

RSAA NEWSLETTER

Romanian Studies Association of America

May 2015

Volume XXVI, Issue I

Special Guests:

Noemi Marin & Cătălina Iliescu Gheorghiu



Dr. Noemi Marin and Dalai Lama

Dr. **Noemi Marin**, Professor, School of Communication and Multimedia Studies, held positions also as Director of the School (2011-2014), Director of the Peace Studies Program (2007-2012), and the Editor of the *Journal of Literacy and Technology*, since 2005.

Sole contributor to the *International Encyclopedia of Communication* (Blackwell, 2008) on Eastern and Central European rhetoric, Dr. Marin presented over 120 international and national conference papers, focusing on communist and post-communist discourse and societies in transition. She received the prestigious Presidential Leadership Award, 2010, and Researcher/Creative Scholar of the Year Award (2009), Florida Atlantic University.



Dr. Cătălina Iliescu Gheorghiu

Cătălina Iliescu Gheorghiu, Professor (University of Alicante), holds a BA in Spanish and English (1989) from the University of Bucharest and a Ph.D in Translation Studies (2002) on *Relevance Theory and theatrical translation* (UA). She is the author of "Introducción a la Interpretación. La modalidad consecutiva" (2001; reprinted 2004; Romanian version 2006) and the editor of LAIC Special Issue (2007, 7:2) *Intercultural Approaches to the Integration of Migrating Minorities* (Clevedon, UK.: Language and Intercultural Communication. ISSN: 1470-8477). She has supervised two Ph.D and several MA theses. Cătălina Iliescu is also a sworn translator and conference interpreter.



Special Guests:

Noemi Marin & Cătălina Iliescu Gheorghiu (2)

In April 2014, **Dr. Marin** was invited to present a lecture at the well-renowned Davis Center at Harvard University, lecture that is now part of the events recorded on the university site. Currently, Dr. Marin is completing a book project “Rhetorics of 1989” to be published by Routledge in 2015. In addition, Dr. Marin is working on a new book project related to political communication in societies in transition.

Dr. Marin authored the book *After the Fall: Rhetoric in the Aftermath of Dissent in Post-Communist Times* (2007), and contributed to several books *Negotiating Democracy: Media Transformation in Emerging Democracies* (2007); *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* (2007; 2006); *Realms of Exile: Nomadism, Diaspora and Eastern European Voices* (2005); *Intercultural Communication and Creative Practices* (2005); *Culture and Technology in the New Europe: Civic Discourse in Transformation in Post-Communist Nations* (2000). Scholarly articles have been published in *East European Politics and Societies*; *Migration: A European Journal of International Migration and Ethnic Relations*; *Forum Artis Rhetoricae*; *Romanian Journal of Journalism and Communication*; *Global Media Journal*; *Controversia: An International Journal of Debate and Democratic Renewal*. Dr. Marin edits the international academic journal *Journal of Literacy and Technology*, since 2005.

Dr. Noemi Marin publishes for the first time in the present issue of the newsletter the English version of **“Universities as Discursive Geographies,” page 27.**

Cătălina Iliescu Gheorghiu has coordinated EU projects on Intercultural Communication, a machine translation project TRAUTOROM financed by the Romanian Government and she has organized the International Symposium on UNIVERCITIES together with Jose Lambert (2008) and TID: Translation and Diasporic Identities (first edition 2009; second edition 2010) and co-organized the Literary Translation Conference “El ojo de Polisemo” (2011). She has published 3 books, over 15 articles in (international) journals, over 30 book chapters and has edited five international volumes. She chairs “ARIP” (2005), a cultural association, and she is the Head of the Summer Courses at her university.

She has also published “Miniaturas de tiempos venideros” (Vaso Roto 2013) a bilingual anthology of contemporary Romanian poets; “En la cuerda de tender” (Linteo 2012) an anthology of poetry by Dinu Flămând; “Un árbol de sonidos” (Eikon 2011) a bilingual anthology of Transylvanian poets; “Chitaristul” (All 2012), a novel by Luis Landero among the most recent literary translations and collections.

Dr. Cătălina Iliescu Gheorghiu wrote a special feature article for the present issue of the RSSA Newsletter **“Narratives of Migration: the Image of Romanians in Spanish Contemporary Literature.”** You may read the article at **page 13.**



Returning Guest: Dr. Constantin Parvulescu
Opening Titles and Authorship in Romanian
Socialist Film (I)

A prolific scholar, **Dr. Parvulescu** is the coeditor of *A Companion to the Historical Film* (Blackwell-Wiley, 2013) and the author of *Orphans of the East: Postwar Eastern European Cinema and the Revolutionary Subject* (Indiana University Press, 2015). He has published two novels, co-authored the best-selling nonfiction book *Timisoara Blues (Blues de Timisoara)*, and edited a collection on the *Garana Jazz Festival*. In our *RSAA Newsletter* 23.3, we republished his article “Challenging Communities of Values: the Peripheral Cosmopolitanism of Marian Crișan’s *Morgen*.”

A complete list of his publications can be found at:
<https://uvt-ro.academia.edu/ConstantinParvulescu>

Summary:

This article analyzes the opening titles of Romanian socialist films. It reveals how their credits reflected changes in how the Romanian film industry and film culture perceived the social functions of cinema, authorship, and marketing. The form, structure, and content of these sequences testify to the director’s elevation to the position of author. Romanian film culture did not simply follow official Communist positions on the role of the arts in society however. While the Romanian Communist Party promoted socialism and nationalism, international capitalist production and distribution trends increasingly shaped cinema in this country. Whereas the late-socialist regime expressed an anti-western stance, Romanian title sequences indicated cinema was heading

in an altogether different direction: it was becoming ever more auteur-driven and aspiring to marketability on an international art cinema circuit that traversed western markets and festivals.

The opening credits of Romanian films illustrate the changing values film industries and audiovisual culture under State-socialism assigned to cinema, authorship, and marketing. This essay examines the opening credits of Romanian serious dramas which were intended to question or raise awareness of historical, moral, political, and social issues. I trace the transformation of these sequences across the socialist era, dividing it into three periods: Early Socialism (1947–1957), Mid Socialism (1957–1977), and Late Socialism (1977– 1989). These periods are distinguished by significant transformations in Romanian socialist discourse and the nation’s cinematic output. I argue that title sequences bare the traces of organizational, aesthetical, economic, and political discourses, in particular the elevation of the director to the status of author.

Following the Soviet example, the opening titles of the early socialist film *Mitrea Cocor* (1952) read: the film company, screenwriter, director, cinematographer, composer, editor, and some staff — the names of the actors appear only later.

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Publications:

Constantin Pârvulescu. “Romanian Cinema.” In *Oxford Bibliographies in Cinema and Media Studies*. Ed. Krin Gabbard. Oxford University Press, 2015.

<http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199791286/obo-9780199791286-0156.xml>

Constantin Pârvulescu. “Opening Titles and Authorship in Romanian Socialist Film.” In *Iluminace*, Volume 26, 2014, No. 3 (95): 21-36. (**read in current issue**)

<http://www.iluminace.cz/index.php/en/article?id=183>

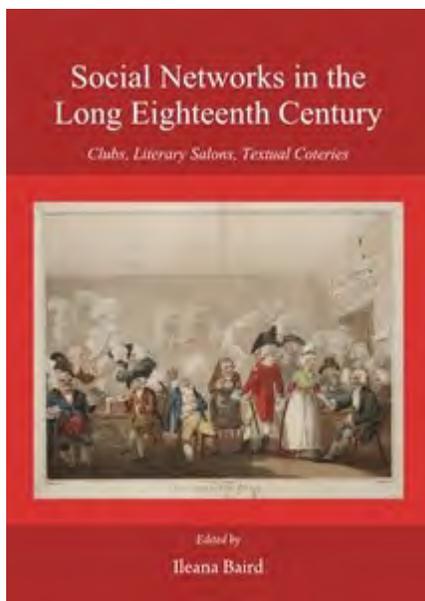
Special issue *Euxeinos 15/16* (2014): **Moldova: A Borderland’s Fluid History**.

<http://www.euxeinos.ch>

Monica M. Grecu: *Twilight of Thoughts*. (Stefan Munteanu poetry collection) AuthorHouse, 2012. ISBN: 978-1-4670-4159-1 (hc) si ISBN: 978-1-4670-4160-7 (sc).

Social Networks in the Long Eighteenth Century Clubs, Literary Salons, Textual Coterie

Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015. Editor(s): **Ileana Baird**



In an attempt to better account for the impressive diversity of positions and relations that characterizes the eighteenth-century world, this collection proposes a new methodological frame, one that is less hierarchical in approach and more focused, instead, on the nature of these interactions, on their Addisonian “usefulness,” declared goals, and (un)intended results. By shifting focus from a cultural-historicist approach to sociability to the rhizomatic nature of eighteenth-century associations, this collection approaches them through new methodological lenses that include social network analysis, assemblage and graph theory, social media and digital humanities scholarship. Imagining the eighteenth-century world as a networked community rather than a competing one reflects a recent interest in novel forms of social interaction facilitated by new social media—from Internet forums to various types of social networking sites—, and also signals the increasing involvement of academic

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Social Networks in the Long Eighteenth Century Clubs, Literary Salons, Textual Coteries (cont. from p. 4)

communities in digital humanities projects that use new technologies to map out patterns of intellectual exchange. As such, the articles included in this collection demonstrate the benefits of applying interdisciplinary approaches to eighteenth-century sociability, and their role in shedding new light on the way public opinion was formed and ideas disseminated during pre-modern times.

The issues addressed by our contributors are of paramount importance for understanding the eighteenth-century culture of sociability. They address, among other things, clubbing practices and social networking strategies (political, cultural, gender-based) in the eighteenth-century world, the role of clubs and other associations in “improving” knowledge and behaviors, conflicting views on publicity, literary and political alliances and their importance for an emerging celebrity culture, the role of cross-national networks in launching pan-European and transatlantic trends, Romantic modes of sociability, as well as the contribution of voluntary associations (clubs, literary salons, communities of readers, etc.) to the formation of the public sphere.

This collection demonstrates how relevant social networking strategies were to the context of the eighteenth-century world, and how similar they are to the congeries of new practices shaping the digital public sphere of today.

Ileana Baird is a Postdoctoral Preceptorship Fellow at the University of Virginia. Her main areas of interest include eighteenth-century British literature, visual and material culture, and digital humanities. She is the co-editor of *Eighteenth-Century Thing Theory in a Global Context: From Consumerism to Celebrity Culture* (2014), an author of articles on Alexander Pope and his circle, and a translator from British and American writers. Her book project, *Spaces, Things, Heterotopias: A Duncical Map of Early Eighteenth-Century British Culture*, draws on historical, theoretical and quantitative methods to shed new light on publicness as an emerging category at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

In preparation for publication:

Studies in Eastern European Cinema Journal: Sports in Film.

Deadline for articles (6,000-7,000 words): 30/07/2015

Please direct enquiries to the editors:

Ewa Mazierska (EHMazierska@uclan.ac.uk), or

Elzbieta Ostrowska (e_ostrowska@hotmail.com)

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Call for Articles:

Studies in Eastern European Cinema Journal : Sports in Film (2)

From *Olympia* to *Shaolin Soccer*, from *The Harder They Fall* to *Chariots of Fire*, and from *Raging Bull* to *The Big Lebowski*, cinema has relentlessly displayed its fascination with the world of sports. As Eastern European cinema is no exception in this regard, *Studies in Eastern European Cinema* sets out to showcase its sport imaginaries. Recognizing that this topic has received little critical attention, the special issue of *Studies in Eastern European Cinema* aims to fill this gap by seeking scholarly contributions that expand our knowledge on films about sport in the titular region.

Just like cinema itself, sport is a vast and complex social arena in which many discourses, practices and institutions enmesh, intersect and – no pun intended – compete. It is about games and scores, but also about politics, economy, education, law and media; about athletes, but also about sport fans; about professionals, but also about amateurs; about discipline, but also about leisure. Sport excludes and divides, yet also conciliates and includes. No social layer is inert towards it as it intertwines with the categories of gender, class, age, sexuality, ethnicity, and location.

The journal *Studies in Eastern European Cinema* aims to explore the ways in which Eastern European films screened the sport-related experiences in all historical periods and

socio-political constellations. According to our central premise, cinema never merely reflected on sport, or depicted it in a disinterested way, but actively shaped opinions and attitudes about sport. In that way, just like sport imagery is integral to the history of cinema, cinema itself participates in the history of sport.

The journal *Studies in Eastern European Cinema* encourages prospective contributors to employ different analytical categories and perspectives such as:

Politics, ideology, nation: sport as the expression of nationhood or an ideological cause; sport as a proverbial “continuation of war by another means”; the athletes as the unofficial ambassadors of a political/ideological system (nation, communism/socialism etc.)

Class: sport as a marker of class belonging and a mechanism of strengthening the class divide; sport as a vehicle for interclass inclusion and movement.

Gender: the various types of sport-related masculinity and femininity; sport as a sexist, male-dominated institution that maintains the general status quo of male/masculine domination; sport as a venue for the gender empowerment of women (a rise in women’s participation in sport);

Sexuality: sport and the heterosexual

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Upcoming Conferences

International Conference Beliefs and Behaviours in Education and Culture

Timisoara - Romania, June 25 - 27, 2015

<http://www.dppd.uvt.ro/bbec/registration.php>

Dr. Marius-Mircea Crişan: (Humanities): marius.crisan@e-uvt.ro

Dr. Roxana-Andreea Costea (Social Sciences): roxana.costea@e-uvt.ro

International Conference Linking Past, Present and Future:

The 25th Anniversary of Regime Change in Romania and Moldova (1989/1991)

Faculty of Political Science, University of Bucharest, Spiru Haret 8

https://www.academia.edu/11829333/Preliminary_Program_-_SRS_Conference_2015

Mosaics of Change, Revisited: Creating Cultures in the “New Europe” and Central Asia

Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland (June 18-20, 2015)

<http://blog.ecu.edu/sites/mosaics2015/>

Studies in Eastern European Cinema Journal: Sports in Film. (cont. from page 6)

privilege; homosociality and homosexuality;

Body: sport as a mechanism disciplining the body; fit and able bodies; disabled bodies; sports and illness;

Age: sports and children; sports as a catalyst in coming-of-age stories; sports and youth delinquency;

Media fame and sporting celebrity: films about or inspired by particular sport stars; films about the sport fame and notoriety in general; films that cast actual sport celebrities.

