

GABRIELA ADAMEȘTEANU. STUDIU MONOGRAFIC

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**GABRIELA ADAMEȘTEANU. A MONOGRAPHIC
STUDY**

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Summary

Gabriela Adameșteanu, a prose writer with a well-shaped epic profile, known in the vernacular literary space for her modern vision, but also for her irony, self-irony, pastiche and fragmentary notes which foreshadow postmodernism, represents one of the most marking figures of the Romanian post-war literature. In spite of her indisputable talent and large capacity of absorption (of time, history and a humanitarian background), the works of Gabriela Adameșteanu seem to be insufficiently explored. Her works are sometimes simplified and easily sent to a certain area (lobbied, battered), the author herself being perceived and labelled on most occasions just as the author of *Dimineață pierdută* (*Lost Morning*). Șerban Axinte tries, by means of a monograph dedicated to the author, published at Editura Tracus Arte in 2015, to re-exploit the works of Gabrielei Adameșteanu. He manages, through an intuitive and well-applied reading, to counterbalance things and bring forward to the reader's attention novels such as *Drumul egal al fiecărei zile* (*The Equal Path of Each Day*), *Provizorat* (*Temporality*), but also her dense short stories, which through their thematic universe (couples' shutdown, loneliness in couples, the image of the individual suffocated by fade and rigid institutions) can seem very actual and close to our contemporary, postmodern sensibility.

Given this context, *the choice of this research theme* is strictly connected to the idea of bringing to surface those works worthy of being analysed, with multiple openings (we're talking here of historical, psychological, or even philosophical resonances) which unfortunately have entered a shading cone. Perceived as an ensemble and unitary block, Gabriela Adameșteanu's works are value precisely through their analogies and through the connections which they raise, through their interdisciplinary approach. Her works therefore lend themselves to a philosophical analysis (we have consulted, in this respect, Karl Jaspers's book, *Texte filosofice* (*Philosophical Texts*), translated by George Purdea, and have investigated the concept of characters and *phatic existence*, which we have tried to correlate with the works in question). On often occasions, the novels and novellas of Gabriela Adameșteanu appear to be truly „anthropologic documents”¹.

¹ Daniel-Henri Pageaux, *Literaturageneralășicomparată* (*General and Compared Literature*), translated by Lidia Bodea, introduction by Paul Cornea, Iași, Polirom Publishing, 2000, p. 93.

On the other hand, *the interest concerning this theme comes also from the need of highlighting and deepening of the types of discourses alternating in her texts*. The works of Gabriela Adameșteanu depict a *trauma discourse* (which coincides with a space of terror, with the negative experience and malefic side of history), and an *ontological discourse* (many of Gabriela Adameșteanu's novels and novellas follow and trace several identity paths). History seems to govern it all, but apart from history, the dramatic sublayer of each text opens to us, as readers, the existence of each character, an existence which can be filtered through their own comprehensive horizon. History is, therefore, only the central reason towards which life stories gravitate.

Our *research* is meant to become a *monographic study*, and thus the critical, interpretative (*close-reading*) or theoretical observations made along the thesis concern the entire body of works of Gabriela Adameșteanu.

In what concerns the *used methods*, our endeavour will be grounded on the psycho-critical method, grounded by the well-known work of Charles Mauron, *De la metaforele obsedante la mitul personal (From Obsessive Metaphors to Personal Myth)*. This method is centred on the hypothesis according to which each text depicts an „associative network”² around which a „group of ideas and images”³ is condensed. Focusing, therefore, on the specificity of the works, the psycho-critical method „searches for associations of involuntary ideas within the intentional structures of the text”⁴. By comparing her texts, we have noticed that our associative network is connected to the *obsession of history*, an obsession which will be permanently correlated with the character's destiny. By means of this critical method, we will explore the thematic levels shown by the works of Gabriela Adameșteanu. We will address the preferred or obsessive themes of the author which grasp the ideas in her novels. Surely, the felt magnetism and option for *such* themes instead of others seems to be involuntary, a part of that inevitable process Llosa was talking about. One must say that the described events are palpable, but to a large extent, they are also a confession of the author's experience and subjects deriving from such experience, all of whom are an intense preoccupation of the author. Lastly, the paper

² Charles Mauron, *De la metaforele obsedante la mitul personal (From Obsessive Metaphors to Personal Myth)*, a French translation by Ioana Bot, critical notes, bibliography and notes for the Romanian edition by Ioana Bot and Raluca Lupu, Dacia Publishing, Cluj-Napoca, 2011, p. 41.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 42.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 24.

presents the major themes, those themes from which Gabriela Adameșteanu cannot be healed. The writer makes a conjunction between history and affective landscapes, and the thematic to which she refers to is not at all short-sided, but on the contrary, is developed on a large register.

