The Challenges of Writing a National Literary History in the Era of Transnationalism: Insights from a Peripheral Literary Space

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Abstract: It goes without saying that during the nineteenth and twentieth century literary historiography tries to define national identities. However, a methodological and paradigm shift occur at the beginning of the twenty-first century when, under the auspices of globalization and the emergence of world literature and transnational literary studies, literary historiography is re-thought as a collective and transnational project. Yet, the asymmetry of the world literary system affects literary historiography too. When it comes to this scholarly genre, the asymmetry is most visible in the fact that in the era of transnationalism, national histories are still written at the periphery. Given the aforementioned observation, this paper a) looks into the challenges of writing literary history in Romania in the age of world literature and transnational studies, and b) tries to explain why a national literary history is still needed and how it can change the way we think about Romanian literature. The starting point of this inquiry is represented by the publication of Mihai Iovănel's Istoria literaturii române contemporane: 1990-2020 [History of Contemporary Romanian Literature: 1990-2020]. In the context of the 'transnational turn' in literary studies, the attempt to write relevant national histories in a peripheral literary space such as Romania is faced, in my view, with two major challenges: 1) the fact that transnationalism manifests itself differently at the periphery and 2) the tradition of Romanian literary criticism and history. The former refers to the fact that unlike central literatures, where transnationalism is shaped to a large extent by migrant writers (those who enter these literatures), in Romanian literature it comprises exiled or migrant writers (those who left Romania and not vice versa) and, to a lesser extent, the literatures written by ethnic minorities. A comparative approach can cast light on this difference. For example, while the thirteenth volume of The Oxford English Literary History is dedicated entirely to migrant and bicultural writers, transnational histories concerning the peripheries, such as History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe, focus on multiple literary spaces and therefore have a different approach to dealing with transnationalism. The latter challenge is represented, as shown by Iovănel, by the long-lasting tradition of the "principle of aesthetic autonomism", which persists even in post-communist Romania. In this regard, this paper aims to show that Iovănel's History... overcomes the above-mentioned hindrances of literary criticism and succeeds in offering an image of Romanian literature not as confined to its national boundaries but as part of the world literary system. Along with other significant scholarly works on Romanian literature as and in world literature, this project is a significant step towards re-thinking Romanian literature as a "literature of the world" (Terian 2015).
Keywords: literary history, transnationalism, Romanian literature, world literature, periphery.

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In their landmark scholarly work on literary history – "Rethinking Literary History – Comparatively" – Mario J. Valdés and Linda Hutcheon start by pointing out that "to 're-think' is not only to think again; it is to think anew."[1] This "anew" refers to a paradigm shift in literary historiography, namely the move from a national to a transnational model. Exactly like the former, the latter model has to be understood contextually. While the first model was dominant from the nineteenth century up to mid-twentieth century and it strove to define national literature (or to put it differently, the literature of the nation-state), the transnational one gained momentum in the age of globalization, migration and decolonization, which reshaped literary studies as a whole. Broadly, besides the usage of larger frames of reference, transnational literary histories are usually conceived as collective projects; they open up to marginal groups, shed light on the great influence that literary institutions have on the production and reception of literary texts, and are interested in cultural mobility through influence or translation.[2] However, in (semi-)peripheral literary systems,[3] such as Romania, national literary histories are still written even in the era of transnationalism. The current regional projects are the result not of local initiatives but of those emerging from the Western academia. A case in point is the four-volume *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe*, edited by Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer, which is part of the Literary History Project of the University of Toronto, led by Mario J. Valdés and Linda Hutcheon.

In this context, the publication in 2021 of Mihai Iovănel's *Istoria literaturii române contemporane: 1990-2020* [The History of Contemporary Romanian Literature: 1990-2020] brings to the fore the problem of writing literary history at the periphery. In light of this, the main questions of this article are: what are the current challenges of writing literary history in the era of globalization in Romania? And why is a national literary history still needed? Although it may seem a "de-synchronized" practice, writing such histories at the periphery can be justified, as I will show in this paper. The main explanation is that the uneven structure of the world literary system affects literary historiography too, which means, applying Said's concept of "traveling theory,"[4] that the "transnational turn" in literary historiography cannot be simply transplanted somewhere else but it has to be adapted to the sociocultural background of the host culture.

