THE LITERARY "CLANDESTINES" OR ANOTHER KIND OF GUERRILLA

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Abstract: *The intransigence of anti-communist post-communism after 1989 among Romanian intellectuals, phobic to any shade of left, denying it any legitimacy, came from a strong right wing doctrinaire area, even with the risk of contradicting the idea of political pluralism. But we must say that this political inflexibility comes from a great solidarity. For that, referring to the political intransigence of Lovinescu-Ierunca spouses, Mircea Iorgulescu noted that not this intransigence will govern their relations with the writers from the country, but a sublime brotherhood; "A fraternal shared struggle unites Lovinescu and her visitors from Romania, even more than the directions of the great planetary confrontation in which this fight is just one episode. Not only intellectual and literary affinities or differences are listed in the background, but also the ideological and political ones. . One of the great revelations of Monica Lovinescu's diary is that one is unable to specify the political identity of all his characters, except the author and Virgil Ierunca. They both are, without doubt, definitely anti-communist, and definitely anti-left. But as such are defined almost exclusively by reference to the French political space.*

Keywords: *literature, exile, communism, intellectual, pluralism*

Although, as rightly argues Dumitru Ţepeneag "major Romanian literature is where the Romanian language is at home", Romanian space being far from a kind of "Siberia of the spirit" - unhappy expression which the writer considers to be a "metaphor of exasperation discarded - as he calls her – the priestess of Free Europe", Monica Lovinescu – it is no less true that the most important strategies of Romanian culture after World War II were tailored at Paris. Since totalitarian political climate tended to contaminate any hollow spiritual space, literary exile act as control mirror over it. As the aesthetic performance was fully represented in the country, with the disappearance of socialist realism without notice, the exile claimed especially the ethical side of the performance. Communist ideology being rightly considered to be the

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main adversary of culture, the response of the exile, through its peaks, was one just as ideological, but with the sign reversed. If in the country they "resisted through culture ", outside the country the exile assumed a strong anticommunist militant role.

There already exist increasingly more evidence of political contamination of the approaches regarding the esthetic evaluation. Dumitru Ţepeneag: "However I do not want people to believe that I was badly received in exile by its leaders, when I got to Paris. On the contrary, I was greeted warmly, with a slightly exaggerated gentleness, and admiration for my political courage. That I did not understood immediately: everything in exile was interpreted politically. The *Onirism*, for instance, was to exile and to RFE (Radio Free Europe) an aesopic language and nothing more![1]; with a little more clear accents, the same Dumitru Ţepeneag speaks of "political fanaticism of Romanians in exile who in their justified struggle against communism tended to «punish» the writers in the country who accepted any compromise with the Power. This might be also defined as the primacy of politics and its consequences "[2]. Speaking of the unquestionable quality of the literature written in the country, the *oneiric* writer believes that, definitely inferior, the literature of exile tended to obscure the path to international reception, also an illusory perception, occupying the outpost, as an interface of lower quality level in comparisson with the peaks of Romanian literature.

It happened that, unlike other exiles from the East, ours was far less concerned about the translation and promotion of writers from the country. True, interest to Eastern literatures there was little in the West, maybe since the second half of the eighties, and only for the literature of dissent. The Poles and the Czechs have taken advantage of this opening, promoting Solidarność and Charter 77, by immediate translation of the writers of these movements. "The reason for the immediate publication of the translation in the West is an interesting one – historian Tony Judt stresses, illustrating the example of Poland. This is because a whole generation of Polish intellectuals who, from 1968 until the late '70s, begin to hold positions in Western universities, Yale, Columbia, Berkeley, Oxford" and he gives the example of Kolakowski and his disciples, and the disciples of Hus and Alex Smolar, who is the founder of the Bathory

[1] Dumitru Ţepeneag, *Războiul literaturii încă nu s-a încheiat*, Interviuri, Edited by Nicolae Bârna, Editura Allfa, Bucureşti, 2000, pp. 260-261.

[2] *Ibidem*, p. 244.