The PhD thesis is structured in five chapters. The first chapter, *Repere biobibliografice (Biobibliographical Landmarks)*, is focused on highlighting the empirical and creative self, summarising, as the title suggestively puts it, a series of relevant information concerning the biography and bibliography of Gabriela Adameșteanu. This chapter's enterprise will be grounded especially on the autobiographical pages in her interviews, but also on her autobiographical writing from *Anii romantici (The Romantic Years)*.

Due to the fact that our research aims to become a monographic study, we will try to extract relevant information, making a correlation between the biography and the works, where we will highlight their intersection points. Both her autobiographical writing style, as well as her interviews clearly reflect the writer's artistic beliefs and the manner in which she sees her own works. The entire works of Gabriela Adameșteanu will be modelled according to the vision she expresses in the interview she awards Nicolae Băciut: "One thing a writer cannot afford is to lie". She will interiorise and assume such a vision and in time this will become a sort of reliable *ars poetica* of the writer.

A free and non-conformist spirit, Gabriela Adameșteanu can hardly be framed in a literary generation. In fact, this non-adherence to a generation the author mentions in her confessions, this "fierceness" of feeling literature in her humanitarian side and in her intensity, of living with it as far as possible from ageing, but also far away from all sorts of theories, literary concepts, labels, re-confirms her love and devotion for literature. The writer must be, before everything else, in agreement with the themes she deals with and with the characters to be constructed, she must fall in love with that voice which facilitates her path towards the configuration of a destiny. Once she finds the way, Gabriela Adameșteanu will pour the story on the page, surely, in accordance with her specific rigor. Before trying to be convincing for the reader, Gabriela Adameșteanu wants to "convince" herself that she is on the right path. Thus, her life experience will become an instrument of work for her, and everything will be converted to text. Gabriela Adameșteanu will cast, in a well-articulated, well-anchored in reality prose, *the unbearable side of life* (communism, control, abjections, poverty, triviality, mediocre existences).

Incorporating theories concerning the character's physiognomy (Salvatore Bataglia, *Mitografia personajului – Character's Mytography*), concepts concerning the ontological dimension (Karl Jaspers) and theories related to the thematic universe (Mario Vargas Llosa), we have noticed that the gravitation and alternation between the horizon of being and the historical and social horizon seems to be the fundamental note of Gabriela Adameșteanu's writing. The thematic grid of this epic universe is therefore structured on this logic of the double: destruction of love and the de-humanization of the individual, by means of an alienating history. Both from the author's confessions, as well as from her works, one can depict the fact that each anxiety has a historical correspondent. We will therefore see that the epic nucleus is configured around an omnipresent historical shiver, and that the text is nurtured from the great voices of History, but not in any manner, but with a purpose, having as a goal the "recovery of the traumatic history"⁵.

Gabriela Adameșteanu's novels seem to be shaped on the same pattern. If analysed from the aspect of the thematic universe, one can notice, indeed, a deep theme. The large points of intersection can be depicted with no efforts (*the obsession of history*, the massive concentration on *fear*). The author's effort (so well managed that it never gives the impression of an artefact) is to trace step by step the manner in which the individual casted in a place of confusion and lack of order lives and loves. There is one question crossing the entire epic universe of Gabriela Adameșteanu's works: how can individuals constrained by the environment, cornered in a small, claustrophobic space, already fitted with a memory of trauma, in which history becomes a character, love?

We have tried to point out also Gabriela Adameșteanu's journalistic activity. As a journalist, Gabriela Adameșteanu meets a series of indispensable attributes for this profession: civic involvement, ethical vocation and critical nature. Her articles from *Cele două Românii* (*The Two Romania's*) have at times a pronounced polemic spirit. Gabriela Adameșteanu militates for an ideal and sanctions certain defects of society. Strongly connected to reality, with an intransigent position, Gabriela Adameșteanu will not tolerate cowardice, not compromise.

