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DOCTORAL THESIS SUMMARY
NARRATIVE STRUCTURES IN ALEXANDRU IVASIUC’S
OPERA

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Introduction

1. Motivation

The present written work theme wants to be a posthumous analysis of narrative structures in Alexandru Ivasiuc's prose, an author equally exciting and outrageous for the readers and literature critics from seven and especially eight decade. An intelligent and cult author that cannot stand still in the narrative structures used almost dogmatically in stiff schemes goes to the abstract structures field, not caring for the reader's livings, but following his ideas, obliging the literature field of his time to make an almost dizzying step in the world of abstract, essence and clarity in ideas.

During this whole written work we will analyze in the two short stories and each one of his novels the technical narrative instruments that he operates with, so that this author of profound livings can expose his problematic referring his multiple personality, but also the social-political metamorphosis that the Romanian society is going thru after 1944 and until the publishing of his last novel, in 1976.

2. Alexandru Ivasiuc's prose characteristics

After the culture and the literature go thru a communist political commandment's ideological and servitude period during the 1950's, after 1964 there will be a somewhat totalitarian regime relaxation inside the communist staff.

Historical circumstances obliged young authors to "discover" those expressing forms that will be tolerated by the new regime, to bring an innovative air in the art of writing, like uprooting Romanian culture would bring it any benefice. The postwar renowned authors look like they are waiting for a new breath of air brought by the young generation appeared from nowhere.

His appearance as a novel writer was abrupt and surprising thru the fact that this writer had the courage to approach social, political and existential themed subjects by realism and an extremely sharp critical sense. But his operas generally treated subjects that could disturb the

newly installed totalitarian political, in other words the communist nomenclature and the security oppressive apparatus.

If we observe his era literature, but also the time criticism content, we will see a big prudence from the intellectuals because Alexandru Ivasiuc ably extracts from the Marxist theory the radical factor as an instrument for fighting against stagnation, but not that perpetual radicalism that could have gone to total denial; a negation world being considered worse than a concentration camp, in need of a harmonic joining with the militant spirit in culture, with the person's and human personality edification, giving the individual overall liberty for fulfillment of the knowledge and going on his own road in life.

Alexandru Ivasiuc comes from a small cultivated bourgeois family with a native taste for freedom; he is altered by the period in which he was locked up, interrogated, ill-treated, beaten until mutilation, than sent to hard work on the new Communist working sites where he is introduced to and analyses power abuse. He sincerely believed in the Marxist theory regarding a human society superiorly organized, but he didn't accept individual freedom limitation. Travelling in America and England he could taste the free capitalistic way of life, he understood that each individual has the right to his vision about life and that it should be respected.

The course of his studies, jail, hard work, forced residence in Bărăgan, travelling abroad will help him create a literary universe marked by esthetic entropy. After five years in prison he works as a simple chemist operator, than as a clerk at the U.S. Embassy and meanwhile he publishes essays in multiple magazines.

In 1970 the *Păsările* novel is published by the Cartea Românească Publishing House a novel that saw multiple editions (1971, 1973, and 1977) and represents Alexandru Ivasiuc's maturing writing opera. When writing this novel, the author listens to his critics' advices and introduces *the all knowing author*; he gives up diluting the analytical text in a essayistic way and will condense his ideas into a more direct writing.

Alexandru Ivasiuc's prose marks a remarkable refresh of the Romanian modern novel by registering undeniable successes starting with 1967, when Alexandru Ivasiuc distinguishes himself thru his essays and the appearance of his first novel, *Vestibul*. His prose was structured on essays, short stories and novels. Alexandru Ivasiuc's novel is a political one, of analytical status and profound psychological poll, combining the classic novel and historical novel's characteristics; epistolary; personal diary; with remarkable symbolic accents, skillfully using

plan overlapping, framed picture, zoomorphism, burlesque style intertwined with drama and fine character intuitions over the personages.

Chapter 1 treats the analytical style and novel themed ideas at the expense of epic in the *Vestibul* novel in 9 subchapters. Each subchapter highlights the narrative techniques used by the author, like they appear in groups during the novel's action unwinding. The techniques are proven thru comments sustained by novel quotes and other critics' considerations.

