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FEMINIST NOVEL. CELLA SERGHI

SUMMARY

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Cella Serghi's literature option has, first of all, subjective motivations: being born in Constantza, the novel that made her known presents the city from the seashore, which has also become a hero itself. "The Spider's Web" has a great influence for the adolescents because the book itself offers us a psychological and aesthetical analize feature. The later objective motivations are connected to the understanding of the interior influence which also had a value decrease of her postwar books. It is also remarkable that the memorialistic books have made Cella Serghi known.

This work proposes a theoretical perspective in order to analize the literature writings including the postwar ones that suffered from the ideological ideas of the respective time. There will also be a chritical approach from the moment the writings appeared and how the critics perceived the novel over the time.

Cella Serghi's writings approach impose a comparative method. We also propose an intertextual approach, which also is going to offer the complexity of perspectives. The commentary wishes to be an expression of some points of view which responsibility we assume.

The main purpose is that all Cella Serghi's writings to be analized from the theme point of view and also from the narrative technics in order to sum up if she proposed or not a style, especially in her novel "The Spider's Web"(1938) that was important for the respective period.

In the study "Feminist Novel. Cella Serghi" our intention is to prove the writer contribution in the developing of Romanian novel and also to analize the mechanisms of Serghi's universe from the socio-cultural context in which the writer developed.

The structure of the novel underlines the theoretical points of view about feminism, its literature impact and the respective analises of Cella Serghi's writings.

The six chapters are:

- I. What is feminism? (the chapters: The Feminism and historical evolution; The Feminism Theories; The Feminism orientation and problematics);
- II. The Feminist literature in postwar Romania;
- III. Cella Serghi - pro domo;
- IV. The Spider's Web;
- V. The other novels with the chapters: "Mirona", "Paralel Loves", "On the Memory Spider's Web", "Youth-this sweet poverty".
- VI. "Romanian Methamorphoses" with the chapters: "The humiliation exercise or socialist-realism link, especially Constantza – developing place.

The first chapter underlines a global presentation of feminism: the historical evolution, the feminist theories, the problematics and orientation of feminism. The term and its definition represent one of the controversial subjects, that means from the world-wide points of view and also at the European level. Not only the definitions are the problems, but also the way this movement developed. In order to give a true definition of the feminism, anyone should make clear the concepts of "man" and "woman".

According to "Romanian Dictionary" – "man"- "men", is an adult person, a male. 2. husband. 3(adj.-rarely used: "a hero" "a hardworking person") "an active person" – Lat "barbatus" - "woman"- "women" 1.(noun) adult person, female. 2. a married person, wife –Lat "familia"- "familial."¹

If we consider the "Holy Book" we could explain the man's superiority over the woman because the biblical explanation is that the woman persuaded the man to eat the knowledge fruit and also the good and bad or Evil fruit. Before this representative point for the woman faith, the God decided Eva's faith considering her birth from Adam's body. So, man was the first one, "And then the God made Adam sleep and if he had been slept, God took a part of Adam's body and made Eva alive. And God gave the woman to Adam. And Adam said << Here you are a bone from my bones and a piece of flesh from my flesh. And that's why everyone will leave her father and her mother and every man will be with his woman and they both will be the same body>>."²

The betrayal made the differences between men and women although they both are punished. The same idea is underlined by Platon in his book "About love" in the chapter named "Human changes." It is introduced the gender "man" and "woman" or "female" and "male" and also the third term, a gender named "androgyn". It is very interesting that at the beginning there were "man" and "woman" or "male" and "female" and a third gender, a hybrid one named "androgyn".

The term "gender" has a sexuality understanding connected to the stars: the "male" represents the Sun "the female" is the Earth and "the androgyn" is the Moon. The Sun represents the light, the life and so the knowledge. The Sun sends its heat to the Earth and helps the last one to reborn every season of the year. Selena suggest the night, the

¹ Dex, pp.91, 373.

² Biblia, Facerea, cap. 2, 21-14.

mystery, the unknown, no knowledge, or minus knowledge (everyone could think about the potential of mystery, its understanding in terms of Blaga).

So the proudness is punished and the Androgyn is also punished in order to make himself to understand its limits. Platon's book underlines the polytheism not the monoteism that is illustrated in the Holly Book.