As this is by no means an exhaustive list, feel free to expand it in accordance with your own theoretical interests and the films that you would like to showcase.

(See contacts on page 6)



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Upcoming Conferences

Religion and Spirituality in Literature and Culture

The 17th Annual Conference of the English Department, University of Bucharest

4 June 4-6, 2015

http://www.unibuc.ro/depts/limbi/literatura_engleza/conferinte.php

Contact: 17.aced@gmail.com

RMMLA: “Romanian Culture’s Contribution to the International Heritage,”

October 9, 2015 (Santa Fe, NM)

After Memory: Conflicting Claims to World War Two in Contemporary Eastern European Literatures

Center for Literary and Cultural Research (ZfL), Berlin, Germany, November 6-8, 2015

Contact: schwartz@zfl-berlin.org

Being Romanian, Being European: Romanian Spirituality in Film, Literature and the Arts

MLA, Austin, Texas (January 7-11, 2016)



Domnita Dumitrescu, (front, right) with Sheri Spaine Long and David Wiseman at the MLA conference in Vancouver (January 2015).



CALL FOR PAPERS: EDITED COLLECTION

Transnational Narratives of Performed Exile and Englishness

Editor: **Dr. Catalina Florina Florescu**

In the PMLA inaugural edition released in 2014, Professor Simon Gikandi of Princeton University published an editorial titled, “Provincializing English,” that (in part) constitutes the foundation for my collection. Dr. Gikandi explains that there is no English but Englishes, a concept that is not novel, and yet not fully embraced by and/or employed in the academic circles. As Dr. Gikandi argues, “An effective way of dealing with anxieties that English generates is to deprive the language of the ecumenical status of the global and to represent it as one language among many, to provincialize it, as it were.” By so doing, “English can be celebrated not as part of a global drive toward monolingualism but as part of the diversity.” Furthermore, there is no universal English throughout the world, but there are many standardized Englishes. That proves that we can talk about many manifestations of the English language as a process to which new forms will be continuously added.

White, Black, Yellow, Digital: Transnational Narratives of Performed Exile and Englishness is a study about diaspora literature and immigrant experiences, and how the idioms brought and performed by immigrants continue to reshape the English language. The contributors focus on how in the digital era physical distances have collapsed and the borders have become less rigid. Furthermore, the study contemplates the emotional and linguistic cartography of exile, i.e., its evolution as a word and concept since Ovid’s time until our globalized society.

Is today’s exile perpetually deferred because it is a state that does not ever truly reach maturation, but, like a pendulum, swings back and forth, back and forth? Should we thus talk about its plural form rather than limit it to singular? People’s exile-s would imply that immigrants traverse uninterrupted episodes and would replicate the phases in the development of their own Englishes. Then, perchance, an exiled identity would have positive connotations and would give up its clichéd stigma.

The collection is divided into three sections, each with 4-5 chapters.

Part one is about the balancing acts conducted in English when one moves from one’s native language. How long does it take for the brain to feel linguistically safe to perform in the adopted language while sifting its imperfections? Does one continue to translate his/her ideas and feelings constantly, or is translation just a transitional phase of immigration? Does an immigrant/exile fully acknowledge his/her contribution to Englishes? Scholars with a background in the study of English and translation are highly preferred. Bilingual essays and/or bilingual passages are strongly encouraged.

Part two relies on the assumption that, because of the Internet, there is a new hybrid in the making, also referred to as “real virtual spaces,” where the dichotomy of “here” and “there” is barely distinguishable.

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Transnational Narratives of Performed Exile and Englishness

(cont. from p. 9)

A person may be physically in one location, yet s/he may Skype with his/her family members trapped in spaces miles and miles away. Google maps can also explore destinations that are physically removed from proximity. One's geographical presence becomes obsolete in this new digital scheme that offers us glimpses of our computerized selves. Contributors of this section are invited to explore the intricacies of these real virtual spaces both from theoretical and personal perspectives. Special emphasis will be derived from the field of digital humanities in conjunction with diaspora study.

Part three reflects on the personal pronoun "I" as being seen through the accumulated lenses of a perpetual tourist. This section describes how people are vulnerable yet thankful of and resourceful because of this complex immigrant status, where they feel without roots precisely because these roots do not belong to any soil any longer. That is, when they return to visit their country of birth they act like (borderline) tourists; ironically, when they live in the adopted country, they act like tourists, too. The desire to migrate cognitively and emotionally on a

daily basis gives these dislocated persons a kind of transparency and it may facilitate their acceptance as immigrants/exiles qua travelers.

Scholars who are interested in this volume should submit an abstract by **May 15th, 2015** at ravaseala@gmail.com or fflorescu@pace.edu. T

The proposal should be between 500 and 700 words and it should be accompanied by a short bio (100 words maximum). Furthermore, please indicate if your proposal will fit into part one, part two, or part three of the edited collection.

Fields: Comparative Literature; Film Studies; Diaspora & Migration Studies; Cultural Studies; Criticism

Dr. Catalina Florina Florescu is affiliated with Dyson College of Arts and Sciences, English Department, Pace University.

Dr. Noemi Marin successfully organized at Florida Atlantic University (March 12-13, 2015) the FAU Peace Studies and FAU Peace, Justice, and Human Rights Initiative International Conference: **Colonizing and De/Re-Colonizing Nations: A Research Inquiry into Communist Practices 25 Years Later**

Among the participants:

Dr. Bogdan Stefanescu, University of Bucharest, Romania (keynote speaker); Dr. Letitia Guran, North Carolina A&T State University; Dr. Noemi Marin, Florida Atlantic University.



CFP:

**Sex and Sexuality in East-Central Europe, Past and Present
An Interdisciplinary Conference at the Central European University**

Conference venue: Budapest, Hungary

Period: October 16-17, 2015

Deadline for abstracts: June 30, 2015

Description

Sex and sexuality in East-Central European contexts are relatively new topics of academic inquiry. While the past five years have seen a growing academic interest, from histories of queer life, prostitution and sexology to ethnographies of lgbtq movements and queer literary representations, forums for scholars working on sex and sexuality in East-Central Europe have often remained fragmented and disciplinarily bound. This conference strives to contest and bridge these boundaries by bringing together scholars from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives to ask: What are the driving questions, theoretical and conceptual issues, and social and political realities that have shaped research agendas in this area? How can we work together to expand our understandings of these issues and realities and their consequences? How can the site of East-Central Europe, past and present, challenge us to theorize and politicize sex and sexuality in new ways?

Eligible topics

We invite proposals for papers and pre-organized panels addressing historical and contemporary aspects of sex and sexuality in the East-Central European context within the following broad themes:

- State, trans/supra-state, and civil society institutions, discourses, and practices
- * Political economies
 - * Religion
 - * Markets (i.e. commodifications, consumptions, tourisms, sex work, pornography, prostitution, trafficking)
 - * Science, medicine and public health (i.e. HIV/AIDS,

medical-scientific knowledge and expertise, etc.)

- * Normativities, non-normativities and queerness
- * Disabilities
- * Mainstream, marginal, and alternative social movements
- * Reflection on the above in literature and the arts as well the media (including, new media, social media)

We welcome proposals from the humanities and the social sciences including but not limited to anthropology, literary studies, history, political science, sociology, science studies and women's, gender, and sexuality studies.

Guidelines for submission Paper proposals should include:

- * contact information (name, email and academic affiliation of the applicant);
- * a 300 to 400-word abstract that includes the title of paper;
- * a short biographical statement.

Pre-organized panels should consist of 3-4 papers. Panel organizers are welcome to suggest a discussant for their panels. If you wish to organize a panel in a different format, please contact the conference organizers. Panel proposals should include information about proposed papers as listed above and a 300-400-word panel description.

Please send your proposals to
sexineuropeconference@gmail.com .

The deadline is June 30, 2015. All proposals and papers must be in English.

Confirmed keynote speakers:

- Joanna Mizielinska**, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland
Josie McLellan, University of Bristol, United Kingdom



Romanian Studies Association of America



Upcoming Conference Panels

MLA, Austin, TX 2016

**“Being Romanian, Being European:
Romanian Spirituality in Film and
Literature”**
(January 7-11)

Christene D’Anca, “umbra unei lumi (the shadow of a world)”: Doina Rusti’s *Fantoma din moara (The Mill Ghost)* Uncovers Romanian Heritage in the Shadows.

Lecturer, English Department, Pierce College, Woodland Hills, CA

Catherine Douillet, Moldovan Identity and the EU Migration.
Lecturer of Sociology, Department of Social Sciences, University of Wisconsin – Platteville, WI

Lenuta Giukin, Romanian Spirituality and Global Challenge in Romanian Cinema.
Associate Professor, Dept. of Modern Languages & Literatures, SUNY Oswego, NY

Adriana Gradea, The Authentic Subject and The Mirage of the Fetishized West in Cristian Mungiu’s *Occident (The West)*.
PhD Candidate, Department of English, Illinois State University, IL

Oana Sabo, Romanian Spirituality as Local Color in Maria Maïlat’s *Sainte Perpétuité*

(*Holy Perpetuity*) and Liliana Lazar’s *Terre des affranchis (Land of the Liberated)*

Assistant Professor of French,
Department of French and Italian, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA

RMMLA, Santa Fe, NM 2015

**“Romanian Culture’s Contribution
to the International Heritage”**
(October 9)

1. “Some Aspects of the Romanian Contributions to the European Culture”

Aurelia Roman, Ph. D., Georgetown University, Washington D. C.

2. “Nobel Prize – Eugen Palade”

Maria Manoliu, Ph.D., UC Davis, California

3. “Lucian Grigorescu, a Great Romanian Colorist”

Carmen Sabau & Isabelle Sabau, NIU Chicago

4. “Women in W. Shakespeare and V. Voiculescu’s Sonnets”

Monica M. Grecu, Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno



Narratives of Migration: the Image of Romanians in Spanish Contemporary Literature

Cătălina Iliescu Gheorghiu (University of Alicante)

Abstract

In the present global landscape, migrants have become a major weight on the demographic scales in developed countries but also on the economic balance in those territories they left behind. Romanian migration in Spain is able to play the role of an “interface” between the post-communist Eastern European zone, nowadays one of the important emigration nuclei on the planet, and the “myth-generating west”, forbidden for decades, and very often revealing itself as full of imperfections and inequalities. In the early 90s, Spaniards knew little about Romania; now, however, Romanians are part of contemporary Spanish society and almost 10% of the population of this former exporter of migration is now made up of newcomers. Romanians have acquired new life-styles in Spain, new attitudes and they have accessed new value standards, different from those which they had brought from their homeland. Antohi (2008: 293) suggests the consequences of this re-socialization are not unnoticeable, while he wonders what kind of collective identity the Romanian communities residing in countries like Spain will develop or how this new collective identity will interact with the new “narratives” (in the sociological acceptance/sense of the word) describing the Romanian experience beyond their country’s borders. The position of Romanian communities as ethno-political groups within Spanish civil society (with its patent or underlying prejudice or xenophobic impulses) has much to do with the image Spaniards have of the Romanian community and literature is one way of expressing this image.

In this paper I will try to pinpoint some relevant aspects regarding the presence of Romanian elements in fifteen literary works by contemporary Spanish authors.

I. Romanian migrants in Spain

Romanian migration to Spain began in the mid-nineties but registered a dramatic growth in the new millennium as a consequence, among other factors, of the Spanish government removing the requirement for a visa in 2002. Presently, there are 940 252 (1) Romanians officially registered in Spain; the largest migrant population (followed by Moroccans and Ecuadorians). Almost half of them are women (439 119) who, under crisis conditions, provide the main support for their families. Employed in housework or caring for children and the aged, they ensure the continuity of the migration project if men attempt a return plan. The Spanish province of Alicante, on the Mediterranean Coast (with 1 945 642 inhabitants of whom 30 312 are Romanians) belongs to the Valencia Community, which has the second highest number of Romanians (143 874) after Madrid (the capital and its surrounding areas).

The main professional sectors occupied by Romanians used to be: building, agriculture (seasonal jobs) and housework (including care of the aged). The reasons why Romanians preferred Spain were: job opportunities, the real estate boom, the aging population, high living standards, a more relaxed control of the black job market, linguistic and cultural similarity and the mild climate. Thus, immigrants chose areas round large urban centres and the Mediterranean Coast. The view of Romanians was more “sympathetic” or “tolerant” than the feeling that certain sections of the receiving society had towards immigrants from other parts of the globe, such as the Maghreb. Viruela suggests (2006) this

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Cătălina Iliescu Gheorghiu: Narratives of Migration: the Image of Romanians in Spanish Contemporary Literature (2)

might be explained on religious grounds and because Romanian workers were associated with such features as responsibility, punctuality, discipline and over qualification for the jobs they were being offered. This idea of overqualified Romanians is recurrent in the literary works analyzed, even to an obsessive extent. Characters have exquisite tastes in reading, are all university graduates and descendants of intellectuals when in fact the migration reality shows a variety of educational levels as one would expect in economic migration (unlike exiled or refugee diasporas). However, in recent years, we have witnessed a growth in xenophobia in the host society in the context of a global crisis and high criminality rates, often attached to “otherness”. Ferrero (2008) explains the Romanians’ current negative image as a consequence of their stereotyping as prone to organized crime, corruption, violent burglary, begging and child trafficking.

In a survey carried out in 2006, I asked members of the Romanian community living in Alicante if they felt integrated in the Spanish society, and 60.4% (of the 53 interviewees) answered “yes, in great measure but not immediately after arrival” 26.4% said “so so” and 13.2% stated “a hundred per cent since the very beginning”. Nobody opted for “no” or “very little”. When asked how Spaniards treated them, 37.7% said “in a friendly way from the very beginning”; 58.5% “in a friendly way but after a period of reserved behavior” and only 3.8% felt “lack of confidence” on behalf of Spanish society. In 2010 I carried out a new survey to which I referred elsewhere (Iliescu, 2010). Among the questions posed (2), there are two which I would like to discuss here:

1. Do you feel integrated in Spanish society?

The options were NO (which received zero answers), YES, “totally” (which received 21), or “partially” (which received 20).

