METAPHORICAL MEANINGS IN STANESCU'S POETIC ESSAY

Luminiţa CHIOREAN
"Petru Maior" University of Târgu-Mureş

Abstract: From the features of textual - reticular, inferential, volumed, synergetic meaning (Vlad, 2000), we chose to interpret the reticular feature manifested by "a variety of networks" or "a discursive verbal chain" and conceptual configuration.
The metaphorical meaning of the text in the essayistic discourse offers a discursive knowledge of reality ("continuous" knowledge): the prospective vision (telescopic, exteriorly transcending) – the sensible continues with the introspective one (autoscopic, interior transcendence) – the intelligible. The poetic consciousness (perceptive: "My sadness hears the unborn dogs/ as they bark at the unborn people") dislocates the textual meaning (from the linguistic sequence) to an imaginary horizon: inter mundi. The reality contemplation meaning is performed "from an outside to an inside". Here the space is compressed, reflected into a hyper dense universe. The isotopies of poetic (textual) meaning are markers of discourse in the metatext of Stanescu's essay.

Keywords: isotopies; metaphor; prospective vision: autoscopic, interior transcendence vs introspective vision: autoscopic, interior transcendence; poetic consciousness; essayistic discourse.

"[...] *Any text provides a* ***variety of networks*** *[our highlight] established by different organizations or links through which verbal signs (primarily) but other signs as well, non-verbal, can participate simultaneously, with different functions (values), specific to every network.*" (Vlad, 2000:88) … or through a metaphorical expression, at the level of isotopies (here, "networks"), of Nichita Stanescu's type, whose essay, *Force de frappe* (1985, in *Secolul XX/ Razgandiri*: 188), will be the object of the analysis on the textual meaning: "***Reţeaua orizontală se întretaie cu reţeaua verticală. Reţeaua oblică se întrepătrunde cu reţeaua oblică.***[s.n.] *Stânga cu dreapta, înaintea cu în afara, susul cu josul, laptele cu măduva, totul cu totul …"* ("***The horizontal network intersects the vertical network. The oblique network intertwines with the oblique network.*** [our highlight] *The left with the right, before with outside, up with down, milk with marrow, everything with everything…*"); in both quotes, the authors' intention is to argue for a reticular representation of the textual meaning (through the reticular, inferential, volumed, and synergetic characters).

The reticular nature is surprising due to the dialectics between the surface "offer", the linguistic sequence rendered dynamic by the text, and the conceptual "re-offer", from the inner world of the text.

The textual meaning unifies the prospective vision (telescopic, exterior transcendence) with the retrospective one (autoscopic, interior transcendence), the sensible and the intelligible. Surface linguistic relations are joined with conceptual ones (here, concepts about the aesthetics of poetry) and come to support the interpretation of the inner worlds which are, in the case of the essayistic discourse, pieces of a cultural mosaic.

No matter the images naming it – "*pânza unui păianjen care s-ar dizolva pe sine în secreţiile constructive ale pânzei sale"* ("*a spider's web which would dissolve itself in constructive secretions of its web*") (see Barthes), "network diversity" or "chains of textual values" (Vlad) or "force de frappe" (Stanescu), textual meaning is disrupted (from the linguistic sequence) by the "devouring" or the hunger for being as interior mechanisms of the

BDD-A21938 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 19:08:57 UTC)

textual labyrinth. The essayist-poet suggests the chronotope passing about this creative activity: "distanţa dintre gură şi hrană" ("the distance between mouth and food".) Distance as time. Time as being. This is the metaphorical meaning.

Our focus is the essayistic discourse in the "ontology of textual meaning[1]", exemplified in works like *The Pleasure of the Text* by Roland Barthes, *Cuvant impreună despre rostirea romanească* by Constantin Noica or Nichita Stanescu's group of essays, *Razgandiri*, whose focal essay is *Force de frappe*. [2]

The author's intention means catching the "pulse" and expressing the diegesis anchored to the dynamics of the textual meaning, no matter the nature of literary communication. Metaphorical meaning is managed through the expression *force de frappe*: "(dis-)location" or (dis-)position in a network[3].