Platon's myth is discussed about and contradicted by Simone de Beauvoir in his work "The Second Sex", the author said that "the story proposes to explain only the love: the separation between male and female is considered to be done."³

The base of Platon's explanation is the idea of love, but this one is also made through the differences between male and female. However, it seems that everyone, men or women go to the origins, to the primordial essence, considering that everything was in harmony in that period. This harmony is a human being utopy because the fight between male and female will always last no mater when the accent will be on these differences. The definitions will have to take into account not the differentiation between male and female because this is not a general idea, it doesn't exist for all the species, but to some categories because in the animal world the reproduction of the species is separated from sexuality.

One could underline the fact considering human beings the „woman or female”⁴ is not locked into sexuality and so it should be stated the idea of equality from the beginning. Women don't exist but in their relationships with men, thus they themselves are the "ideas shadows" as Mihaela Miroiu considers. The woman is a shadow that comes from behind, it follows a human being, the man, she is not a slave, meaning man's slave, woman has not her own personality, she doesn't represent man's echo but man's projection, she is unseparable from man's body, she doesn't exist as an individuality, she is physical and mental subordinated :" With a few exceptions, the culture is until now a man's creation. The women exist in this culture as projections, as shadows, because it wasn't said, it wasn't told, they were not named, but they have been named, they didn't define themselves, but they have been defined, they didn't find their place, but their place has been found".⁵

³ de Beauvoir, Simone, *Al doilea sex*, Editura Univers, Bucureşti , 2004, p. 47.

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ Miroiu, Mihaela, *Gândul umbrei*, Editura Alternative, Bucureşti, 1995, p. 53.

Here is a definition of the woman who has already defined her mental subordination. In other words, the woman doesn't act as she likes, she is defined by her female nature and this idea was stated and developed by man and dictated to women. The woman is seen and analyzed through humanity from cultural, historical and political point of view, in relationship with somebody not only as on individuality. Neither nowadays she has her own acces to some brauches nor her implication is limited.

We can see that feminism problem, through the concepts of "woman", "men", "female", "man", "androgyn" or sexuality, "the third sex" was stated from the beginning although the term "feminism" didn't exist as well. Dorothy Parker states the idea that if we are men or women, we must firstly be seen as humans so, the starting point should be this one and not the sexual difference. Simone de Beauvoir agrees this idea, but she states that this idea doesn't have to be considered a summing up one but anyone should take into account the idea that everyone is a unique person "There is no doubt that the woman is a human being as the man is; but such an idea is an abstract one; the idea is that any human being is always situated as a singularity."⁶ But only the man is seen like this, meaning the representation of singularity and the woman appears as she represents the negative part and this is the first step to limitation.

The concept of "femininity" is from Biology (from Sigmund Freud-," the anatomy as feith") and has its origins in the social hierarchy when, in 1949, Simone de Beauvoir in her work states the idea that a female child is influenced by external social and political to become a female and she is not born as it.

It must be remembered that Fr. Nietzsche has made a rationality criticism because he gives a definition for Truth through woman's image, thus criticising the women who agree the modern rationality. J. Derrida develops the same idea and states that the women wish they were similar to men who study Science. Derrida does not agree the idea, but opposes women's wish to build themselves as a subject and the motivation is that the women should enter to "falogocentrism logics" and the subject, the ego represents the philosophical center that make women inferior creatures. In fact the purpose of feminist writings would be to destroy the notion of: subject, ego, soul, body, consciousness. What is important is that "difference" through which we notice the differences between men and women in termss of language, leading to the

⁶ de Beauvoir, Simone, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

deconstruction of masculinity. The difference would be the terms that mark the opposition and the accent on plural, multiplicity in writing sphere.

J. Derrida states the idea that it is necessary to speak about a text excluding the sexuality idea, the gender, political ideas because there is not a special women's language.

Deshumanization and the lack of body and the centerless proposed by Derrida determines voluntary or involuntarily that some privileges are given only to some human beings that are considered humans. If women want to share the theoretical discourse, they can obtain only through men's mediation because everyone knows the idea that that women can not do anything without a protector, a mediator, no matter if their life is defined as a social one.

Michel Foucault in "The History of Sexuality" considers that the sexual abilities are not born. So the identity of gender is made in terms of discourse, considering the dichotomies man-woman, rationality-history.

These theories that belong to the feminism do not exclude each other, they complete each other. Their awareness is to brings in the prime-line women's problems and also the men's ones, those of humanity. There are a few directions the chance inequality between men and women; the women are limited in their possibility of affirmation, the women's exploitation in her family – the double duty, the absence of some values created after women's wishes.

