

ANTON COSMA – MONOGRAPHIC STUDY

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The thesis, entitled *Anton Cosma - Monographic study*, aims to present the activity of the literary critic and historian Anton Cosma. We learn from some sources that he was a less communicative nature on a social level, but deep and faithful to romanian literature, distinguished by unusual literary theories. It should also be emphasized that this process took place with the help, in particular, of the critic's daughter, Ela Cosma, a devoted daughter and a loyal admirer of her antihero¹, the father. Details behind the scenes of the family, as well as the materials still unknown to the public, led this approach to the construction of a new puzzle piece, which can be added to the romanian literary consciousness. Anton Cosma is an essential figure in the discovery of the romanian novel, the multitude of approached writers, which he gathers in several volumes, contributes to the configuration of a complete image of literary critic.

In carrying out the research approach, the work meets the following objectives: presentation and promotion of new materials, highlighting information still unknown to the public, identification of all articles from *Vatra* magazine for a complete and qualitative image of the literary critic, analysis of journal articles, interpretation of his critical method. The scientific approach considered the application of research methods, such as: analysis, synthesis, interview, comparison and investigation. Next we will notice that the approach to the topic of this doctoral thesis aims at the comprehension and explanation of the critical work, the generalization and transition from individual to general highlights in a qualitative manner characteristic of the entire textual portfolio belonging to Cosma.

The construction of the thesis is made of four chapters and subchapters that intend to illustrate the activity of Anton Cosma in romanian literature in the post-war period. The first chapter, *The Mirror of the Biographical Ego*, concentrates information from personal life that takes place against the background of the critic's career. In this area we have the opportunity to find out

¹ Paula Constantinescu, *Interviu cu Ela Cosma despre Anton Cosma*, în revista „Vatra”, numărul 10-11, Târgu Mureș, 2022, p. 169.

some news related to certain materials that he has never published, such as some typed files of the volumes of criticism, variants thereof and posthumous volumes in progress. At the same time, issues related to his employment with the literary magazine *Vatra* were mentioned, such as the content of letters addressed to Dan Culcer and Romulus Guga, and also here, we find a presentation of his career as a teacher until his employment in the magazine's newsroom. Posthumously published volumes were not omitted either, they were presented as they were born through the author's daughter. The research strategy used in this chapter was based on identifying situations that led to the formation of the unique perspective of Anton Cosma, but the objectives of the chapter were to identify both public and personal information.

Critical contributions in Vatra magazine is the chapter with a large bibliography, made up of all the articles signed by Anton Cosma to the literary magazine in which he worked for twenty years. From the first article signed in 1971 until 1991, it was given the task of commenting on local literature from the perspective of a literary historian. In the case of the second chapter, the comparative research strategy is applied, which will be used in the analysis of articles, where elements related to period, theme, literary concepts are followed. Also, structurally the chapter is divided into three parts (*Critical Hypostases*, *Criticism of the novel*, *Criticism of the genre S.F.*, *Critique of poetry*). For example, in *Critical Hypostases* were gathered all articles that deal with the body of literary criticism, Cosma's perspective on how to apply literary criticism, and in some we find information that configures an overview of the critic. The articles destined for the Romanian novel occupy a major space over the years in *Vatra* magazine, they can be considered elements of connection with elements prior to the volumes of criticism. Cosma's disappointment with the lack of volumes of literary history of the post-war romanian novel thus captures the unchanged attitude of the Romanian critic, because Paul Cernat himself states in an interview (Literary Romania) that the absence of an image of today's literature is increasingly evident. We will identify articles built from seven parts, such as today's romanian Novel, which illustrates the writer's triad - text - reader based on Lotman's ideas, and the depth of the text is the main ingredient in the formation of the contemporary novel. Concerned with poetry, Cosma will open the magazine in a new version with the article entitled Nichita Stănescu and the modern adventure of the elegy, and a few numbers later to continue with George Coșbuc, a forerunner of Lucian Blaga who proves to be a tribute to the Cossack poetry. Among the literary articles we find those destined for the s.f.,

especially that for personal satisfaction Cosma will reserve time to write fantastic prose, which he will keep in private.

The third part of the paper called *Perspectives of Literary and Historical Criticism* illustrates the four volumes of literary criticism along with the new theories about the Romanian novel. With different optics, the volumes contribute to the image of the style that Cosma adopts in the interpretation of the romanian novel. Depending on the order of publication, we have the opportunity to observe the critic in a process of literary maturation, which will accompany the news he assumes in research. The first volume, the romanian Novel and the issue of contemporary man deal with theories of the novel that have as a starting point realism and man. Anonymization and omnilateralism are fundamental ideas that follow modern man in local novels. At first Cosma claims that man is in a phase of anonymity, he is led by history and significant events, the inner plan is thus put in second place, then the man is ambitious by ideals, and then we notice the new man concerned with himself, who will go through an existential crisis and will be aware that time offers him fleeting aspects, so he will forget about ideals and enter, again, the phase of anonymity. The genesis of the romanian novel certainly remains the most discussed book of the critic due to the theories launched. Cosma thinks that it would be good to offer a new image on the origin of the romanian novel, for example, the Transylvanian Pilgrim by Ion Codru Drăgușanu is the one who captures the beginnings of the romanian novel. Also, the present attitude in volume of the author proves to be patriotic, and for this fact the most vocal among the critics is Nicolae Manolescu who will criticize his volume.

Ambient at the thought of being able to bring all post-war authors together, the critic also has the courage in the contemporary Romanian novel, volumes I and II mention around 500 authors of novels, to whom he will assign different types of novels. Of course, the problem from which the study of volumes starts are realism and metarealism and their evolution in the Romanian post-war literature. The strategy adopted by Cosma is the same, that of the classification that promises us a vast study in the area of the local novel. The panorama of the two directions is illustrated through historical events and the way in which they influenced the evolution of the Romanian novel after the Second World War. Thus, in the first volume we follow three historical threads: the Moment of Dogma, of Truth and of Roman meant to offer types of novel and new novelists, while the second volume published in the posthumous version intends to remind even writers in the diaspora area.

Regarding chapter IV, the work marks another unknown face of Anton Cosma, The posthumous work is a chapter intended for poems, comedies and dramas, fantastic prose, works that have been preserved without being published. The reason is understood, especially since the style used resembles subversive literature, and irony is a form of recurring expression. The author seems to have a penchant for neomodernism, but in some places we can also identify postmodernism.

In the end, Anton Cosma pointed out all aspects of the Romanian novel, he remains a valuable literary critic and historian, who fulfilled his dream of sketching the Romanian novel from the primordial state to the critical moments, and then to move towards a modern, metarealistic attitude. There is no doubt that Anton Cosma contributed substantially to the evolution of local culture.