Here is the essayistic passage of the disruption of the textual meaning at the beginning of the essays, a defining context in the **labyrinth articulation** of networks and abolishable interferences (the category of abductions[4]), in the **configuration**[5] of significance: "*Reţeaua orizontală se întretaie cu reţeaua verticală. Reţeaua oblică se întrepătrunde cu reţeaua oblică. Stânga cu dreapta, înaintea cu înafara, susul cu josul, laptele cu măduva, totul cu totul …"* ("*The horizontal network intersects the vertical network. The oblique network intertwines with the oblique network. The left with the right, before with outside, up with down, milk with marrow, everything with everything…*").

Simultaneity as poetical principle is manifested in the syntactic parallelism[6] which becomes the guideline in the construction of the reticular spatial axis and it leads the semantics of the text to a density of the text built on the unity of opposites. Networks are nothing but a metaphor expressing the poly-isotopy, the source of the textual meaning.

Respecting the reading grid suggested by the speaking instance, we are caught from the very beginning in the chain of circumstantial values [+ space] which are attracted from the outside towards the inside – and we are warned about the direction of movement of the textual meaning, a factor to be taken into account in the interpretation, which functions according to the dichotomous principle *telescopy vs. autoscopy*.

The circumstances encumber the labyrinth networks, compressing them in a hyper-dense[7] sphere, breathing a likewise … hyper-dense air: "*[...] până când materia devine atât de densă, încât e totuna cu vidul." // „Întunecând întunericul, iată porţile luminii !"* (*Haiku*) *("until matter becomes so dense, that it becomes one with the void." // "Darkening the darkness, behold the gates of light!" (Haiku).*

For the fulfilling of the metaphorical (or hyper-dense), meaning we quote from the essay *Marele trohanter sau despre ritual*: "*„Îmi închipui, uneori, că obiectele întruchipează*

1 We respected the author's intention in the interpretation of Stanescu's essays. The essay *Povestea vorbii* (*The Tale of the Word*) (FP, 1990: 214-215) argues for the existential meaning of communication, and as such, we made, in a previous chapter, a trip in the ontology of the textual meaning.

2 Without it being an exaggeration, we argue for the citation of the three works as having the same degree of interest, despite the fact that two are volumes, and the other work is an essayistic discourse included in Stanescu's posthumous volume, *Razgandiri*.

3 The last 12 days of the poet's creation. 28 November - 9 December 1983. Nichita Stănescu: "Razgandiri", unpublished essays, in *Secolul XX*. Revistă de sinteză, edited by the Writers' Union in the Socialist Republic of Romania, no. 289-290-291, Bucuresti, 1985, pp. 188-198

4 "Abducţia e singura operaţie logică ce introduce o idee nouă" ("Abduction is the only logical operation introducing a new idea") (Peirce, as quoted by Vlad, 2000: 169)

5 *Configurations* are nothing but representation or essayistic imagery: thought in images vs. thought in notions.

6 Among the figures of construction classified by the School in Liège in the class of metataxes, syntactic parallelism is the long-living figure, recognized as a mechanism generating the antithesis in Romanticism, the patch up in Neomodernism, the paradox in Postmodernism.

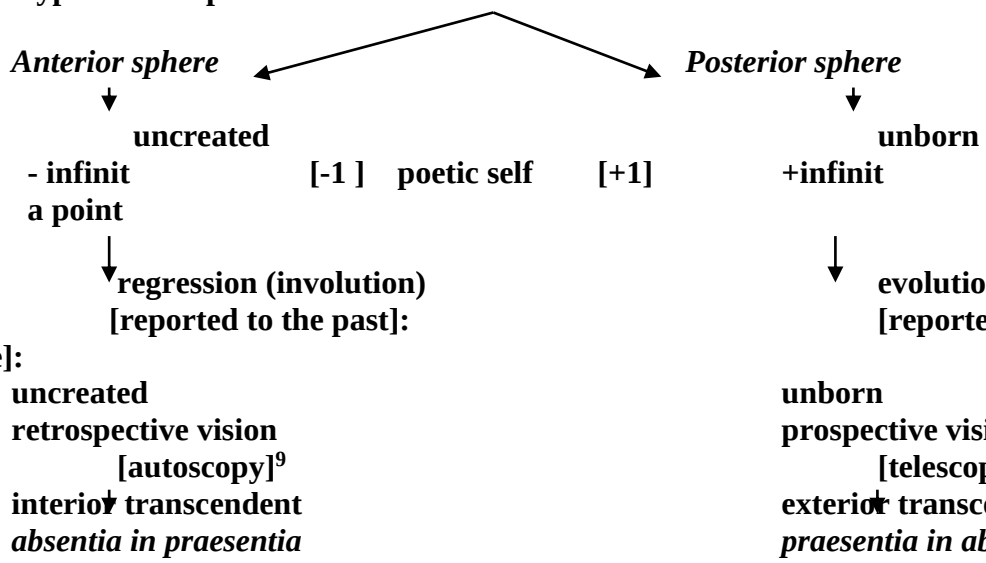
7 See Luminita Chiorean, vol. I. *Arhitectura eseului poetic stănescian*, Cap II. 3.2. *Titlul discursului eseistic*, 2006, Petru Maior University Press, Tirgu Mures, pp. 144.

