MARIN SORESCU – THEATREGOER AND THEATRE CRITIC

Mariana ANDREI
University of Piteşti

Abstract: *A creative inventive spirit, characterized by an undeniable originality and alone among poets, has shown a passion for theatre since his student years. Trying to capture the philosophical dimension in its simplicity, Marin Sorescu cultivated his passion for theatre in a triple hypostasis: as an author, spectator and theatre critic.*

As a theatre critic, the well-known lover of linguistic paradoxes expresses his opinions on ancient and modern writers, foreign and Romanian, in national and western theatres, often being the spectator of his own plays.

Key words: *Marin Sorescu, theatregoer, theatre critic.*

In an interview appeared in 1981, at the reporter's question *Which was the most extraordinary event you have lived until now?*, Marin Sorescu answered: T*he fact of having been born is an extraordinary event.I havent't recovered from it yet* (M. SORESCU, 1981: 3).

The answer, a reflection of anxiety and quest has a routing quality or the sensuousness of the paradox, denoting perfectly *the dialectics of the predictable and the unpredictable* (ANDREESCU, 1983: 5) from the work of the well-known poet.

Consequently, we must believe his word, if we must consider the moment he saw *light on earth* and to the *setup* of the apparition, which is connected not to a *confession*, but to an *interrogation*.

Am zărit lumina pe pământ, / Şi m-am născut şi eu / Să văd ce mai faceți: / Sănătoşi? Voinici? / Cum o mai duceți cu fericirea?

Marin Sorescu asks questions because the one who asks is more powerful than the one who must answer, because the one who speaks is more powerful than the one who is silent, because the one who routs is more powerful than the routed.

He turns up by a show, and as in any other shows, he is the director who brings into effect marvellously, the sudden apparition of the persona, the script writer who gives directions about how to bring down the house, at the same time being open *Sănătoşi? Voinici?* But also by an innocent absconding: *Mulțumesc, nu-mi răspunde-ți. / Abia dacă am timp să pun întrebări.*

And thus, the audience, seduced, challenged and involved participate at the dialogue which springs from the deep necessity of the poet, the playwright and the prose writer (hypostases otherwise familiar to him) to communicate directly, spontaneously and completely.

The world is a stage and Marin Sorescu, the director, is familiar with all its aspects and needs. He deals with scenography: *Mi-am adus în atelier stejarul falnic / Şi l-am spânzurat de un cui / Cu coroana în jos. / Cerul l-am legat de un nor / În dreptul ferestrei. / Sub el, orizontal / Am aşezat câmpia.*

In a theatre decor, made of cardboard, the actor has also other roles: *Dimineața strâng cu o greblă / Chipurile mele vechi / Din oglindă. / Din când în când culeg şi*

BDD-A5811 © 2010 Universitatea din Piteşti
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 08:18:08 UTC)

sticle / În care, destupându-le, găsesc / Bilete scrise cu sânge, / Şi toată ziua îi înjur pe proştii de naufragiaţi / Care cred că eu pot să-i salvez.

Life becomes a show and the show becomes a manifestation of life. *Spectator ca la teatru tu în lume te-nchipui,* remembers us the *Glossa* by Eminescu, letting drop in front of the eyes the memory of another life, of other shows: *După ce a văzut totul-ploi, războaie / Soare, cârtiţe, evenimente / Repetate mereu aidoma, / Omenirea nu cred că mai doreşte serios / Să vadă ceva, / Totuşi, uite-o lipită de ferestre, / Se uită în gol.*

An extremely mobile and confused author, Marin Sorescu *follows the logic of the living, which always coincides to the logic of the unpredictable* (ANDREESCU, 1983: 19).

In a play entitled *Fighter of two fronts*, which was published in fragments in 1981, the trainer says to the wrestler: Y*ou fight between two borderlines of attack,* and this one answers: *this is our destiny ... between two borderlines ...,* that is, the existential line and the line of art, the habitual show of the work of Marin Sorescu.

In this show of life, he manages to be the script writer, the director and also an actor. But however, the actor is the one who is in direct communication with the audience. That is why, the director experiences an unexplained envy towards poor actors: *Cei mai dezinvolţi – actorii! / Cu mânecile suflecate / Cum ştiu ei să ne trăiască! / Moartea lor pe scenă e atât de naturală, / Încât, pe lângă perfecţiunea ei, / Cei de prin cimitire, / Morţii adevăraţi / Grimaţi, tragic, odată pentru totdeauna / Parcă mişcă!*

The unpredictable continues to shock us and the stereotype of the ordinary manifests itself like a stimulus of poetic imagination, the guised joy in front of the universe being remarked also by G. Călinescu, who asserted that *the final taste ... is bitter though* (CĂLINESCU, 1968: 114).

