

Universitatea „Ovidius” Constanța
Facultatea de Litere

DOCTORAL THESIS SUMMARY

PERICLE MARTINESCU. A MONOGRAPHIC STUDY

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Constanța

2013

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**“If I had died at age 36, like Rafael,
maybe I would have had a place
in the World Literature!”**

PERICLE MARTINESCU, *THE KNIGHT’S DREAM*

The thesis entitled *Pericle Martinescu. A Monographic Study* is the result of an approach of the proposed writer’s work from the perspective of the relationship existing among the various narrative forms of memoirs, of literary creation (poetry, prose, novel), and the approach of literary criticism. The work is intended both to literary historians and critics, and to the wide public who is interested by the writings of this author. The monographic study also offers information less known so far, some of which entirely new, related to the socio-political and cultural activity in which the writer was directly involved.

In an attempt to approach the literary phenomenology, we did not ignore the analysis of the corpus of texts illustrating the social shakes, but also the personal evolution of the auctorial self. We pinpoint the fact that our study focuses mainly on the representative creations of subjective prose, with references to the Romanian and European literatures, considering the coexistence of the two perspectives, synchronic and diachronic, regarding the evolution of the form of manifestation of the literary genres.

The scope of our doctoral thesis is, therefore, a monographic presentation of the life and, especially, the work of Pericle Martinescu. Our starting point is the holistic method inspired by Lovinescu or Călinescu, following the evolution of a personality that belongs to literature, so that the biographical dimension should reflect on the deep structure of the work. Considering that the biographical segment of a monographic study involves an intense documentation activity, we kept the paradigm consecrated by George Călinescu (*Life of Mihai Eminescu* [*Viața lui Mihai Eminescu*], 1932; *Life of Ion Creangă* [*Viața lui Ion Creangă*], 1938); therefore, we considered, in the case of the writer our research focuses on, that we could use all sources of information available, without ignoring hypothetical documents. In the context of the monographic study, self-referential elements proposed by diary texts are meant to orientate the reader toward a guided reception, which does not exclude possible connections between the historic, social, and political facts and the esthetic transformation thereof.

The elements of literary criticism and theory are presented in all three chapters, during the entire study, as landmarks for our analysis, to which we added a corpus of texts, most of them unpublished, which are significant for the author’s contribution to the extension and diversification of literary genres. The effort was related to the missing information, the

absence of some complex studies on Pericle Martinescu's creation; consequently, we oriented our research toward valorizing some observations circulating on the world of literary ideas, trying to make the necessary connections between the minimum information available and our own appreciations of each volume of the writer's work.

The original character of the work resides in the fact that we valorized for the first time the writer's private correspondence, located in the collection of Antoaneta Martinescu, the writer's granddaughter.¹ The innovative character of our enterprise resides in the way in which we proposed to order and interpret Pericle Martinescu's work, from the perspective of the creator, of the history that he knew first hand and projected into the imaginary world of his diary.

The biographical resources mentioned at the end of our study reflect its documentary character; to that end, we considered the specialized studies, namely the works of literary theory and criticism, the printed articles, dictionaries, and other creations that constitute landmarks in the genre phenomenology within which they are circumscribed.

Considering the ideological and political contexts that the longevive author passed through during his 75 years of creation (his literary debut coincides with the article printed in *Gazeta Transilvaniei* [*Transylvania Gazette*] in 1928; his last publication, *Balada morții lui Edgar Poe* [*Ballad of Edgar Poe's Death*] was issued in 2003), we mention the fact that we tried to avoid the risks of *partis-pris*, the inherent encomiastic formulations induced by the empathy of any researcher with the object submitted to analysis.

The scientific dimension of the study is given, as mentioned above, by the perspective of a holistic approach, which does not exclude the systemic rigorousness, accompanied by observations pertaining to some relatively recent fields of research, such as the imagological and culturalist discourse. Having understood the very hard to surpass, sometimes insurmountable inconvenients of approaching Pericle Martinescu's work, we made recourse, first of all, to a traditional approach. The quasi-positivist approach represents, for a great part of Pericle Martinescu's writings, the adequate solution for commenting or receiving them. Then there is the intertextual and the hermeneutic approaches, which pinpoint the peculiarities of the texts that offer a literary universe of their own. We used elements of sociological criticism and comparatist analysis – when we considered it necessary – which confers the thesis a character of accomplishment. The balanced theoretical perspective offers us arguments

¹ On and off during the period 1970-2003, Pericle Martinescu wrote to his niece Antoaneta Martinescu, who lived in Constanta, and who possesses now 154 letters and postcards. We underline the fact that the writer left a greater number of letters, which are unknown both for the specialists and the wide public, and are part of a private collection. The legal status of such letters prevented our access to them.

enough to support our value judgments, because, at the end of the day, the text imposes the method(s).