BDD-A21938 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 19:08:57 UTC)

vidul. Se cade în obiecte. Numai vidul poate avea formă. Ceea ce există numai murind poate avea înfăţişare" ("*I sometimes imagine that the objects embody the void. One falls in objects. Only the void can have a form. That which exists can have an appearance only by dying.*") [1990: 316]

The representation of the „hyper-dense" sphere anticipates the presence of the interpreters and the interpretation manners – *autoscopy vs. telescopy* – from the textological analysis:

Hyper-dense sphere [8]



Together with the "hyper"-solicited space, the moment [+ time] is stimulated as well, by the use of the relative adverbial connector of time, preceded by the restrictive adverbial, modalizing the limit: "*pana cand..."* ("until"), catching the image of *time as distance*. It is the expression of the mastery of the textual meaning.

By over-soliciting the textual meaning, we perceive the source of the critical act on Stanescu's poetry: in the semiosic process, the exterior transcendence corresponds to the sensible imagery, and the interior, autoscopic transcendence corresponds to the intelligible imagery[10].

"Prima monadă de vid în materie i-apare a fi creatul, sau prima monadă de materie în vid, - acelaşi lucru." ("The first monad of void in matter appears to be the created, or the first monad of matter in void, - the same thing."). Indeed, by the encumbering of meaning by the co-participation of networks to being, one may discern the ontical dimension of the textual meaning:"the created". The "in-existence" may be perceived only in relation to the "existence", only by reporting it to the "created" may one express the "un-created". Meaning must be thought as ontos.[11] Genesis is defined by the chronotopic identity (time and space): "*Răsucirea, înnodarea e prima formă posibilă a timpului, iar monada răsucită, pretextul lui, - **monada** putând avea orice dimensiune, în funcţie de **torsiunea** timpului* [...]*" ("The twist, the knot is the first possible form of time, and the twisted monad, its pretext, - the **monad** can have any dimension, depending on the torsion of time [...").* The monad, seen geometrically

8 The scheme respects the views in literary criticism (Braga, 1993).

9 *Autoscopy* and *telescopy*, as means of knowledge, are used in the critical texts signed by Corin Braga (*Nichita Stanescu. Orizontul imaginar*, Imago, 1993, Sibiu), Daniel Dimitriu (*Nichita Stanescu. Geneza poemului*, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University Press, 1997, Iasi), Luminita Chiorean (*Natura cuvântului. Din(spre) "razgandirile" lui Nichita Stanescu*, Studia UPM. *Philologia*, 1/2002, Tg. Mures, pp. 49-59).

10The interpretation may be the reading grid set forward by Corin Braga.

11 It is the belief according to which we have shaped the inferential argument for the ontology of the textual meaning.

BDD-A21938 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 19:08:57 UTC)

as a sphere, becomes the architectural leitmotif in Stanescu's work, characterized by volume, corporality, so space and time, and it corresponds here to the "living metaphor" (Ricœur). When it comes to the chronotope, expression of the reticular character of the textual meaning, Stanescu suggests a different metaphor for "*torsiunea timpului"(*"*torsion of time*"), which is "*înnodarea orizontului* " ("*the knotting of the horizon*").

Another expression, "system of reference", is used in order to fulfill the reticular character and shape an attitudinal configuration: "*Dar torsiunile înseşi ale timpului sunt multiple, simultane şi asincrone în funcţie de viteza materiei faţă de sistemul de referinţă..."(*"*But the very torsions of time are multiple, simultaneous, and without synchrony, depending on the speed of matter related to the system of reference…."*).