Regarding Romanian literature, I consider that the need for yet another national literary history derives from two specific features of this system, which become the main challenges for a literary historian: 1) the fact that transnationalism manifests itself differently at the periphery and 2) the historiographical tradition. In the first part of this paper, I will argue that Mihai Iovănel's *History of Contemporary Romanian Literature: 1990-2020*, published in 2021, overcomes this first challenge, managing therefore to re-think Romanian literature as a dynamic system, integrated in larger and complex networks; in the second part I will focus on showing that overcoming aesthetic autonomism is one of the main requirements for any literary historiographical project that aspires to be relevant in the era of transnationalism.

Re-thinking Romanian Literature: Literary Transnationalism(s)

As I previously mentioned, the asymmetries of the world literary system[5] can be examined at the level of literary historiography too. On the one hand, the asymmetrical structure points to different types of histories and the uneven impact they have on the scholarly debates regarding Romanian literature. Indebted to the national model and focusing on aesthetic autonomism, post-communist literary histories cannot constitute useful instruments in the attempt to re-think Romanian literature. This is why in their inquiries Romanian scholars have turned to transnational projects produced in Western academia[6]. On the other hand, I would argue that the production of relevant literary histories of Romanian literature is based on what Moretti calls, with regard to literary texts, "a compromise between foreign form and local material."[7] In the sphere of literary historiography, the foreign form would refer to the import of methodological and theoretical frameworks while the local material would stand for a specific form of transnationalism.

The existence of multiple forms of transnationalism further reiterates the center-periphery asymmetries. On a first level, there are national literary histories of central literatures, whereas literary transnationalism is shaped to a large extent by migration and postcolonialism. An example is the thirteenth volume of the *Oxford History of English Literature* (2004), which covers the period between 1948 and 2000, and "is devoted to migrant and bicultural writers, and takes up as much space as the volume on post-Second World War British writers."[8] Following Moretti's claim that "hegemony does not belong to those that produce exiles, but to those that welcome them"[9] and taking into consideration the migration fluxes from the periphery to the core it can be said that the emergence of such transnational literary histories is a specific feature of the core literatures. On a second level, transnational literary histories of (semi-)peripheral literatures display a regional transnationalism.[10] Here, the focus is on geographical areas rather than on exile or migrant literature. Even when the latter category is taken into consideration, two differences arise: a) transnational writers from these areas are usually politically exiled writers and, although they represent a large group, their number is smaller than that of postcolonial and migrant writers;[11] b) in these areas the concept of migrant writers refers almost exclusively to those who left these countries and not those who moved here.

However, given the fact that the methodological and theoretical frameworks can be imported, the challenge for any literary historian is to re-think Romanian literature from a transnational perspective using these imported tools and at the same time paying attention to the specific forms of transnationalism inherent to the Romanian literary system. Three main groups of writers could be included: 1) exile and migrant literature, 2) the literature written in Romanian in the Republic of Moldova,[12] 3) the literature written by ethnic minorities. The first group refers to Romanian-born writers

who left the country. Although a significant number of them gained worldwide recognition, their reception at home "was (and in some cases still is) uneven and fluctuating,"[13] as Terian argues. Regarding the second group, despite the common language and the literary contacts that would allow for a transnational approach, the challenge is and will be the political context, which could possibly lead to a relationship between these two literatures similar to that between German and Austrian literatures[14]. The third group is represented to a large extent by writers from Transylvania but also from the Banat and it brings to the fore the need for a literary history pursued collaboratively due to the multilingualism of the literature written in these regions. Interestingly, some of the writers included in this category are exiles as well, among them Herta Müller, which points to an even more complicated form of transnationalism, generated by the overlap between the two groups.

In addition to these three groups, a fourth issue should be taken into consideration: the circulation of literary works and forms through translation and transnational intertextuality,[15] two modes of circulation constantly neglected in literary histories of Romanian literature. Although unequal, these modes of circulation encounter a double route, both from the core to the (semi-)periphery and the other way around. A case in point for the second type is represented by Romanian avant-garde. Thus, the insistence on the aforementioned transnational specificities can finally set literary histories apart from "methodological nationalism,"[16] showing that Romanian literature is, in fact, a dynamic system, and that it should be analyzed as such.