Organizing the whole *Vestibul* novel in an almost immaterial plan of ideas and psychological reports filled with general significations for defining a conscious truth, creates almost like in music a base or streaking tunes symphony without any melodramatic inflexions, an abstract music on which characters, actions, ideas are dancing. Alexandru Ivasiuc stalks history's secret movement thru the influences upon his own identity, searching around himself individualities that make up the expression of confronting all contradictions, models of distinctive creative psychologies seen by a pragmatic fellow that doesn't stand imposture, creating the steps of an almost dogmatic idea of truth, strongly glued to the scientific, lifted, or better said, brought in a utopia state. "The truth", this pure jewelry, fanatically loved by a Alexandru Ivasiuc, forever restless and extroverted personality, will be polished, explored and assembled in his whole literary opera, in different folders and situations. This theme, apparently abstract, is the philosophical, political and psychological author's source, training his heroes in the individual's fascination and delusion by using the word or the esthetic artifact in the narrative dynamics, building overlapped or reversible plans, giving each narrative unit a powerful semantic, bringing the reader in subtle perspective games.

In the 2nd chapter it is revealed the real's expressivity and the detachment from the symbolism reflex thru the parable and fiction in fiction methods in *Interval* novel. In the 17 subchapters are analyzed in narration order the narrative techniques elements and the critics appreciations from the Romanian literary field backed up by text exemplifications and quotes from literary critics.

Interval, Alexandru Ivasiuc's second novel, published in 1968 by the Literature Publishing House from the *Casa Scânteii* Polygraph Works, Bucharest, being a part of the great XXth century novels where the art of vivid memory living excels, concentrating narration in a

determining moment along with intermediary time sacrificing, giving strength to the tale that is a profound meditation upon human condition.

The author chooses to fundament his novel on two narrative instances, linked by the author's own instance. He prefers representation storytelling as a textual strategy thru which characters' speech substitutes the author's. The all knowing author appears in the first text of each chapter. During the chapters the reader gets a voices and ideas overlapping from the author and the characters that dominate the monologue. The characters' struggle, sometimes pathetic, is looking to give shape and explain to their self own existence meaning despite divergence between the interior image of each character and the real one.

In the 3rd chapter Alexandru Ivasiuc is debating in scientific accents the atomized matter gravitation around the phantasmagorical vivid memory living, synthetic condensation and compressed anthropogenesis event inside *Cunoaștere de noapte* 1969 novel. The analysis expands thru 13 subchapters complete with novel quotes and literary critics.

In *Cunoaștere de noapte* novel, published in 1969, the author creates a self identity tension onto compensation where determinism justifies the novel's apparition, in who's mechanism there are existentialist philosophical ideas being assembled, a contraries parade, the effort of reconstructing forgotten livings and experiences for regaining the past, reinventing a timeless life in a self centering close to alienation; arriving in the immediate reality leads to Ion Marina's tragedy bursting, the novel's main character.

Cunoaștere de noapte novel is debating the self centering problem appeared like a social illness, following the traumatizing experiences of its heroes during The Second World War and aggravated by the new social order's percepts, profoundly materialistic, emptying the human being of feelings, own sensibilities, interior needs, in a word **spirit**, asking it for surface manifestations, total conformism and soldier like discipline.

Alexandru Ivasiuc, all knowing author, thru narrative fiction, thru metalepsys, creating deep shadows and lights angles, carries the main character thru his life's history, past and present, making him relive powerful sensations with their help willingly wanting to know himself, to profoundly self analyze onto *atomization*. Alexandru Ivasiuc affords the luxury in this novel to decompose and recompose the human being. Alexandru Ivasiuc's storytelling excels thru sliding from the main plan into secondary ones, that in the end are debating the same problematic of self knowing and reflection like the main character, Ion Marina. His wife, dying

on the hospital bed, travels backwards in search of a substantial truth for recognizing some painful facts from this marital couple existence.