The lack of synchrony, far from being regression (temporal), brings the suggestion of coming out, beyond/from the "grid" of the category of ideal being, "the multiple torsions of time" proving the return to the reticular nature of text: "*[...] sau, de ce nu, faţă de torsiunea sistemului de referinţă ce încadrează monada"(*"*[...] or, why not, to the torsion of the system of reference that frames the monad"*). The "monad" could be exemplified again with the help of Stanescu's reflections about the poet, the reader, poetry, profession: "*Poetul e de natură profund monadică, dar el se adresează unei mari mase. În singurătatea, în unicitatea lui, comunică, totuşi, cu nenumărate unicităţi de natură monadică* [...] *Poezia are un caracter revelatoriu şi de natură monadică* [....] *Profesiunea este de natură monadică*" ("*The poet has a profoundly monadic nature, but he addresses a large mass. In his loneliness, in his uniqueness, he communicates, nevertheless, with countless uniquenesses of monadic nature [...] Poetry has a revealing character, of monadic nature [....]Profession has a monadic nature"*).

The monadic nature of matter revitalizes once again the metaphorical meaning: "*Faţă de un sistem de referinţă, în mişcare ... " ("To a system of reference, in motion…"),* arguing not for a primary meaning, connotative, but for a final, plenary one – the "being" [12] meaning or the metaphorical meaning, which implies the presence of poetry: "[...] *existândul modifică uluitor, până la simultaneitatea*[13] *cu sine infinitele existentului* [...]*"* ("*the being, world of the abstractions, ideas – existand - amazingly modifies, to simultaneity with itself, the infinites of the world of objects – existente- [...]")* The variety of the meaning slides simultaneously with the possible worlds, themselves of monadic nature, offered by the interpreters.[14]

By preserving the stylistic of the original gerund in the noun reality of the "being" (the fact of being, the world of abstractions), the narrative instance wants to name the shapeless universal mass the **corporality of meaning**, the matter that will name its man, poetry, possible worlds, the time when self consciousness shows itself.

The present continuous of the verb "to modify" suggests the aesthetic emotion, the wonder as emotion felt in the process of creation by its association with the absolute superlative of the adverb "amazing" with the expression "direct object+attribute": "*infinitele existentului" (the infinites of what exists"),* an infinite or creative art the ignores the matrix or the "track" of… matter.

The world of objects (*existente*) is vitrified in "forma de îngheţare" ("*the shape for freezing*"), and become the expression of the "**thought in images**" simultaneous with the thought **in notions**, built on **isotopies**: "*Forma de îngheţare vădindu-se numai în sens şi semnificat, amândouă suprapuse şi simultane şi reprezentând o dimensiune în afara creatului şi increatului, timpului şi spaţiului, existenţei şi existândului, materiei şi antimateriei şi în*

12 ... close to interpretations made from the point of view of Heidegger's work.
13 Simultaneity is the process of rendering transparent, trans-substantial. It is the simultaneity of the sign (the word) with the "anything" and "anytime".
14 In the textological analysis: Ii- Immediate Interpreter, Id- Dynamic Interpreter, If – Final Interpreter.

BDD-A21938 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 19:08:57 UTC)

genere extrapolate oricărei forme antagonice sau contradictorii."("The shape for freezing proving to be only in meaning and signified, both overlapping and simultaneous and representing a dimension outside the created and uncreated, of time and space, of the existence and the being, of matter and anti-matter and generally extrapolated to any antagonist or contradictory form").

In fact, the creative consciousness discerns between real and truth, between what exists in reality and in ideality (Hartmann, 1974). We notice that, through the so-called "shape for freezing", the essayist expresses not only the trichotomic relation meaning (referent) – signified (object) – dimension outside the object or sign (interpreter), but, though this third concept of the "extrapolated dimension" to any antagonism, he verifies the generosity of the interpretative significance, the extrapolation of t*he textual meaning beyond the limits of the text as linguistic sig*n. *It is the context of the disembodiment of the translinguistic, of the semiotic frame: significance and communication*.

Through the capacity *to visualize* trans-visual realities, angelical worlds, to incorporate the spirit into matter, the "thought in images" in the effect of the imaginal perception: *imaginatio vera*. This is about a "dimension outside the created and the creation, of time and space." Revealing is the self alone.