"The feminist novel in postwar literature", the second chapter, presents the progress of Romanian literature between first and the second world war stated by Ov. S. Crohmalniceanu, G. Calinescu, Garabet Ibrăileanu, I. Negoitescu, Alex Stefanescu, with the respective accent on the feminist literature.

So, the writers have had the opportunity to practice different types of writings: poetical novel M. Sadoveanu's novel, psychological and deep analyses novel - Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu's novel, realism through - L. Reboreanu's novel, fantastic novel - M. Eliade, autenticity novel - Camil Petrescu, Anton Holban, Mihail Sebastian, science fiction novel - Felix Aderca's novel, livresque novel - G. Calinescu's novel, experience novel - M (ax) Blecher's novel.

Al. Protopopescu an "Romanian psychological novel" shows the relevance of feminist novel and underlines the importance of Cella Serghi's "The Spider's Web", Ioana Postelnicu's "Deep Dark" and Henriette Yvonne Stahl's: "Between day and night", Ticiu Archip's "Black Sun" which oppose Emily and Charlotte Bronte's novels

and he also states that "the feminist novel represents an unitary area which could not be ignored itself." ⁷

Mihail Sebastian states in his study "Note to a feminist novel" (in which he studies the novel "Youth" written by Lucia Demetrius) that the feminist novel has a lack of frivolity: "I have already stated that the lack of frivolity of feminist literature seems to be a curiosity. But the women bring a gravity accent in literature which contradicts our own ideas about their easiness." ⁸

Ion Negoiescu states the psychological analyses made by writers and also by Cella Serghi and sums up the deep psychological analyses from the stylistical point of view: "The modern and general becomes them the naturalism through the psychological analyses made by Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu, Camil Petrescu, Gib Mihaiescu, Henriette Yvonne Stahl, Anton Holban, Dan Petrasincu, Octav Sulutiu Lucia Demetrius, Cella Sergei, Sorana Gurian ".⁹

Camil Petrescu, as a deep observer of the way the writers write states in "Notes about our feminist novel" that the feminist writings are dominated by sensibility, intuition, revealing the knowledge through the woman. Another way to look and think is different from the men writers: "The world image through its colourful flowing and the brutality of practical necessity keep in women and irritating mood of the sensibility that grows the knowledge." ¹⁰

Eugen Lovinescu, a great critical figure of the novels which authors are women, wrote a study named "Feminist Image" tells the phone discussion with Ioana Postelnicu. She tells that the literature is very important for her but Lovinescu says that the literature is men's work of art and he underlines as G Ibraileanu does that the women are in the second position in this field.

Anyone can distinguish the following ideas in E Lovinescu's studies:

- the feminist literature centered on the woman's soul and her spiritual life and also on the social issues;

⁷ Protopopescu, Al., *Psihologismul feminin*, în *Romanul psihologic românesc*, Editura Paralela 45, Bucureşti, 2002, p. 237.

⁸ Mihail Sebastian, *Eseuri. Cronici. Memorial*, p.380.

⁹ Ion Negoiescu, *Istoria literaturii române*, vol. I, p. 196.

¹⁰ Petrescu, Camil, *Notă despre romanul nostru feminin*, în *Revista Fundațiilor Regale*, an IV, nr. 2, februarie 1937, p. 400.

- the two women – both mistress and mother (pay attention! not the wife) - characterizes the "eternal woman";
- women that act instinctively and so they are connected to other species (the connection between woman and the dove may seem to be a simplicity one because such a literature if it exists (the one of the “greatest contemporary writers”) would not be based on the rational base;
- the social context destroys the instincts (the connection is made with the cat: this one sings her love but the woman hides her love) and these rules are the education result, that means some rules that have to be obeyed;
- woman’s literature from Procust’s bed is one of "shadow and tales" which generates the mystery that gives the originality;
- the feminist literature (especially Hortensia Papadat Bengescu’s one) is an ideological one, the attention is on the idea and not on the strength or gesture, sometimes this kind of literature is rich in ideas and surely superior to other types of literature.