The key-words used by us pertain to some semantic fields aiming at reflecting the coordination of our approach. The terminology chosen by us shows that our work belongs to the field of literary theory: autobiography, axiological/anaxiological, communism, correspondence, diary, diary writing, epistolary, *homo cogitans*, *homo duplex*, *homo politicus*, *homo viator*, history, intertextuality, journalist ego, literature, memory/antimemory, metatext, mythology, narratology, novel, phenomenology, synchronic/diachronic.

The actuality of the topic is evidenced by aid of some references, quotations, referrals, and paraphrases of memoir literature, along with the fact that this thesis turns literary correspondence to the best account for the first time.

From a structural point of view, we organized the ideas in three chapters. **The first part** evidenced the hybrid character of the work, which is located at the threshold between memoirs and fiction, pinpointing the political, social and cultural context of the interval comprised between the years 1936-1985, considering both the chronological, and the thematic criteria, and recording the events that marked the Romanian society of that period. Being in a double hypostasis of witness of and participant in the development of a history he disapproves, according to a *Weltanschauung* specific to an erudite auctorial instance, the writer becomes a credible instance himself, who succeeds in transforming the flair of time by exceeding a simple record of facts. Also, the syncretism of languages that alternate or intersect in a balanced manner, underlines the unitary character of the work, the approach being focused on the following central lines: *Truth-Justice-Freedom*. The monographic vision of the thesis illustrates the encyclopedism specific to an author who appropriated the values of the national and European cultures, in a similar manner to that of humanist thinkers. This explains the presence of some *livresque* references, such as those related to the work and activity of writers pertaining to the world literature: Fyodor Mikhailovitch Dostoevsky, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, George Gordon Byron, George Orwell etc. There are also references, notes, comments regarding the personality of interbellic authors, such as Emil Cioran, Mircea Eliade, Nae Ionescu. There are also presented the portraits of some characters who played an important role in the development of the national and world history: Horia Sima, Mihail Sturdza, Marshall Antonescu, Hitler, or Stalin.

By revealing aspects of the Romanian life, Pericle Martinescu lives the creator's drama over and over again, unhappy with the limits of his own writing, wishing to achieve, by his whole memory work, a spectacle of existence with all its shortcomings, along with the dimension of the esthetic reflection. The writer's personality evolves on the cross coordinates

of its own history, thereby understanding the individual, but also the world history, namely the socio-political phenomenology. The reader discovers a writer under a continuous formation process, interested in topicalizing his own perceptions of interbellic Romanian world, the Legionary Movement, the abdication of King Michael, or the effects of Sovietization on Romania.

The seriousness and gravity, as features of the diary discourse, do not exclude humor and colloquial language which slacken some passages dominated by a political climax pushed to the limits of supportability. The rhythmic insertion of elements of humor, intertextually entertained by comments of some jokes, allows for the assertion that in the border writing submitted to our attention there are insinuated some badinage elements. Thus, the personal, subjective observations of political events are followed by anecdotes: “The Italian Encyclopedia (37 volumes) does not include Greece, because the Encyclopedia was printed before 1940, the year when the Italians discovered that Greece existed.”²

In the volume *Uraganul istorie (1941-1945)- Bombe și boemă* [*The Hurricane of History (1941-1945) – Bombs and Bohemia*], the writer calls *jokes* two independent text corpuses, which are actually some mathematical speculations, equations that refer to the important years of our modern and premodern history, such as: the birth of Napoleon or of Hitler: “The last two <jokes> that are circulating in town, both are expressed by figures. The first – between the birth of Napoleon and the birth of Hitler there are one hundred and twenty-nine years. If that number is added to an important date in Napoleon’s life, we obtain a number that represented an important date in Hitler’s life.”³ Pericle Martinescu’s *Diary* pertains to the so-called ‘drawer literature’, published only after the fall of the totalitarian regime, which contains numerous information that could not be printed during the post-war period. The topicalization of communism shows that the auctorial instance witnesses a period that he knew first hand. The main ideas in the diary reflect the fact that the fifty years of communism represent the most troubling period in the whole national history. Romania fell under the evil influence of the atheist communism, along with the king’s abdication, and the new state policy tried to impose onto the society the Soviet model, the militant atheism, to remodel consciences, as proved by the *Pitesti Phenomenon*. The precariousness, the fear, the terror, and the horror are the features of a period where the whole population was condemned to submission.

The authenticity of the diary texts derives from the position of witness to and participant in the history under way: “I am but a witness of times. All the notes made in this

² Martinescu, P. Martinescu, P., *Uraganul istoriei - Pagini de jurnal intim - Anul 1940*. page 242.