2. Are Spanish people more intolerant now than before?

“Yes, because of the crisis” (8 subjects), “because of some Romanians’ behavior” (11 subjects), “because of immigrants’ behavior” (11 subjects), and “not really” (11 subjects).

As we can see, half of the people surveyed feel quite integrated in Spanish society, but one aspect needs to be nuanced in their answers to the second question: 22 informants think that Spaniards have become less tolerant because of Romanians’ or immigrants’ behavior, so migrants themselves tend to put the blame on the migrant community for conflicts that have to do with either poverty and socio-economic conditions, or education, thus justifying stereotyping tendencies and drawing a dangerous border between “good” and “bad” migrants, an idea which clearly appears in the teenager committed literature analyzed, as we shall see below.

2. Narratives under migration. An illustration

The concept of “narrative” is a complex one which has been defined by many scholars in terms of a dynamic entity (i.e. it changes with exposure to new experience) on people’s behavior, guided by stories they believe on certain events and defined on the grounds of social and communication theory as “a context for interpreting and assessing all communication” (Fisher, 1987), or a “way of constituting social identities” (Somers, 1992), or a “sequence of statements connected by both temporal and moral ordering” (Ewick & Silbey, 1995), or a

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Cătălina Iliescu Gheorghiu: Narratives of Migration: the Image of Romanians in Spanish Contemporary Literature (3)

“modality of shaping people’s views of rationality, objectivity, morality, of themselves and others” (Bennett & Edelman, 1985), or an “instrument of mind” operating in the construction of reality (Bruner, 1991). In turn, Baker shows (2006:9) that a narrative is not a genre, but rather a meta-code that underpins all modes of communication and categorizes worlds into types of characters, types of events and bounded communities. It also systematizes experience by ordering events in relation to each other temporally, spatially and socially. Human behavior is dichotomized by narratives into such pairs as valued/non-valued; normal/eccentric; rational/irrational; legitimate/non-legitimate or legal/criminal. Narratives are based on a selection process, since any story has many versions which are in competition with one another. Thus, individuals and communities continuously draw on past narratives in order to construct present ones. Narratives also imply tension, since they reproduce power structures while at the same time providing means of contesting those structures.

The **ontological narratives** are stories we tell ourselves about our place in the world and our own history; they are focused on the self, but a situated self, that depends on a community. Conflicts may arise between our stories and ontological narratives of others who share the same social space, as well as incompatibilities with collective narratives. In our case, ontological narratives can either be those each individual develops on his/her migrant status or those an individual belonging to the host society constructs on the migrant. Such is the case of Spanish authors who write on Romanian characters/realities. **Public narratives** are stories elaborated and circulated at social and institutional level on such issues as family, religion, educational institutions, among others. In our

case, those labels authors attach to diaspora, including generalizations and stereotyping, belong to such public narratives. **Conceptual narratives** embody a series of concepts and explanations that scholars construct for themselves and others about their object of study. In other words, this kind of narrative is not the subject of this study, although they constitute an interesting field for further research in order to see how scientific discourse in the host country emits diagnoses on diaspora habits, political and civil implication, etc. **Meta-narratives** work as “epic dramas” of our times. Political and economic dominance plays an essential role in the survival of a meta-narrative and media or film industries are the perfect means to spread them as well as literature. Both vampire myth based novels and documented stories in my corpus are good candidates to illustrate meta-narratives.

In this paper, I argue that in the case of diaspora communities, identities are being permanently negotiated, either between migrants who interact within their spaces (often these are spaces of exclusion), or between them and host societies (that integrate, assimilate or segregate them). The concept of “narratives” helps us to describe how identity signs are perceived from inside and outside a group. Thus, an external narrative would comprise those images, perceptions, stereotypes that host societies develop on a certain cohabiting community as reflected in media releases, artistic productions (film, fine arts, literature) or personal declarations (politicians, opinion makers). On the other hand, internal narratives would focus on migrants’ way of seeing themselves, either individually or collectively, as emerging from: artistic production (made by diaspora creators, e.g. ectopic writers), social network

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interaction and life stories narrated in private interviews, conversations, while they account for their migration experience and motivations. My intention is to focus on those external narratives that can be drawn from literary productions (fictional portraits of migrants) by writers who belong to the host society. More exactly, I will analyze Spanish prose written in the last two decades, that is the period since the phenomenon of Romanian migration into Spain has increased in number and visibility and certain curiosity has arisen among the host society towards this relatively close culture. After a general browsing of the Spanish contemporary literature, I found that fifteen prose writers had introduced in their works elements such as: main or secondary characters, realities, cultural aspects, stereotypes, or recent historic data. According to the subject and plot of the novels, a four type classification of these literary pieces emerged (see Iliescu, 2014), namely: (1) the recent history of Romania, the fall of the dictatorship, Romanian society; (2) the underworld of prostitution, procurement, begging and crime; (3) the Romanian community in Spain: integration, difficulties, daily coexistence and (4) the eternal seduction of vampires and the Stoker revival.

Other possible classifications take into account the centrality or subsidiarity of the Romanian elements within the development of the narration. Thus, the Romanian element is the axis around which the action takes place in: Ignacio Vidal Folch's "La libertad"-1996, Miguel Sánchez Ostiz's "Cornejas de Bucarest"-2010, Jaume Benavente's "La il·lusió"-2008, Víctor Batalle's "Els trafecs d'en Ton"-2011, Luis García Montero's "No me cuentes tu vida"-2012, Javier Alfaya's "El chico rumano"-2007, Luis Sanz Álvarez "La joven llegada del frío"-2012 and Ramón Usall i Santa's "Tots els camins porten a Romania"-2008. On the other

hand, it is only secondary in Quim Monzó's "Hotel Intercontinental"-1991, Juan Manuel de Prada's "La vida invisible"-2003, Lorenzo Silva's "La reina sin espejo"-2005, Carme Riera's "Natura quasi morta"-2011, Lucía Etxebarria's "Un milagro en equilibrio"-2004, Joan Perucho's "Historias naturales"-1960; 2003 and Enrique Vila Mata's "Historia abreviada de la literatura portátil"-1985/2005.

Finally, a clear distinction should be drawn in terms of genre and target audience between (1) **teenager short novels** with a strong educational commitment, which seek to instill tolerance and reinforce diversity, (2) **adult detective stories** (ranging from mastery of the genre – Silva, Riera- to diletantism – Sanz Álvarez), (3) **novels of certain length based on historic and social documentation** – García Montero, Sánchez Ostiz, Vidal Folch, and (4) **fantasy stories** in which the Romanian element is almost anecdotic – Perujo, Vila Mata.

Teenager short novels with educational purposes
In the following pages, I will try to outline the presence and significance of the Romanian element in these fifteen literary works. According to my classification in terms of genre and type of audience, the first category would include moralising fables intended for a teenage readership, who need to become aware, through these texts, of the socio-political realities behind migration and of the cultural particularities shared by a numerous and visible community in Spain such as the Romanian one, in the media spotlight for news related to violence, robbery, procurement or human trafficking. In this sense the titles in this category: Javier Alfaya's *El chico rumano* (2007); Ramón Usall i Santa's *Tots el camins porten a*

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Romania (2008); Jaume Benavente's *La il·lusió* (2008); and Victor Batallé's *El strafecs d'en Ton* (2011), play a social rather than a literary role in the educational process of Spanish adolescents.

Narrated in the first person by a 50-year-old translator from Galicia, *El chico rumano* (*The Romanian Boy*) reveals a charitable attitude towards the Romanian boy selling newspapers, trembling with cold, exploited but honest (he insists on giving back a customer a few cents). The boy disappears (Sergiu is his name – we find out on page 56) when the neighborhood becomes the scene of racist disturbances and the narrator finds him, cures his pneumonia and takes him to school from where he is kidnapped by a pedophile network and organ traffic network. This time the search goes as far as Romania, introducing characters like the boy's grand-uncle, Mr. Enescu. Finally the boy is rescued from the hands of the organ traffic mafia and he tells the story of how he fled Romania. His narration is adult, by the terms and style employed, so conflict arises between his narrative voice and story tenor. The plot is childish and Manichean, with a child victim at the centre and the surrounding characters are either good or evil.

Tots el camins porten a Romania (*All roads lead to Romania*) is a well-documented novel in which we find such varied references as those to a historic football match (Steaua-Barça, 1986) or to classical Marxist texts, to songs during the communist regime, the lyrics of which are reproduced exactly, or to the episode of the execution of the Ceaușescu couple. But we also find a cliché present in several others of these 15 novels, namely one character's confession about his negative memory of the police in his country (p. 13) apparently a recurrent idea in Spanish

contemporary authors. The main character is Ioana Lupescu, a maid who helps in the investigation of a murder: the victim, Florian Grigore is an educated, discreet, kind man, but also a former secret police agent. A third Romanian character is an angelically beautiful prostitute, Constantina Dumitru, and a fourth is the corpse of another former secret-police agent killed in Spain, Ilie Stroia. The investigation requires a trip to Romania that allows the author to introduce notions of Transylvania and Dracula (p. 74), Bucharest (nicknamed 'little Paris' - p. 75), Tarom Airlines and Henri Coandă (pp. 78-79), and Dacia cars (p. 81), to mention a few. Other characters in the story are the taxi-driver cum procurer, the food industry tycoon and sponsor of a sinister nationalistic party – Ioan Grigore, and the Commissar of Romanian Police, depicted in a very favorable light as a learned, elegant, reasonable person.

A new incursion into the recent history of Romania gives details on the life in the 80s ("era un miracle poder endur-se un tros de carn a la boca si no s'era un aparatchik") or on the episode of the fall of the dictatorship, with the riots, the death of the journalists, or the speech given by a despairing Ceaușescu, followed by the crowds marching through the capital with a holed flag singing "oe, oe, oe, Ceaușescu nu mai e!".

Obviously, there are odd-sounding expressions in Romanian like the exclamation "Ficioara Maria" (p. 13) (instead of the more natural: "Doamne, Maica Domnului"), or misspellings like "septamana" (p. 11), "clatitet" (p. 112) or incomplete vocatives like "Pleacă de aici, nenorocit" (p. 134).

=> p. 18



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There are even non veridic assertions such as: “la dona de Nicolae havia aconseguit fer-se passar per una eminent científica” which any Romanian of that time, would recognize as farcical as neither society nor the scientist community doubted her ignorance of chemistry, or any other field. In the end, detective Rovira manages to reveal the murderer, Adrian Bărbulescu, a hired assassin, and his boss, Ioan Grigore who had ordered his own brother’s death out of vengeance. The way the case is solved seems infantile and implausible, as do certain flashes, such as the protagonists listening to songs like “Partidul, Ceaușescu, România” at home, or having a library full of books signed personally by Ceaușescu, details which are hard to believe and should have been counter checked with Romanian advisors.

In spite of the simplicity of the plot, the unconvincing situations described and the simplistic resolution of the murders, the book is valuable for its documentation work and the author’s efforts in talking to Romanians and traveling to Bucharest. Although the stereotype cannot be avoided (the maid is in fact a graduate in Greek and Latin philology, who introduces herself from the very beginning in these terms: “Però no pensi vosté malament, eh, no sòc cap fulana...” (p. 13) and the brothel has as an advertising slogan: “Perlas jovencitas del Este. Las mejores y más calientes”) an effort is made to introduce a more complex color range in the painting, not just black and white, good and evil. That is how the reader can sympathize with the victim, former Securitate agent, but not with his racist fratricidal brother.

Within the same category, Jaume Benavente’s *La il·lusió* (*The Illusion*) and Victor Batallé’s *Els trafecs d’en Ton* (*Ton’s Bustle*) are two moralizing stories seeking to show that things and people should not be judged on appearance and that readers should not be tempted to give in to generalizations and stereotyping,

but try to understand people’s backgrounds and motivations. With a clear educational aim, both stories show extreme situations, in which citizens’ security is threatened and children are the heroes who re-establish order/logic. In *La il·lusió*, Cezar Bostan, a house painter and his apprentice Gavril come into the plot on page 27 as mysterious characters who address each other ‘aggressively’. The boy refuses to talk about his parents (a father who is a professor at the Polytechnic in Bucharest, punished by the system for complaining, and a mother – a philosophy teacher - who emigrates to Holland to work as a cook). The boy lives alone in Barcelona with his sister Vera who is a talented skater, although both siblings are under age. Descriptions of characters and the development of dramatic tension are based on a succession of clichés and stereotypes: violent Romanians causing altercations (p. 85); Romanian police always bringing trouble, unlike the Spanish police “which is here to help” (p. 82); the mother’s photograph ten years before with a scarf on her head (p. 63), (a feature of folklore rather than an intellectual’s garment in the 80s); a bus driver who takes them to Spain and his assistant depicted as “a threatening gypsy” (p. 62) who carries a pistol. Vera is a kidnapped by prostitution mafias and a series of actions are triggered to save her before it is too late. Everything ends well with the help of Bostan who turns out to be a former police agent who could not save his own daughter (whose name, by the way, was also Vera) from a similar tragic situation (p. 139). The two siblings leave for Amsterdam to join their mother, hence a second migration destination described as a happy choice in a period when the Spanish government is encouraging migrants to return to their countries.

This novel is not based on solid research of Romanian culture or history. => p. 19



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Instead, it indulges in the media reports on Romanians in Spain which is why its tenor is paternalistic and the authorial voice often denotes pity for the protagonists (reminding the reader of the hardships, sorrows, poverty in the home country). The plot is predictable, the style is dynamic, the structure of short chapters with suggestive titles makes it suitable as teenager, committed literature to be used in class when discussing issues of migration, tolerance, or stereotyping, although the documentation leaves a lot to be desired.