The aforementioned transnational peculiarities of Romanian literature are the most visible in the last part of Mihai Iovănel's *History*. The four chapters that make up this part ("Transnational Maps," "Global Connectivity," "Spaces and Temporalities," and "Towards a Transnational Canon") offer an image of contemporary Romanian literature as and in world literature. Even though this kind of re-thinking can be found throughout the entire history, the last chapter stands out because it manages to bring to the fore almost all of the transnational characteristic mentioned previously.

The exception is represented by the literature written by ethnic minorities but it is an "exclusion" that can be justified. Firstly, as I previously argued, any literary history that delves into this group of writers calls for a collaborative work due to the multilingualism of the literature written by ethnic minorities. Secondly, assimilation plays a significant role. Many ethnic minority authors write, actually, in the Romanian language. Nonetheless, I consider that an in-depth discussion would be extremely relevant, given the fact that, in some cases, these authors play a double role: they are both writers and translators. Thirdly, the extremely low number of ethnic minority writers included in the *History...* has a historical explanation. In their chapter on Transylvanian literary cultures, Neubauer, Cornis-Pope, Kibédi-Varga and Harsanyi note that

> "As Ceaușescu's personality cult intensified, he came to represent both the Party and the nation. The regime embarked on a homogenization of the nation by forcing the Hungarians and smaller minorities to assimilate and by encouraging the Germans and Jews to emigrate ... Faced with hostility, many Hungarian Transylvanian writers felt pressed either to prove their loyalty to Romania and the Party, or to settle in Hungary."[17]

A similar faith had the ethnic German writers who made up the *Aktionsgruppe Banat*, which functioned during the eighth decade of the last century. Although post-communism cannot be understood without communism, in Iovănel's *History...*, the focus on the contemporary Romanian literature involves a less extended temporal axis. Contemporary prose and literature are understood predominantly in relation/opposition to the literature written in the '80s and '90s, when the literature(s) of ethnic minorities had already been affected by acculturation.

At the opposite end, there are the writers from the Republic of Moldova who write in Romanian. Besides the disintegration of the URSS, which led to the formation of a new state, and besides the linguistic factor, the Romanian-language literature written in the Republic of Moldova can be seen as part of Romanian literature because of a synchronization of the two, as Iovănel states: "the rapidity with which the genuine poetry of the twentieth century written in Bessarabia synchronized through Emilian Galaicu-Păun with the peak of the poetry written in Romania – a poetry that, in turn, is connected to the global scene, especially to American poetry – appears to be surprising"[18]. What is interesting is that Iovănel's observation is integrated in the broader discussion of literary import-export, which highlights the fact that this literature is imported rather than part of Romanian literature. Indeed, seen institutionally, literary works such as those written by Galaicu-Păun do belong to a different literary market (they are published in the Republic of Moldova and imported in Romania). However, this does not apply to all writers. Some of them moved to or studied in Romania, had a significant contribution to the evolution of Romanian poetry (in particular) – as is the case of *fracturism* –, and their books were published by Romanian publishers. Consequently, they are much better assimilated to Romanian literature. This difference can be noticed in Iovănel's *History...* as well. For example, writing about the literary magazine *Vatra*, the author says that "at the beginning of the 2000s, it [*Vatra*] supported the emergence of *Generation 2000*, offering publishing space to Marius Ianuș, Mihail Vakulovski and Alexandru Vakulovski."[19] Of the three, only Ianuș was born in Romania. Moreover, their position in Romanian literature is strengthened, as can be noticed from this observation, by legitimizing authorities, such as literary journals.

The discussion exile and migrant literature follows multiple paths. It is understood in terms of export as well as import, it refers to both literary works and criticism, and it tackles emigration as "a point of resistance" in contemporary Romanian fiction. All these delimitations shed light on the multifaceted nature of such literary phenomena. It can be

said that at stake here is not a descriptive but an analytical approach of the literature of exile/migrant literature. In other words, Iovănel does not proceed to simply acknowledge the literary products and writers that emerged from these socio-political phenomena but rather he tries to include them in the broader aim of re-thinking Romanian literature. An illustrative case is the issue of what Iovănel calls "recovering-import," a concept that refers to writers who had episodic relations with Romanian literature and who were imported to Romania only after they became internationally canonized:

> "The issue of import has been discussed as complementary way to the export of Romanian literature. This has happened not so much through translations from world literature, as by giving up the language criterion as a sine qua non marker of belonging to the Romanian literature and reclaiming certain writers who had episodic relations with Romanian literature, either because they were born in Romania and tackled Romanian topics (Panait Istrati, Paul Celan, Herta Müller) or because they entered, through various contexts, the gravitational field of Romanian cultural system."[20]

This "recovering-import" was a central issue in post-communist Romania both in theory (debates, scholarly works) and practice (through the publication of these writers' books either in translation or in the original). Another mode of approaching migrant literature is in terms of literary production. While most scholarly works focus on Romanian-born migrant writers who are successful abroad, Iovănel does not focus only on them but also on the rich domestic production of literary texts that foreground the topic of emigration, a production that is in many cases, based on the authors' experiences as emigrants.[21]

Regarding the export, a process through which the literature written in Romania can gain visibility on the global market, the discussion falls predominantly on translation strategies, institutional agents and cultural policies. Thus, it can be noticed that the issue of the global visibility of Romanian literature is approached mainly from a materialist standpoint. An example of successful Romanian writers abroad presented in the *History...* is that of Mircea Cărtărescu, who "found another way to achieve 'mondialization,' of accessing a global network, namely intertextuality, a transnational mechanism where he weaves the local material among global references. This material is, first and foremost, Bucharest"[22]. In short, it seems that to be exportable, the domestic literary material is dependent on the need to find a way of writing for the world and on the network of literary institutions involved in the production, circulation, and reception of literature.

Towards a History of Romanian Literature in Sync

I suggested previously the existence of a sort of compromise between "localized" forms of transnationalism and imported methodological and theoretical frameworks in any attempt to write national literary histories in the era of globalization and transnational literary studies. In the first section, I tried to argue that a national literature is still relevant if and only if the national is re-thought beyond the boundaries of the nation-state, that is as a "node" that intersects with other nodes in a network.[23] Here, my aim is to focus on the methodological updates that are required by any transnational historiographical project.

In his introduction to the fourth part of the third volume of *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe*, namely the one on literary historiography, John Neubauer argues that the slower emergence of nation-states in these areas generated, in the twentieth century, the appearance of national literary histories that intertwine the organicist model with the notion of aesthetic autonomism.[24] However, in Romanian literary historiography and criticism, aesthetic autonomism persisted until recently. It permeated successively the literary historiography and criticism written in the first half of the twentieth century, during communism[25] and after communism[26]. While in the first period aesthetic autonomism can be understood in terms of synchronization and in the second as a strategy of avoiding socialist realism, in the third phase it appears to be completely de-synchronized. To put it differently, the problem that arises refers to the use of a historicized notion in a completely different context. In my view, leaving behind aesthetic autonomism in favor of an updated methodological framework has a double function. Firstly, it would solve the most visible and serious problem of being out of sync,[27] and by doing so, it could lead to a synchronization of Romanian literary history with homologous literary historiographical projects conducted in Western literary systems. Secondly, it can contribute to what I would call a "domestic synchronization" (i.e., between literary history and scholarly works).Regarding the limits of an aesthetic perspective, Mario J. Valdés and Linda Hutcheon draw attention to an updated methodological framework, where they mention the need for an approach that pays attention to literary institutions and extraliterary contexts which shape the production, circulation, and reception of literary texts:

> "a comparative literary history such as we are proposing would foreground these methodological frameworks (hermeneutic, post-structuralist, post-colonial, feminist, and so on) and directly address its own theoretical assumptions regarding both texts and contexts (socio-cultural, economic, political, aesthetic)."[28]

In the Romanian literary system, where the battles were won almost all the time by the proponents of aesthetic autonomism, the absence of ideological modes of reading literature or any another contextual understanding of it (except for ethnic determinism) is just the logical consequence. In the "Introductory Note" to his history, Iovănel takes note of this absence and calls for a post-Marxist materialist re-reading:

> "The way I invoke post-Marxist materialism has also an explicit polemical rationale. This ideological model is almost totally absent from the Romanian criticism of the last decades. A primitive version of Marxism, manifested as a form of socialist realism, had a hegemonic role in 1948-1964, that long first decade of communism in Romania. Some of the critics of this period managed, during the 60s and 80s, to produce sophisticated pages of Marxist criticism ... In general, the following generations of critics rejected Marxism in the 70s and 80s (the last two decades of communism) as well as during the decades following the fall of communism in 1989 ... Although it [literary criticism] encountered multiple methodological updates from various directions, even now Romanian critics are suspicious of ideological modes of reading literature."[29]

Thus, I consider that the methodological relevance of *History of Contemporary Romanian Literature: 1990-2020* lies, among other qualities, in the attention paid to extraliterary contexts that shaped the literary material in post-communist Romania. By doing so, Iovănel stands out among the literary historians[30] – including those from the last decades – who were and still are "allergic" to any materialist mode of reading.