³ Martinescu, P. Martinescu, P., *Uraganul istoriei - (1941-1945), Bombe și boemă*, page 337.

book prove it.”⁴ The fear that the repressive organs would brutally act upon him and his family determined him to confess, on various occasions, that expressing sincerity during the communist period was drastically punished: “I realize how dangerous this position is. It could cost me my life.”⁵ Nevertheless, the diarist is willing to become a victim of History, to assume his suffering, and his diary to become a lesson for Life, intended mainly for the posterity: “an adequate message to the future generations would be this: <Future generations, beware of communists!> This is the cry sent to you from the depths of a century by the voice of an honest man!”⁶ In his fight for freedom, there is a permanent pendulation between refuse and acceptance, between contesting the political regime, expressed in writing only, and the compromise of the self-imposed silence, as a form of accommodation.

The writer’s relation with History allows the reader to discern some hypostases: the witness, the participant, the observer, and the victim, because Pericle Martinescu is one of the few Romanian writers and men of culture who were contemporary to the national changes that took place during three different political regimes: interbellic, communist, post-Decembrist. As we can see after researching his whole work, he succeeded in surviving the vicissitudes of history, passing beyond the Politics, in the field of Art and Philosophy, as it results from the recurrence of the triad *Truth-Justice-Freedom*, which we can find in the poetic art at the end of the volume *Visul cavalerului* [*The Knight’s Dream*]: “There are three letters written on my flag: T.J.F. / To them only I dedicated my life and fruits./ These three letters are my creed: The first stands for Truth and I am working for it./ The second is Justice – and I never stray from its path./ And the third is Freedom, my purest instinct!”⁷ The recurrence of these leitmotifs, established at the text level by the initialing method (T.J.F.), contributes to outlining the writer’s personality, disclosing at the same time the humanist dimension specific to the great thinkers who succeeded in keeping their conscience immaculate in an unfavorable context and thus avoiding the compromise with History. In the interview given by Pericle Martinescu to George Arion in the magazine *Romania Literară* [*Literary Romania*], the nonagenarian diarist proves humor, the ability to make connections between events and important political leaders of the world, but also the ability of integrating into the market of cultural and literary ideas after 1989. Referring to the age-related similarities and vulnerabilities, he said: “I consider myself a competitor of Ronald Reagan.”⁸ When presenting the interbellic period, he writes underlines the fact that the 30’s represent a period of cultural and political effervescence, when a *young*

⁴ Martinescu, P. *7 ani cât 70*, page 441.

⁵ Ibidem

⁶ Idem, page 442.

⁷ Martinescu, P. *Visul cavalerului*, page 156.

⁸ *România literară*, no. 10/2003, pages 16-17.

and active generation affirmed itself, but which was eliminated from history right at the moment when it was reaching its maturity, when it could have offered Romania an exceptional work. Numerous members of that generation fell victims of the communist detention, and while others continued their creation in exile. Pericle Martinescu bears witness for those, especially for those whom he knew personally: Eugen Ionescu, Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran, Ștefan Băciu, Horia Vintilă etc. The interview reveals hypostases of the auctorial instance and establishes the main coordinates of the writing: “You are an extremely precious witness due to the famous notebooks where you recorded happenings, you described more or less known characters, you sketched the image of a terrifying epoch: especially for the interval 1948-1954 you drew up a staggering document of an inestimable value”.⁹ In the same interview, the speaker makes his own self-portrait by revealing the inner motions, the fears, inhibitions, suffering, thus configuring a painting of the unseen silence as a reflex of the social life, marked by a hostile history, whose tragism is transfigured by his literary creations. We can consider stylistic refinement as a consequence of assumed suffering: “[...] the diary is the most interesting creation from the biographic and spiritual point of view, because here I express myself in a most authentic and sincere manner”.¹⁰ The terror atmosphere, confesses the writer, is concretized in the investigations made by the Securitate [secret police], under the form of Stalinist-like trials, in the indoctrination by political and ideological education, culminating with the summum of dehumanization in the communist prisons. To round up, the writer gives a definition of the post-war period: “That was the atmosphere in the country after 1944, when the tragic and radical ideological, political, and cultural overthrow.”¹¹ In other words, the diary imagery resumes 50 years of Romanian history in a single sentence.

Anticommunism does not exclude objective observations on the cultural life, it contains notes regarding the fact that poetic, theatrical, and epic creations were published during that period, although the ideological pressure did not make possible for masterpieces to appear. As a translator, he underlined that during the communist period there was also a circulation of works from the world literature, although the Romanian writers who had not left the country did not have the freedom of express themselves according to their real value.

