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THE BAROQUE DIMENSION OF MATEIU I. CARAGIALE'S WORK

Summary

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Mateiu I. Caragiale, *Pajere*, *Remember*, *Craii de Curtea-Veche*, *Sub pecetea tainei*, Journal, Agenda-Acta-Memoranda, *Correspondence*, poetics of de compensation, the baroque, mannerism, decadent, balcanic, poietică, *poeta faber*, biographical fragmentarium, “explicit library”, “implicit library”, “self-referential library”, precursors and followers, hybrid species, setting in abyss, “obsessive metaphors”, “personal myth,” "initiation," labyrinth, metamorphosis, mirror, mask, dream, hagialâc, confession, dandy, self-mystification, double, crisis, death.

Our dissertation on the Baroque dimension of Mateiu Caragiale's work draws on the doctoral thesis defended by Mariane Iliescu under the scientific supervision of professor Ion Vlad. The theory of the "compensatory poetics" elaborated by Mrs. Iliescu demonstrates the idea according to which in the inter-war period Romanian prose, mainly the novel, has recuperated avatars of the form previously absent in our literature; it experimented with new techniques and new means of expression, acquisitions in the realm of narrativity and of its configuration as an ontological and gnoseological document. Our whole endeavor has aimed to single out certain features of Mateiu Caragiale's works ascribable to the category of the baroque and thus, inscribing the author in this **poetic of compensation** specific to Romanian literature between the two World Wars.

We have undertaken an incursion into the laboratory of a controversial Romanian writer, an author whose prose writings have intrigued the Romanian literary world between the two World Wars and which continues to remain singular among his peers through the language of his creation, through the devouring, time-gorging effort of polishing to which he subjected his texts, through the adamant refusal to constrain his prose pieces to fit into a precise literary form. At the time we have initiated our research of Mateiu Caragiale's work (November 1999), we did not suspect that his novel, *Craii de Curtea-Veche*, would generate comments and controversies through its placement in the first place in the famous poll of *Observatorul Cultural*, whose findings were published in issue nr. 45-46 on January 3rd 2010. 102 literary critics and historians (out of 150 whose contribution was solicited) have entered the 'serious game' of the magazine, responding to the proposed questionnaire. The requirement was the creation of a personal top 10 of the most valuable Romanian novels of the XXth century, and the result generated surprise. Beyond any hierarchy based on the fatally subjective esthetic taste, beyond the vulgarization any "opinion poll" at the cultural level generates, beyond the metamorphosis suffered in time and space by the public receiving the works, both the "innocent" and the "professional" one, beyond the whims and the ludic dimension of the "electoral gesture" the questionnaire assumed, beyond the manner in which points were accumulated at the completion of the hierarchy, the placement of *Craii de Curtea-Veche* in the first place in the ranking of the most valuable Romanian novels of the XXth century does nothing short of reasserting, in our opinion, the fact that it is a prose writing which keeps re-inviting its reader to re-reading, which launches new challenges to each generation of readers, certifying itself from an axiological point of view.

Although the approach is not monographic, our research has had the entire work of the writer as source material, both the literary, lyrical, or epic texts (*Pajere, Remember, Craii de Curtea-Veche, Sub pecetea tainei*), and the ones on the border of literature (*The Agendas, The Diary, correspondence*), as well as fragments left over from the writer's literary projects, articles published in the press, drafts and reading notes. We set out to emphasize elements which give the writings of

Mateiu I. Caragiale a baroque character, without rendering absolute this dimension of his texts, and without contesting the other stylistic, psychological, historical, typological characteristics, even when they enter in an opposing relationship with the baroque.

We have structured our work in six sections, in turn organized in chapters and subchapters.

The first section comprises a Working Hypothesis, in which we establish the departure point of our thesis in the poetics of compensation developed by Mariane Iliescu and the idea according to which one of the fundamental dimensions of Mateiu Caragiale's work is the baroque one. In this chapter, we affirm that we place ourselves in our approach on the position of the researcher who prefers the typologic meaning of this concept, as a universal constant, and not the historical, diacronic one, which sets the baroque between clear, well delineated chronological limits.