In this novel too, the author Alexandru Ivasiuc brings forth the object-woman, the instrument-woman, the amorphous-woman that in the end disappears from the novel's powerfully masculine landscape. She is just a men's annex that he uses and finally finds out that he leaned morally on her for a good period of time by creating a stability, comfort and home balance state.

The fable appears in this novel too as an artistic procedure insinuated in the story line, incubating inside the imaginary cognitive phenomenon hyperbole knowledge's hard rationing.

The author cartoons like so own cognitive conceptions and his inclination towards concepts' primordial believes, making the abstractions almost sensorial, taking them to its ancestral roots, by doing so gifting his heroes with a narcissist parable towards true self knowing. Ion Marina's contact with the outside world thru his dream halo appears like a regress, like a overlapping in negative over another image in daylight reality. Fighting with the intimate truth's dynamic analysis, of real, multiplying main character's problematic with his wife's, his mother in law's and his friend's one, Alexandru Ivasiuc sacrifices novel's intrigue and epic means. The prose writer permanently staggers between his own essences its alteration.

In the 4th chapter highlighting the esthetic, constructive artifact with overall perspectives and symbolist structures in *Păsările* novel, along 14 analysis subchapters we prove thru examples and detailed comments and other narrative structures.

In *Păsările* novel the author in fact expresses the Romanian intellectual's disgust against the vulgarity and lack of respect for the individual of the new power representatives that try to recruit snitches, to create guilty persons according to personal interests, not to install a healthy climate of work and correct inter human relationships. Only the Liviu Dunca picture, novel's main character and the C.E.O. Dumitru Vinea, ably maneuvered by the Chief engineer Mateescu (scrupulous man with a great puppet master talent) is pretty eloquent in light of backing up the author's social-political riot against these power representatives.

The *Păsările* novel symbol is the main character's own vision that appears like a main point several times when unpleasant, weird, unexpected events are about to happen that create a emptiness, pray like feeling.

Another powerful symbol is the mirror, that appears both in *Păsările* and *Apa* during Liviu Dunca and Paul Dunca main characters' crisis moments when near the edge political confrontations take place, and the intellectual feels the need to *detach* from reality to save himself as an entity, at least for a few moments. One might say that the morally relevant expression in Stroblea's innocent eyes during the death moment in *Apa* novel produces to Paul Dunca such a deep revolt feeling, that these eyes can still be considered one of his visions, the mirror.

In the 5th chapter during 24 subchapters we analyze the power idea caught in the ironic conscience fiction in the *Apa* novel and the narrative techniques used by the author. We will prove the existence of these techniques by exemplifying thru inside text comments, by novel quotes backed up by assented collocations of some literary critics that leaned over the novel.

Under the mask of a Transylvanian family chronic used in a fictional way to be detached from the realistic link, it targets the pragmatic model of a society that doesn't go stray from quality, from the truth and social equity principles. The *Apa* novel scenes are like reruns from *Interval*, where yet another Dunca old lady tells to another grandson about another one of his old Transylvanian family member, still memorandums man, a fighter for Romanians independence. These old Dunca ladies symbolize themselves a world on the brink of disappearance, but one that takes care to transmit to the next generations the most important information about kin, dignity, principles and inherited rules.

Another symbol in A. Ivasiuc's novels are the hanged, the suicidal that represent society's weak link; either goalless people, or full of vices and hunted by the authorities.

Alexandru Ivasiuc's whole opera is marked by the symbols of life and death, truth and lie, darkness and light, so it is the creation of a free man that could differentiate his era's social and political events in a radical way. The real's profound obscurity many times being indecipherable along with history's changing, challenges the writer on the era's hierarchy facing attitude, feeling touched in his own freedom and thus becoming conditioned to use the symbols so he can express himself from opposing positions with these. His opera's originality resides from harmonious intermingling between the late romantic style and the modern novel on one hand, and on the other hand, the historical novel, the adventure and symbolism.

In the 6th chapter, composed from 16 subchapters, we demonstrate the existence of the negativity technique in the psychoanalysis novel *Iluminări* and other narrative techniques that the

author struggles to create, using the metalepsys as a literary procedure also, characters' memory flashes, artistically border lining their personality in the individual genesis process. The singular conscience procedure helps Paul Achim, novel's main character to have a revelation about a life lived after some self imposed constrictive norms that brought him towards depersonalizing and automatism.