Even if the post-Decembrist period does not make the object of the diarist writing of Pericle Martinescu, he still continued to reflect on the political and historic factor, offering pertinent reflections in his interviews, that is to say, after 1990 there was a compensating tendency, a search for freedom at all costs; there was much writing and publishing on anaxiological criteria. All that picture was called in an original manner – *the dictatorship of*

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ Ibidem.

liberty. Nevertheless, the post-totalitarian Romanian culture is trying to remake the link with the interbellic culture, without being convinced that it would reach the same value level. Despite physical vulnerabilities, old age keeps the wisdom intact enough to propose an optimistic prognosis for Romania, asserting that *this country will never disappear*, although it is possible that the unforeseeable future might bring political *adventures*, which will transform, in time, into a history with *more terrible* events than the ones already known.

Despite the distrust with the mutations occurred in the Romanian society during the various periods of history, the journalist has the conscience of a *homo cogitans* located either in the middle of the events, or at the desk, to filter the events, because he is the man involved in the relationship with time, oscillating between the solitude and the wish to communicate. Consequently, the greatest part of the memoirs is represented by the phenomenology of the relationship between the political decision makers and the majority of the governed people.

In the second chapter, *The Work*, we contemplated the creation in its entirety, and proposed its systematization, each subchapter being dedicated to another form of exposition and to another literary esthetic formula. The first chapter, entitled *Romanul Adolescenții de la Brașov* [The Novel <The Teenagers of Brasov>] is written under the sign of the two keywords: *love* and *revolt*. We mention that this book can be read from the perspective of a novel of knowledge, of love, but also as a bivalent text, document and fiction. Using the perspective of homodiegesis, the narrating character, teenager Horia, is part of an epic scenario projected on the background of the time, represented by “Andrei Saguna” High School of Brasov. Although the novel contains several biographical elements, the authors is keen on specifying in the book *Visul cavalerului* [The Knight’s Dream] that it had not been written with a view to pinpoint some biographical data, despite some similarities. With the art of an explicit poetic art, the interview granted to Dan Petrasincu in the newspaper *Rampa* in 1936, the year when the novel was published, contains interventions, explanations, disambiguities related to *Adolescenții de la Brașov* [The Teenagers of Brasov]: “I don’t know if it’s a confession, if it’s a document or if it’s <literature proper>. Yet, I can say that it has something of all of them, and nothing of them all. [...] What I wanted to do with this novel was an act of bravery: to pinpoint the action in space and time [...]”.¹² The echoes of the *interbellic science of living* are not ignored by the novelist, whose characters are marked by the experiences that they exteriorize by aid of a pathetic rhetoric. The complexity of the protagonist, who is both narrator and actor, allows for locating some elements subordinated to the concept of *donquixotism*, considering the teenager’s creed, defined by innocence and terribilism, as well as the ability to transfigure an uncomfortable *realia*, by aid of a *utopia* to which the hero aspires. By using the techniques

¹² Idem, p. 11.

of the modern novel, the auctorial instance valorizes introspection, psychological analysis, significant details, achrony alternating with chronology, affective and involuntary memory, simultaneization of the discourse level with the diegetic one. George Călinescu had a favorable opinion on this novel, underlining the author's ability to reveal the psychological mutations of the characters facing the puberty drama: "While evoking this age, the authors shows vibration and a sense of lyric situations. The nocturnal gesture of some girls in a school dormitory who receive a serenade from their colleagues delicately defines the teenage soul."¹³ Without wishing a simple reprint of his work, having intervened on the text proper (published in 1936), Pericle Martinescu reprinted it in 1991. If one compares the two editions, separated by a time span of 55 years, one can notice the transformations occurred in the Romanian language and the adoption of an important number of neologisms, which illustrates the linguistic evolution of the writer (and of the epoch). The attempt to restyle work was achieved by giving up the elements of pretentious discourse. The recurrence of adjective forms was eliminated in the second edition, whose writing proves simplicity and refinement, as well as propriety of terms, which still do not exclude the valorization of the connotative potential. We consider that *Adolescenții de la Brașov* [*The Teenagers of Brasov*] could be categorized as an *ionic novel*, as it contains some elements specific to this typology: the heterogeneous character of the world depicted, the focalization on the inner space, the discovery of subjectivity, the dramatization of existence, the passionate forms of love feelings, the relativization of space and time coordinates, the appropriation of reality by reflection, the discontinuous character of the narrative, generated by the involuntary memory and by the narrative achrony. Without waiving formulas consecrated by the traditional novel, Pericle Martinescu valorized the possibilities of modern epic, by using, at the composition level, the insertion of non-literary text in fiction; we are talking about the letters where the high school student Dav motivated his suicide. The modernity of the novel is also confirmed by the option for the topicalization of the city world and for introducing the typology of the intellectual character, all these being considered by the literary critic Nicolae Manolescu as defining features of what he calls, by using a metaphor taken from the language of architecture, an "Ionic novel".