We support this option on Jacob Burckhardt's assertion according to which history is that which an epoch finds worthy of attention in another. Or, we may add, history is that which which a writer considers worthy of recuperating from a historical epoch, through the esthetic channels of his epoch. Moreover, "a literary current cannot be strictly ascribed to a specific period, it returns within other epochs. This is due to the fact that it bears within it a series of values and problems which pertain to the ontology of the human being, universally valid, and which never stop appearing because they have not been, nor will they be solved."¹

We give priority in our research to the typological approach of the baroque, but also bring up the question of relativity, since the "returns" (Eugenio d'Ors, Diana Adamek) of the baroque in literature, especially the modern one, of the XXth century, is achieved depending on the "personal style" of every writer, depending on the cultural space, and depending on the artistic epoch.

To call Mateiu I. Caragiale's work baroque does not mean throwing it back in time, in the era of the historical baroque. It recuperates from the baroque certain constants, archetypes, and symbolic images, reconfiguring them, investing them with new meanings, attributing to them a modern dimension through by enriching them with particularities of the writer's contemporary epoch, looking at them through the modern lens provided by the "monocle" of decadentism at the level of the esthetic of his own literary work and of the dandyism at the level of existential esthetic. We ascribe Mateiu to the baroque in a new historical perspective, adapted to modernity, we therefore speak of a historical baroque in the sense of Burckhardt's affirmation, a sense which does not give up neither the typological meaning, nor the historical. Thus, a synthesis can be achieved of the typological and the historical baroque, an attempt to reconcile the two, in a modern vision.

In modernity, the thesis of the continuity in history seems bypassed, which leads, in Romanian literature, towards two possible solutions: absolute innovation (particular to the avangarde), or the resemantisation or certain cultural values from a distant past, from the local

space, or the Western one. The present refuses to build itself organically, dialectically, on the basis of the immediately previous past, practicing a "radical antitraditionalism"², can take leaps into a past which seems long set and devoid of interest. Modernity therefore withdraws from the commitment to growth in historical steps which succeed one another in a traditional fashion. This explains why, especially in literature, Romanian inter-war modernity endeavored to recuperate stages from the literatures of the West absent in our literary tradition. It is a form of pioneer work through which the Romanian modernists make history, paradoxically, by reconfiguring the diachronic and the synchronic perspective.

We dedicate the second section of the work to an attempt to outline the concept of the baroque, by approaching its evolution, the relation with mannerism, classicism, and decadentism, by tracing the theories which consider baroque an independent artistic style, well defined temporally, against the ones which define it as a constant of spiritual life, beyond chronological limits, by extracting the constants of the baroque spirit. In the first subchapter, we reconstitute the definitions and the etymology of the term, the ambiguities and the controversies which have marked its evolution, calling on the information drawn from authoritative sources such as Adrian Marino, Al Ciorănescu, Edgar Papu, Rosario Assunto, Heinrich Wölfflin. The second subchapter aims to seek the answer to the question Adrian Marino poses in the *Dictionary of Literary Ideas*: "Is there a synchronic baroque, or only a diachronic one?"³ Our answer follows the same line with the researcher's: "We will maintain that both answers are possible, as they correspond to certain realities and analysis which are different, associated only through general notes."⁴

In a typological definition, Adrian Marino speaks about the possibility of capturing an "eternal" baroque style, with "periodical and differentiated historical [occurrences], defined in the sense of a universal concept and esthetic phenomenon."⁵ The operation of rendering the concept essential and general allows us to obtain a series of "baroque" features, to be found in various geographic, linguistic, and historical territories, extracted from the study of all arts, with an originating point in the plastic arts.

The recognition of the baroque's existence only within certain chronological limits, with a somewhat degree of precision, belongs to the partisans of the historical definition. The latter pin the baroque as a "purely historical concept, characteristic only of certain European spiritual and cultural phenomena, well limited in time, with ramifications only in the countries under Western

¹ Delia Ungureanu, *(P)revenirile barocului*, in *Observator cultural*, nr. 274/23 iunie 2005

² Sanda Cordoș, *Literatura între revoluție și reacțiune. Problema crizei în literatura română și rusă a secolului XX*, ediția a II-a adăugită, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Biblioteca Apostrof, Colecția Ianus, 2002, p.24.

³ Adrian Marino, *Dicționar de idei literare*, A-G, vol. I, București, Editura Eminescu, 1973, p.236.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p.236.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 233.

influence."⁶ It allegedly covers the period between the end of the 16th century and the first half of the 18th century, comprising the whole of the 17th century. There are researchers who propose very exact periods, such as H. Hatzfeld, or who tend to call the 17th century baroque, although previously considered a foremost classical century, at least in France (Marcel Raymond, Jean Rousset).