After 1929 when Virginia Woolf had already captured the attention a decade before with the essay "Women and the novel" relevant images for women - as a women writer: the women will develop the positive side of the novel and not the quantity one, they will write lyrical or poetical masterpieces, they will work in the critical, historical and theoretical fields. All these branches will be developed if and only if the women will be recognized their rights and so all the people will be equal: "If we are allowed to speak like a prophet, the women will write in the future more novels and better ones. They will write not only novels but critical and poetical works of art. So, this is for sure a image of a golden age when the fabulous woman was negated for such a long time – working, money and a room for her. ".¹¹

Although the two ideas are convergent they begin with different consideration: Eugen Lovinescu mymisis the psychological soul of a woman, while Virginia Woolf states the historical and social images and goes over the boundaries of literature and esthetics. Only if the woman wins her well known place in society, then and only then she will succeed to transgenes the emotional feeling in her writings and this work of art will surely not have the sexual side in discussion. The novel appreciates the writer who "will stop to be a room full of emotions" and they will not be empty white pages in which women would probably confess and transform them in their own confident.

¹¹ Woolf, Virginia, *Les femmes et le roman*, in *L’art du roman*, Edition Du Seuil, Paris, 1963, p. 90.

Dumitru Tiutiuca discusses the problem of work identity is it relevant for any work the author's sex? The question seems to have some veridic sides because the pattern of <<feminist literature>> begins with the difference between man and woman, firstly from the biological point of view and them from the social and the aesthetic one in the end.¹² More than that, there is a feminist literature specificity made by this literature: "When someone accepts the existence of a feminist literature (G. Sand, E. Elliot, Alice Calugaru, HP-Bengescu, Cella Serghi, Yvonne H. Stahl and so on) the discussion is only about the specificity of this one."¹³

So, the feminist Romanian novel is an important part in which writers as Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu Lucia Demetrius, Henriette Yvonne Stahl, Ticu Archip, Sanda Movila, Ioana Postelnicu, Cella Delavrancea, Cella Serghi, Constanta Marino-Moscu, Igena Floru in which works we discover the eternal feminine. The poetry is represented by Alice Calugaru, Otilia Cazinir, Elena Farago, Claudia Millian. We also can see remarkable figures in critical side of the literature quoted by E. Lovinescu in "The History of Romanian Contemporary Literature": Isabela Sadoveanu-Evan, Constanta Marinescu.

The third chapter, "Cella Serghi - pro domo" presents the author's evolution because this writer is an important and special figure of Romanian literature because it is generated by the period the writer lived in - an epoch of great difficulties, of hard emotional thoughts if we think about the period between the First World War and the Second World War. A remarkable writer of the period between the first and the second war, Cella Serghi was well – known by the novel "The Spider's Web" (1938) which was highly appreciated by writers as Camil Petrescu, Mihail Sebastian. Despite this fact, the critical writers of this period didn't consider so important but also, underlined the idea that the writer didn't make a great contribution for the Romanian literature of this period, but also the idea that this woman writer wrote in a period when everything was controlled by men.

I have analyzed this writer's work in the general Romanian context and the one of the literature between the first and the second World War in order to bring into discussion the writer's style and point of view.

E. Lovinescu says in "Aqua forte" that Cella Serghi's style is "a dark one" and the author succeeds to "do things without brightness but with the image of an early

¹² Tiutiuca, Dumitru, *Teorie literară*, Editura Europlus, Galați, 2004, p. 75.

¹³ Idem, p. 76.

maturity”¹⁴. The writer’s life at Pontus wasn’t a comfortable one, but one of a difficult period of wins and losses. There are real events told in the writer’s memorialistic writings – and the title is a metaphorical one “Memory Spider’s Web” - and this contains a large period but an insufficient one in order to give the posterity a lot of writings. Unfortunately the stories stop around 1944-1945 and they are then completed between 1967-1992 and chronologically connected by Ilie Rad in “Cella Serghi. Interviews” (a very interesting book in which it is revealed the writer’s opinion about: the creation, the literature and the feminist writings, etc.).

In some stories she herself said that she herself was a master of telling stories and her model was Camil and Sebastian and other writers. So, she enchants with short stories in which the court of justice is the main character. Helped by two of her friends, Cella Serghi writes a lot of newspaper issues: sports chronicles, theater, article, cinema article, reports with a biographical theme. Under the nickname of Cella Marin she wrote for the “Gazeta” and “Reporter” newspapers a lot of reports and theatre articles which had a lot of success. Her first report was named “Week-end in Bucegi in the winter” and was followed by others like: “Steam bath”, “Football Match”, “French Institute of High Studies from Romania”, “Between screen and street” published in 1934. These publications will open Cella Serghi’s following way of writing. Camil Petrescu is the one who advised her to write newspapers because he saw the easiness with that Cella Serghi used to speak: “I had written some reports advised by him (n. a. Camil Petrescu). He wished. I had written modern newspapers articles. He saw my wish to write. He thought. I was a spontaneous person. But he was so wrong! He wished for me to have a newspapers career after the model of Odette Panetier whom he admired <<Don’t lose yourself!>> he used to say me. <<Why do you speak so much instead of writing?>> After all, I wrote a few newspapers articles, but I didn’t succeed in this field.”¹⁵