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Foundation, "the equivalent of the Soros Foundation in Hungary". Alex Smolar was a student in Paris in the early 70s, I did not know him, but he was one who was translating Michnik. They all lived in the West, they were the network by which Polish dissidents have their voices heard in the West"[3]. However, giving credit to Dumitru Ţepeneag, one of the few writers who have promoted his Romanian colleagues at French publishing houses and publications, "Romanian emigration did not know how, or did not want to promote Romanian literature. A time they had difficulty even to accept as an elementary truth that Romanian literature is written in Romania, not in exile. Each struggled to publish himself".[4]
Romanian Exile therefore chosed another way. Lacking the same means that probably enjoyed their fellow Czechs or Poles, did not promote Romanian literature for abroad, but only for Romanians, and especially or exclusively for political purposes. The small number of dissidents constituted an impediment again, but when they existed, exile has made every effort to make them visible. Located differently under the emergency of the political demands, the exile, through its leaders, focused almost exclusively on directing his message to the country, in some cases for propaganda purposes. Oriented towards the country, the militant exile, represented by the literary critics Monica Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca, exercised its influence (a huge one, because its moral autority) upon the hierarchy of literature in the country, primarily by ethical criteria, thereby the aesthetic platform of the literary works falling in the background. Simultaneously, the exclusively aesthetic approach of the main literary critics from the inside the country operated in parallel with the ethical approach from abroad, but finaly both approaches were meeting each other. The two visions were in fact faces of the same literary reality, coming from the same literary reality, and their joint action, on the one hand expressed in an aesopic language by the aesthetic approach from inside the country, and on the other hand, in an ethic language from abroad. After all, they aimed a same common enemy: the literature subservient to the regime. However the hierachy established in the country do not overlap exactly on that established abroad, thus the talent of the authors, having real aesthetic merits, was obscured because of their so-called "collaborationism", while the merits of the more "brave"

[3] Tony Judt, *Europa iluziilor*, Editura Polirom, Iaşi, 2000, pp. 19-33.
[4] Dumitru Ţepeneag, *Reîntoarcerea fiului la sânul mamei rătăcite*, Institutul European, Iaşi, 1993, pp. 65-66.

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were sometimes exaggerated. But - it must be said - the differences were not so pronounced as to prevent a closest to reality axiological perception. Small distortions still had a role, insidious, indeed, but in the long-term produced effects of distortion upon literature, and its policies.
In this juncture is configured by far the most important institution of the exile, broadly called "the Parisian group" whose nucleus was represented by the two notorious radio people, Monica Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca. Their influence will be crucial for the evolution of post-communist Romanian culture. But for now, at the beginning of their exile, it is easy to guess the frustrations of the two critics in Paris, unable to make their voices heard, to make known the drama of their country into the hands of the Soviets, voices drowned, lost in an Marxist intellectual uproar. This frustration has generated a kind of radical political intransigence, unable to understand French politics, incapable of perceiving the nuances, even after the French leftist political language begins to differentiate. The idiosyncrasy of the two for the leftist policy will remain forever, in spite of the fact that, paradoxically, as evidenced by the memoirs and diaries of other Romanian exiles (Monica Lovinescu, Dumitru Ţepeneag, Sanda Stolojan, Paul Goma, Virgil Tănase), their political struggle was supported at an utmost extent, directly by the leftist French press, "what is even more humiliating to the communist regime in Bucharest" – as Mircea Iorgulescu stated in a chapter of *Tangenţiale* dedicated to Monicăi Lovinescu's *Diary*. An explainable particularity, as being known that left is allways more opened towards issues of political or social injustice. The fact is that Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca, pushed by circumstances, will ignore the pluralism of the political debate in France, opting for a sort of inflexible, suspicious rightist maximalism. Something as possible "exotic" for those years of postwar Paris.
One thing is clear. As documented in the diary of Monica Lovinescu, although their politicized action, rabid anti-Left, allowed and even recommended boundaries, as noted by Mircea Iorgulescu, "Guidelines, options and political sensitivities of «clandestines» from Romania" as well as of the exiles, appear as "colorless" from the political point of view. Their common goal was more important, more significant that ideological differences really matter. Coagulation miracle comes from a common "consensual adversity and likely to be extended to writers and intellectuals who were traveling or not to Paris". This adversity "federates groups, groups and individuals extremely diverse and ensures

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the functioning of «the holy Alliance» between the country and the exile, made dazzling light by Monica Lovinescu's *Diary*. It is necessary to specify that the "exile" must be understood primarily as the small Parisian group which is headed by Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca. It is thus a common front, very wide, and his target is one: blocking the policy of the regime.