Paul Achim has a revelation, understanding that what he did until now with the people in the institute was actually buckram, a spirit's death of these scientist and that he should, thru fighting and struggle, to bring them back to an effervescent life for creative freedom so he could take the step forward.

Suddenly, Paul Achim realized that he actually was the head of a centaur as a part of the institute fighting with his own body "...and just like him, pairs-pairs, where others", everyone clenched in a competition fight, represented by depression zoomorphism.

In the 7th chapter we prove the author's anguish defining regarding the total oppressive system of his time thru the power utopia in *Racul* novel thru complex narrative techniques, thus defining a literary matured novel. During 16 subchapters we progressively analyze the narrative techniques that Alexandru Ivasiuc already uses skillfully, constituting detailed comments, exemplifying thru quotes from the novel's text and literary critics.

Being an external storytelling procedure fiction novel, *Racul* is abounding in political, social, behavior problematic and reaction to the institutional anomalies from the main heroes or different social groups. The novel was written under the pathetic rationing sign with cinematic instruments efficient until perfection, proving the author's high culture. The art of vivid memory living, of opposing pictures, side by side, to inform about the existence's authentic substance, creates a potent universe of energy and individuality, with pathetic heroes struggling to give meaning to their own existence, everything in a fierce battle to undo the power myth. This interpretation is insufficient; it does not convince the way that the novel is debated in the modern prose theory or some methodological orientation, but the text's reality itself. The power, the undying wish manifestation of individual self is denounced as false eternity, questioning the very human existence. With a methodical detachment, Alexandru Ivasiuc divulges cruel realities in deep psychoanalysis, always referring to the ensemble parable idea. It is recognized a domination, evil complex, followed by an unclear guilt, with intimate livings tensioning and

decadent fear initiations, until the main character's personality dissolving and his transformation in a mechanism that can be reset or modified by a master in any moment.

Like the other heroes of Alexandru Ivăsiuc, Miguel is an introverted, but with rare strokes of extroverting, like self defining cries for help. In the sterile discussion at the mess hall with the major, the main hero has the individual life smallness revelation, comparing it to the “big plan”.

In *Racul* novel Alexandru Ivăsiuc denounces the occult, oppressive anti individualistic character of the totalitarian society. The fragment that closes the novel explains its network of symbols. The book's parable main motif, that appears in the title also, is the **crawl fish**, a symbol for totalitarian dictatorship, based on the power deployed as a supreme mechanism, of a social system built on terror, that annihilates any one of individual's personality, brings him to a larva, out of history, crustaceous state, indifferent to anything that humanely means time and existence, that doesn't feel anything and reacts only as a species. The meanings are shaped by Miguel's symbolic vision that he will see himself as a crawl fish, with a tough crust like it, becoming immortal. This perfect instrument's death of a power that wished to be forever symbolizes utopia's disappearance in favor of normal reactions, of natural life to go on, of negating terror and lie. This outcome is a very successful parable that brilliantly closes Alexandru Ivăsiuc's opera that overlapped events and individual livings, themselves dense parables of timeless fictions, meant to serve social and art.

The reader discovers in Alexandru Ivăsiuc a good connoisseur of power's mechanism and historical mutations; a profound psychologist, impressed by the individual's fascination and deception, confronting objective reality, in antithesis with his own expectations. Contemporary critics tried to motivate the pragmatic thematic of his novels, sending them into pure imaginary or in the struggles of a intellectual wishing to know social phenomenon or individual's psychology: “The prose writer felt the real decayed thru word, the fully altered existence feeling thru contamination with the fictive reality, that, autonomously, the word gives birth to... The way A. Ivăsiuc cultivates literature resembles a sympathetic imitation of knowledge, where ceremonial reproduction is - like in magic - a summoning.” (Gabriela Omăt, 1979, *Cunoaștere de noapte* novel afterward, Eminescu Publishing House, Bucharest)

In the 8th chapter we analyze author's individuality as a psychological study theme, moved thru history's mutations, in this case a family saga in the external storytelling *Corn de*

vânătoare novel during 12 subchapters and the heuristic narrative style intertwined with the symbolism in *O altă vedere* novel during 9 subchapters.