In October, 1934 she published “Football Match” which distinguishes her as a sport addict because she comments on the general atmosphere “The distinguished lawyer from Ilfov enters without a ticket. The stadium is full of people. I, as an experienced member of the audience have newspapers with me and put them on the stairs in order to

¹⁴ Lovinescu, Eugen, 1998, *Memorii. Aqua forte*, Bucureşti, Editura Minerva, pp. 608 – 609.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

stay there but I am very sure that I and G. Vraca will be disturbed by the waiters with lemonade".¹⁶

In 1937 it was published the first fragment from the novel "The Spider's Web" in "Royal Fundation Magazine". It was named: "The First Thoughts". This appearance is remarkable and the writer was highly appreciated by Camil Petrescu and Al. Rosetti. One could say that Cella Serghi art power was made well-known with the publication of this novel. The writer's first book recommended to the public by three writers: Camil Petrescu, Liviu Rebreanu, Mihail Sebastian because it was written on the novel's front cover "Liviu Rebreanu, Camil Petrescu and Mihail Sebastian recommended the Printing House this novel." Cella Serghi remembers the meeting with the "Ion" 's author who put his hand on her shoulder and said "Now, you are a writer". She also said that the meeting moment with Liviu Rebreanu was an emblematic one for her life. Mihail Sebastian read the novel manuscript and gave her a start and then it was liviu Rebreanu. She remembers in 1971: "Liviu Rebreanu helped me a lot. Every writer waits from her master a start. He said to me << Put it in a drawer and take it out after six year. I will not tell you what to take out and what to introduce. If you had written this book you would have been aware to know what to write and what not. You have all the necessary talent but you have to have a lot of work and patience>>. Them I started crying. After one year I thanked him – The Spider's web is ready for printing house".¹⁷

Cella Serghi didn't go to "Sburatorul" "but the novel was highly appreciated by its master "Eugen Lovinescu had in my literature career a great importance because he helped me to become a writing profesionist <<I think you will not be the author of only one book >> he said to me << I have also experience which I haven't used in The Spider's Web >>, I said to him and I thought that it must have been very difficult to write a book. Cella Serghi remains in literature not only through her novels, but also through all these memories from the interviews that are very sensible and interesting but also a very subjective approach of the art of writing, as Camil Petrescu learned her: "hard work, bitter work".

A great deal from "The Spider's Web" is a study of the novel which the writer made her debut in literature in 1938 when the novel appeared. In the context of literature in 1938 when the novel appeared. In the context of literature in 1938 this

¹⁶ Marin, Cella, *Match de football*, în *Gazeta*, an I, nr. 190, 30 octombrie 1934, p. 1.

¹⁷ Buzilă, Boris, *Mărturii în amurg*, Editura Dacia, Cluj, 1974, p.192.

novel appeared as a hard working work of art a writer who made a great contribution at Romanian literature developing.

So, it can be said we have remarked in the field of poetry the work of great writers as Mihai Beniuc, Virgil Carianopol's orientation to traditionalism N.(icolae) Crevedia's love poetry, Emil Giurgiucă's poetry, George Lesnea's work, Adrian Maniu's poetry, Mircea Streinu's poetry, Dimitrie Stelaru's work, Otilia Cazimir's poetry. In the novel field we can talk about great names as: Liviu Rebreanu, Mihail Sadoveanu, G. Călinescu, Hortensia Papadat-Bangescu. The picture of the period is completed with names as Pavel Dan, Ion Vlasiu, Ion Petrovici, Georgeta Mircea Cancicov. Elena Matasa is close connected to Cella Serghi because they published their first novels in the same year. It is also remarkable the chritical literature from this year. G. Calinescu wrote "Creanga's life", D. Caracostea published "Eminescu's art of words", Aug. Z. N. Pop wrote "Studies and literature portraits", and an essays anthology "History and nationalism" and also Tudor Vianu wrote the great chritical essays in the mentioned period. Pompiliu Constantinescu's "Literature figures" was a remarkable book, Vladimir Streinu's "Pages of literature chriticism", Tudor Vianu wrote "Literature and portrays", and an essay anthology "History and Nationalism". It is also remarkable the work of Octav Sulutiu, D. Popovici, I.M. Rascu.