The second chapter, entitled *Poetul: poezia între modele și căutarea sinelui* [*The Poet: Poetry Between Models and the Search for One's Self*], pursues another coordinate of Pericle Martinescu's creation, the lyric work. The poetic text oscillates between two antinomial elements, *realia* and *utopia*, or between structures with iconic value, namely the symbolological and mythological connotations. Although he was contemporary with Martin

¹³ Calinescu, G., *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent*, 2nd revised and completed edition, Ed. Minerva, Bucharest, 1982, pages 966-967.

Heidegger, the lyric self excludes the existentialist pessimism, his work remains a continuous search for the self, within the inner balance, concretized in an expressive and concentrated manner along the two volumes: *Sunt frate cu un fir de iarbă* [*I Am the Brother of a Leaf of Grass*] (1941) and, *Balada morții lui Edgar Poe* [*The Ballad of Edgar Poe's Death*] (2003). A polyedrical construction reuniting an asymmetrical variety of themes and motifs, the first volume of poetry can be understood as a metaphorical remake of the autobiographical element, an essential source of inspiration. The thematic eclectics may be understood as a proof of the writer's intellectual mobility, but also as a form of modern thinking for which literature is built on literature, by aid of intertextuality and interculturality. The unity of the volume resides in the reinterpretation of myths, without excluding reflections on the sacred dimension of the existence. The topicalization of history is doubled by the erotic one, generating a permanent valorization of the world cultural imaginary, understood as a summum of archetypes, whose structure presupposes a fluid content and a constant form. We mention the fact that the apparition of the writing was welcomed at the time, as it results from the notes published in the contemporary press by Ștefan Cuciureanu or Paul Lahovary. Nevertheless, what followed was an interval when Pericle Martinescu's work was no more subject to literary criticism. The volume entitled *Balada morții lui Edgar Poe* [*The Ballad of Edgar Poe's Death*] is centered on two key concepts: balladic and hermetic, which illustrates the Romanian writer's sensitivity to the flux of ideas of the American literature, as well as in the Romanian one. We observe the valorization of all possibilities allowed by the inter-genre character of literary forms: by keeping the supernatural, fictitious, ballad-like framework, the poet develops complex descriptive pictures. The vision unity that can be noted throughout the entire work of Pericle Martinescu valorizes the ludic character of the split attitude, which the auctorial instance constantly proposes both in the memoirs *Visul cavalerului* [*The Knight's Dream*], where an Ego communicates with and Alter Ego, and in his poems, where he substitutes his own identity with that of Edgar Allan Poe, who has become an initiator, a psychopompous character leading the way of his younger colleague into the unknown: "*Wandering / Through astronomy*".¹⁴ In the poem [*The Ballad of Edgar Poe's Death*] we discover lines that prove good knowledge of folklore-type culture, but also a sound appropriation of the consecrated philosophical systems: time is understood in its relative dimensions, it is geometrized under the form of a sphere, which induces the idea that death means coming back to a point which allows for evolution, so that such experience excludes the feeling of fatality, since it presupposes another form of the *living*: "Included in your cycle/You rest and will be seated/On the highest throne:/ A Living

¹⁴ Ibidem.

come back from the dead”.¹⁵ A hybrid creation with numerous biographical elements, envisaging the tumultuous existence of the American poet, [*The Ballad of Edgar Poe's Death*] contains in its deep structure a symbolic nucleus, marked by erudition and visionary force, but also the obvious vocation for the intertextual and intercultural insertions.

The third subchapter, *Historian and Critic: The Impact of Lovinescu's Impressionism* brings into the discussion Pericle Martinescu's hypostasis as literary critic. We mention that the author mentioned above wrote several volumes in which he achieved some memorable portraits: *Figuri în filigran* [*Filigree Figures*] and *Umbre pe pânza vremii* [*Shadows on the Canvas of Time*], along with the works containing the majority of his chronicles, published in the press of the time: *Retroproiecții literare* [*Literary Retroprojections*] respectively *Existențe și creații literare* [*Existences and Literary Creations*]. The monograph dedicated to Costache Negri imposes by the rigorous discourse and fundamented observations, determined by the access to unpublished documents, valorized in an adequate manner. The vocation for encyclopedism, the wish to encompass phenomenology of receiving Eminescu's lyric poetry were the base of the complex volume entitled *Odiseea editării "Poeziilor" lui Mihai Eminescu în prima sută de ani. 1884-1984* [*The Odyssey of Editing Mihai Eminescu's "Poems" in the First Hundred of Years. 1884-1984*]. A contemporary of Eugen Lovinescu, Pericle Martinescu is circumscribed into the novatory trend, therefore he might be considered a post-Lovinescian. The impressionistic character of formulation and the discourse subjectivization both in the texts of literary criticism and in this memoirs, illustrate the author's adhesion to the flux of novatory ideas circulating at the time. Being attracted to the impressionist esthetics, the critic avoids cultural clichés, by promoting an original, pertinent analysis containing numerous affectogenic formulations. The analysis of the works does not exclude the biographical vision of the authors envisaged, thereby achieving new connections regarding the relation epoch-history-creator. Another feature of Pericle Martinescu's literary criticism is that the investigated author is located in the trail of the system of interbellic values, thereby achieving a link between epochs, and not a hiatus.