The sign and the meaning are omnipresent and simultaneous, a statement justified by corporality, the "represented dimensions" which are the metonymical expression in the imposing the essay as sign. The transparency of the sign in relation to meaning was anticipated in a different essay by a duplicated instance (Joachim-Thomas): "*Semnul e singurul care este în afară. El este dezîmbrăţişarea cuvântului cu lucrul cuvântat" ("The sign is the only one that is on the outside. It is the disentanglement of the word from the uttered thing")* (1990, FP / *Scrisori de dragoste sau înserare de seară*: 328).

The sign is "on the outside", but the meaning is dynamic, oriented inwards: two attitudes triggered by contemplation, by the essayistic mechanism of the disruption of meaning perceived as "the exciting je-ne-sais-quoi", a metaphor for the aesthetic emotion, a "pre-ethical" phenomenon: "*Contemplarea prin semn este o formă sublimă a tuturor simţurilor"* ("*Contemplation through sign is a sublime form of all the senses*").

The sublime form is tangent to possible universes or worlds: concrete (physical) vs. logical (metaphysical) vs. metaphysical (anti-metaphysical), hence the imagery sensible – intelligible – imaginal – angelical. "*Ea este **forţa de izbitură*** [n.n. *force de frappe*] *care pune infinitul şi măreţia în funcţie."("It is the **blow force*** [*force de frappe*, our note] that sets the infinite and greatness in function") … through sign (symbol – allegory – paradox): flight or anabasic flush vs. the cold of Golgotha vs. vitrification[15] vs. to-be-an-angel. „*Naşterea şi moartea sunt numai două uleiuri de proastă calitate care fac să scrâşnească osia timpului."("Birth and death are only two bad oils that make the axis of time squeak").*

Art cancels the temporal "restrictive". Hence, time interpreted as distance. A time and a space that prefer geometrization, as an establishment of the palpable being: the sphere, the line, the point. Because man has access to being through "pasul trecerii" ("the step of passing") [Blaga] towards time: this is the access to the totality of the being with the purpose of achieving. "[Ne imaginăm textul] *ca o **structură galactică**, aptă să adăpostească sensul, izvorât din text şi amplificat progresiv prin alchimia tuturor semnelor, verbale şi neverbale, osmotic relaţionate în jocul de fiecare dată particular al actului concret de vorbire. Şi, cu toate că textul îşi are propriile sale reguli (lingvistice şi semiotice) de construcţie, acestea nu pot bloca mobilitatea şi fluiditatea sensului, căci în dinamica acestuia este cuprins* in

15 "*O, fii îndurător şi nu ne rupe, / în sfânta mâna ta, / puţină sticlă colorată prin care / părinţii noştri mult privit-au."* ("O, have mercy and do not break us,/ in your holy hand,/ a little colored glass through which/ our parents have long looked") (*Puţină sticlă colorată,* din *Belgradul în cinci prieteni*)

BDD-A21938 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 19:08:57 UTC)

nascendi *şi* ***un act creator***." ("[We imagine the text] *as a galactic structure, able to host the meaning, originated from the text and progressively amplified by the alchemy of all the signs, verbal and non-verbal, which relate in an osmosis in the particular game of the concrete act of speech. And, despite the fact that the text has its own rules (linguistic and semiotic) of construction, these cannot block the mobility and fluidity of meaning, because in its dynamic a* ***creative act*** *is incorpored* in nascendi" [highlight of the author]) (Vlad, 2000: 180).

Our interpretations on the essayistic textual meaning, equivalent to the metaphorical meaning since the discourse under analysis is metapoetical, respected the order established by the author. Stanescu's essayistic "voices" direct the reading by (re)ordering the essays not following a certain aesthetic of poetry, as the editor suggests[16] (an aesthetics ignored or, at least, postponed for the moment, an idea that should be taken into account by the critics of Nichita Stanescu's poetry, for a "postmodern" criticism valid in the volume *Noduri si semne*), but by the recognition of an anthropological criterion ("duct") from the perspective of the poetic logos: **contemplation of man from the outside**.

By closely following the author's "scenic" cues, we suggest the following reading grid (especially for *Fiziologia poeziei*, *Antimetafizica, Razgandiri*.): *Contemplarea lumii din afara ei; Rasu' plansu'* (*Vremea calatoriilor; Subiectivisme de epoca; Scrisori de dragoste*); *Cuvintele si necuvintele*; *Nasterea si devenirea artei poetice* (from *Antimetafizica*); *Nevoia de arta; Razgandiri.*

While maintaining the option for the real proposed by the author, following the reading the essays and, of course, accepting their discursive composition, we noticed that the isotopies, lexical sequences corresponding to the ideatic-essays networks (literary ideas), are contained (expressed) through a criterion and pretext and then generated through lexical fields developed as arguments of the essayistic "experiment". The essayistic conclusion proclaims the concept given for the foundation of the (aesthetic) truths about poetry, the subject and the theme of Stanescu's essays The essayistic epilogue is the one that maintains "logica labirintică a sensului textual" ("the labyrinthic logic of the textual meaning") (see Vlad); it is Ariadne's thread to be followed in the reader's odyssey through the Dedalus-like labyrinth of the poetical essays.