In the context of the year 1938 above mentioned my intention was to draw the image of the period when Cella Serghi's "The Spider's Web" was published. It was a great literature period when remarkable work of art were written and in this context, Cella Serghi's place was an important one.

"The Spider's Web" was sustained by remarkable writers. "Through this writer's words the literature underlines the local colour and the brightness of this oriental and seashore worls", very wele illustrated in her book, Mihail Sebastian would say in order that liviu Rebreanu to read the book. The visit she had made to Liviu Rebreanu when he would say "You are a writer" brought in cella Serghi's soul a great relief and happiness. Here you are what she had said after a lot of years: "If after all the years years that had passed and the ones that remained somebody would have got me up in order to ask we what was the happiest moment in my life, I would answer "When <<Ion>>'s writer with his hand on my shoulder said <<you are a writer>>.

Perpessicius's opinion "Cella serghi's debut is one of the most remarkable of this period and a very well-known feminist writing" ¹⁸, this could be one of the greatest appreciations of a great spiritual value for Cella Serghi. The chritical approach puts cella Serghi's novel through young feminist writings because "The Spider's Web" speaks about "one heart's sufferings" and the literature approach as the "sea poetry" tells in fact Diana's adventures that gives growth to some heroes. Pompiliu Constantinescu has written about cella Serghi „not only the objectivity and the talent that Eugen Lovinescu loved but also the generosity made Cella Serghi an important figure of the period". Cella Serghi had the opportunity to thank as follows: „...he opened the grate that would encourage other work of art". The chritical approach has proved the reading pleasure the thanking for the author's work, the desire to give the opportunity of this young writer to trust in her own powers. The words are a real challange for Cella serghi in order to start the next novel. „Cella Serghi's debut is remarkable and it springs from an experience of life and less from a literary technique".¹⁹

The chritical approach finds a motivation an explanation of Diana Slavu's life in "her social and psichological condition".²⁰ Balcic's landscape "a love fulfills all Balcic's landscape" – is an image of an objective mood"from Diana's point of view.

Pompiliu Constantinescu underlines the correlation between the external side and the interior mood because the writer underlines the feminist side, all the sensibility that springs from this image because "all our novel new world brings through Cella Serghi a new life, a warm feminity and a personal significance".²¹

There is a great truth in Pompiliu Constantinescu's words because all those who reads her book with great attention see what a big significance had balcic and Mangalia in Diana Slavu's life. There is also a subtle observation when the chritical approach says that the writer doesn't have the literary technique. Pompiliu Constantinescu says that the premature experience and the specific feminist vitality are found in all the written books. Balcic is seen from a woman writer point of view, it has dignity and personality, it is alive. Pompiliu Constantinescu refers to the presence of a feminist novel "from the life point of view and the feminist sensibility".²²

¹⁸ Perpessicius, *Opere*, Bucureşti, Editura Minerva, 1978, p. 88.

¹⁹ Pompiliu Constantinescu , *Vremea*, anul V,1938, în *Figuri literare*, 1989, p. 307.

²⁰ Idem, p. 304.

²¹ Pompiliu Constantinescu , din „*Vremea*”, 1938, nr.538/22mai; în *Figuri literare*,1989, p. 304.

²² Idem,pag.307.

Ov. S. Crohmălniceanu in “Romanian Literature between the first and the second world wars” pays a great attention to Cella Serghi and her novel, “The Spider’s Web”(1938).

He states as follows about the writer’s novel: “<<The Spider’s Web>> that impressed Camil Petrescu and Mihail Sebastian is a very good novel”.²³

The critical approach is on Diana slavu’s evolution “she is the one who lives the temptation of a tyrannical and unhappy love, that disturbs her marriage life”.²⁴

And he also appreciates: “the heroine has a great morality and sense of duty that determines her to make something with modesty and durability”.²⁵

The analyses of “The Spider’s Web” follows the following aspects: the geneses, the critical reaction to the novel appearance, this structure and composition, the theme, the subject, the symbols, the narrative techniques, points of view, the changes made in time: some of them formally and others from the stylistical point of view.