The texts on the volume *Retroproiecții literare* [*Literary Retroprojections*], reproduced from the journalism of the time, reveal that the auctorial instance preserves the historic context, the effervescence of the younger generation of intellectuals and the *vibration of the soul*, all these having the ability to generate interest of the receiving subjectivity for a historical interval marked by esthetic and ideological complexities.

The volume entitled *Existențe și creații literare* [*Existences and Literary Creations*] evidences the authors; specific rigorousness, which offers well-structured information related to

¹⁵ Martinescu, P., *Balada morții lui Edgar Poe*, Ed. Ex Ponto, 2003, page 15.

the presentation of the concept the definition thereof, to the representatives and their significant works, the characteristics of the memoir literature. The remarkable erudition, the projection of the event and of the ideas at a philosophical level makes him assert that his value judgments of, his own interpretations involve an *inner dialectics*.

The study *Costache Negri* brings to the reader's attention the complexity of a historical and cultural personality projected on the political, social, and literary background of the time; since the work is a monograph, the author valorizes the biographic dimension, the character's relationship with family members and the relations between him and the national and the European context.

With regard to the volume *Odissea editării "Poeziilor" lui Mihai Eminescu în prima sută de ani. 1884-1984* [*The Odyssey of Editing Mihai Eminescu's "Poems" in the First Hundred of Years. 1884-1984*], Z. Ornea emphasizes in his article [*How Eminescu Was Edited*], published in *Romania literara*, the author's merits and appreciates his extraordinary intellectual effort: "It is a useful and very worthy scientific service, even if, I repeat, the analytical part of each edition, is openly to frugal from a textological point of view, nevertheless, the essential things are said there."¹⁶

The volume *Umbre pe pânza vremii* [*Shadows on the Canvas of Time*] is marked by the self-confessional character and it represents, at the same time, a form of self-knowledge; the diarist's reflections, along with the ones of the memorialist, reunite the descriptive techniques in equal proportions, alternating analysis with lyric observations. Denominated *portrait sketches and episodes*, these diary segments are characterized by technical dualism: on the one hand, there are used some arguments of certain documentary value, on the other hand metaphorism is cultivated as main source of expression.

Unlike other critics, Pericle Martinescu avoids malicious expressions, cultivating an appreciative criticism, where the positive tone, encomiastic formulations and favorable quotations are redundant, as seen in the writing [*Filigree Figures*]. His work envisages, first of all, recomposing the first half of the 20th century, with all its literary successes, but also with its limitations, especially in the ideological area. The existence of a comparatism *in nuce*, noticeable throughout the entire study of literary criticism, proves that the author distinguishes between the occidental culture and the marginal culture, which generally pertains to the East-European space, which is undergoing an evolution process and in a perpetual attempt to surmount the gaps. The writer imposes the interculturalist concept of *pride*, as a fundamental feature of great cultures, in relation to *marginality* or *periphery*.

¹⁶ Ornea, Z., [*How Eminescu Was Edited*], *România literară*, no. 2/2001
http://www.romlit.ro/cum_a_fost_editat_eminescu

Following our research of studies of literary criticism, we notice the presence of principles of Lovinescian impressionism: each analysis, note, summary or detailed comment reflects the initial emotion, the impression as an element generating affectogenic lexical structures and esthetic images. Thus we motivate the presence of a subjective writing in a text whose hybrid condition aspires to the status of a scientific one. Aware of the risks of oblivion, he decides to recover the articles published in periodicals, staking on the pragmatism of reuniting them in a volume, which demonstrates the intention to come to support the readers and to the reception of this own work. If his diaries contain numerous confessions, where he minimizes his talent, his creativity, his value as a writer, in his criticism volumes we notice that the author adopts another register, he regains his self-confidence by assuming, with a certain emphasis, the merit to have promoted in the Romanian culture the works of some writers such as André Malraux, William Faulkner, Nikos Kazantzakis, Luís Vaz de Camões, Yasumari Kawabata etc. There are books which generate ideas that will be submitted to public debate in the post-Decembrist period, considering that, at the publishing date, such ideas had a subversive character in relation to the propaganda discourse.