A key concept proposed by Iovănel that outlines his methodological approach is that of "points of resistance"[31], discussed at length in the eight chapter of the second part, "The Evolution of the Literary System and Literary Criticism." During the transition period, the field of literary production in Romania as well as in the other parts of Eastern Europe is marked by a set of macro-structural changes that affect the production and distribution of literary goods: the subsidies formerly available to writers are trimmed by governments promoting market reforms; economic restructuring had an unfortunate impact on the cash flow of citizens who also have a wide range of other products to buy now; and publishing houses – who were among the first to be privatized in Romania – saw a drop in sales.[32] At the same time, the domestic literary production is undermined by the increased number of translations, followed by a decrease in the number of literary titles translated ("Percentage of fiction and poetry in the total number of translations was sharply decreasing from 80% to 50% by 2005"[33]). In addition to this, the evolution of ideology has to be mentioned as well. As shown by Iovănel, while the first decade of post-communism is marked by the hegemony of the right-wing, which "corresponds to the material changes determined by the transition to neoliberal capitalism," the 2000s encounter an ideological re-balancing between the right- and left-wing.[34] In this challenging context, writers found themselves looking for new modes to "remain relevant after communism." Borrowing the concept of "points of resistance" from Stanisław Lem, Iovănel sheds light in this chapter on the dialectic process between the points of resistance (which, in the absence of political censorship, have to be found by writers themselves[35]) and literary material. More exactly, he emphasizes the manner in which extraliterary contexts and ideological orientations pervade the literary material at different levels: forms, themes, stylistics and so on.

One of the numerous "points of resistance" encountered in Romanian literature after '89 is new media. The access to multiple layers of technology in post-communist Romania has an influence, Iovănel argues, not only on the production and distribution of literature, manifested through the increased role of blogs and electronic/digital literature but also on the textual level, through a linguistic update.[36] Another "point of resistance" is represented by emigration. The issue of emigration (as a social phenomenon as well as a literary theme), discussed in the first part in relation to the need for a broader understanding of Romanian literature, evinces at the same time the methodological approach used in the *History*. "Emigration" and "exile" are concepts used in relation to literary systems and authors as well as to the domestic literary materials. The successive migration fluxes – at the beginning of the 1990s, determined by the fall of communism, and especially after 2002, when visas were not required anymore for Romanians who wanted to go to any UE country, and 2007, when Romania was integrated into UE – pervaded the domestic literary production as literary themes.[37]

By leaving behind aesthetic autonomism in favor of a materialist approach to literature, Iovănel manages to synchronize Romanian literary history with homologous international projects. What I intend to stress out is that even though Valdés and Hutcheon, as I showed before, ask for renewed methodological and theoretical frameworks in comparative literary history, this can also be required and achieved in national ones. This need for methodological and theoretical updates is even more visible when understood in relation to the historiographic tradition. Except for E. Lovinescu's *History of Contemporary Romanian Literature* (published in 1926-1919), to whom Iovănel's model is indebted, no other canonical literary history moved explicitly beyond aesthetic autonomism.

Besides the synchronization with comparative literary histories conducted abroad, *History of Contemporary Romanian Literature: 1990-2020* contributes also to a "domestic synchronization" with other historiographical projects and scholarly works. The turning point in Romanian criticism is represented, as Iovănel also mentions, by the publication in 2009 of Andrei Terian's *G. Călinescu. A cincea esență* [G. Călinescu. A Fifth Essence].[38] A significant number of scholarly works have reshaped Romanian criticism since then. Some of the most relevant collective research projects that aim at re-thinking Romanian literature by using larger frames of reference and updated methodological tools are: Mircea Martin, Christian Moraru, and Andrei Terian (eds.), *Romanian Literature as World Literature* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), the special issue "Romanian Literature in Today's World" in *Journal of World Literature* (Brill, 2018), and Maria Sass, Ștefan Baghiu, and Vlad Pojoga (eds.), *The Cultures of Translation in Romania* (Peter Lang, 2018). To these can be added historiographical projects such as *Chronological Dictionary of the Romanian Novel from its origins to 1989* and *Chronological Dictionary of the Translated Novel in Romania* – largely used in quantitative research by young scholars such