The truth maintained by Al. Ciorănescu about the baroque in his ample study, *The Baroque or the Discovery of Drama*, is based on the fact that "the baroque is not dead, but transformed"⁷, coming to represent "a series of conquests which still hold, or, if they are forgotten, resurface sooner or later into consciousness, due to their logical derivation from a fundamental criterion which could never be abandoned ever since."⁸ Admitting as baroque "any writing which would indicate, not only as a possibility of its style, but also as a constant and as a fundamental feature of its composition, repeated on all its esthetic levels, the dichotomic device of unity within duality, of contrast, conflict, and drama,"⁹ Ciorănescu established the governing principle of baroque art: the pulverising of unity and the necessity of drama. The author approximately situates the beginnings of the baroque experience in the last quarter of the 16th century, but declares himself at a loss in deciding an end point, as the fundamental principle mentioned above "corresponds perfectly to the literature of all the following centuries."¹⁰ Unifying the stylistic and the historical perspective, the researcher concludes that the baroque is "a historical process as old as humanity,"¹¹ practically favoring a typological approach as well.

The synthetic line is also followed by Edgar Papu, who credits the baroque as a "type of existence" deduced from all the manners of creation within the baroque universe, giving them both the attributes of an "eon," as well as those of a "historical style," which resembles other styles in as much as "it develops several times throughout history."¹² Although he pins the full expression of the baroque in the 16th and 17th centuries, when it also achieves planetary expansion, Papu underlines the importance of recognizing in the baroque phenomenon a certain "emotional attitude, of a certain "feeling," of a "sentiment of existence." He tends to look at the baroque not as "an art phenomenon, nor as one of ideas, but as a life phenomenon."¹³ Its acceptance as a "spirit" and not a

⁶ *Ibidem*, p.237.

⁷ Al. Ciorănescu, *Barocul sau descoperirea dramei*, în românește de Gabriela Tureanu, postfață de Dumitru Radulian, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1980, p.439.

⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 439-440.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p.438.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p.438.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 443.

¹² Edgar Papu, *Barocul ca tip de existență*, București, Editura Minerva, Colecția Biblioteca pentru toți, 1977, vol.I, p.19.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 26.

"current" explains "the multiple apparitions of the baroque along the centuries, across the meridians."¹⁴

We dedicate the third subchapter of the second section to the relationship between the baroque and mannerism and their antithetical stance towards classicism, whether the baroque/mannerism and classicism are perceived as styles, or understood as stages in the evolution of any style, or as well defined historical currents. Our sources are the studies of Ernst Robert Curtius, Gustav René Hocke, Matei Călinescu, Al. Ciorănescu, Jean Rousset, Edgar Papu. We consider Matei Călinescu's conclusion as a balanced position which maintains the essence of the analytical undertakings dedicated to the baroque. The researcher admits that a distinction between the baroque and mannerism can be drawn, "the baroque fitting under the category of *exaggeration* and *multiplication*, mannerism under that of *purely subjective distortion* of the images of the real."¹⁵ Despite this possibility of differentiation, Matei Călinescu prefers to include within the baroque "the mannerist guidances," since, actually, the central contradiction of the epochs previously delineated is that which opposes the baroque to classicism: "the baroque postulating an infinite *liberty of creation*, classicism will gradually define an opposed esthetic doctrine, inspired by the *critical spirit* of rationalism and constituted as a complex ensemble of rules for guiding the creating genius."¹⁶

As far as concerns Mateiu Caragiale's positioning, we need to observe that his work is traversed by an amalgam of elements, some claimed from the baroque, some from mannerism. In the monography dedicated to him Ovidiu Cotruș maintains himself in the terminological delimitations in a space of ambiguity, placing the writer at the interference between baroque and mannerism: "Mateiu I. Caragiale was, in any case, a baroque writer (romanticism being a particular case of baroque) or mannerist, in the sense attributed by E.R. Curtius and G.R. Hocke to this term."¹⁷ The quicksands at the border of the two concepts host the mateian creation, but as a generic term, in order to simplify the demonstration, we have preferred to relate to Mateiu's writing as to one which builds itself on a baroque dimension, without ascribing absolute statute to this side. We have not negated thus the existence of a mannerist dimension, but have assimilated it to the baroque, following the demonstrative approach of Matei Călinescu.