In the fourth subchapter, [*Frontier Literature – Borderline Between Document and Fiction*] we tried to present the diary text having the generalized support of all diaristic creations published. Starting from a series of theoretical studies, considering the evolution of the memoir genre, we noticed that some elements defining the diaristic writing allow closing up to the belletristic style, the rhetoric of expressivity, where the syncretism of styles, genres, and forms emphasizes the principle of authenticity as an invariable by which national literature can access universality. Studying the memoir texts, we found that the auctorial modesty is a constant in his confessions, since the author repeatedly expresses his doubt with regard to the presupposed value of his own work, minimizing any possibility for the posterity to be tempted by the contents of ideas and by the expressivity of his creations. The five volumes *Confesiune patetică* (1936-1939) - *Vulcanul iubirii* [*Pathetic Confession* (1936-1939) – *The Volcano of Love*]; *Uraganul istoriei - Pagini de jurnal intim - Anul 1940* [*The Hurricane of History – Pages of Private Diary – The Year 1940*]; *Bombe și boemă* (1941-1944) [*Bombs and Bohemia* (1941-1944)]; *7 ani cât 70* (1948-1954) [*Seven Years As Long as Seventy* (1948-1954)], or *Jurnal intermitent* [*Intermittent Diary* (1945-1947), (1964-1985)] fall into the category of drawer diaristic literature, considering that not even today (2013) his work has not been published entirely, such being the objective of Ex Ponto Publishing House. Drawer literature is an ineditous field, considering that none of his diaries was published before 1989. The readers' interest for frontier literary forms which transmit information forbidden for half a century justifies our approach. Memoirs of authors who refused or could not publish their work under

the conditions of a totalitarian regime, marked by connivances and duplicity, constitutes another argument of our approach. The diary operates, at a philosophical level, with an alternance between the concepts of temporality and atemporality, associating the political and social fields to the first concept, and the literary and cultural field to the latter. The two perspectives are projected into a supertemporal dimension, which sometimes confers the discourse a certain metaphysical perception in some pages. Without imposing himself a timetable, the diarist notes the events in accordance with his personal disposition, the intensity of perception, his physical and mental state, the financial precariousness, the solitude, his erotic experiences, either successful or fulfilled. An important aspect of his work is the documentary dimension by which are established his relations with outstanding personalities, such as Emil Cioran, Nae Ionescu, George Călinescu, Mircea Eliade etc. In the article entitled [*Sentimental and Political Diary*] published in *Romania literara*, Al. Sandulescu identifies the peculiarities defining the writer and the man Pericle Martinescu. Appreciating his vast culture and refined spirit, the bohemian character and passionate temperament, such features depicting him as a member of the *generation* of 1927, the author of the article offers both biographical data and characteristic elements for the psychological portrait. An incurable music fan, the writer is a solitary romantic who imposes by his intellectual seduction and illustrates a typology which reunites the features of Don Juan with some elements of donquixotism. “The diary is for him a <confessor, brother, friend, in whom he sincerely confides his joys and sorrows and alleviates his soul>”.¹⁷ The borderline feature of diaristic writing is intuited by Al. Sandulescu, as well, who asserted that the [*Diary*] can also be received as an *indirect novel*.

We recognize, throughout his entire memoir creation, recurrent themes and motifs: the eros, the solitude, the voyage, the political skepticism, as many sources of a complex of states oscillating between two extremes: ecstasy and disappointment. Another observation regards the interest for evoking the national or personal past, without excluding the presentation of events contemporary with the author, so that the dynamics of synchrony and diachrony is established, at the stylistic level, by a constantly alternation of perspectives.

The fifth subchapter entitles *Ego Inflation – Visul cavalerului [The Knight’s Dream]* proposes an approach of an autobiographic text. In this volume, the dialog of the two allegorical characters, Ego and Alter-ego, discloses the writer’s creed related to the possibility to express himself in a historic period marked by interdictions. “I have neither the liberty, nor the courage to talk, as I should, of the present. Even what I have told so far there have been truths disclosed only halfway, with the seal on my lips, because the whole Truth can never –

¹⁷ Sandulescu, Al., *România literară*, no. 10/2003. [http://www.romlit.ro/un_jurnal_sentimental_i_politic]

and even more less today! – cannot be brought out to light.”¹⁸ The character called Ego claims to have been involved, during his whole existence, in numerous *bodily* and *spiritual* experiences, but he considers himself a betrayed man, disappointed by history, with regard to socio-political aspirations and ideals. As far as literary methods are concerned, he confesses that he has preferred authenticity, avoiding all forms of embellishment of his biography, which could falsify his existence. The confessions represent *half-told* truths, because the communist regime did not allow that truth be expressed in public, and they are the topic of autobiographical fiction.

The fluidity of memoir discourse includes the alternation of narrative with interpretation, buy the exchange of cues between the two textual instances. Being interested by the valorization of referential elements, the writer is trying to recover the experiences he lived in the past, with a view to transmit information related to the recent history, the way of life, the existence as such, with references to the interbellic and totalitarian periods, by using the collage technique, because the images described are disparate, pertaining to different moments and circumstances. Being an autobiographic feature, the work mentioned above selects sequences activated by the involuntary memory flow. The allegorical character called Ego, in his dialog with Alter-ego, assumes the role of remembering, because he presents, even if fragmentarily, some sequences cut off from the past.