as Ștefan Baghiu, Ovio Olaru, Daiana Gârdan and Emanuel Modoc – as well as the forthcoming *Dictionary of the Central-European Novel*, edited by Adriana Babeți. However, what is rather unusual in the Romanian literary system is the fact that if scholarly works are pursued collaboratively, Romanian literary history remains to the present an individual project.

In my attempt to synthetize the answer to the question of why we still need a national literary history, I would start by paraphrasing Terian's statement: because in order to become a true literature *for* the world, Romanian literature has yet to learn how to see itself as a literature *of* the world[19]. Even though relevant scholarly works have been produced in the last decade, literary histories have remained faithful a) to understanding the "national" as being confined to the borders of the nation-state and b) to aesthetic autonomism. To overcome these hindrances would mean, first and foremost, to re-think the national in relational terms, as a node of a larger network. Secondly, it would require a methodological and theoretical update. Given the fact that it manages to break this out of sync pattern, Mihai Iovănel's *History of Contemporary Romanian Literature: 1990-2020* represents a serious attempt to synchronize literary history as a scholarly genre not only with comparative literary histories but also with domestic criticism, which in the last decades strove to re-think (both again and anew) Romanian literature. Nonetheless, although a pathway has opened, there is still a lot to be done. It remains for future projects do delve into an updated, collaborative re-reading of the entire Romanian literary system.

Notes:

1. Mario J. Valdés and Linda Hutcheon, "Re-thinking Literary History – Comparatively", *ACLS Occasional Paper* 27 (1994): 1.
2. For a synthetic description of the features of transnational histories in the era of globalization and world literary studies, see Mario Valdés and Linda Hutcheon, "Rethinking Literary History – Comparatively" and Andrei Terian, *Critica de export* (București: Editura Muzeului Literaturii Române, 2013), 275-278.
3. I understand (semi-)peripheral literatures in terms of import, export, language (minor or major) and international canonization. Given these criteria, in the category of (semi-)peripheral literatures would fall those literatures defined by the scarcity of national writers who are internationally canonized, literatures which are written in minor languages (as Romanian) and in which the import weighs more than the export.
4. Edward Said, "Traveling Theory," in *World Literature in Theory*, ed. David Damrosch (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 115: "Such movement into a new environment is never unimpeded. It necessarily involves processes of representation and institutionalization different from those at the point of origin. This complicates any account of transplantation, transference, circulation, and commerce of theories and ideas."
5. See Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature," *New Left Review* 1 (2000): 55-56.
6. For example, in Christian Moraru and Andrei Terian, "Introduction: The Worlds of Romanian Literature and the Geopolitics of Reading," in *Romanian Literature as World Literature*, ed. Mircea Martin, Christian Moraru and Andrei Terian (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), 1-32. The authors turn to the conceptual framework (the concept of "node" is central in their introduction) provided by the comparative literary histories which resulted from the Literary History Project, led by Mario J. Valdés and Linda Hutcheon.
7. Moretti, "Conjectures," 58.
8. Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, *Mapping World Literature: International Canonization and Transnational Literature* (London & New York: Continuum, 2008), 61.
9. Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (London & New York: Verso, 2013), 36.
10. See, for example, Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer (eds.), *History of the Literary Cultures of East Central Europe: Junctures and Disjunctures in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, vol. I-IV (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004-2010); Mario J. Valdés and Djelal Kadir (eds.), *Literary Cultures of Latin America: A Comparative History*, vol. I-III (Oxford University Press: New York, 2004); Steven P. Sondrup, Mark B. Sandberg, Thomas A. DuBois, and Dan Ringgaard (eds.), *Nordic Literature: A Comparative Literature*, vol. I (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2017).
11. Rosendahl Thomsen, *Mapping*, 86.
12. See Terian, *Critica*, 293, for the discussion on including migrant writers and writers from Republic of Moldova in Romanian literature: "And Yet, recent literary, social and political evolutions as well as the emergence of new literary forms, the intensification of writers' migration and the emergence of a new state whose official language is Romanian (Republic of Moldova), all these make us ask ourselves what is 'Romanian literature' today" (my translation).
13. Andrei Terian, "Romanian literature for the world: a matter of property," *World Literature Studies*, 2, vol. 7 (2015): 9.
14. Terian, *Critica*, 297.
15. Alex Goldiș, "Beyond Nation Building: Literary History as Transnational Geolocation," in *Romanian Literature as World Literature*, 108.
16. Ulrich Beck, "Toward a New Critical Theory with a Cosmopolitan Intent," *Constellations* 10, no. 4 (2003): 453-468.
17. John Neubauer and Marcel Cornis-Pope, with Sándor Kibédi-Varga and Nicolae Harsanyi, "Transylvania's Literary Cultures: Rivalry and Interaction," in *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe*, vol. II, 281.
18. Mihai Iovănel, *Istoria literaturii române contemporane: 1990-2020* (Iași: Polirom, 2021), 656.
19. Iovănel, *Istoria*, 134 (my translation).