In the second chapter, *Romanele Gabrielei Adameșteanu. Univers tematic (Gabriela Adameșteanu's Novels. The Thematic Universe)*, we will attempt to demonstrate that her favourite themes (levelling, uniformity, individual's de-humanization under influence of

⁵ Adina Dinițoiu, *Recuperarea trecutului traumatic în Provizorat de Gabriela Adameșteanu și Carteașoaptelor de Varujan Vosganian (The Recovery of the Traumatic Past in Temporality, by Gabriela Adameșteanu and The Book of Whispers, by Varujan Vosgnian)*, in „Transilvania”, no. 8, 2015, p. 50.

totalitarianism, temporary love) gravitate towards some characters whose autonomy is largely diminished by the “hermetism” generated by extremist doctrines. Freedom remains, in this context, a delicate subject, the characters being fearsome and intimidated by the coercion mechanisms. Devastated by an aggressive history (which becomes a central theme), the characters wander away, often being presented in a dissatisfaction condition. They are anchored in a daily and small, but incredibly burdening reality.

Without claiming to be exhaustive, this chapter aims to argue that in Gabriela Adameșteanu’s novels the political framework, destabilizing and violent towards the individual, always interferes with the intimate one and fits the psychic of characters with visible internal ruptures. A world, therefore, where even the few tenderness feelings occurring at time are quickly stifled. In other words, if “history is off its hinges”, love, at its own turn, is not what it should be. Love is as evanescent as the character’s expectations, who confronted with a major question, could not state their needs, as they are defined by a continuous search.

In the first sub-chapter, we have analysed the themes approached in her debut novel, *Drumul egal al fiecărei zile (The Equal Path of Each Day)*, namely the theme of adolescence and the ethical team. The book begins with the confessions of Letiția Branea, an adolescent which bitterly talks about the dull and sterile life she is forced to live. By means of these confessions and revealing, through the exposure of the thoughts and feelings of a woman suffocating in the proximity of family, *Drumul egal al fiecărei zile (The Equal Path of Each Day)* shares some common points with *Memoriile unei fete cuminți (Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter)* (Simone de Beauvoir): the primary need of intimacy, the protagonist’s desire to overcome a claustrophobic, provincial and conventional environment, the thought that life should be something else, the permanent self-depreciation of the present moment, all these aspects admirably illustrate the configuration of the feminine soul. Symptomatic for these analogies are some paragraphs which scrutinize adolescence in its universal meaning.

Moreover, the novel also highlights, as it progresses, the *ethical theme*. There are two distinct moral attitudes coagulating between the two masculine characters (equally important in Letiția’s life). If Petru Arcan, a clever nature, makes his own path by managing to overcome obstacles, the case of her uncle Ion is different, as he is baffled by the idea of an intact dignity and by his lack of capacity of being versatile. Born under the sign of an excessive justice spirit, which will determine his lack of success, uncle Ion will fail and lose opportunities.

Adolescence, with all its afferent turbulences (riot, indignation, prudery) is marked by the essential ethical question.

Within the second chapter we have analysed the thematic universe explored in *Provizorat (Temporality)*. In this novel, the feminine “areas” are configured around the theme of the unwanted pregnancy, by means of which the author highlights the woman’s fear of getting pregnant during a period of pro-child birth politics and in which abortion could have serious repercussions. At this point, the predominant condition is that of culpability, as Letiția cannot detach herself from guilt.

The theme of the file shows us that each of our lives hides an aspect which cannot be confessed, a masked dimensions, hidden from the public eye, and that any fumble in the past will end in shivers.

The theme of love is projected on a supremacy of the temporal, revealing the fact that the heroine, lacking logic thinking, must live with intensity, namely to feel both the spell and poison of the love feeling. Her restlessness impulse and passion perish, however, under the impulse of this infusion of temporality. Love takes the path from trust to suspicion and distrust, the final moment (that of acknowledgement) being marked by a chain of disappointments.

I would be tempted to say that, apart from the evident thematic stake (Gabriela Adameșteanu highlights very well a love story in the communist period), the author shows us the heart-breaking mechanism through which a relationship is destroyed, the manner in which affection, trust and sympathy in the couple can be lost, on the background of a trivial reality, but especially on that of some affective anomalies and traumas. The affective insufficiency “applied” on an aggressive ordinary life which abounds in restrictions gives birth to that “suicidal atmosphere” Andrei Bodiș was talking about.