In the same line, *Els trafecs d'en Ton* describes the friendship between two 12-year-old boys, Ton and Dorinel (whose father is a chemistry engineer, their mother a pediatrician, and their grandmother an artist) and their adventures on several levels: at school, at home and in the neighborhood, helping the police to catch an Albano-Kosovar gang of dangerous criminals. Dorinel, the Romanian boy, seems to be a pretext rather than an action exponent, except for the end of the story when he dresses up as a girl (p. 170) to find out which part of the body Ton's girlfriend has had pierced. Dorinel disapproves of piercings and tattoos since he finds them "frivolous" (p. 146), and he has never had a girlfriend, but only some "infatuations" (p. 145); the choice of vocabulary is striking. Dorinel is also able to judge a painting (p. 76) like an educated adult, which turns him into a implausible character whose words are hardly those of a 12-year-old boy and this creative device, I believe, might be due to a desire to present Romanian characters as cultivated, polite and of exquisite breeding, even if this implies exaggerations (for instance the obsession that Romanian adolescents' parents should all be intellectuals. The purpose of the authors is to raise respect in Spanish young readers' eyes towards migrants, since the

generalized tendency is to confound poverty or economic scarcity with low social/educational level. As a matter of fact, these authors generate an opposite, positive stereotype which is in turn yet another distortion of reality.

Adult detective stories

The second category in my classification is the one labelled "adult detective stories" in which Romanian characters, either victims or perpetrators of evil, are more or less realistically depicted and play sometimes a central role in the crime plot development (Luis Sanz Álvarez's *La joven llegada del frío* [2012], Lorenzo Silva's *La reina sin espejo* (2005), Carme Riera's *Natura quasi morta* [2010]). In other cases, they play a secondary role, and have an almost chimeric presence (Juan Manuel de Prada's *La vida invisible (The invisible life)* [2003]). Here, the two exponents of Romanian society are a young gypsy, Michalela, who first appears on page 428 (bearing this strange name for a Romanian) who begs or sells newspapers on the underground platforms in Madrid. She is presented almost as a heroine, in idealized colors, a victim of the communist regime which chased gypsies through muddy roads in Bukovina [p. 496] who were in turn forced to steal honey from hives to survive; a description not devoid of condescension and moralistic attitude. As an anti-hero we discover the beast, Vasile Morcea, who (p. 446) "is worse than the devil", a procurer who tortures his prostitutes, whose icy voice has an "unimaginable radiation of malignity" (p. 514), but who, with a rather implausible command of popular culture, is able to recite the most unexpected authentic Spanish sayings and proverbs.

Apart from these two characters, from the underworld, other references to => p. 20



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Romanian migration come in descriptions of the modus operandi of prostitution networks (buses full of Romanian girls arriving in Spain) and the sordid area of “Casa de Campo”, a terrain of drug dealing, prostitution and outcast refuge in peripheral Madrid. References to Romanian society are made superficially, in lapidarian sentences and clumsy local details, betraying little or no research. The migration phenomenon is not dealt with in depth, unlike prostitution and human trafficking which seem to have been studied more thoroughly. As a general impression, this epic novel with a promising beginning fails to solve one of the two conflicts at the end of the 500 pages which tell a double story, and contain parallel plots and winding descriptions of the characters’ lives. One is the story of a pin-up girl, Fanny Riffel, which seems to be more accomplished and better documented and resolved. The other, a detective story embedded in the Chicago-Madrid axis, leaves the reader with a feeling of frustration and a bizarre taste of a nineteenth century pre-deterministic novel in which the author overwhelms us with his bookish style and classical references as well as an extremely cult language.

The other three novels in this category are more traditional detective stories. Silva’s and Riera’s are beautifully constructed exponents of the genre, while Sanz Álvarez’s is more amateurish. The location for *Natura quasi morta* (*Almost Still Nature*) is not frequent in Spanish literature and is reminiscent of David Lodge’s university campus novels. Riera sets her series of murders on the campus of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and involves professors, students and staff in the police investigations. The first victim, Laura Carmona, is murdered and at the same time, Constantinu Iliescu, a tall and robust 21-year-old Romanian student, disappears without trace,

which makes him a suspect, together with Marcel Bru, the last person to see Laura alive and who also dies. Another victim (Domenica, Laura’s friend) displaces suspicion towards a professor with whom she had had an affair but he too is killed by an apparently a psychopathic serial killer.

Apart from Constantinu (whose name’s final vowel is inexplicable), formerly a child abandoned in a container, three other Romanians appear: Dimitri Vasilescu (again, a strange first name for a Romanian), the Consul of traditional convictions who refuses to talk to the police, Gheorge Cercel who chairs an association and has falsified his own documents, and Vasile Samoila who lives in London and confirms Constantinu’s alibi. None of these characters raise any interest in the author and are not treated in depth. They only serve as pretexts for the introduction of information on Romania which is neither accurate nor interesting: the Secret Police “Securitate” is called “Seguritate” (p. 28); the “People’s House” (Parliament) is called “Palace” and is haunted by the ghosts of late builders; descriptions of Bucharest remain on a superficial level and evasive assertions such as Constantinu’s lodger, “things have always been difficult” do not contribute any worthwhile information. Although the detective story is well structured and the suspense appropriately dosified, the Romanian element seems to be there only for the sake of colorfulness with Wikipedia-type data and a paternalistic view of poor Romanians who seem to have “sarmale” and “mititei” for lunch each time they meet.

At the opposite pole we find Lorenzo Silva’s *La reina sin espejo* (*The queen without a looking glass*) which belongs to a criminal saga featuring Sergeant
=> p. 21



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Bevilaqua and Caporal Chamorro, of the Guardia Civil. The police solve yet another complex murder case, in which Neus Barutell, a famous TV show leader discovers a prostitution network following the information leaked by a Romanian girl who is also assassinated. Both mafia members, Nicolae and Stefan, are briefly described, but the character that retains the author's attention is Gheorghe Radoveanu, a petrol station employee who helps in the investigation, whose Spanish is fluent and almost lacking any accent, and who is a reliable "clever young man, with a natural aspect" (p. 63). He borrows classics from the public library because he prefers reading rather than watching TV. Silva depicts him in a favourable light as a collaborative, responsible and courageous man who wants to be helpful to his "second country": "... you have given me a job and a home. And I am a grateful person. If I can help you, I'll be pleased to do so." (p. 65).

As in the rest of the novels discussed so far, we see a tendency of Spanish authors towards compensation. For every evil character of Romanian origin, for every exponent of the underworld of crime and procurement, there is a positive one to guarantee the equilibrium of an ambivalent migrant segment.

Finally, this category is completed by a text, *La joven llegada del frío* (*The Girl Coming in from the Cold*) which can hardly be considered as literary since, not only does it contain spelling mistakes but also expression and concept incongruities in relation to Romanian culture. Thus, starting with the protagonist and her sister, the names 'Stelevania' and 'Aliankasia' are not at all familiar to a native speaker, the names of secondary characters follow the same scheme, for instance, 'Sergio Radavitch', who is a mafia controller (the man in charge of checking the women work 12

hours a day and earn 40€ of which he keeps half), or Mr. 'Rutack' who is a businessman who comes from Bucharest to take over the drug from Colombia and to whom girls must be "kind."

Other supposedly Romanian elements are: dishes such as "sarmulate con mamaliga"; false traditions like families gathering on the 1st of December (which is the official National Day but not the people's feast); or the protagonist trekking on Transylvanian hills with a volume of Eminescu under her arm and "reading from Mihai", which sounds altogether farfetched and unnatural to a Romanian reader.

The protagonist (Stelevania) is caught by a gang, she is forced into prostitution, she suffers mistreatment (p. 130), all kinds of aggressions (p. 165) and rape (p. 187), until the brothel in which she ends up, Kamasutra, is raided by the police, drugs are found, bosses are arrested and forty captive women are released. The book ends with a declaration of the author's intentions: "to reveal the gravity of some facts to which our society remains blind, facts which although fictitious, could have happened in real life." (p. 167).

Documented novels

The third category in my classification includes "novels of a certain length based on social/historic documentation" in which the Romanian element is either central to the plot (Vidal Folch, Sánchez Ostiz, García Montero) or marginal, but still significant (Etxebarria or Monzó).

In *La libertad* (*Freedom*) Vidal Folch describes the last years of the dictatorship, its fall and aftermath. Well narrated and documented, the novel is veracious and based on experiences gathered by the author while he lived in Bucharest as a press correspondent. Names and quotations are correct and information seems to have been checked by well-



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informed Romanians, judging by the presence of such elements as the quotation of a poem by Deșliu or the names of the six intellectuals who signed a protest letter read out on the Radio Free Europe broadcast. Apart from these, Vidal Folch introduces customs, traditions, iconic places for Romanians and a detailed and expert architectural description of famous corners in Bucharest.

Vidal Folch is critical, both with bored Spanish diplomats who accumulate money, disregard the authorities and despise the local population, and with certain Romanians, like the “indigenous girls” that “take aim like remote controlled police torpedoes” (p. 14) or interpreters lacking minimum standards and always “expecting something from you... marriage, pure love or who knows what” (p. 15). He identifies the lingua franca of communist countries, the master key to open all doors which is nothing else but fear (p. 33) and he is aware of the 770 Decree against abortion and all its sinister consequences. He reproduces political jokes of the time and commonplace convictions circulating in Romanian society of the eighties (such as zodiac signs, positive energies, even healing by touch) or the absurd law forbidding Romanians any contact with foreigners and obliging them to inform authorities within forty-eight hours of any such encounter.

The main character is a young gymnast reminiscent of Nadia Comaneci who refuses to construct a story of traumatic events in order to be recognized as a refugee after her emigration to the USA, and thus, she ends up in a striptease club (Pink Pussycat) where she is a contortionist for anonymous men. Her story is an exponent of the hell sometimes lived by migrants, but this is told at the end, after the reader has the opportunity to explore the socio-historic background of the home country and has

enough elements to judge the situation in some depth.

This preoccupation of Vidal Folch for veracity, documentation and in-depth analysis makes the novel worth considering as part of a selection of texts to define the identity of the current Romanian diaspora in Spain.

Not the same could be said about Sánchez Ostiz's *Cornejas de Bucarest (Crows of Bucharest)* which describes, over five hundred pages, feelings and perceptions of the author on his trips to Bucharest, seen as a totally unsafe dirty city, “full of prostitutes, thugs in uniform, and nobody's dogs” (p. 14) whose aura as an exotic, cosmopolite city between Orient and Occident is false. Romanians are shown as superstitious and prone to magic; they indulge in cruel exorcisms even within the Orthodox Church, and they never like what foreigners write on them (p. 17).

This “novel of novels, multicultural, multi-ethnic and meta-literary” (p. 32) as he himself defines it, entangles reality, semi truthful facts, memoirs, readings and fictions. Thus, the reader does not know whether to take seriously the coincidence of names or positions when professors from the University of Bucharest, Press Agencies Journalists, or Cervantes Institute managers are criticized. According to Ostiz, Bucharest people are rude (p. 29) as a reminiscence of the “communist equalitarianism” and they lack any sense of humour (p. 66) while “the academic community are insolent, disinterested, non-receptive and proud” (p. 70). He uses the history of the fascist movement in Romania (the Iron Guard) as a pretext to tell a story in which we might find some autobiographic elements mixed with excerpts of Spanish history narrated in the first person (the release of his friend Fede, the tumultuous encounters with MaBelle and her corpse eaten by animals which he had to identify at the morgue). => p. 23



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He also mentions his trips to Paris and the Basque Country, his relations with Francoist authorities and the friendship between Traian Maniu involved in the Spanish Civil War and the narrator's grandfather who learns about the atrocities of the Iron Guard from a Jew, Elías Alcalay. Full of names, some of them real, some invented and some misspelled, this novel is built around the leitmotiv of the crows –as bad-omens– which are everywhere in Bucharest. It is difficult to read, with a clear lack of accuracy in Romanian names, quotes, and data, and a sensation of bitterness, destruction, in which neither Spanish nor Romanian characters are spared the author's sarcasm and acid criticism.

A completely different impression is given by the story told in *No me cuentes tu vida (Don't Tell me your Life Story)* by L. García Montero that takes place on two space/time levels: the love story of Ramón and Mariana in Spain in the present day and the story of love and activism lived in the past by the couple's respective families, parents and grandparents in Romania and Spain. García Montero uses diacritical signs correctly and if we judge by the details and documentary data provided in his prose he seems to have undertaken thorough research into Romanian history, as well as interviewing intellectuals. In any case, his intention, unlike that encountered in other titles discussed so far, is not to build a folkloric or colorful landscape to be used as a canvas on which to pinpoint a few facts or a few characters in order to give the impression that he understands the situation and motivations of Romanian migration in Spain. Instead, he is interested in a more integrative approach, bringing arguments in favor of similitudes, in history, mind, way of thinking and of overcoming hardships between the two nations; his analysis goes further, it does not focus on the exotic features, but on those which approach both societies and give

normality to everyday coexistence. His novel is a constant shift of past and present consciousness combining perceptions and convictions, reminding us of the Civil War and resistance, of the fight against fascism and of the sacrifice and commitment of many men and women who believed in freedom, democracy and education. These issues enrich García Montero's text with a nostalgic touch but also with a dynamic unexpected plot development.

Lucía Etxebarria's *Un milagro en equilibrio (A Miracle in Equilibrium)* is a novel in which the Romanian element is adjacent but decisive in the development of the plot. Although it appears on the scene rather late (on page 195), it takes the form of a young scientist, a PhD. in biology, who plays a significant role in the protagonist's life. Like Lorenzo Silva, Etxebarria opts to start the description of her Romanian character by praising his command of English language and lack of an accent, together with his skill in curing hangovers (p. 199); later we discover he has an alcoholic mother. He is also punctual, discreet and obliging (p. 202). This realistic story wonderfully narrated in the first person by a mother towards her unborn daughter, makes readers identify on many occasions with the protagonist and recognize themselves in more than one of the extreme situations she undergoes. Regarding the Romanian character, she does not idealize him, nor is he depicted in a paternalistic, patronizing light. Although his background is of a difficult childhood, his tragic dimension is not magnified by the author who leaves the character to speak for himself and the readers to draw their conclusions from this text which criticizes Spanish society, its false moral precepts and its prejudices (also towards migrants).