Marin Sorescu felt an attraction towards theatre since his student years, when optimistically, he wrote to George Sorescu: *I dream a comedy* (G. SORESCU, 2008: 52). (15 XII 1957). Few months later (1 III 1958) he announced his brother triumphantly: *Do you know what I have done lately? I have written a comedy! You have my word I have written it! (Precisely: I have written only the first act, I have only act two)* (G. SORESCU, 2008: 57).

In order to convince his brother that he had been serious, he also communicates the story of the respective comedy.The plot, told by the leader of the Iaşi literary circle is the following: a*fter the end of the Second World War, a German engineer finds refuge in America, where he pretends to be a specialist in atomic bombs.A series of confusing events come up from this*. (G. SORESCU, 2008: 56). Written *at one go, like you write a poem when you have an inspiration*, act I gives him an unusual feeling of satisfaction, backing up his belief *that I could be successful in playwriting*. (M. SORESCU, 1999: 170).

The enthusiasm of the student years from Iaşi appeases until the publication of his play *There are nerves* in 1980.

Therefore, he becomes not only author but also a spectator. The emotions of the moment are intense, the play being staged at Majestic, by the players of the Baia Mare theatre. T*he director, very young, drove on full throttle. Something beyond an absurd comedy came out – a very transparent political pamphlet. Around me, the audience elbowed one another and didn't know what to do ,to laugh, to applaud...to be afraid?*

In this case, his position as a spectator loses its charm; the author holds the first place and feels *slightly annoyed by the obviously transparent translation of the <message>*. (G. SORESCU, 2008: 57).

BDD-A5811 © 2010 Universitatea din Piteşti
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 08:18:08 UTC)

During his long and interesting journeys, Marin Sorescu feels himself a *Traveler*, but also an *Antitraveler*.

While the Traveler *curious like a child in a general store* was ready anytime *to be taken aback at any step*, the Antitraveler, *bored to death, as he knows everything, he has had an inkling of everything* was always eager to *to take everything in scorn, looking down to it* (M. SORESCU, 1999: 67) or to ask rhetorically: *Why am I travelling, My Lord? As I don't remember anything. I forget everything*. (M. Sorescu, 1999: 325)

It is obviously about the dual personality, but since this word is not in his line as he confesses, he admits that one can speak about *my inner torment, the battle of opposites on my account* (M. SORESCU, 1999: 76). And, in the event we havent't understood, he gives us an example*: Aşteaptă să-ti arăt – **another** would say now (The Traveler), foolishly kind-hearted as he is. <Da' c'eşti copil?> **one of them** suddenly says plump**,** quoting from the classics*. (M. SORESCU, 1999: 77)

The same dual personality, as Marin Sorescu confesses, also appears in the relationship author-spectator. Could't refuse himself the pleasure *to meet actors*, he accepts, as an example, the invitation of the State Theatre from Oradea, at the unofficial first night- the official first night had taken place before - of his play *The Fan House*, play unpublished in Romania. Read only at the literary circle *Ramuri* from Craiova, possibly an imprudence (as the author appreciates it), *for most likely from here the spillings had been received <interpretations>*, the play had been banned and nobody knows by which miracle the manager of the State Theatre from Oradea got the permission of staging the play, since the text had been unpublished.

The dual hypostasis of author and spectator determines Marin Sorescu to remind us again the *problem of dual personality*, considered not as a dissociation of personality, at the same individual but rather as an attempt of coexistence of two arts in a single unit.

The author jots down without commenting the work of the director, whose name he does not remember, but he is completely swept off his feet by the actors' performance who *played with verve*, on that account many scenes having being applauded.

Therefore, the spectator is satisfied!

And as in the world of intelligentzia, *the shows becomes a means of communication*, the spectator (M. SORESCU, 1999: 21) reverted at his initial intellectual status at the exit of the theatre hall, has a good subject of conversation. *If one should not have seen the respective show,* he has anything to talk about. That is why, Marin Sorescu is convinced*, all aim at seeing what is new* and breathlessly, all like greyhounds, rout for *a hunt which belongs to the ineffable* (M. SORESCU, 1999: 21).