Engrafted, therefore, on the subject of some disarticulated lives, constructed as according to the principle of uncertainty, *Provizorat (Temporality)* does not register only the events of a country localized under the sign of Evil, but illustrates life stories of characters driven by anaemia and exhaustion.

Through *Fontana di Trevi* Gabriela Adameșteanu suggests a polarized world, full of contrasts. The novel is modelled by a space of tensions, contradictions and opposing elements: the conflict between those in the country and those who left, the intergenerational gap and ruptures, communism vs. capitalism, freedom vs. coercion, totalitarian regime vs. democracy,

presence vs. absence, all these aspects support this tense dynamic and are depicted by Gabriela Adameșteanu with a careful delicacy. A common element of all of Gabriela Adameșteanu's books is fear, the terror induced by the Romanian Secret Police, an evil organism which controls in a paralyzing manner the lives of all her characters. If *Provizorat (Temporality)* tells us that "your best friend turns you up to the Secret Police", from Petru's speech (the character suffering the most from "mal du pays") one can conclude that there is no world in which files do not exist, Romania being therefore described as "the country of generalized suspicion"⁶. Sickness, aging, loneliness, lack of tolerance (felt both at a couple's level, as well as on a social scale, as one can depict the intolerance between those within the country and the emigrant community), remain the themes around which the novel gravitates, ageing being perceived in itself as a sickness one cannot get healed from.

Dimineață pierdută (Lost Morning), a remarkable novel in terms of themes, „orchestrated” by some strong narrative voices, Vica Delcă, “an incurable optimistic gossip”⁷ and Ivona Scarlat, “a rare example of the «high society» from old times”⁸, and, in the other temporal dimension, Sophie Mironescu (“the adulterine woman”⁹), and Margot (“the chaste adolescent, haunted in her imagination by the temptations of passion”¹⁰), is distinguished by its perspective. The novel has narrative amplitude and indicates, as Virgil Podoabă underlined, „a pantagruelic desire of assimilation and incorporation of the world”¹¹. In an article concerning the “negative experience of time”, Virgil Podoabă clearly formulates the change of paradigm Gabriela Adameșteanu makes when publishing *Dimineață pierdută (Lost Morning)*. One can clearly see that beginning with *Dimineața pierdută (Lost Morning)*, the novelist adheres to a different narrative „program”: „From a fairly simple prose, of quotidian banality, apparently calming, but actually dramatic, the author makes a turn towards an epic both evocative and stenographic under the aspect of the managed discourses.”¹²

⁶ Alex Goldiș, *Țara biografiilor falsificate (The Country of Falsified Biographies)*, in „Vatra”, no. 5, May, 2019, p. 20.

⁷ Eugen Negrici, *Literatura română sub comunism. Proza (Romanian Literature under Communism. The Prose)*, Fundația PRO Publishing, 2003, p. 428.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Virgil Podoabă, Gabriela Adameșteanu: *Experiența negativă a timpului (The Negative Experience of Time)*, in „Calende”, no. 1-2-3-4, 2001, p. 53.

¹² *Ibidem*.

Gabriela Adameșteanu seems to continue the narrative line which begins with Hortensia Papadat - Bengescu by exploring a universal theme: the theme of family. The action in *Dimineața pierdută (Lost Morning)* will be amplified by following the path of some families (Ivona and Niki, Sophie and Ștefan Mironescu). These relationships have a deeply falsified aspect in their structure, being associated with the preservation of appearances, with the conventional dimension and a sort of suffocating negligence. *Dimineața pierdută (Lost Morning)* depicts at some point a confession of Ivona which could help us navigate towards drawing the entire physiognomy of her marriage: “Life with Niki will be increasingly difficult, his tendency towards running away from responsibilities will be increasingly higher and he will be less willing to carry any weight on his shoulders.”¹³ Ivona draws a true biography of absence, invoking Niki so often precisely to compensate for him being absent.

Moreover, we have noticed that the general climate depicted by *Dimineața pierdută (Lost Morning)* is that of ageing. There is a thematic nucleus configured around the atmosphere of crepuscule, which is organically correlated with old age, sickness and alienation. Reminiscence, in itself, is associated with old age. Ivona and Madam Delcă can no longer be anchored in the present. The present has nothing more to offer them, being marked by despair, compact loneliness and almost full indifference of the others.

The theme of the lost morning becomes a central motif of the book. This is a morning of searching for one’s self-identity, human values, personal histories which reveal feelings, states, sensations, long lost illusions, a morning sewed from conflicts and disquietude, but also from small scores of past idealization. Lastly, it is a morning strategically placed under the *human aura*, under the aura of life.

