Her selection of texts is rich and varied in kind and difficulty, and combines cultural components with a fine humor which makes the learning process seem so much easier and pleasant. At the university level, she drew attention to the classical analytical method, which although had seemingly lost ground in favor of modern methods (ex. free conversation with image support) is the only effective one, concludes the author, leading to quality results even in developing a course as demanding as that for law students, for example.

Whether we talk about the human being, teacher, textbook author, essayist or literary critic, I. Galea occupies the same intermediate space in which O. More places the Bronte sisters in his article (115); we witness the same oscillation between tradition and innovation, the same quest for balance, for order, the need to integrate traditional and modern approaches into a unified whole. This polar approach leads to a tension that I. Galea sustained in the way she approached Victorian modern and postmodern novels. The emerging identity of I. Galea, the critic, underscores Carmen-Narcisa Braşoveanu (17), alternates the old and new theories of literary criticism, the communication between different literary movements, the double perspective, that of the inner life and of the outer

life, through the development of referential circular applications that are subject to a continuous movement of transformation, remodeling and adjustment.

In his essay “The (Hi)Stories of the Novel,” V. Stanciu (235) makes evident I. Galea the critic’s opening toward more recent mutations taking place in the literary field. By comparing J. Barth with J. Fowles, the author of the article affirms, I. Galea understands the significance of the transition from modernism to postmodernism, thus proving the perfect fusion of tradition and modernity. Her perspective is inter-disciplinary, being situated at the crossroads of literary theory and hermeneutics, literary sociology and literary theory; it proves once again the indispensable qualities of the independent thinker that was I. Galea.

Some of the articles contained in this volume are meant to be a tribute and a respectful continuation, as coming from a disciple to one’s mentor, of certain strongpoints of I. Galea’s intellectual preoccupations. Of mention is the novel *Onida* (133), pointed out by M. Mudure, for her courage and discretion in questioning a series of Victorian Era taboos: the marriage market, adultery, domestic violence, the necessity of accepting divorce. The author’s approach to the text proves a high degree of mastery of feminist and gender discourses.

The reconciliation between traditional and innovative principles, the polarization between moral dilemmas and the materialistic spirit that characterized the Victorian Era, created, especially towards the end of the Victorian period, an environment conducive to the development of certain progressive attitudes which would ultimately result in propelling the world toward modernity. Oana-Meda Păloșanu (199) offers proof in this sense by mentioning the cultivation of sensuality almost exclusively. Hence, towards the end of the Victorian epoch, we see a growth in the popularity of the novel that primarily illustrated the conflict, characteristic of the Victorian period, between the real and the allegorical, in which the role of educator falls on both the author and the reader, thus bringing about a narrative shift toward the inner life and the psychology of the characters.

These dual perspectives, which constitute approaches between Victorianism and modernity on the one hand, and between modernism and postmodernism on the other, are also found in other articles that reflect I. Galea’s intellectual preoccupations. For example, A. Radu discusses the validity of a general application of Bakhtin’s modern ideas to the Victorian Dickens. Likewise, M. Jucan talks about melodrama, a component of kitsch, and its central role in the cultural expression of modernity, whose origin is to be found in the desire to escape from reality into an idyllic, spectacular past which would be accessible to the middle class and thus to mass culture (67). Ruxandra Bularca talks about steampunk, another recycling of tradition, this time a typically postmodern recycling (35). Worth mentioning is the association R. Dimitriu makes in her article between the modern A. Huxley and the postmodern M. Eliade (49). Finally, we mention

here the semantic analysis done by Ș. Oltean from the same dual perspective of the literary text. It demonstrates that along with the character's and the narrator's perspective, the denotation of the literary text is to be found at the intersection of those two worlds.

As a last homage paid to this lady, T. Lăcătușu (101) brings to our attention an older contribution of I. Galea (1988), a speech at a round table (organized in Iași) on the theory and practice of translation, which was never published due to human oversight. This material is of great value since it contains I. Galea's creed as a translator, which, I dare say, should be the creed of the translator in general. It ought to be applied to the great mass of translations, some of them of doubtful value, which suffocate today's book market at the expense of cultural quality. It is a creed that should be inscribed on the front page of any translation and interpretation manual, as it is comparable in importance to E. A. Poe's, R. W. Emerson's, and W. Whitman's famous literary creeds. During the communist era, when access to world culture was difficult and heavily censored, I. Galea talked in that unpublished speech about the importance of translation for any culture, and, in fact, acted on it by becoming one of the foremost translators of British literature, and especially of Henry James. According to her creed, a good translator *must be* bilingual and bicultural, a versatile interpreter who goes through two stages: personalization and depersonalization in deciphering the text to be translated.

Alina Pamfil (187) offers us the profile of a *reading professional* by creating a portrait of I. Galea from her annotations. The author presents, in an atypical and succinct manner, I. Galea's dynamic dialogue with the texts she reads. The author interprets the dialogic elements inscribed by I. Galea on the margins of the texts she read and reaches the conclusion that Mrs. Galea did not simply read; she was a careful, lively, questioning reader who often took great pleasure in the act of reading itself.

In her article, C. Novosivschei touches upon aspects of M. Arnold's cultural criticism. The primary sense of the word *culture* is to *cultivate*, to *grow* (163), the author affirms; hence the parallel between culture and education, meaning the *cultivation/growing* of the mind through education. This is, we believe, the very message I. Galea embodies as a person and the one she sends us through her work as a teacher, translator, essayist, and literary critic.

The volume constitutes not just a tribute to the person, the teacher, the translator, and the researcher I. Galea; due to the scientific value of the articles included, this volume also constitutes a certain and valuable contribution to the study of Victorian, modern, and postmodern literature. Not least, this volume enables both an emotional *remembrance* and an intellectual *challenge* for those who take the time to read and find the value of this initiative.

FINALLY, WE have to congratulate Mihaela Mudure, the initiator of this project, for having facilitated this “reunion across time.” She succeeded in gathering within these pages I. Galea’s contributions, her intellectual pursuits, as well as the memories with and of her. I believe that the motivation of the editor of this volume has been a very suggestive one: “[I. Galea] generous, always ready to learn something new, was one of those professors who is never afraid of being upstaged by her former students’ successes, but instead is happy for them” (133).



Abstract

Ileana Galea

The study presents a memorial volume, *De la victorianism la postmodernism: In memoriam Ileana Galea* (From Victorianism to postmodernism: In memoriam Ileana Galea), published in Cluj-Napoca by Presa Univesitară Clujeană, celebrating the life and career of a Babeş-Bolyai University professor and Anglicist. The author highlights a number of elements from the various essays included in the volume, outlining both the human and the professional profile of the distinguished professor, as well as the qualities of her mentorship.

Keywords

Ileana Galea, Romanian Anglicists, memorial volume