In *Corn de vânătoare* novel the symbols' series starts with the hunting horn's call that is a symbol which announces the old days hunters coming on the Transylvanian realms during feudal times; the hunting horn calls upon the Habsburgic landlord suite apparition in front of the poor young noble Mihai, imaginary Transylvanian intellectual that is also the novel's main character. The same hunting horn will call in the novel's end, receiving answer from another distant one like a hardened conclusion upon a social justice deed made in the name of independence. This is the sound symbol that drives thru the whole story like a spur into action for survival, against yielding, like an encouragement in front of danger.

The circle and the rhomb appear like life governing symbols, increasing the profoundly existential philosophy and psychology that the author masters. The road travelled by the chancellor Mihai from his youth to his professional moment of glory (the assassination of the count and countess of Bethlen) after long journeys thru the whole Habsburgic Empire ends in a circle on homelands. This symbol borderlines the writer's concept about the role that an intellectual must play for his country and people, namely the duty to cultivate himself, to gain mostly intellectual abilities and, if necessary, even positions, influence and power in the state, that will enable him to fight against peoples oppressors. The bed-plate of life, the big rhomb, a symbol found in ancient Dacic culture and kept in the people's initiates memory, appears embedded in noble's Mihai youth, when fear was dominating his being, but the same rhomb symbolizes an infinite joy of life for him in the novel's end, when he feels a winner, when fear has disappeared, when he eliminated one of the greatest adversaries of the lands inherited from the ancestors.

In the heuristic narrative style intertwined with the symbolism of the *O altă vedere* short story, the author Alexandru Ivasiuc, like a conscientious pedagogue, restarts the Transylvanian intellectual theme - still a historical fiction -. A Transylvanian intellectual biography, being told by a grand-grand-son with an independent spirit, resembles very well with the struggle of Tudor Vladimirescu against the Ottoman occupation. In this novel too, the main hero lives under the mathematic symbols sign; the circle, in which they were going round and round with their heads bowed and regulated walk in the prison yard, symbolizing an endless road, like the Romanian people was condemned to walk again; the pendulum in the prison duty officer's bureau, that

measured a overwhelming time; the figure 5, that appears obsessively on the number of steps he could equally do in the cell, the number of bars in the cell and the multiple of 5 (365 days of the year) that the inmate was counting obsessively, five shadow stripes on the cold floor; all these numbers represent the psychological pressure that the fighter Todor is exposed by the royal Habsburgic laws. The unheard guardians' steps on the endless corridors symbolize the oppressor's tactic to indirectly exploit, without being felt. The crazed inmate's fixed hour scream symbolizes the superior being's revolt that realizes the emptiness is so enormous; both inside and outside the walls and that the intellectual's despair becomes frightening, the tragic, as a theatrical effect, is making room in this repetitive scene.

During Todor M.'s whole stay in the Habsburgic prison are obsessively appearing the numbers that are marking days, hours, routine, finally representing emptiness. A healthy, fecund, fighting and active man's mind slowly decays along with the character's physical health. Nightmare descriptions during this prison time along with the deep livings of a complex character symbolizes in their turn true livings of awake, swift population minds again occupied by another empire, by a new social order, again artificial, not proper for the Romanian people's structure. Not even Todor, like Tudor Vladimirescu, is perfectly understood until his death by family and friends. The author brings in front symbolically this fictive character, like he is asking the reader to look closely at his time's reality he is living in, to detect his guiders, the wake minds, to evaluate them correctly and follow them in their fight for moral, physical and material independence.

The entire Ivasiuc's prose marks an important moment of neomodernist Romanian novel is under the sign of debating idea in political, social and deep psihanalysis of a person plan. His phylosofic ego puts him in authors's area which in thru dissimulation they are writing the story of their tumultuose and complex lives, bringind the reader in the position of a spectator and also able to decode cripted messages in his opera.

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