Through the third chapter, *Repere ale nuvelisticii (Landmarks of the Short Stories)*, we aim to achieve a general picture on the short stories, but also to draw the main directions concerning their themes. The short stories of Gabriela Adameșteanu have sometimes been received with criticism and have been associated with a certain type of monochord literature, which is highlighted only by the reiteration of some monotonous themes, worthy of being integrated in the neorealism Mircea Iorgulescu was talking about. Today, a series of literary critics (Daniel Cristea-Enache, Paul Cernat, Șerban Axinte) deal with the re-exploration of these

¹³ Gabriela Adameșteanu, *Dimineața pierdută (Lost Morning)*, 6th edition, definitive, Polirom Publishing, Iași, 2012, p. 395.

promising texts, managing to prove that the substance of Gabriela Adameșteanu's short stories lies in the narrative valorisation of the characters' internal feelings. In other words, the cliff-hanger moment is to be found in the internal reality of the character (in *Dăruiește-ți o zi de vacanță* (*Give Yourself a Vacation Day*), the adventure moves on the internal feelings of Cristian Pătrașcu) and occurs through the battle of a panicked conscience.

Related to the prose of Anton Holban due to the exposure of those "purely soul-related problems" Nicolae Manolescu was talking about, Gabriela Adameșteanu's prose is individualised through the psychological branch and through the approach of some themes related to the characters' psychic. The prose of Gabriela Adameșteanu becomes a space of internal explorations in a world in which disquietude imposes self-analysis and introspective exercises, exploration of obscure areas and destroyed illusions. Gabriela Adameșteanu therefore tells a story about the authority and rigidity of convention, about conformism, about the unsettling dictatorial voice of the "must", about hot days and undefined moments, and last but not last, about the overwhelming burden of solitude.

Regardless of which of the following short stories we're talking about – *Dăruiește-ți o zi de vacanță* (*Give Yourself a Vacation Day*), *Vară-primăvară* (*Summer-Spring*), *Neliniștea* (*Unquietness*), *Dialog* (*Dialogue*), *O plimbare scurtă după orele de serviciu* (*A Short Walk After Work*), *Gara de Est* (*The Eastern Train Station*), *Ora de navetă* (*The Commute Hour*), *Scurtăinternare* (*Short Hospitalization*), *Pe zebra* (*On the Zebra Crossing*) – we can notice the fact that Gabriela Adameșteanu's short stories become radiographies of the immanent structures of the characters. Relevant in this respect is the perspective of critic Cornel Moraru, namely the fact that the perspective of her short stories is "clearly analytical and psychological."¹⁴ *O plimbare scurtă după orele de serviciu* (*A Short Walk After Work*) talks about the familiar hours spent in the company of colleagues, filled with coffee and cigar pauses, but also with gossip or personal discussions. *Vară-primăvară* (*Summer-Spring*) is built on the structure of the malady, with reminiscences from *Dimineață pierdută* (*Lost Morning*). *Gara de Est* (*The Eastern Train Station*) is a text about atonement, *Dăruiește-ți o zi de vacanță* (*Give Yourself a Vacation Day*) is nurtured from the main character's failure, but all of these novels connect with each other and meet at the crossroad of different common points.

¹⁴Cornel Moraru, *Nelinișteșitandree* (*Unquietness and Tenderness*), in „Vatra”, 20th of May, 1980 *apud* Gabriela Adameșteanu, *Varăprimăvară*(*Summer-Spring*), Polirom Publishing, Iași, 2012.

În *Neliniștea (Unquietness)* we meet a brutalized Dinu, whose conduct betrays the encapsulation in an extremely familiar and compromised relationship. The conflict of the Marta-Dinu couple is born from both directions, felt both by Marta and Dinu at all levels of their existence. We have selected, in this respect, two paragraphs which prove this premise: “He always leaves me alone when I need him, she thought.”¹⁵, “With her glum and always discontent face, does he believe that a woman naturally looks like this?”¹⁶. The prose borrows voices of anima and animus, the text speaks from frustrations, but the partners of the couple cannot find a common language, an ambitus and a proper tone of communication. Unquietness is alive in all the short stories of Gabriela Adameșteanu, being associated with a pronounced state of fear. Anchored in a tragic reality, Gabriela Adameșteanu’s character cannot remove himself from the background of the *fatum*.