Quim Monzó's *Hotel Intercontinental* does not entirely fall into this category, => p. 24



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since the volume gathers a series of short stories, of which only one is devoted to the Romanian element. The Intercontinental Hotel in Bucharest, an emblem of the western, capitalist atmosphere right in the heart of the communist capital during the cold war, has become, after the fall of the regime, a press center in the story titled “La facultat de Ciencies de la Informació” (*The Faculty of Information Sciences*) in which Monzó describes with journalistic vividness and dynamism the life of press correspondents (Spanish and international) in those tumultuous days. The intrepid environment immediately after the announcement that the FSN (National Salvation Front) will run in the elections (p. 13) raises the alarm against a new single party regime in Romania. Some historic and social data are combined with some street or neighborhood names in order to provide local color, but in fact, the narration is a mirror for Spanish journalists rather than for the Romanian diaspora.

Fantasy Tales

The fourth category in my classification based on the criterion of the genre-targeted readership is fantasy stories. The two texts illustrating it are Juan Perrucho’s *Las historias naturales* (*Natural Stories*) and Enrique Vila Mata’s *Historia abreviada de la literatura portátil* (*Abridged History of Portable Literature*).

The first one mentions (on page 24) the “bat from the Balkans” who has a suction capacity, something “evil going directly to your blood”, but it is not until page 120 that the term “vampire” is uttered as a feature of the Balkanic people, against which the village of Dip in Catalonia defends itself by means of garlic, crucifixes and mirrors, as suggested by Montpalau, the scientist and leader of the community. To Montpalau’s despair the woman he loves, Doña Inés, offers herself as bait (p. 125) in order to trap and

destroy the monster. The vampire, disguised as a warrior, commits a series of atrocities and bites one of the army generals. Montpalau cures this bite (pp. 177-179) but the general’s soul is still in danger. When chasing the warrior they find a coffin in his refuge, a letter in Hungarian and several human figures transformed into stones by a petrifying mineral music. Meanwhile, a hidden force bites two hundred warhorses that have to be sacrificed. This is a tale in which the history of Spain (the Carlist wars) intermingles with naturalistic elements (detailed descriptions of landscapes including information on botany and toponymy), narrated in a pure, elegant, meticulous nineteenth century style reminiscent of the great authors of the genre although Perujo created it in the 1960s. In chapter 10 (pp. 141-143) he pays homage to the gothic myth by recounting “a story of the Carpathians”, thus linking the first generation of vampires with Romania. In fact his story is full of hints to Stoker, paying tribute to his tormented character, who in Catalonia receives the name of “dip”.

On the other hand, Vila Mata’s novel deals with the “Shandy conspiracy” or “the secret society of the portables” (a society of writers whose works could be easily transportable in a brief case), created at the mouth of the Nile in 1924 and dissolved precisely when the 1927 generation was inaugurated at the Athenaeum of Seville. A “Shandy” had an extreme sexuality, an innovating spirit, profound nomadism, sympathy for blackness and cultivated the art of insolence (p. 13). Scott Fitzgerald, César Vallejo, García Lorca, Pola Negri, Duchamp, are said to have been members of this secret society. Vila Mata’s book is valuable for the data offered on writers and artists of early twentieth century and the atmosphere in those circles which helps us explain the evolution of literature between the wars and the revolutionary art movements. Romanian features => p. 25



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are totally absent except for a recurrent character like Tristan Tzara who occasionally comes onto the scene, and the isolated reference to the “bucarestis”, minuscule and terrifying Romanian creatures, related to the “odradeks” (a kind of abominable muse participating in the creative rape out of which the portable literature is born). An “odradek” sits on the writer’s shoulder (p. 96) always accompanied by a “golem” which in turn, has its own “bucaresti” (p. 94). The term was first employed by Satanist Aleister Crowley in *Os bucarestis, a tale of his stay in Trieste* (p. 92) in which, along with twenty-seven excerpts, he describes this intriguing secret society.

Conclusions

As we have seen, through the fifteen literary works analyzed, the two main categories chosen by contemporary Spanish authors to tackle Romanian cultural elements are detective novels and juvenile stories for educational purposes. In the latter, the Romanian characters, based on antagonisms, appear as both victims and perpetrators of evil. The plot and style are kept simple, the resolution of conflict childish and the documentation work almost absent. Their value nonetheless resides in their social rather than literary intentionality, which is that of depicting this migrant group as highly educated, and worthy of respect, while admitting the existence of mafias that spoil this image and which are resisted by Spanish police forces in collaboration with the Romanian ones, aided by civil society.

The detective stories category is more complex, containing nuanced characters and more elaborate cultural elements. Some are supported by in-depth documentation, others remain on a superficial level, but their dramatic structure and style are of higher quality. Generally, they are interesting pieces of

literature in which the Romanian element is, either naturally embedded in the plot development and artistic procedure, or an adjacent adornment that does not manage to convince (Romanian) readership of its authenticity and fails to overcome its anecdotic condition.

Regarding narratives, as we have observed, three of the four types described at the beginning of this paper are present. The ontological narratives, based on media reports, rather than serious research, are reflected in each author’s views on Romanian culture and history, but especially on the diaspora living in Spain and it is most evidently patent in teenager literature. The meta-narratives (epic dramas) are more conspicuously visible in the fantasy stories (the vampire myth revisited from naturalistic and literary historiographic and biographical viewpoints) and in the documented novels based on in-depth accounts of events. Finally, the public narratives are present both in detective and teenager stories, since they reproduce institutionalized positions of the host country system regarding the most representative segment of the migrant population, which are, as we have seen, not free from generalizations and stereotypes.

Notes:

(1) According to the INE (National Institute of Statistics, 30th of June, 2014) the number of EU citizens in Spain is 2 724 189 out of the total number of foreign citizens: 4 905 495.

(2) This new survey was conducted in February 2010, on 41 informants belonging to the Romanian community resident in Alicante.

=> p. 26



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Corpus

Javier Alfaya, *El chico rumano* (Madrid: Anaya, 2007).
Víctor Batallé, *Els trafecs d'en Ton* (Tarragona: Arola Editors, 2011).
Jaume Benavente, *La il·lusió* (Barcelona: Columna Edicions, 2008).
Juan Manuel de Prada, *La vida invisible* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 2003).
Lucía Etxebarria, *Un milagro en equilibrio* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2004).
Luis García Montero, *No me cuentes tu vida* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2012).
Quim Monzó, *Hotel Intercontinental* (Barcelona: Quaderns Crema, 1991).
Joan Perucho, *Historias naturales* (Barcelona: Edhasa, 1960/2003).
Carme Riera, *Natura quasi morta* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 2011).
Miguel Sánchez Ostiz, *Cornejas de Bucarest* (Pamplona: Pamiela, 2010).
Luis Sanz Álvarez, *La joven llegada del frío* (Almería: Círculo Rojo, 2012).
Lorenzo Silva, *La reina sin espejo* (Barcelona: Destino, 2005).
Ramón Usall i Santa, *Tots els camins porten a Romania* (Lleida: Pagès Editors, 2008).
Ignacio Vidal Folch's, *La libertad* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1996).
Enrique Vila Mata, *Historia abreviada de la literatura portátil* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1985/2005).

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Romanian Studies Association of America



Universities as Discursive Geographies

Dr. Noemi Marin (Florida Atlantic University)

Looking at American universities and at internationalized contexts of their functioning, the discursive spaces under and within which they operate are always fragmentary, converging multiple loci of interactions. Discussions cross subject matters, linguistic and semantic articulations, personal data and geographical and historical locations. Fascinating topic, complex, fluid, interactive. Hence, in viewing American universities as a topic in international conferences and congresses or fora, what strikes as an important perspective is how the discursive spaces are always created in fragmentary yet complex formats. Discussions cross subjects, topics, linguistic or semantic concepts and articulations, personal or spatial information, group identities, and cultural positions, to name a few. The relations construed among academics, information, knowledge, and human communication become a fascinating locus where cultures and communication collapse to emphasize specific targeted conversations on education and research, on polis and politics, on clustered fragments of discourse that would be continued throughout the world, in times to come. Complexity falls into place all over, sharing words, structures, multiplicities of meaning, while at the same time, specific clusters of cultural discourse shares mainly spaces of linguistic experiences, without semantics following in support. Idioms, academic jargon, and interstices of scholarly formations of meanings flow in Foucaultian >discursive formations = together with spaces, geographical and physical spaces concurring within cultural and critical relationships of multiplying and multiplied reconstructions of knowledge, all within the space of a university.

Hence, how can the relationship between university and discourse be viewed from a cultural and critical perspective, when reflecting on human communication? What I claim in this essay is that the relationship university-discourse construes a complexity of spaces, discursive spaces where location and loci interact and interrelate creating convergent and divergent dynamics for human communication. In order to explain how complex exchanges of discourse take form within cultural and critical perspectives of academic life, three such discursive mappings will be featured in particular, namely: [a] physical locations of discourse; [b] intellectual spatial constructions [architectures of power structures]; and [c] discursive geographies.

[a] Challenging to reflect on is the cultural lens through which such mappings can be seen, for American universities reflect and deflect in a sense, the European versions of higher education centers, creating specific geographical entities for specific continuation of discursive practices on necessary knowledge and information. Such cultural lens assists in contextualizing campus and college towns as physical loci for American academic discourse, inventing places similar in the world, yet divergent and different due to the cultural boundaries and perspectives. The diversity of American universities and their geographical position, history, and culture is overwhelmingly complex, adding to the dynamic mentioned state histories, federal policies, local ambitions or global contexts. Thus, by drawing from interactions between locality of discourse, i.e. specific to specific university location; and contextual general



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format of discourse, such loci to perpetuate histories of higher education standards and hierarchies invite the participants to abide by the general rules of academic life while at the same time, add architectural bodies and proxemics, or negotiations of space within the cultural and critical clusters posted within the physical locations of universities.

Campus and college town represent two conceptual and territorial notions that define in particular large university centers in the US, collecting in a sense entire cultural and educational cores of discourse. Fascinating to follow in this critical journey is the fluid notion that language as a metaphor of discursive practices and physical territories as academic units, campuses, college towns, people participants co-create in continuum motion. Unlike European universities, American ones continue semesters with summer school, with next semesters, without silences that breaks into the discourse might bring to the relationship. Hence, the continuum on which this relationship develops remains important physically, as both participants and spaces coexist in spaces without specific temporal frameworks of human communication.

The way the notion of campuses is used here refers mainly to academic discourse designed to locate centers of education, divided into colleges of arts, science, medicine, law, and the list goes on and on. From a communicative perspective, academic culture reflects specifically the translation of physicality of universities into cultural words, symbols for geographic entities that cover the campuses all over the US. Campus translates as a collective university, a collective space where, depending on the

type of higher education school, (private, state, comprehensive, research, etc.) several colleges coexist as intrinsic physical and geographical entities. Cultural translations of words and their location within the discursive spaces of universities while at the same time identifying physical buildings representing specific clusters of academic knowledge concur to reiterate a pertinent and permanent relationship culture-discourse-space to be experienced as life in a university.

The play between physical spaces and language when discussing American universities through a cultural lens such as Romanian language becomes a “*playing with mirrors*” endeavor. In cultural translation, “*campus*,” “*college*” and other examples to follow, all represent different discursive meanings and words while shared by cultural interests. In Romanian language “*campus*” signifies a “*university*” and “*college*” might mean divergent spatial bodies, such as “*liceu*” or “*facultate*.” All over American space, campuses and college towns attach to their meanings additional cultural words, fluid and transparent, differently read in diverse cultural contexts. Commonalities remain in American-shared physical spaces of academic life: “*faculty*” means the body of professors for a specific department (*corpul profesoral*); “*department*” means a “*facultate*” (*Rom*), “*college*” means “*a university*” or “*an institute*,” “*a school of medicine*” means “*an institute*” or “*university*” (in Romanian, *institut* or *universitate de.*), “*law school*” is yet another “*faculty*,” “*research*” is collapsed most of the time as part of the college, “*students*” are different from “*graduate students*,” “*assistant*” means a “*secretary*,” “*provost*” is a “*prorector*,” “*a degree*” is actually a “*license*” and



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“commencement” is a “graduation ceremony.” All students “graduate” no matter which level of schooling; but not all students are in “graduate programs.” As one can see, the cultural discourse labeling the places and the results of existing in those places called universities or higher education institutions attest to cultural constructions of symbolic geographies for the academic endeavors taking place. Symbols and signifiers share both linguistic and cultural meanings that concur in occupying physical and cultural spaces to partake to American academic life. (1) This is not to say that other cultural readings universities from countries like Romania, for instance, would not be similar. However, the essay emphasizes mainly the intracultural and intercultural relationships of discourse created within the space of American universities as *campus* represents a limited and liminal physical locus for such interactions.

Similarly, and as fluid, *college town* is yet another spatial notion that corresponds in language to an entity of buildings, structures as well as to cultural clusters functioning to assist any university in its endeavors by bringing together the students, faculty, and administrators. College towns bring with them additional words, places for fun and entertainment, accommodations, solid businesses to cater towards a normal life while in college, or while in graduate school. There is a transitive quality to college towns shared closely with the university life, for each year the newcomers arrive and the oldtimers leave, creating a vibrant flux of communication, new and old patterns of discourse, diverse venues for national and international interactions.

Additionally, while both campus and college towns constitute physical mappings of higher education, they also carry an insular dimension, specific mainly to American universities, rather than European ones, even if using this dimension as a cultural yet simplifying generalization. Universities as discursive campuses represent, on one hand, a physical entity unlike the rest of the corporate or private worlds of a city or region, articulating academic discourse in separate yet continuous relationships with specifically-delineated loci of knowledge creation and engagement within a larger cultural community. On the other hand, the insular feature that discourse and space engage in by coexisting into a dynamic conversation constitutes an isolation of discursive practices, offering conversations of specific topics, specific patterns and particular vocabularies not shared by larger communities where such universities are located. This double insular feature of the relationship language space in American universities claims cultural ethos and appropriate civic and civil engagements which involve both insular and global dynamics while at the same time construing specificities of such discursive practices into the spaces mentioned.