In the fourth subchapter of this section of the paper we have retained the recurrent elements in the baroque esthetic, as they appear in the studies of the historians and the critics. We consider that one can identify, describe, and interpret several **constants of the baroque spirit**:

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p.27.

¹⁵ Matei Călinescu, "Clasic"-romantic-baroc-manierist, in antologia *Clasicism, baroc, romantism*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1971, p.55.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p.55.

¹⁷ Ovidiu Cotruș, *Opera lui Mateiu I. Caragiale*, București, Editura Minerva, 1977, p.415.

- ◆ the maker creator, "poeta faber";
- ◆ the artist unsubordinated to nature, preferring the artifice, art, to nature's detriment;
- ◆ the imperative of the imagination, the anti-mimetic dimension;
- ◆ the movement, the dynamic of the forms;
- ◆ the dilemmatic spirit, the problematic person, the psychological disequilibrium, ambiguity;
- ◆ dual natures, the logic of the dichotomy, the contrast, the opposition, the state of crisis, the break-up, but at the same time the harmony of contrasts ("concordia discors");
- ◆ the ostentation of the decor, the exaggerated sparkling, the pictural; life as dream, life as theater, the mask;
- ◆ the metamorphosis;
- ◆ the labyrinth, initiation;
- ◆ death.

Of course none of these constants of the baroque can be analyzed independently, as they complete their meanings only in the network of significance which creates itself between them, and which we tried to highlight in the paper. What's more, the network constitutes itself as an interpreting grid especially at the level of creations from plastic art. Literature takes on in a manner of its own the constants of the baroque, adapting them to the expressive capacities of the word, the "prime mater" with which it "operates." This subchapter values as sources the solutions and interpretations of researchers such as Rosario Assunto, Gustav René Hocke, Jean Rousset, Al. Ciorănescu, Edgar Papu, Romul Munteanu, Jurgis Baltrušaitis, Adrian Marino, Diana Adamek, Adrian Angheliescu, Corin Braga.

Our journey through the constants of the baroque universe has set in this subchapter only the fundamental markers, as it is duly taken up again and deepened in the study of Mateiu I. Caragiale's works. A few fundamental elements are subsequently followed in their materialisation at the level of the writer's work and are interpreted with all the mutations they suffer due to their materialisation in the creation of an author who numbers among those who achieve a return of the baroque in an epoch which surpasses by far from a chronological point of view the golden age of the historical baroque.

The last subchapter from the second half of our paper is dedicated to the relationship which establishes itself between the baroque and decadentism and the manner in which decadentism has conserved, reconfiguring esthetically, some of the thematic, symbolic, psychological, mentality constants of the baroque:

- ◆ the cultivation of art for art's sake, of artifice to the detriment of nature, antimimetism;
- ◆ the blurring of the borders between life and art, between the real and the illusion;
- ◆ subjectivism, the fore-fronting of the self;
- ◆ the temptation to show off;
- ◆ theatrics, the activation of the histrionic side of being;
- ◆ the pairing of contrasts;
- ◆ the metamorphosis;
- ◆ the labyrinth;
- ◆ the break-up, the crisis, the doubled person, tortured by interior conflicts.

The literature of this current was often named, especially in Central Europe, (Mitteleuropa), with a term which suggests the historical epoch and the dominant state of spirit, of imminent end, decline cu un termen ce sugerează epoca istorică și starea de spirit dominantă, de sfârșit iminent de declin: *fin-de-siècle*, identified by Eugenio d'Ors under the name of *barocus finesecularis*. Edgar Papu speaks, in this contest, about a "*neo-baroque species*, prolonged under different versions deeply into our centry [20th cen., n.n.R.B.]", which "becomes, together with other styles, a general phenomenon, conscious of its identity. This explains the fact that precisely now [...] the baroque reestablishes itself completely and becomes, for the first time, the object of a rigorous systematic look, which will amplify progressively. The theoretical interest over this style cannot be foreign to the atmosphere of the time, in particular the concomitant existence of a neo-baroque on the level of creation."¹⁸