În *Dăruiește-ți o zi de vacanță (Give Yourself a Vacation Day)*, a novella with an immense psychological potential, this social space of oblivion is highlighted by an existence disputed between crises and defined through postponement and resignation. Here, Gabriela Adameșteanu deals with, such as mentioned by Eugen Simion, some of the anterior themes: “the psychology of the failed individual, the sadness of mediocre matrimony and attempts new themes, such as the fight for power in a confined human community and the reveries and melancholies of the loner.”¹⁷ The epic line of the text is relatively simple. The novella describes the life of Cristian Pătrașcu and the tragic implications of such an existence. The tension poles seem to appear from a permanent need of the main character of self-assertion, counterbalanced by the inability of taking action. If the text does not depict any bold or risky action (except for the day of vacancy from the end of the text), because actions seem to vanish in the air, the adventure moves in the interior of the character.

Cristian Pătrașcu is dominated by an instinct rich in contrasts and conflicts and has, at the same time, a tendency (inhibiting and torturing at the same time) of seeing especially the unfavourable side of things. The entire paradigm of the novella is built on this lack of trust in the future, on this suffocating defeatism, on these fears which overwhelm him. By means of the

¹⁵ Gabriela Adameșteanu, *Vară-primăvară (Summer-Spring)*, Polirom Publishing, Iași, 2012, p. 49.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

¹⁷ Eugen Simion, *Scritori români de azi (Contemporary Romanian Authors)*, vol. IV, Cartea Românească Publishing, Bucharest, 1989, p. 456.

central character, Gabriela Adameșteanu shows us the secret connection installed between social anxiety and certain fumbling.

The content of the novella can be easily summarised: an excursion into the interior life of Cristian Pătrașcu, clerk, a character „downgraded” both on a professional level, as well as on a social scale. *Dăruiește-ți o zi de vacanță* (*Give Yourself a Vacation Day*) is a novella centred around the profile of this man, delicate, rigid in gestures and movements, left with no argument when his boss nominally addresses him. A man with an existence devoid of satisfactions, sometimes dealing with an unhealthy fear. His discourse becomes a memorial of failure, as the obsessive feeling of failure constantly reappears in his conscience. With a maniac tendency of over-analysing things, he observes his reactions and prudery, and becomes aware of the fact that any malicious comment is meant to throw a curve ball. On the other hand, Cristian Pătrașcu is a good observer of conventional visits and worn down marriages. Moreover, the main characters identified himself with Cosmovici, a sort of alter-ego, a livid individual with a tragic and severe air.

Our protagonist has a sort of exaggerated affectivity and emotional conduct. In these conditions, it is almost impossible for him to separate reality from the unreal space of his perceptions. Anything can aggravate the condition in which he is found. On several occasions, he is forced to have a monologue with himself in order to quiet down, but any attempt of escaping from the monopole of his torturing thoughts is a fiasco. The character’s soliloquies must be understood, I believe, as a release, as a manner through which the hero tries to unwind. Gabriela Adameșteanu’s main character talks to himself as talking with another person, and the monologue can be perceived, according to Cornel Moraru, as “a nervous breakdown of some repressed, long-time hidden energies”¹⁸.

The dramatic accents derive not only from the characters’ shortcomings and frustrations, from their tendency of uniformity and levelling, but also from a certain emotional lack of fulfilment. All the characters’ attempts of meeting are unsuccessful, fail. Partners neglect each other. This is the dilemma of Gabriela Adameșteanu’s characters. They cannot live together, nor separately. Cristian Pătrașcu does not enjoy his conquered loneliness, he remains a voluntary prisoner, caught in the trap of his own mind. The excesses of the main character, the striking contrast between desire and inability of taking action and his lack of patience, all these betray the

¹⁸ Cornel Moraru, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

choleric type. Anxiety is generated, however, more by the fact that things lie under an unbeatable sign, a fact acknowledged by the main character. Cristian Pătrașcu does not spare his feelings towards himself and adopts a conduct lacking any concession in terms of his own persona equally noticeable during the narrative. The die is cast, in front of him lies only failure. This explains his fear. Any day-dreaming is in vain, as his predictable life lies before him, reduced to an already-known evolution, which has long-lost its substance and magic and which only tastes of isolation. Daniel Cristea-Enache points out this aspect: “The perspective is that of a biography which has exhausted its centres of interest, its episodes of seduction, the youth promises of Life. Gradually, this capital aspect will be more and more flaccid. The large horizon dreamt by the character many years ago has become smaller. Open spaces decrease and become limited. Options are closed.”¹⁹ The narrowing of perspectives could be, therefore, the actual explanation for the almost uncommunicable sadness felt by our character.