Most likely, one of its most pervasive features for such linguistic and physical mapping of academic life lies in the convergent and concurrent realms of identity as cultural practices of discourse. Residing within the physical buildings are discursive practices that identify and ritualize constructions of specific identities based on specific names, words, and meanings shared by faculty, students, administrators and alumni (to name only the obvious users of discourse), in cultural clusters where individuals,



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collectives, knowledge and information coexist under identifiers and identities of choice. For the continuously reinvented relationship between physical and cultural delineations of discourse as identity representations carves important discursive spaces for human communication concurring in search of intellectual answers in the name of knowledge.

[b] Another cultural read on American higher education institutions as discursive geographies highlights the relationships created between space and power as cultural architectures of discursive structures. In a sense, like all educational institutions throughout the world, no university or college of higher education remains free of territories of power, in metonymic and contextual usages of the term. After all, higher education in itself involves architectures of power, whether cultural and/or political power, religious power, or even scientific or artistic credibility as academic power.

Interesting for the purpose of this essay is to explore how the multiple interactive spaces of discourse concur in both horizontal and vertical power structures, as levels and layers of discursive interrogations on power and knowledge, constitutive dimensions of university life. All academic institutions in all cultures carry with them power-embedded architectures, from physical buildings to spatial hierarchies conducive to decision making processes connected and in continuous relation to economic, political, social and cultural power.

As mentioned, universities and their discourse occur in hierarchical spaces, from presidential structures as highest spatial and power-related loci

down to a larger spread of schools, colleges, departments, faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students, potential participants and former ones, called alumni, all share discursive structures embedded as architectures of power.

The vertical axis mentioned is always already (to use postmodern terms) altered by academic discourse working in horizontal axes, addressing questions of power, pursuing political, economic, cultural and social interests in relation to countries, cultures, individual drives and collective concerns. (2) American academic pursuits are legitimized by critical endeavors in questioning power on a continuum, as part of the democratic process as engaged civic participation. Most campuses offer courses in public speaking, in communication in intercultural contexts, in debate and argumentation, adding to linguistic vocabularies accrued within disciplinary realms, civic and public articulations on social, political, and public matters salient to the culture represented.

In addition, academic faculty, most professors and researchers cohabiting within the power hierarchies of the vertical realms such cultures call for, articulate and revisit articulations of discourse for the benefit of a demos, contributing to a critical ethos of knowledge within and resisting structures of power. Socratic questions pertaining to inquisitive argumentation on linear or vertical powers of discourse concur and collapse into linear and synthetic synergies of academic pursuits in collective and individual attempts to diffuse solid architectures of power in order to reconstruct civic engagement for citizenry in a global world.



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Critical thinking, individual development of civic voice and resistance to conformity provide participants with discursive vocabularies to engage continuously in the dual axes of power structures, creating at the same time complex modern and postmodern cultural experiences of knowledge and power.

[c] Looking at American universities as cultural entities of discourse where physical, spatial, and meta-structural discursive mappings coincide, what stands to mind is the intricate articulation of discourse as cultural fragmentation inherent to multiplicity of vocabularies and voices partaking within shared spaces geographies and symbolicities of academia.

Creating texts in contexts, scientific, literary, critical, engaging, political, social and economic texts, all vocabularies of universities present challenges for a meta-discourse unless viewed in cultural fragmentation as coherent functions of such discursive geographies proposed.

Discursively, cultural fragmentation challenges the inherent function of the text-context relationship in contemporary rhetoric. (3) Using the same framework to continue the argument of the essay, all critical discourse, pertinent to academic pursuits and used here in its totality as part of the academic rhetoric, are formative and transformative texts. Understood to be larger than apparently finished discourse, different cultural fragments that form discursive maps of shared meaning. While McGee takes “rhetoric as a master term,” explicating that “rhetors *make* discourses from scraps and pieces of evidence,” creating meaning by moving between different cultural

fragments that are both textual and contextual, this essay features academic discourse as textual-contextual spaces in *cultural* interconnectedness, as “structures of fragments, finished texts “ and contexts as a collapsed text and context relationship in culture. (4)

Important for the purpose of this essay is McGee’s argument (5) that by modifying the relationship between text and context, critics and rhetors operate with “*discursive fragments of context*,” with an invisible text “never quite finished but constantly in front of us.”(6) Similarly, universities as discursive fragments and geographies can celebrate mapping of incomplete structures where text and context influence and confluence into each other, disappearing into discursive constructions of cultural fragmentation. The claim of universities as discursive geographies focuses most on the relationship among cultural fragmentation, national and international interjections of topical and spatial loci, as concurring confluences of interactive discourse.

Responding to multiple, convergent and divergent cultural contexts and discursive fragmentary exchanges performed within the palimpsestic loci forming, re-forming and reconstituting the geo-entity of a university, can such spaces negotiate unilateral relationships between places of knowledge and locations of discourse? Most likely, in a global world, where locating and dis-locating universities on the internet, from the national into international, within cultures and outside a main culture, intervening on language by using international languages in construing academic discourse, all coexist within discursive geographies incurring multiple cultures, deterring



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multitudes of cultural boundaries, and negotiating influences and confluences of meanings and knowledge that form and per-form as an entity called a university of the 21st century. It is in the multiple interconnective cultural and intercultural discourses that coexist within languages pertinent to academic fields, architectural structures, and cultural expectations that such entities continue to formulate spaces of human[e] interaction.

Notes:

(1) See Marin=s study on intercultural differences between Eastern European expectations and American ones in relation specifically to higher education. Marin, Noemi, "Turning American: Cultural Challenges for Foreign Students in American Universities" in Czas Kultury, 3(102) (2001) 17-21. University of Poznan, Poland.

(2) An interesting study referring to the experience of both vertical and horizontal axes of discourse as performative interactions see Blair, Carole, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, Jr. "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as Prototype." 1991. Critical Questions: Invention, Creativity, and The Criticism of Discourse and the Media. Eds. William L. Nothstine, Carole Blair, and Gary A. Copeland. New York: St Martin's Press, 1994. 344-383.

(3) Michael McGee, "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture" in Western Journal of Speech Communication, 54 (1990): 274-90.)

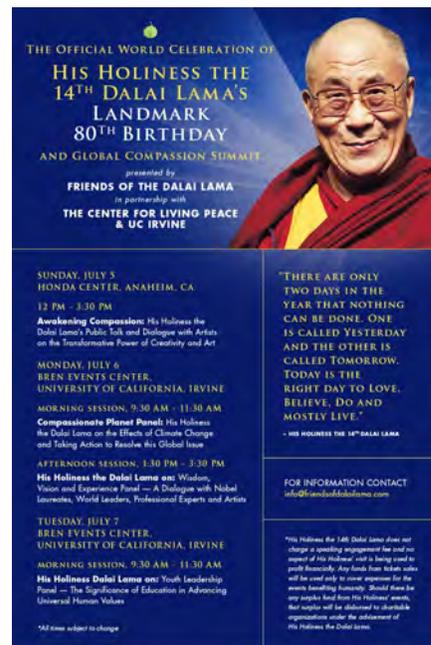
4McGee, "Text," 279.

(5) Calling attention to the "fundamental interconnectedness of all discourse," McGee challenges the traditional notion that text is a finite rhetorical product and separate from its historical (and cultural) context. Consequently, McGee collapses the two, in order to visit cultural fragmentation (McGee, "Text" 281). Suggesting that "conceptual separation" creates confusion about "the root nature of discourse" he contends that rhetoric needs to see discourse within a collapsed text-and-context relationship in culture. Positing himself in contrast with the close textual analysis

of rhetorical texts, McGee writes that: "[B]y contrast, with rhetoric as a master term, we begin by noticing that rhetors make discourses from scraps and pieces of evidence. Critical rhetoric does not begin with a finished text in need of interpretation; rather, texts are understood to be larger than the apparently finished discourse that presents itself as transparent. The apparently finished discourse is in fact a dense reconstruction of all the bits of other discourses from which it was made" (279). Later on, describing how fragments reshape the relationship between text and context in contemporary rhetoric, McGee adds that: "My way of stating the case (using the concept "fragments" to collapse "context" into "text") emphasizes an important truth about discourse: Discourse ceases to be what it is whenever parts of it are taken "out of context." (McGee, "Text" 283)

(6) McGee, "Text" 287-88.

This article translated in Romanian by Justina Ieremia appeared in the Romanian Journal of Journalism and Communication, 1(1) (2006): 85-90. University of Bucharest, Romania.



Dr. Noemi Marin has been invited to participate at the 14th Dalai Lama's 80th birthday celebration.



Dr. Constantin Parvulescu: Opening Titles and Authorship in Romanian Socialist Film (2)

To account for this format, we need only recognize that *Mitrea Cocor* was made at a time when the Soviet Union exerted its strongest control over Romania. In 1950, the Romanian film industry was nationalized, and reorganized according to the Soviet model. *Mitrea Cocor* represented the collectivization of agriculture — a process which started in 1949 and which itself was modeled on a Soviet precedent. The film combined elements of pre-socialist cinema with aspects of socialist realism (again imported from the Soviet Union). This hybrid style was also a product of the film having been made by two directors — one schooled on, and active in the theater of the interwar period, the other an innovative filmmaker who had learned his craft in Moscow.

The Soviet approach to opening credits differed from those used at the time in western film industries, including Hollywood. The Soviet model derived from a distinct cinematic tradition, a distinct understanding of art's social functions, a distinct organization of industries under State-socialism, and a pan-European postwar effort to offer alternatives to American imports. Hollywood's influence on the cinema of the continent was substantial. It had generated seventy-five percent of its income in the 1930s from its European exports. (1) After the war, however, European film industries and governments retaliated by implementing protectionist measures. (2) The traces of such conduct were noticeable in the opening titles of their films, partly as a means of showcasing difference from the Hollywood products being framed as culturally imperialistic and economically piratical.

Hollywood and the Soviet film industry were not just major influences on Romanian cinema, they were also its most prominent Others. As Tomas Elsaesser has suggested, they were significant Others not only because they were widely seen as colonizing forces, but also because they were reminders of the aesthetic interdependency of film industries, including those across the Iron Curtain. (3) When considering the early-socialist period, I place an emphasis on the influence of these two superpowers. The differences between Romanian opening credits and their Hollywood counterparts are of particular importance at this time, because they emblemize distinct modes of production: one capitalist, the other socialist. However, during the mid- and especially the late-socialist period — eras of détente and continental integration — a consideration of European film culture becomes pertinent on account of its growing influence on Romanian cinema.

As the early socialist period was unfolding in Eastern Europe, Hollywood's opening credits were ordered thus: lead actors and actresses came first (the above-the-title cast), followed by the rest of the cast and the crew. Hollywood also foregrounded producers, overlooked writers, and, some exceptions notwithstanding, named the director at the end of the sequence. (4) Only a handful of directors, including Frank Capra, Orson Welles and Alfred Hitchcock, were granted the honor of having their names featured before the title of the film (or of having their names featured on posters above that of the picture). (5) Hollywood's order of billing therefore followed a specific marketing logic. => p. 34



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The development of title sequences used in the Romanian film industry was shaped by a negotiation of ideological and commercial imperatives of Soviet and western influences, of popular and high cultural values, and of nationalism and transnationalism. They were also influenced by institutional developments such as the creation of Romanian Buftea Film Studios (Studioul Cinematografic București), historical shifts such as de-Sovietization and the cultural liberalization of the 1950s, and the post-1968 internationalization of Romanian society. Economics also played a part, especially the pursuit of autonomy from Moscow and the austerity of the 1980s.

During a period of de-Stalinization that began in 1956 the order of billing that had been used on *Mitrea Cocor* gave way to a new approach. Consequently, *The Eruption* (Romanian title: *Erupția*, 1957) featured credits ordered thus: the production company, full cast, title, screenwriter, music, director of photography, and finally the director. This approach approximated Hollywood's credits in terms of its order, its placing of on-screen talent up front, and the pre-title billing of an ensemble cast. Widely considered a landmark film due to its topicality and social relevance, (6) *The Eruption* is representative of a period of experimentation in Romanian cinema.

The early billing of actors does not ape Hollywood's prioritization of marketability but instead conveys an artistic logic. It reads: the production company (Studioul Cinematografic București) presents (prezintă pe) a cast of thirty men and (some) women in a film called *The Eruption*, which has been written, produced, recorded, filmed, and directed by

the credited people. The duration of the credits also sets them apart from their Hollywood counterparts. By 1950s, Hollywood credits had been reduced to about ninety seconds, with those of *Rear Window* (1954) for example lasting less than a minute. By contrast, *The Eruption's* credits ran in the absence of any background action for about two and a half minutes, giving late-running moviegoers the opportunity to seat themselves. They also evinced a more democratic approach to billing, using an identically sized font and providing equal amounts of screen-time to all contributors.