We can state the idea that “The Spider’s Web could be introduced in the series of psychological analyses novels between the first and the second world wars (short before the second world war began). Our arguments are: the first one that Diana - the protagonist of the book - is a heroine with a rich life, with great interior thoughts and disappointments, with great ups and downs movements, she always is on the way of finding the soul dignity and trust. The second argument is sustained by the idea that the writer follows the evolution and involution of the heroine, using a narrative technique specifical for the psychological analyses: the introspection, the retrospection, the analyses and self analyses, the dialogue and interior monologue. The psychological analyses goes to the interior sides of the hero’s consciousness.

The last but not least chapter is about the other Cella Serghi’s novels “Mirona”, “Paralele Loves”, “Memories Spider’s Web”, “This Sweat Poverty-the Youth”. All these writings complete the image of a writer that went over the communist oppression.

The novel, “Mirona” had a lot of phases: it appeared in 1950 with the title “The Walls are Falling Down”. In 1965 it was completely changed and appeared under the title “Mirona’s Book” and then in 1972 it appeared under the main heroines name, “Mirona”. The structure of this novel is a great one. It has 18 chapters in the order in which the events took place, even if they are social or of a deep psychological analyses, they help us to state that in this novel as Cella Serghi has already done in her other

²³ Crohmălniceanu, Ov. S., *Literatura română între cele două războaie mondiale*, Ed. Minerva, 1972, vol. I, p. 19.

²⁴ Idem, p. 20.

²⁵ Ibidem.

novels there is a narrative technique which is accessible to anyone because any reader could find that the writer follows not only the details but also the understanding of the transmitted message.

Ov. S. Crohmalniceanu considers that even if he recognizes some “artificial elements” in “Mirona”, this is the second novel through which Cella Sergi remains in the readers attention.

„Parallel Love” appeared in 1974 and represent a reaction of the book “Barota’s Girls” (1958) that had as main theme the bourgeois family opposed to the working class family. Both live in a great physical and reality life disappointments. There are some interesting portrayal images here and the intertextuality that gives a dramatical technique to the novel: the heroine Artemiza is in the first place but the book also present the events through which Victor faces.

The interesting technique in this novel is not the epical string but also the portraits (the way in which the heroes are drawn, the moods, the feelings of these people). The novel had a less value from the narrative point of view but is rich in feminist portrays.

All the novel women are in fact the image of only one woman, a generical image in some moments of her life, in a mirrors room where only one woman is seen in all the mirrors.

The adjective “parallel” draws parallel lives: that of the girl, the woman, the wife, the mother, the aunt, the grandmother, the lover, the mistress because the love could be of anyone: that of Artemiza, Clemansa, Elena, Draga, Genia, Voica, Geta, Nicoleta...

With a metaphorical title that remembers of the title of the novel of Cella Sergi’s debut, “The Memories Spider’s Web” (1977) is as Liana Cozea used to say, “an emotional confession of an author”. This is a memories book and is made of four parts, everyone having a lot of chapters. She wrote and dedicated this novel to Liviu Rebreanu, Camil Petrescu și Mihail Sebastian „with great gratitude”. The book has a very rich literary value and involuntary memory, the proustian technique made a spider’s web memories. “The Memories of a spider’s Web” presents the history of “The Spider’s web” and ‘Mirona’ creation. There are also new events that we haven’t met in the other novels.

The writer draws some literary personalites as Camil Petrescu, Liviu Rebreanu, Mihail Sebastian, Eugen Lovinescu, Hortensia Papadat Bengescu, Felix Aderca, Sanda Movila, Ilarie Voronca, the painter Magdalena Radulescu and many others. The most

pages of this writing had Camil Petrescu, the man who consecrated cella Serghi in all her work. He is the man she loved most and with him she opened ‘The Memories Spider’s Web’ because she shows two letters of him and anybody can sum up the nostalgia and the affective mood of the moment they met each other.

Lovinescu’s house that housed “Sburatorul” meetings where she met a lot of big and great literature figures is summed up under the metaphor “a human oasis”, symbolizing the atmosphere of this époque. Here she met Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu. The writer spoke gratefully about Cella Serghi’s “The Spider’s Web” when this book appeared, with a teenager generosity and happiness. That we also found in all her books we also found in “The Memories Spider’s Web” which is an entirely life philosophy. Mihail Sebastian, Cella Serghi best friends, said directly to her that she is “a dangerous intelligent woman” and he also adds: “The women(the novels heroines don’t trust in their men because the men haven’t trusted in women when they had chosen them. This wrong choice is as if you would have chosen a goods train instead of an international train”.²⁶ Mihail Sebastian’s opinion is that “the women change men’s life when men are artist” ²⁷, and in this is connected to Patrascu, Tonitza, Arghezi, Cezar Petrescu and so on.