In *Dăruiește-ți o zi de vacanță* (*Give Yourself a Vacation Day*), relationships wear the mask of insufficiency, and the unhealthy element and the devitalization are projected on the theme of the couple. Even after the divorce, the bothering image of his wife returns to our main character’s memory.

With *În tramvai* (*On the Tram*) and *Ora de navetă* (*The Commute Hour*), the author slightly modifies the register, as the two novellas seem to be “slices” of life. This is a literature incorporating the street with all its proximal elements: the block, the tram, the yards, the patches of concrete, all these being configured with a narrative ability which allows the reader to visualize everything. *În tramvai* (*On the Tram*) and *Ora de navetă* (*The Commute Hour*) can be read as *best of* novellas from the series of those attempting to re(present) the street. In these conditions, betting on elements from the street arsenal, the writing receives a street “texture”, at being at the same time a deeply visual one.

În tramvai (*On the Tram*) is a story in which the characters’ voices move impetuously, in an over-agglomeration of opinions and ideas which the reader cannot fully decipher. *Ora de navetă* (*The Commute Hour*) and *În tramvai* (*On the Tram*) capture life’s pulse in the means of transport and commuters, who expose during their trip a part of their ideas. The commute is always, on the other hand, a divided character, an *in between*, permanently on the road. He becomes a character who wants to fill his time by telling stories. The language register fluctuates

¹⁹ Daniel Cristea-Enache, *Drumulascuns* (*The Hidden Path*), in „Românialiterară”, no. 1, 11th of January 2008.

according to the character's culture and age, but the overlapping of voices is a recurrent theme which can be found in almost all of Gabriela Adameșteanu's novellas.

In the world built by Gabriela Adameșteanu, people are slaves to routine and owe to customs. These individuals, dominated by automatisms, live their petty lives and cannot manage to escape the pattern of the vapid lives. The author pushes her characters in a small world, hallucinatory precisely through sordid and the malefic side. She localized her characters in an almost terrible reality, exploring his vulnerable dimension: the phobic universe, the fear of disease (a deepened fear which is read in an hypochondria key), the doubts and hesitations and the aboulia. Gabriela Adameșteanu's character feels perplexed, is paralysed before life. The daily spectacle, flattened in excess, becomes a nightmare at times also due to the fact that Gabriela Adameșteanu's character seems to be an insatiable being, who is always searching for frameworks of reception, but does not discover them. The dramatic echo is born from the characters' structure with blurts of pessimism, from their deep routine and wearing base. The novellas seem to be constructed on the structure of some over-sensitive individuals fighting excessive worrying, loss of tonus and the sense of uselessness. The individual's attempt of re-balancing himself is prevented by trivial factors: a request from the boss to pay the subscription, an evasive telephone answer, an improper tone. Any external influence is more than disorienting, meant to vanish the character's wellbeing, being perceived abusively, as damaging. It is precisely in the moment when the character feels the balanced rhythm and the rhythmic development of his vital activities when the balance is broken, becomes fragile. Gabriela Adameșteanu manages to create a micro cosmos departing from the affectivity of some individuals.

Chapter four, *Personajul literar în proza Gabrielei Adameșteanu (The Literary Character in Gabriela Adameșteanu's Prose)*, seeks the deepening of some elements concerning the construction of the character. We follow, therefore, the manner in which the character is metamorphosed in the work. On the other hand, according to his position in the literary work, we talk about characters appearing during the entire length of the narrative or on a fragmentary basis. At the same time, we also meet characters of a reflective type (of an attitude, idea, environment or a certain social category). Such a character is Vica Delcă.

Gabriela Adameșteanu's characters depict events, trace frameworks, seam a sort of historical slide show, most of them fulfilling the function of depositary character. The character becomes the witness of a spasmodic history, being involved, at the same time, in conflicting

relations. We wish to highlight the fact that if there is a certain macro-history in *Dimineață pierdută (Lost Morning)*, there is also a certain micro history, deriving from the first. The literary character suggested by Gabriela Adameșteanu must actually live in the middle of these spasmodic historical events and must go through a varied range of emotions (fear, terror, suspicion) and situations (uniformity, anonymization). Given these conditions, the analysis of the different types of characters can represent another criteria and manner of reading and ultimately deciphering Gabriela Adameșteanu's prose, representing, in itself, a reading grid.