The order of *The Eruption's* opening credits influenced those of other Romanian dramas of the mid-socialist period. However, subsequent releases used shorter sequences and echoed Hollywood's lead by dropping the names of below-the-line talent. During this period, one important shift did take place however. The title of the film was generally featured before the cast. This change led to the inclusion of the term "with" ("cu," in Romanian) between the two; Hollywood had used this technique to distinguish a film's leads from its supporting cast. *The Eruption's* title sequence thus suggested that a company had made this film with the assistance of various performers, in much the same way as Hollywood credits indicated that a production company was presenting a group of actors. It is likely that these similarities to Hollywood minimized the influence of such features; after all, socialism emphasized the film itself over the talent behind it. (7)

There were variations, of course. For instance, where *The Reconstitution* => p. 35



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(Romanian title: *Reconstituirea*, 1968) used a cold open (opening in media res; to plot events rather than credits), and *100 Lei* (1973) billed actors before the title of the film. Arguably, more significant was the addition in the early 1970s of the production unit and the manager of the unit (head producer). Previously, the first image seen in Romanian films was a title card reading “Studioul Cinematografic București” (see Fig. 1). The inclusion of the producing unit reflected the reorganization of the Romanian production sector. Patterned after the Polish model, the production company was broken into five smaller creative teams or units, characterized by relatively high degrees of autonomy and internal cooperation. (8)



Fig. 1. The logo of the Buftea Film Studios from opening the title sequence of *Mitrea Cocor*

A head producer was placed in charge of each unit, suggesting a vertical organization of labor, thus concentrating authorial power in the hands of one individual per unit. As the general manager of Buftea Studios, Constantin Pivnicieriu recalls:

“As time passes, the output of a film unit comes to reflect the personality of the head producer, in the same way as the editor-in-chief influences the content of the publication he is in charge of. [...] It’s mostly about the thematic concerns of the films; their audiences, genres, directors, the boldness of the projects, the cinematic mode and, in general, the atmosphere [in the unit]. “(9)

At first glance, the billing of the unit might seem to be an endorsement of collective authorship reminiscent of socialism’s promotion of collective labor. Yet, the very notion of collective authorship and cooperation is undermined by the hierarchical nature of a title sequence that boasts different sized fonts and allocates more screen time to some contributors than others.

The title sequences of late-socialist dramas increasingly emphasized the hierarchical organization of the producing unit, and the talent behind the film. For example, *A Girl’s Tear* (Romanian title: *O lacrimă de fată*, 1980) lists the studio, the unit, the title of the film, the screenwriter, principal cast, music, make-up artists, set designers, costumers, sound engineers, editor, producer, director of photography, and director; other below-the-line talent are excluded. *Sequences* (Romanian title: *Secvențe*, 1982), an homage to the French New Wave, is even bolder. It opens to the names of the production company and the unit, before switching to a two-minute long cold opening, before finally displaying the film’s title in a small font. The most significant change here concerns the introduction of the phrase “a film by” between the title and the principal cast. => p. 36



Dr. Constantin Parvulescu: Opening Titles and Authorship in Romanian Socialist Film (5)

The phrase “a film by” — a hallmark of auteur cinema — became increasingly common in the opening credits of Romanian films of the 1980s. For example, *Two Step* (Romanian title: *Pas în doi*, 1985) takes the totems of auteur cinema to a new level. Its opening credits foreground individual artistic consciousness over collective work, by naming the director of the film immediately after the production company and before the unit. To this, the opening credits of *Iacob* (1988) added the name of the director and the male lead after a four-minute cold open.

The title sequences of Romanian genre films developed in a similar manner. Thus, much like art cinema of the day, the gangster movie *Clean Hands* (Romanian title: *Cu mâinile curate*, 1972) challenged the conventional Romanian approach to billing talent. Its title sequence begins five minutes into the film when a card reading “a film realized by” reveals the director as Sergiu Nicolaescu. (10) The comedies also featured various formats. For instance, the opening credits of *I, You and Ovid* (Romanian title: *Eu, tu și Ovidiu*, 1977), a musical, starts nine minutes into the film, and herald its generic credentials by listing its cast of well-known comedians.

Early Socialism, 1947–1957

The changes detailed above were products of negotiations related to the aesthetic, industrial, and political functions of cinema. They remind us that under socialism the notion of cinema was not constructed in exclusively ideological terms. They also testify to the transnational and trans-ideological dimensions of Romanian film production, thereby bringing into question the extent to which a national cinema approach can help us understand the challenges faced by this industry.

The opening credits of *Mitrea Cocor* reflected the Romanian film industry’s adoption of Soviet production practices and socialist-realist content, and that the radical cinema of the Stalinist period

challenged the very idea of film as art. Hollywood also showed indifference to bourgeois preoccupations with sophistication and style, as both socialist realism and Hollywood targeted a mass audience at a time when television had yet to damage film’s cross-class appeal. Recognizing that it was the medium of choice for the proletariat, Communist Party elites hoped to use cinema to promote the socialist way of life. By contrast, Hollywood typically aspired to the production of politically neutral entertainment. Yet, in spite of these differences, in the 1940s and 1950s, both downplayed the artistic input of the director, by rejecting a model of authorship derived from a “bourgeois institution of art” comprising literature, the visual arts, and theater. (11) The opening credits of Hollywood and of socialist films therefore expressed an industrial conception of cinematic production, even if the industries that produced them organized labor and ownership differently. Nevertheless, in both cases, style was considered secondary to more pertinent goals; entertainment in the case of the former, shaping citizens’ worldviews, in the case of the latter.

Where Hollywood credits highlighted contributors who earned the most money, socialist realist films foregrounded personnel according to the political sway they were assumed to carry. It needs stressing that aesthetic theories of the 1950s drew a line between art produced under capitalism and that produced under socialism, positing distinct conceptions of its social functions in eastern and western nations. As a workers’ art and the heir to the interwar avant-garde, socialist realism was envisaged as a cinema without authors. Authorship was dismissed as product of bourgeois concerns with form and commercial branding; it was derided as an explanatory framework of creative practice. Socialist-realist art was framed not as a product of individuals imposing a personal vision onto a work, but of people who served as conduits for the interests => p. 37



Dr. Constantin Parvulescu: Opening Titles and Authorship in Romanian Socialist Film (6)

of the proletariat.

As much as the credits for *Mitrea Cocor* embody a rejection of bourgeois conceptions of art, they also express antagonism toward the entertainment of Hollywood. Nowhere is this more apparent than in their refusal to maintain the Hollywood marketing practice of listing the cast before the title of the picture. The stars of 1950s socialism were not film actors as such, but Stakhanovite workers and communist party leaders. For this reason, in a film about collectivization like *Mitrea Cocor*, performers' names appear at the end of the opening credits. (12) One should also not misread the positioning of the director three shots after the production company and the writer. This film's credits were designed to contrast Hollywood practices, which billed the director at the end of the sequence. Although the Romanian film industry saw the director as a producer, it needs to be made clear that the term "producer" was rarely used before the 1970s and did not mean the same thing as it did in the West. Thus, what *Mitrea Cocor* credits as the work of the director also refers to the contribution of the producer, i.e. supervising project development. A key semantic nuance also characterizes the Romanian phrase for "directing," which is used instead of the western standard "directed by," thus undermining the sense of directorial ownership; emphasizing the role of the director rather than his or her influence over the final product.

The early billing of the directors also reminds us of the relationships between socialist art and the theatre. Most creative personnel working in the Romanian film

industry — including the co-director of *Mitrea Cocor*, Marietta Sadova — either came from the theater or continued to work there. (13) As a relatively new institution, the Romanian film industry was unable to develop a pool of politically "on-message" personnel, and was thus heavily reliant on individuals schooled by, what were seen at the time as, the reactionary institutions of the past. A onetime acting luminary of bourgeois theater, Sadova had either truly embraced socialist values or repeatedly affected them. In addition to adapting classic Romanian novels, she staged plays rooted in socialist doctrine such as *The Miners* (1949). (14) Ultimately, the Romanian film industry would cultivate socialist personnel, allowing it to unburden itself of individuals like Sadova, who was imprisoned in 1959.

The manner in which the cast of *Mitrea Cocor* is listed is also reminiscent of theater inasmuch as it reads like the cast page of a program for a stage-play. It is organized in top-down fashion, based on each character's importance to the story. A dotted line connects the name of the character on the left of the screen with that of the actor on the right. The character — the product of the actor's labor — is thus listed first, with the talent who made this possible coming only second. Another trace of the Romanian film industry's relationships to theater, and by extension its failure fully to develop the cinema as a distinct institution, can be seen in the inclusion of writer Mihail Sadoveanu as the first credit after the production company. Like Sadova, Sadoveanu also changed his political colors, at least publically.

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By becoming a member of the socialist parliament and receiving several prestigious political accolades, he occupied a lofty position in socialist cultural hierarchies. His prominent crediting on *Mitrea Cocor* is also indicative of the moving image being widely seen in Romania as secondary in cultural terms to the written word. Moreover, the emphasis placed on the script serves as a reminder that this aspect of the production process was seen to offer the greatest opportunity to police a film's political stance.

The Soviet-inspired elements of *Mitrea Cocor's* opening credits also exemplify a significant way Soviet Bloc film industries were differentiated from American culture. As David Cauter has argued, "Soviet ideologists, critics, and film-makers tended to depict America as uncultured, as a land of capitalist entrepreneurs selling low-level entertainment, ephemeral, narcotic trash, and Disneyland fantasies to a bemused populace." (15) Although the Soviet Union was a largely proletarian country, its elites aimed to market the nation as educated and well-versed in high art: not only as the land of Lenin and Stalin, but of Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich, Russian Ballet, Dostoyevsky, Stanislavsky, Chekhov, and the Bolshoi Theater.

For the Soviet population the vital term "cultured" — kul'turnyi — carried, paradoxically, values normally associated with the bourgeoisie, not least "correct" and "respectable" comportment in public. (16)

Romanian cultural elites replicated this paradoxical mixture of elitism and proletarianism, laying the groundwork for the notion of the film director as the sole source of artistic input. Nevertheless, it needs

stressing that the emphasis placed on the writer is not only a symptom of socialist cinema's relationships to theater and high culture, but also a demonstration that the order of billing during early socialism mirrored the temporality of the film production process. In a country undergoing radical industrialization in line with the Soviet model such practice reflected a productionist understanding of filmmaking, which stood in contrast to Hollywood's ordering of talent based on marketability.

As a writer, Sadoveanu was named early in the credits because his novel and script initiated the development of *Mitrea Cocor*. As such, his contributions are the most spatially and temporally distant from the audience. From an industrial-productionist perspective, *Mitrea Cocor's* opening credits convey the notion of a Romanian studio having started production of a film based on a novel and a script by Mihail Sadoveanu, a film that was then adapted for the screen by two producers/directors, who in turn employed a composer to write the music. The music and script were then realized by three directors of photography, three art directors, a costume artist, an editor, makeup artists, an orchestra, and a troupe of actors.

Mid Socialism, 1957–1977

Romania's period of socialist-realist filmmaking ended around 1956. That year, in countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Romania, the denunciation of Stalinism precipitated periods of political liberalization, which incentivized alternatives to socialist realism and the promotion of "European values." => p. 39



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The film industries of Eastern Europe consequently sought to open up a dialogue with their counterparts in the West. The opening credits of 1957's *The Reconstitution* exemplify this shift and project the message that Romanian cinema was responding to change. Austere sequences reflective of working-class unpretentiousness gave way to credits that boasted names located in sophisticated-looking frames. These listings were paired with an eerie musical score and images of bubbling oil and sliding mud reminiscent of American and European films noir.

The cold open of *The Reconstitution* also exemplified the general recalibration of opening credit sequences. A common practice in the 1970s, this feature gestured toward film's emerging status as a distinct art form, and to the notion that individual authorship generated unique motion pictures. In this sense, the cold open conveyed the idea that the conventions of cinematic storytelling could be comprehended and accepted in the absence of the framing provided by the title sequence. An updating of this sort was bound up with notions of de-politicization; and with its direct and wholly diegetic character suggested a matter-of-factness, which countered the prescriptive nature of socialist realism. A case in point is also provided by genre films. For example, *I, You and Ovid* begins with a ten-minute cold open that suggests the growing influence of television on Romanian audiences. Instead of featuring the film's title, its highly self-reflexive opening shows a protagonist turning on a television set as a well-known anchor announces that the film

about to be broadcast is "the Romanian production *I, You and Ovid*."

The opening of *I, You and Ovid* is indicative of the Romanian Communist Party's changing views of filmmaking. Party leaders were increasingly preoccupied with the commercial potential of cinema. By the 1960s, the ratio of entertainment to propaganda films in this country already stood at 60–40. (17) It was also clear that television was overtaking film as a popular medium, if only for short periods of time given that programming was broadcast for few hours a day in the 1980s. (18) The Romanian Communist Party's interest in the commerciality of cinema is encapsulated by a meeting among top brass that took place in 1968 prior to the drafting of new legislation on the country's film industry. The powerbrokers present felt that increased entertainment value would help bring ticket sales for Romanian films close to those of well-liked American and Indian imports. The question of how entertainment, which was seen as a capitalist appropriation of art, was to be negotiated alongside the political function of film under socialism was never answered fully. The Party's position remained contradictory. For example, it condemned sex and violence, at the same time as it condoned soft versions of this material. In addition to maximizing ticket sales, entertainment was seen to have an important public relations function. It promised to improve the image of the Party, giving the impression that it was not just interested in ideology but shared citizens' desires for recreation.

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Although The Party ultimately struggled to balance entertainment and socialism, its 1968 meeting made some recommendations to this effect. One recommendation concerned the production of historical epics. The potential of such an approach is illustrated by the fact that eighteen of the twenty most viewed films of the period fell into this genre. A second recommendation involved turning to films examining contemporary social issues from a socialist perspective. Topical cinema grew in importance, not least because it allowed Romanian filmmakers to fulfill Party elites' calls for socially and politically engaged pictures while allowing for artistic expression and even criticism of the regime. This shift would become more pronounced and lay the ideological foundation for the kinds of formal experimentation associated with the New Waves of other European nations. (19) At the forefront of this movement, *100 Lei* concerned the nature and problems of the "contemporary man", as socialist discourse would have it.

The establishment of the role of the producer in the Romanian film industry was envisaged as a means of balancing ideological acceptability, artistic quality, and commercial success on the domestic market and overseas. Constantin Pivniceriu has suggested that producers complicate notions of authorship, arguing they operate as mediators of incompatible interests who are "responsible, and made responsible, for the quality of films and their commercial viability." (20) The emergence of the producer in the Romanian film industry was bound up with the reorganization of the national studio (Studioul Cinematografic București),

especially its division into units. Within each unit the director was but one member of a team whose multidirectional cooperation suggested greater levels of collective authorship than the previously centralized studio. These developments were expected to challenge the notion of director as film author while blurring distinctions between the institution and the artist. They were also expected to elevate other staff and the supporting cast above their previous status as inconsequential parts of a complex machine that at once enabled and obstructed a director's vision. As Pivniceriu details, it was anticipated that the units would provide myriad creative personnel with the opportunity to express themselves through film albeit via exchanges of ideas. (21)

These institutional transformations notwithstanding, the director continued to hold a preeminent position during Mid Socialism. Consequently, *The Reconstitution* highlights its director Liviu Ciulei by lingering on his name — presented in a larger font than his collaborators — at the end of the opening credits (see Fig. 2). Moreover, *The Reconstitution* underscores directorial authority in a manner reminiscent of the self-reflexive *I, You and Ovid*, by including voiceover of him instructing an actor. The director tells the actor to throw his face into mud, to lift it slowly, to let blood flow from his mouth, then to look up and ask another character why he hit him, before repeating these actions. Thus, the sequence emphasizes the director's power over the actors and the crew in general, and his right to be recognized by the spectator for => p. 41



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his authority over the film.