The novel “This sweet poverty-the youth”(1983) has a metaphor in the title - it is an oxymoron “sweet poverty”. The work is the connection between a lot of species: autobiographical confession, letters, and journalism. Ilie Rad stated that this novel is made of “life files: letters, comments to comments, narrator’s interventions who doesn’t shadow his identity” .²⁸ The novel has a sphere structure: Cella Serghi’s first great love opens and ends the novel. The sea and the memories “The sea is here at the world beginnings, it is all it was built, all that surrounds us in our youth”.

“Novel Metamorphoses. The Exercise of Humiliation or Socialist Realism” is the last chapter of the book and it contains two other chapters. The first one is about other Cella Serghi’s novels: “The Factory Song”, “The Cantemirs”, the story “Sisters”, “The old Ilie decided” which central theme is the work, the enemy that is in the shadow and also communist struggles.

The novel “The Factory Song” that appeared in 1950 is not such a good work of art because it was not so appreciated. It is interested from the context it was written

²⁶ Idem, p.57.

²⁷ Idem, p.58.

²⁸ Ilie Rad, op. cit., 2005, p.7.

because it symbolized the terror of which the writers were witnessed to in this literary period.

The story “The Old Ilie Decided” (1950) from the title to the last page succeeds to be the perfect example of the realist and socialism scheme” ²⁹ because this has a political scheme: the collectivization.

In 1951 the Literature and Art Printing House of Writers Union from R.P.R. printed the story “Sisters” which is another writing that reflects this assertive literature, made in the same model as the novel “Factory Song” and the story “The Old Ilie Decided”. The heroes portraits are made with a great sensibility trying to sweeten the boring theme. In this period of imposed communist ideas the writer losses the great literary ideas because Cella Serghei as all the other period writers wrote between communist features, she was politically manipulated as all the others and her writings lossed literary value. The description (short portraits or landscapes) paied attention because all the other amount of her working was influenced by the great communist idea.

She thought that “a writer that is influenced by the ideas of Communist Party must give up all her ideas if she didn’t want to be taken out from the literary world” ³⁰ but the writer had the great mistake to think, to make ordered works. In 1954 at C.C. at U.T.M Printing House was printed the novel „The Cantemires” which has forty-four chapters. It is a very impressive novel if we thought how hard Cella Serghei had written “The Spider’s Web”. Writing is not for her “á la Légère” but she also wrote a few member of books between 1950-1954. They are not so valuable, but they are the symbol of a period when all the writers were the Communist Party’s slaves. As all the other novels of this period “The Cantemirs” is the image of a realist-socialist époque, it is the symbol of an entire collectivity, that of some high-school teenagers. After we have read this novel we can say that the taste is a bitter one, the one of an époque when the novels were political controlled and thus a sad literature. This is what Cella Sergi preid to Communist Party.

The subchapter “Constantza – a place of becoming” presents the image from the seashore in some of the greatest novelists works of art and thus the town itself becomes a literature hero. It is also underlined cella Serghei’s contribution on this way of

²⁹ Zaharia- Filipaş, Elena, *Studii de literatură feminină*, Editura Paideia, 2004, p. 142.

³⁰ Popa, Marian, *Istoria literaturii române de azi pe măine*, Editura SemnE, Bucureşti, 2009, p. 308.

becoming of the literature of this period. Everybody could see the description of Constantza as a city at Black Sea seashore, the place of a great events in “Constantza and her surroundings”, 1908 by Ion Adam, in “Hotel Maidan” (1936) by Stoian Gh. Tudor. The After War novels which had Constantza as a main hero, we can talk about “Blocada” by Pavel Chihiaia (1947). We also have to talk about “Crazy Summer in Blue Boats” (1983) by Constantin Novac “Fun Fair in Constantza” (1978) by Ion Coja. Romanian novels made Constantza a real hero but this was beautifully presented in Cella Serghi’s Novel “The Spider’s Web” – not only because the writer presents an image of the city, but also because the city is seen through a teenager’s eye. This subchapter presents the city image that becomes a real “axis-mundi” for an author who dreams in a world of innocence and childhoodness. The writer had a special relationship with the city and the sea. The author had the same relationship because the introspection is possible.

Through all the aspects above mentioned this work proposes to open a huge possibility of Cella Sergi’s work of art analyses, to decide what is the place of this writer in Romanian literature and to underline the feminist aspects of her writings.

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