Defining himself as *a living author and a running director* (M. SORESCU, 1999: 121) who mingles everywhere, he carries his luggage from one hotel to another, *since rooms at the hotel and seats in a theatre are hard to get*, seeing even three plays a day, he comes at a moment when he learns to be patient, *as appropriate for the one who ponders about art*, (M. SORESCU, 1999: 121) or … not. *Here, I have risen to leave , or it's the other way, here I have decided to stay ? Let's see how much they will stay like that* (p. 122).

They are *I hope, husband and wife*, *who have stripped (not undressed)to their skin*, *and stayed feet up*, in the French performance of Ariane Mnouchine (M. SORESCU, 1999: 122).

BDD-A5811 © 2010 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 08:18:08 UTC)

He is annoyed not by the removal of any props but by the abandonment of any talent *like something stale and pompous* (M. SORESCU, 1999: 122).

We recognize that the one who *ponders about art* is the critic who *playwright or not, ... lives his cronic, mingles in it enormously* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 99).

Objectivity and much responsibility are required to this one, since *to perceive an event is sometimes equal with to put one's head on the block ... that is, in a way, to condemn yourself*.

Also, the theatrical observer, another name for the theatre critic must give proof of *participation, with all his self in the play*.

Admiring without reserve the theatre of Büchner, *philosophical and social theatre, having great ideas thrust everywhere, like weapons in a panoply* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 16), the theatre critic Marin Sorescu, affirms that, *the plays of Caragiale shoud be staged for ever*, because *the stimulation of original playwriting depend also on the continuous presence of the national masterpieces* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 17).

As a theatre critic he is much interested in the *director's vision, the decor, the costumes* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 81), the theatre manager who must have *great authority, real value, experience and good taste* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 68). His affirmation about Radu Penciulescu, a temporary manager of Teatrul Mic from the capital is edifying: *Without him, in the theatre I also try to write, I would feel no pleasure* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 69).

But, an *honest* theatre manager must at the end of the season ask the prompter *to forgive his season*, as he was obliged *to prompt convincingly too many banalities and ineptitudes. He was obliged to perspire and have emotions (there is stage-fright here, too) for any unimportant beautiful lost intention* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 39).

Giving as example our great Eminescu, an *enthusiastic* prompter in his youth, Marin Sorescu admits that there exists *an art of prompting, similar to the actor who must have the ability to get wind of the words* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 39).

In a respectable theatre, the prompter, similar to the supreme creator, is the single responsible for the *wave of happiness and the great late tirade of life*.

In his well-known ways, Marin Sorescu pays tribute to the *titular holder of spreading all our words and responses in the world,* that is, metaphorically speaking to the wind, which can be always a good prompter: *Give me a good prompter – and I will recite you Mahabharata, as nothing* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 39).

Marin Sorescu, the theatre critic admits to Ion Băieşu *a real vocation of the real fact ... having deep implications in the moral and social nature* (M. Sorescu, 2005: 30), celebrates Marin Preda like one of *our young classics*, on the occasion of the apparition of the *Private Diary* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 118), criticizes the play of Alexandru Mirodan *The Mayor of the Moon and His Sweetheart*, appreciating in his personal style: *Everything is false from the beginning till the end. It seldom happened to leave so grieved from a show* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 19).

His well-known praise for actors can also be felt in this critique: *I will not say a word about the show, as I hold in estimation the staff of actors from the Teatrul Mic, on the whole. I consider that a good play cannot be done on a minor text* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 20).

Among the actors appreciated by Marin Sorescu in his critiques one can find Ion Caramitru (M. SORESCU, 2005: 84), Virgil Ogăşanu (M. SORESCU, 2005: 149), Radu Beligan (M. SORESCU, 2005: 51), Marcela Rusu (M. SORESCU, 2005: 52) and others.

BDD-A5811 © 2010 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 08:18:08 UTC)

In many critiques, Marin Sorescu shows his preoccupation for the situation of the Greek tragedy, for the authors and characters. Deriving from the Greek word *tragoi – he-goat*, the tragedy begins *after the destiny has been released* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 103), in close connection to *Achille's anger ... against heaven and earth*, which generated *Greek tragedy out of the need to find a theatre of operations* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 103).

The idea of the apparition of tragedy makes him think about the numerous deaths, considering that this one must be seen *in front of the face distorted with pain of a mother or young wife, pulling her hair, kissing the earth and invoking the Gods* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 112).