Although *The Reconstitution* represented a major step toward a Romanian auteur cinema, the film remained something of an anomaly, and its influence was minimized when it was banned. The *Reconstitution's* title sequence is long, austere, and evokes collectivism, by listing the entire cast and crew. Even the film's director, Lucian Pintilie, is not afforded the privileged position his successors would receive. Rather, alongside, the self-reflexive strategy noted above, Pintilie's contributions are elevated indirectly by listing him as a co-writer. This emphasis on the director as contributor to preproduction anticipated the framing of the writer-director as an auteur by way of the phrase "a film by," which would become commonplace by the 1980s.

The Reconstitution exemplifies another aspect of authorship under Mid Socialism. At this time, authorship was seen also to be produced through the artist's conflicts with state censors. Indeed, film historians have argued that similar positions contributed to understandings of other Eastern European cinemas of the period, including the Polish cinema of moral distrust. In this discourse, the auteur is envisaged as taking a critical stance against the state, a practice that required him or her to mislead the state into playing the film theatrically. Andrzej Wajda is, for example, credited with executing this tactic successful when he secured releases for the stridently anti-establishment *Man of Marble* (1977) and *Man of Iron* (1981).

From this perspective, the strong ticket sales generated by *The Reconstitution* during its eight week



Fig. 2. Stylized crediting in *The Eruption* engagement at a single Bucharest theater indicate not only the appeal of the film but also that of director-centered authorship. Moreover, in the event that a purportedly subversive film was banned, it tended to be the director rather than the producer or star who was seen as the principal casualty of censorship. The director was thus credited not only for the artistic success of a film, but also for its moral, intellectual, or political message. Such was the reception of Yugoslav director Dušan Makavejev and several Czechoslovak New Wave filmmakers such as Miloš Forman, who left their homelands following firestorms over their films *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism* (1971) and *The Fireman's Ball* (1967).

Late Socialism, 1977–1989

The themes of political dissent which had partly driven the success of *The Reconstitution* at the domestic box office also made the picture marketable on the international art house => p. 42



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and film festival circuit. This development would facilitate the rise to prominence of auteurism in the Romanian film industry of the late-socialist period. At their aforementioned 1968 meeting, the Romanian Communist Party leadership had identified the international distribution of indigenous films as commercially and politically attractive. These decision-makers had spoken at length about how such fare could draw overseas movie- and festival-goers. Their discussions were underpinned by the notion that this international cultural bourgeoisie was enamored with stylized cinema, as evinced by an award *The Forest of the Hanged* (Romanian title: *Pădurea spânzuraților*, 1965) had received at the Cannes Film Festival. A structuring absence at this meeting was the belief — left unspoken for political reasons — that elite audiences gravitated to films that delivered social and political critiques of Soviet Bloc countries. Rather than openly admitting as much, those in attendance concluded that international success rested on violent and titillating content, the “undressing of the actress,” as Party Prime Secretary Nicolae Ceaușescu described the latter. (22) Ceaușescu put a positive spin on this issue, stressing it was inevitable that both national and international audiences would be interested in the transformations taking place in Romania. Crucially, The Party’s desire to export Romanian films increased the prestige of the director on account of the auteurist turn sweeping international festivals in the 1960s and 1970s. Art cinema, auteurism and international distribution became ever more intertwined with the “(...) international reception of art cinema becoming proof

of its national importance.” (23)

In the late 1970s, Romanian cinema was visibly westernized, not least because of the European détente and growing East-West exchanges taking place after the Helsinki conference of 1975. This too would catalyze the rise to prominence of the Romanian auteur — and those of other Eastern European countries — in the following decade and a half. We need to acknowledge that sending Eastern European films to western festivals was nothing new, as the presence at Cannes of numerous films including the Hungarian drama *Strange Marriage* (Hungarian title: *Különös Házasság*, 1951) demonstrates. However, what set apart the exports of the 1970s from their predecessors are the grounds upon which they were shipped overseas. The early films were sent to promote both the strength of the film industry behind them and the socialist way of life, and, in so doing, antagonize western audiences. In short, they were exported on political grounds; as part of the political and cultural battles of the early Cold War. Consequently, they were not used to showcase the talent of the director helming the picture.

The 1975 Helsinki conference, which gradually precipitated socialist reform, was intended to advocate shared European traditions and values over East-West differences. This event served to imbue participation in subsequent festivals with an altogether new significance: belonging to a common European artistic community. Eastern European film industries were content to be seen as staunch supporters of a cultural pan-Europeanism => 43



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undergirded by the European-born concept of the Auteur. The Romanian film industry in particular was more than happy to present itself as an urbane European filmmaking nation whose exports would now not just testify to the success of State-socialism, but also to its belonging to the continent. The importance of winning an award at a western festival also increased as it was seen to pave the way for international distribution and ultimately much-needed hard currency.



Fig. 3. The celebration of the director as author in the 1980s: *Two Step*, “a film by Dan Pița.”

The phrase “A film by” became the standard introduction of directors of Romanian films in the 1980s (Fig. 3). This trend was prominent among, although not restricted to, the nation’s art films. Also specific to this time were credit sequences which spotlighted long-standing director-star relationships, with *Iacob* even highlighting this type of collaboration

before the title of the film appears on screen. In much the same way as western directors had consistently worked with a preferred star — Godard with Karina, Fellini with Mastroianni, Antonioni with Vittori — the Romanian Dan Pița had collaborated with Claudiu Bleonț on four films: *Contest* (Romanian title: *Concurs*, 1982) *Chained Justice* (Romanian title: *Dreptate în lanțuri*, 1983), *Two Step* (Romanian title: *Pas în doi*, 1985), and *White Lace Dress* (Romanian title: *Rochia albă de dantelă*, 1988). Somewhat paradoxically, such partnerships served to underscore the creative authority of the director. Where Hollywood marketing emphasized the importance of the star, these collaborations positioned the actor as a conduit through which the director could articulate his or her vision. These actors were the directors’ actor in the literal genitive sense of the term.

The opening credits of *Two Step*, a recipient of a Silver Bear award at the 1985 Berlin International Film Festival, shows the development of Romanian socialist cinema, including its drift toward notions of director-centered authorship. This film’s title sequence conveys the division of the studio into units, bills the manager of the producing unit, names the producer, and indicates directorial authority with the phrase “a film by.” At the same time, these credits evince the growing influence of another player: RomaniaFilm (hereafter RADEF). The inclusion of RADEF is significant because it reflects the decentralization of the Romanian film industry and the adoption of another western billing practice. Perhaps most importantly, however, it is => p. 44



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evidence of Romania's active involvement in film exportation. After all, adding this institution to the credits was redundant in the domestic market due to RADEF's monopolization of distribution and exhibition in the country. The phrase "RomaniaFilm presents" was therefore primarily intended to mark a film as a serious drama for overseas eyes, both in Romania's traditional export markets of Eastern Europe but now also those in the West.

Conclusion: Post-Socialism

Since the fall of Communism, Romanian cinema has gradually lost its socialist character. It has become an increasingly director-centered cinema, albeit stripped of the socialist underpinnings of yesteryear. Economic and political changes facilitated the (western) Europeanization of Romanian films, even if they still differ to some extent from their western counterparts. The title sequences of the 1980s evince both stasis and change under socialism. Partly as a result of international cinematic trends, Romanian credits shifted stylistically and structurally towards western practices, irrespective of whether the film in question was light-hearted escapism or a serious drama addressing socialist issues.

Film criticism and historiography — books, newspaper articles, and Romania's leading film magazine *Cinema* — contributed to the shift toward auteurism in serious drama. Thus, a 1982 publication designed to promote the Romanian film industry abroad framed the nation's cinema as wholly director-centered. Printed in the English language, this volume devoted an entire chapter to the auteur

cinema of "the 1970s generation"; a generation that included Dan Pița and Mircea Daneliuc. (24) Predictably, auteurism grew in significance after 1989, when the fall of the Ceaușescu regime permitted filmmakers to indulge in greater degrees of self-expression without fear of political censure or censorship. Regime change also transformed the dynamics of this field of production, by, for example, allowing filmmakers greater control over budgets. Pița would even become the head of the state body responsible for underwriting the Romanian film industry, and, for a short time, Pintilie the Minister of Culture.

In spite of such developments, the title sequences of the early 1990s do not reflect the radical political changes Romania underwent at this time. In fact, they are remarkably similar in format, order, and style to those of the 1980s, testifying to relations with the West that predated 1989. The order of billing and the exceptions to it remained the same. The only notable change was the inclusion of the new names of production companies and distributors. Thus, the opening credits to *Senator of the Snails* (Romanian title: *Senatorul melcilor*, 1995) inform audiences that this state-supported film is distributed by a company with a non-Romanian name that includes the word "international;" following the dissolution of the units, The Studio of Cinematic Creation of the Ministry of Culture (previously known as Cinematic Studio Bucharest — Bufta) became the principal financier of Romanian films. Another change involved a rise in co-productions with western nations compared to the sporadic success the

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Communist regime enjoyed in arranging such ventures. Accordingly, in addition to listing various overseas production partners, *The Oak* (Romanian title: *Balanța*, 1992) went as far as to feature a title sequence entirely in the French language. Quite how all these international production companies made it into the opening credits of (partially) Romanian films is another story however.

Notes:

1) Tomas Schatz, 'Hollywood and the Triumph of the Studio System', in Steve Neale (ed.), *The Classical Hollywood Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 167–178, 175.

2) Steve Neale, 'Arties and Imports, Exports and Runaways, Adult Film and Exploitation', in *The Classical Hollywood Reader*, pp. 399–411, 401.

3) Tomas Elsaesser, *European Cinema: Face to Face with Hollywood* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), pp. 40–41.

4) Western opening credits are ordered in the following way: production and distribution companies, above-the-line actors, titles, other actors, composer, editor, art director, director of photography, producers, writers, director. See Dominic Case, *Film Technology in Post Production* (New York: Focal Press, 2001), p. 233.

5) The opening credits of *Rear Window* (1954) are ordered thus: company, featured actors "starring in," and title. However, the title screen reads "Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*," with Hitchcock's name appearing above the title in a smaller font.

6) Călin Căliman, *Istoria filmului românesc* (Bucharest: Contemporanul, 2011), p. 225.

7) The billing sequence emphasizes the director, Liviu Ciulei, by presenting his name in a large font, on screen alone, and for a longer period of time than his collaborators. *The Eruption* is also unusual because of the gendered billing of its cast. The first shot bills the actresses and then, a separate shot bills the male

performers. War films such as *The Blue Gates of the City* (Romanian title: *Porțile albastre ale orașului*, 1975), which featured mainly male casts, also tended to bill female performers separately.

8) This model was in operation in Poland from the start of the socialist era. As Dorota Ostrowska suggests "[w]ithin them filmmakers were able to exercise some degree of not just creative but also political freedom. The production units were thus semi-autonomous teams of film practitioners, funded by the state, and operating within the state-owned and state-run film industry." See Dorota Ostrowska, 'An Alternative Model of Film Production: Film Units in Poland after World War Two,' in Aniko Imre (Ed.), *A Companion to Eastern European Cinemas* (Malden: Blackwell-Wiley, 2013), pp. 453–465, 453.

9) Constantin Pivniceriu, *Cinema at Buftea: The Cinematic Studio "Bucharest" 1950–1989* (*Cinema la Buftea: Studioul Cinematografic "București" 1950–1989*) (Bucharest: Biblioteca Bucureștilor, 2011), pp. 52–53.

10) "Realized" is a telling word choice. First of all, its Romanian translation, "realizat de," was used in television for crediting producers. Second, it maintained the preeminence of the director while avoiding the auteurist underpinnings of the phrase "a film by."

11) See Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2003).

12) The tradition of Soviet Montage also devalued the contribution of the actor and the scriptwriter. See Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, *Film Theory and Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 448.

13) With few exceptions, well-liked Romanian film actors (socialism's stars) made their living from theater.

14) Vera Molea, 'Marietta Sadova from Legionarism to Proletcultism' (Marietta Sadova de la legionarism la proletcultism), *Historia.ro*. <http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv_web/general/articol/marietta-sadova-legionarism-proletcultism> [accessed 23 September 2014].

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15) David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 8.

16) *Ibid.*, p. 9.

17) Cristian Tudor Popescu, *Filmul surd în România mută. Politică și propagandă în filmul românesc de ficțiune* (Iași: Polirom, 2011), p. 116.

18) Since both television and cinema were state-owned, one cannot talk of their competition in the same terms as we could of western European nations or the United States, especially in relation to how this competition might have affected style.

19) Even the makers of a formally innovative historical film such as *Stone Wedding* (Romanian title: *Nunta de piatră*, 1972) felt the need to explain its setting in a prologue which drew parallels between the past and the present.

20) Pivniceriu, *Cinema at Buftea*, p. 52.

21) *Ibid.*, p. 53.

22) Popescu, *Filmul surd în România mută*, p. 131.

23) See Gait Rosalind and Karl Schoonover, "Introduction: the Impurity of Art Cinema." In *Global Art Cinema: New Theories and Histories* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 4, 7.

24) See Manuela Cernat, *A Concise History of the Romanian Film*, trans. Andrei Bantaș (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1982).

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Contact: lenuta.giukin@oswego.edu or msmith@fivecolleges.edu



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“Con carne”



“Voulez-vous coucher
avec moi”



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