Subchapter six, entitled *Excursie în Ciclade* [*A Trip to the Cyclades – Voyage Journal*] depicts the human existence from the perspective of a *touristica*, the writer being in the hypostasis of *homo viator*. Although he traveled to various countries, he feels attracted by the Hellenic landscape and culture, which is illustrated by publication of this volume. The declared aim of the writing is to offer the landmarks of an imaginary voyage, by a bookish challenge presupposing that the reader is interested in assuming the literary message. Impressed by the archeological sites, the author being in a hypostasis of an erudite connoisseur of the Hellenic antiquity, discovers unexpected forms of communication in the space defined, at the diarist discourse level, as follows: *the hieratic epos of the stones*. The exit from the matrix space represents a significant moment, included in the voyage ceremony that the author, in his hypostasis of *homo viator*, prepares with application, lives intensely and go through by the avidness of a being that yearns to go beyond his gnoseological limits. From his point of view, the voyage at sea is the most attractive way to get to Greece. The diary imagery includes the primordial elements – earth, water, air – which are equivalent to just as many form of the way that the man goes from the phase of *ignorant* to the phase of *initiated*, into another world that had been strange to him so far. *Excursie în Ciclade* [*A Trip to the Cyclades*] transforms, as

¹⁸ Martinescu, P., *Visul cavalerului*, Editura Ex Ponto, 1998, pages 148-149.

he said, into an invitation to *contemplation and reverie*, a constant in his writings, because Pericle Martinescu is attracted to getting to know the space first hand, by traveling, and the time by getting involved in history.

In chapter three, [*Epistolarum: The Thaumaturgical Effects of Writing*], we projected a radiographic perspective for the entire correspondence of the author, which allowed us to approach the system of ideas resulted from a complex personality, who has a lucid, even though sometimes tense, conflictual, or tolerant relationship with himself and with existence. By our thematic and analytical approach of the 154 letters, we discovered that a constant of his correspondence is represented by the confessions containing the veritable elements of a poetic art of confession, aiming at expressing his inquietudes related to the impossibility to write anymore, the difficulties related to publishing books during the communist regime. Many of the letters refer to the trips he took as a writer both in the country and abroad. If *voyage* represents a supertopic, his letters do not lack the debates over the historic and political context, and at the same time they contain details related to his family life, the act of creation, the discomfort caused by age and illness, along with reflections on solitude, all these growing more and more acute in the last part of his life. Biographical elements are recurrent in his correspondence, they contain numerous data regarding the family, the writers' closes or farther kin, and the death of some of these is signaled by some reflections on the implacable moment. Polycentrism, a redundant element of his epistles, allows for finding some landmarks on a possible emotional map, which includes his natal Viișoara, Constanța of his secondary school years, Brașov of his adolescence and Bucharest of the literary bohemia. The seashore city was breathing echoes of Tomis antiquity, associated with the aquatic endlessness, the Dobrudjan village represents the return to origins, and the telluric force, while the atmosphere of Brasov evokes the teenage years, being at the same time a source of inspiration for his novel. The writer discovers another emotional center, the capital city of the country, where he would live most part of his life, will make a family and build a career. Here he feels the need to come back, because it gives him a sense of comfort and protection, unlike the other zones of the country, in relation to which there is an obvious difference of civilization.

Pericle Martinescu left behind him a work that was published during his life and posthumously, but also a history, recorded by the diarist regularly or intermittently, under the form of an authentic drawer literature, until September 1989. An active participant, witness, and victim of History, a bohemian, *admirer of feminine beauty*,¹⁹ without abandoning philosophical, political, and cultural reflection, the writer lives remarkable events intensely,

¹⁹ Sandulescu, Al., *România literară*, no. 10/2003. [http://www.romlit.ro/un_jurnal_sentimental_i_politic]

with passion or despair. His diary pages reveal an author with intellectual talent for memoir writing.

By this study we have attempted to outline a personality that remained in quasi-anonymity, although all his publications compose the image of a complex author, who should be discovered, considering that the image of the *man* who witnessed the Romanian history for almost a century, along with the image of an artist who knew how to transfigure this world, with his specific ways.

This thesis represents just a phase in the research of the studied author's work, because we cannot claim that this is an exhaustive interpretation. We are aware of our limitations, which are inherent to any form of research. Therefore, we mention that the solutions advanced by us engage an opening toward the subsequent research of the Romanian literary phenomenology, such as it is illustrated by a complex creation comprising a significant time span.

In conclusion, the work entitled *Pericle Martinescu. A Monographic Study* may envisage widening the canon proposed by the modern Romanian literature, by publishing a professional edition of the complete works, including the correspondence of this author.

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