20. Ibid., 654-655.
21. Ibid., 331-335.
22. Ibid., 674.
23. See Mario J. Valdés, "Preface" by the General Editor of the Literary History Project in *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe*, vol. I, xiv: "The concept of node is a rich metaphorical alternative to the traditional metaphors of organicism. In our context it is the starting point for multiple derivations; it can also be taken as a point in a network at which the multiple lines of development come together, or, to put it in broader terms, the point that is the hub of the network."
24. John Neubauer, "Introduction," in *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe*, vol. III, 350: "twentieth-century organicist literary histories became particularly prominent in cultures whose national independence was, for historical and political reasons, slower to emerge. Because of this delay, curious hybrid forms developed that were absent in the first, more purely romantic phase of organicism: in the second wave, romantic organicist ideas came to coexist and mix with modernist notions advocating the aesthetic independence of artworks."
25. For an in-depth discussion the on the Romanian criticism during communism, see Alex Goldiș, *Critica în tranșee: de la realismul socialist la autonomia esteticului* (Bucharest: Cartea românească, 2011).
26. See Ovio Olaru, "Who's afraid of Mihai Iovănel? Regimes of Relevance and New Literary Historiography," *Transilvania*, no. 7-8 (2021): 32-44. Olaru understands aesthetic autonomy in post-communist Romania in line with Kiossev's concept of self-colonization. According to the critic, "the official revival of aesthetic autonomy following the regime change was not necessarily dominated by nationalist overtones but rather by a self-colonizing disgust for all things local and provincial, built on unwavering reverence towards the Western world, regarded as a cradle of civilization."
27. Terian, *Critica*, 290: "Thus, the conclusion is that recent Romanian literary histories are profoundly out of sync with international homologous projects. This delay is most obvious with regard to methodological and theoretical frameworks" (my translation).
28. Valdés and Hutcheon, "Re-thinking," 6.
29. Iovănel, *Istoria*, 13 (my translation).
30. An exception to this rule is represented by E. Lovinescu's *Istoria literaturii române contemporane*, to which Iovănel's *History* is indebted.
31. For the discussion on the role of concepts such as "regimes of relevance" (Galin Tihanov) and "points of resistance" in literary history, see Doris Mironescu's contribution to this issue in Doris Mironescu, "Regimuri de relevanță, puncte de rezistență: literatura română în postcomunism," *Transilvania*, no. 7-8 (2021): 107-114.
32. Andrew Baruch Wachtel, *Remaining Relevant after Communism: The Role of the Writer in Eastern Europe* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 46-47.
33. *The Budapest Observatory – Regional Observatory on Financing Culture in East-Central Europe for Making Literature Travel* entitled "Publishing Translations in Europe: Trends 1990-2005." Based on analysis of the Index Translationum Database, Literature Across Frontiers, Mercator Institute for Media, Languages and Culture, Aberystwyth University, Wales, UK. Report prepared by *Literature Across Frontiers*, 112.
34. Iovănel, *Istoria*, 37, 41 (my translation).
35. Ibid., 273.
36. Ibid., 282-286.
37. Ibid., 331-335.
38. Ibid., 233-235.
39. Terian, "Romanian literature", 11.

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