The fifth sub-chapter, *Publicistica (Editorial Works)*, consists of a series of reflections and a short retrospective of Gabriela Adameșteanu's activity as a journalist. Through *Obsesia politicii (The Obsession of Politics)* and *Cele două Români (The Two Romanians)*, Gabriela Adameșteanu draws an almost apocalyptic image of a drifted Romania, marked by instabilities and inadvertences felt both at a historical level, as well as at a social and cultural level. Her editorial Works integrate the opinions of some cultural personalities from exile and touches on a few tensed subjects. The interviews advance as they depict some notions meant to define the dehumanizing Romanian totalitarian "paradigm": *hostage mentality, infinite transfer of responsibility*.

As a journalist, Gabriela Adameșteanu is a fascinating figure due to her spontaneity, but also due to the manner in which she uses information and manages to draw on reality, rotating in a varied angle of spheres. Dealing, therefore, with different subjects, some of them of a sensitive nature, such as the problem of institutionalized children, of the generalized pessimism and of things made in a slipshod way, Gabriela Adameșteanu proves to be a prolific observer of the psychology of the Romanian people. According to her opinion, Romanians are engrafted with the "catastrophic feeling", as each event gathers, according to their mentality, apocalyptical accents. Moreover, Gabriela Adameșteanu criticises on every occasion the fragility and defeatism of Romanians, her entire discourse being structured on an instinct of equality and orality, manifested whether we're talking about articles dealing with political and social events, or those concerning gender issues.

Through her articles of psychologic investigation, Gabriela Adameșteanu draws a radiography of the Romanian mentality, observing that the Romanian mental space is individualised by the cultivation of the negative aspects of life, by a self-destructive nature and by a tendency towards catastrophe. Gabriela Adameșteanu does not forget to register traits such

as boorish, triviality, lack of discipline, resignation, megalomania, improvisation and amateurism. She discovers the apocalyptical feature of the Romanian structure, translated by a sort of scepticism, of circumspect nature and generalized depression: “People normally with no justification for complaint regarding their living publicly repeat that things are worse than in Ceaușescu’s days. They have already internalised the catastrophic feeling inoculated with determination, on a daily basis, by multiplied voices”²⁰.

Gabriela Adameșteanu is currently an important representative of the Romanian post-war literature. In *Istoria critică a literaturii române (A Critic History of the Romanian Literature)*, Nicolae Manolescu includes her in the chapter dedicated to the sixties prose, because according to the criteria of the biological age, Gabriela Adameșteanu belongs to the 60's generation, although her debut was late (in 1975, with the novel *Drumul egal al fiecărei zile (The Equal Path of Each Day)*). Nicolae Manolescu underlines the fact that “writers who began to publish after 1970 were innovative firstly due to their manner of considering reality. Metaphorically speaking, their perspective can be called short-sided. The eye comes very close to a reality which has become very porous”²¹.

From the perspective of an epic paternity, Gabriela Adameșteanu’s prose is localized in the ancestry of the inter-war psychological novel (Camil Petrescu, Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu), with numerous correspondences, either thematic, in terms of attitude or stylistic with Proust or Joyce. Gabriela Adameșteanu does not use, however, the specific methods of the psychological analysis novel in an exclusive manner, namely the interior monologue or the flux of conscience, and alternates them with the free, indirect style or sometimes with the perspective of an objective narrator. All these narrative modalities, characteristic either to the objective-realist, or to the modernist-psychologic prose, can be found within Gabriela Adameșteanu’s literature in different proportions, shades or configurations, and this present PhD thesis attempted to explore a part of this epic universe of a great complexity and relevant narrative and aesthetic presence.

²⁰ Gabriela Adameșteanu, *Cele Două Români, articole și fragmente memorialistice (The Two Romanians, Articles and Diary Fragments)*, Institutul European Publishing, Iași, 200, p. 49.

²¹ Nicolae Manolescu, *Istoria critică a literaturii române, 5 secole de literatura (A Critic History of the Romanian Literature. 5 Centuries of Literature)*, Paralela 45 Publishing, Pitești, 2008, p.1198.

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