The textological analysis reveals the contemplative mechanism undergone in the interior of Stanescu's essayistic discourse, as the "*uleiul ce pune în mişcare osia timpului" ("the oil that moves the axis of time")* ...returned to the matrix of feelings. "Eseurile sunt „dialogurile" cu tine, cititorule...." (The essays are the „dialogues" with you, reader…") (speaks to us above time, the histrionic Nichita). Contemplation of the poet and of poetry from the outside. How to become friends with the poet if you do not come from outside him, if you do not feed on his work?... "*Fiecare om spune despre sine însuşi Eu. Acesta este un miracol care refuză definiţia*!" ("*Every man says about himself I. This is a miracle refusing to be defined!")* Or: *„Eu sunt numele meu.*" ("*I am my name*") (1990, FP / *Ce este omul pentru marţieni?* : 68).

The essayist's option for the real is made by the hypostases/ behavior of the poet: "*Există un amestec ciudat de forte în fiinţa lui Nichita Stănescu:* ***un respect aproape religios pentru poezie şi o supunere aproape cinică faţă de real.*** [...] *Nichita Stănescu reprezintă un mod specific de a fi poet în lumea noastră. E greu să-i afli un model în literatura anterioară. " ("There is a strange mixture of forces in Nichita Stanescu's being:* ***an almost religious respect for poetry and an almost cynical obedience to the real***. [...] *Nichita Stanescus is a specific way of being a poet in our world. It is difficult to find a model in previous literature*")

16 Al. Condeescu makes a suggestion to a possible (real, states the editor, a friend of the writer) conversation with the poet, meant to set the order of the essayistic matter from the volume we set as applicative support of our research:: *Fiziologia poezie (The Physiology of Poetry).*.

BDD-A21938 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 19:08:57 UTC)

(Simion, *Sfidarea retoricii*, 1985: 103) ***... "Eu sunt mormântul vostru, eu sunt..., eu"*! ("*I am your grave, I am…, I*"!)** *"Nichita Stănescu a străpuns lumea fenomenală până la* ***nominosum*** *(eu esenţial iradiant)"* ("*Nichita Stanescu has pierced the phenomenal world and reached the* ***nominosum*** *(essential radiant self)") (*Braga: 1993: 29).

Bibliography

Stănescu, Nichita, 1990, *Fiziologia poeziei*, edition curated by Al Condeescu, Cartea Romaneasca, Bucuresti.

Stănescu, Nichita, 1985, „Răzgândiri", unpublished essays, in *Secolul XX*. Revistă de sinteză, edited by the Writers' Union in the Socialist Republic of Romania, no. 289-290-291, Bucuresti, pp. 188-198.

Barthes, Roland, 1973; 1994, *Plăcerea textului*, translation into Romanian by Marian Papahagi, preface by Ion Pop, Echinox, Cluj-Napoca.

Braga, Corin, 1993, *Nichita Stanescu. Orizontul imaginar*, Imago, Sibiu.

Chiorean, Luminiţa, 2006, *Arhitectura eseului poetic stanescian*, Petru Maior University Press, Tirgu Mures.

Dimitriu, Daniel, 1997, *Nichita Stanescu. Geneza poemului*, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University Press, Iasi.

Hartmann, Nicolai, 1966; 1974, *Estetica*, translation by Constantin Floru; foreword by Alexandru Boboc, Univers, Bucureşti.

Ricœur, Paul, 1975; 1984, *Metafora vie*, translation by Irina Mavrodin, Univers, Bucuresti.

Simion, Eugen, 1985, *Sfidarea retoricii. Jurnal german*, Cartea Românească, Bucuresti.

Vlad, Carmen, 2000, *Textul aisberg*, Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă, Cluj-Napoca.

BDD-A21938 © 2015 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-27 19:08:57 UTC)