Lovinescu recorded in her diary on 22 October 1983: "Impression that we are there and here - to say bombastic - the same barricade to defend the same culture. We see them all as ... from the front". Because, really, this joint action of the two critics from Paris together with the "clandestines"" was an action almost militarized, because - Mircea Iorgulescu says - "Battle images and language are actually perfectly adequate, not" inflated "rhetorically. And fight involves either side movements, tactical, strategic maneuvers, refoldings, attacks, concealment, veiling, concessions, all in the interest of the sole cause. The evaluation criterion was efficiency. What visitors tell and know is reproduced in the Free Europe broadcasts made by Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca, both seem to actually live in Bucharest and be fully informed of what is happening there. " Consciously or not - Mircea Iorgulescu notes, this action falls within the framework defined, since July 1947, through the US strategic concept of *containment*, launched by George Kennan (...). Fencing, limiting, damming the actions of the communist officials, firstly in the cultural plan, but also in the social and political ones, thas was the goal of the campaign..."[5]

In a thorough reconstitution of the time, it can be said that by incessant pilgrimage, which became possible with the "thaw", pilgrimage of the critics from the country to Paris, pilgrimage of the "clandestines" – as they were named by the two Parisians – became, not even the vital center of the anti-Ceausescu and anticommunist struggle, but also a kind of dispatcher, a kind of major state of the Romanian literature. "The clandestines" were visitors from Romania, the entire flower of Romanian literature, "Those who, once they arrived in Paris, defeated their fears and met, usually in secret, with the two Parisians, who became officially the toughest enemies of the regime in Bucharest. They came, went, some, most, rebounding, forming a peculiar people, always moving, a crumbling nation, never together, never connected, never united. « A

[5] *Ibidem*, p. 142.

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peculiar people, among whom only I did not feel foreign », wrights Monica Lovinescu. They are listed in *La apa Vavilonului...*, dozens of names of «clandestines» (...). Even in cases where a natural repulsion can not be completely eliminated, tone height is maintained almost effortlessly "- notes Mircea Iorgulescu. Monica Lovinescu, in his memoirs, strongly avoids any trace of "low quality of anecdotic" and maintains a solemn tone, equal to the task that had assumed. That of the center of clotting Romanian opposition. „In this Bucharest-sur-Seine – an inspired phrase due to Mircea Iorgulescu referring to the legendary 8 Rue Pinton address – there are not allowed to enter the miasmas of the other Bucharest, the real collapsed and deformed one, not only in terms of architecture”[6]. It has seen that even the ideological opponents longed to hear their name mentioned, even in the bad sense, at the famous radio station. From this point of view, Monica Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca were the absolute authority and an ultimate instance in the delegation of authority under communism; especially after its fall.

Taking into account the importance of Parisian critics overwhelming influence on Romanian cultural life, it is self-evident the documentary importance of their memoirs and diaries, as “essential documents for writing the history of Romanian cultural life in the last decades of the last century. (...) Chronicle of cultural and journalistic campaign, but with political and ideological substrate, from the last decade of the Cold War”, written "in the trenches, hot in the heat of the everyday battle " These documents are a capital "testimony to the history about that time”[7]. In the diaries, unlike that in the more pondered memoirs, stands out the plethora of "conflicts, idiosyncrasies, tensions, the specific delusions of the exile which, Mircea Iorgulescu believes with remarkable acuity, were imported into Romania after 1990 and thus gained visibility and resonance not only excessive, but even toxic for cultural and literary environment very disturbed anyway. That «paranoia» mentioned now and then by Monica Lovinescu in her notations about the exile, sometimes met, since 1990, with similar conditions in the country that had taken until the fall of communism, many characteristics of a vast asylum. The effects and results of the mutual contamination were disastrous.

[6] *Ibidem*, p. 126.

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 128.

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A question perhaps more necessary than about knowledge and recognition about the exile is its eventual contribution to the establishment and building in post-communist Romania of a truly democratic literary and cultural climate. The fact that such a question was not even suggested, (...), is more significant, and more serious than hierarchical disputes, which are minor and marginal…"[8] Commenting the Monica Lovinescu's *Diary*, Mircea Iorgulescu also notes an aspect, a disturbing feature: that it "offers an extraordinary first image of solidarity among writers and intellectuals of the country and those in exile. Enough to mention - says MI - for "people today", how bright they were, according to the Journal, in the early 80s, the relations between Goma, Liiceanu Andrei Plesu and Nicolae Manolescu. For readers after 1990, only connoisseurs of "polemics" often filthy, which have blackened the pages, literally and figuratively, of so many newspapers and books, the diary entries are from another world.

And the question is - or could be – why it was lost, perhaps irreversibly, its spirit. Why communion and communication have been replaced by hatred, contempt, insult, and pathological desire, macular will of destruction"[9]. It is a variant of the question why reviewing failed to revisionism or to what extent the idea of revising served as pretext for the struggle for power in the cultural Civil War. Be the idea of contamination with the political idiosyncrasies of the exile one answer? Because, we must recognize that a good part of Romanian intellectuals nor today did not get used to the idea of pluralism.

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[8] *Ibidem*, p. 131.

[9] *Ibidem*, p. 131-132.

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