Eschylus, Sophocles, Euripides are present in his critiques and close to the theatre of antiquity, Marin Sorescu considers the choir as an indispensable factor, which anonimous, collective and oral *represents, in fact, the folklore of ancient tragedy* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 47). This one is wise and possibly made up only of old people, who cannot participate to the action and whatever comes, it do not change until the end, it develops schematically, everything being framed, overused by experience, and not in the least, it is monotonous, its interventions being *drowsy like a murmur of waves which reach th edge of the precipice* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 48). On his opinion, there are two worlds in the performances of ancient plays: the choir, made up of philosophers and the living people, as he calls them. Consequently, *two incompatible worlds*.

The theme of the tragedy, as Marin Sorescu observes, is the *limit which must not be surpassed*, and on its both sides there are equally legitimate forces *in a ceaseless powerful struggle* (M. Sorescu, 2005: 49).

The theatre critic also analyzes modern writers, like Papini, Arghezi, Caragiale, Blaga, Camil Petrescu, examining attentively types of performances, concepts about the theatre performance or analyzing freedom and creation in playwriting and the correlation text- interpretation.

Inventive, unpredictable, Marin Sorescu proposes the setting up of some *pocket theatres, which should have the status of the usual theatres: manager, literary advisor, minus the maintenace money, since everything will be enthusiasm based* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 75).

The vocation of such small theatres would be the discovery of new dramatists, talented actors and why not? The critic asks himself of new spectators, because *all these would not cost much* and would require *only a bit of initiative and a few air bubbles sent to the surface of the cultural atmosphere from those of the bottom* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 75).

In a critique suggestively entitled *Between joke and tension*, Marin Sorescu is convinced that *the public apt for difficult performances has been here, makes us not only optimistic, but also to observe that the prejudice we are not prepared for exceptional stages can be refuted* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 53).

A theatre critic also has the task to analyze exigently the repertories of the burlesque theatre, aiming at disproving *the refined* who considers that these theatres *are located on the underground of The Great Theatre*, which turns up its nose, condemning a performance without having seen it.

He points out that theatres must be cautious with the texts which should not contain vulgarities, which will make spectators laugh at all costs. *To this effect, the lyricist releases vulgar, low jokes, the interpreter fetches a sigh, makes faces, takes oneself hoarse, the music keeps accompaniament, and the effect is contrary to what has been expected* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 11).

BDD-A5811 © 2010 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 08:18:08 UTC)

The scenes are awkward, the actors dispel reverences and what is most important *the audience look at them coldly, with a glance full of ... condolences* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 11).

Maybe, that is why the audience *laugh (but not roar with laughter), applaud ... sometimes get bored, yawn (do not think they listen with open-mouthed wonder: they really yawn); they smile again; then, when the stage plunge again into banality, our audience look politely at the wristwatches... but stay until the end* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 9).

The audience stay because they like the burlesque, they believe in the great efficacity of this genre of performance and particularly rely on the common sense which tells them they are right.

The staff of the burlesque theatre must be more selective, must have in view the improvement of the artistic level, avoid poor texts based on old jokes, poor music and bad interpreters.

The theatre criticism of Marin Sorescu, *expressions of a wide outlook, constitutes in away, the initiation act, necessary to his own creations, haunted by the tragic and serious reflections (Jonah, The Matrix, The Verger etc.)* Theatre critic or poet, playwright or writer, Marin Sorescu seeks perfection, admitting that *reality has also humor, but enough force to support certain dramas, too* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 140), that an epoch remains by which it promotes and *betting small sums, you gain small money* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 141).

Exigent with himself, he feels dissatisfied that he could not attain success as a dramatist *due to the fact that my plays, not being published or staged on time, could not have a normal evolution and I had to learn from the confrontation with the audience not to hold on by my teeth some works written seven years ago which I still have to explain* (M. SORESCU, 2005: 140).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andreescu, Mihaela, *Marin Sorescu – Critical moments*. Bucharest, Albatros Printing House, 1983

Călinescu, George, *The Youth of Don Quijote (postfață)*, Bucharest, Minerva Printing House, 1968

Sorescu, George, *Marin Sorescu in Family Letters*, foreword, syntheses, notes, annexes and commentaries by George Sorescu, Craiova, MJM Printing House, 2008

Sorescu, Marin, *My Books Like to Travel* interview by Virgil Sorin in *România literară*, nr. 12/19 March 1981

Sorescu, Marin, *Diary, The Novel of My Journeys,* Bucharest, Marin Sorescu Fund Printing House, 1999

Sorescu, Marin, *Cronici dramatice*, Craiova, Editura Scrisul Românesc, 2005.

BDD-A5811 © 2010 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.75 (2026-11-02 08:18:08 UTC)