There are other points of convergence of the neo-baroque specific to the *fin-de-siècle* period, outside the French space: Spain, Austria, in which, after the glory epoch of the historic baroque, a certain continuity of some baroque cultural phenomena was registered. Central Europe of the end of the 19th century, whose focalizer was Vienna, known as Viena *fin-de-siècle*, represented a space of manifestation of decadentism, as an inheritor of the baroque. If the geopolitical borders of Central Europe were not precisely traced, outlining themselves on the map depending on the perspective from which this part of Europe was surveyed (French, English, German), its literary identity, however, that of "another Europe" gains a clear enough profile, in the opinion of the French professor Jacques Le Rider, one of the great specialists of the Central-European cultural history: "The first configuration of the cultural identity of Central Europe appears at the moment in which the Renaissance and the baroque spread, in the modern epoch, in Mitteleuropa by means of the courts in Vienna, Prague, Cracow, Ofen (Hungary), which maintained, in the 15th century, care

¹⁸ Edgar Papu, *op.cit.*, vol. I, p.232.

întrețineau, din secolul al XV-lea mai ales, close ties with Italy. This "late" Renaissance fuses with the baroque art and spirit, profoundly and durably marking the entire Central-European region."¹⁹

Milan Kundera also speaks about the role of the Counterreformation in drawing the imaginary borders of Mitteleurope and the defining of the specific nature of this space through the baroque in an article which emphasizes the *tragedy of Central Europe*: "The specific nature of Central-European culture manifested itself all of a sudden through an extraordinary explosion of baroque art, a phenomenon which unified this vast region from Salzburg to Vienna. On the map of the continent, Central Europe dominated by the baroque (characterized by the offensive of the irrational and the prevalence of visual arts and music) became the opposite pole of classical France (characterized by the predominance of the rational and by the privileged position of literature and philosophy. The baroque is, in fact, the period in which the origins of the extraordinary central-European development are found."²⁰

At the end of the 1920s, Europe undergoes a deep cultural crisis which is also the setting, according to Jacques Le Rider, of the resuming, during the period between the two World Wars, of the discussions about the baroque "which Josef Nadler, historian of Austrian literature, presents as quintessence of the entire cultural identity of the Habsburg monarchy and of Danubian Central Europe, a permanent style, with a few variations, of the Renaissance in the present times and which can be observed in all domains: literature, architecture, plastic arts and music, performance arts, philosophy, politics, characterizing, additionally, a human type: « the baroque man »."²¹

Central Europe outlines itself, as Adriana Babeți notes, as a "territory forever "between," with "crisis" as "community of destiny."²² In Jacques Le Rider's terms, Central Europe's feeling of identity manifests itself acutely during the epochs of rupture, of tension, and subsides during periods of historical calmness. The relationship of the Central-European countries with history, usually unfortunate through the modification of boundaries and through the amputation of territories, reveals their vulnerability of the former. The fragility of their political status has given birth to a painful attitude of doubt, ruled by the idea of decomposition, of the fall.

The experience of the decline and of the threat of extinction is well known to nations of Central Europe and has prolonged itself sometimes throughout several decades, or even centuries.

¹⁹ Jacques Le Rider, *Europa Centrală sau paradoxul fragilității*, vol. coordonat de Dana Chetrinescu și Ciprian Vălcan, traducere de Izabella Badiu, Dana Chetrinescu și Ilinca Ilian, prefață de Ciprian Vălcan, postfață de Ilinca Ilian, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2001, p.113.

²⁰ Milan Kundera, *Tragedia Europei Centrale*, in vol. *Europa Centrală. Nevroze, dileme, utopii*, antologie coordonată de Adriana Babeți și Cornel Ungureanu, Iași, Editura Polirom, Colecția "A treia Europă", 1997, pp.221-235. Traducerea textului lui Kundera îi aparține Alinei Ghimpu și a fost realizată după versiunea engleză a articolului *Un Occident Kidnappé ou la tragédie de l'Europe Centrale (Le Débat, 27 noiembrie 1983)*, apărută în *The New York Review of Books*, 26 aprilie 1984, în traducerea lui Edmund White. Am citat de la pp.228-229.

²¹ Jacques Le Rider, *op.cit.*, pp.117-118.

²² Adriana Babeți, *Europa Centrală – un concept cu geometrie variabilă, Cuvînt înainte* la volumul *Europa Centrală. Nevroze, dileme, utopii*, ed.cit., p.11.

The Romanian historical and cultural space, assimilated by the Westerners to the Balcan universe, rather than the Mitteleuropean one, is no stranger to this truth, which is why we cannot view as fortuitous the resuscitation, in our literature, especially in that belonging to modernity, of the decadent vision of the world, whose historical and typological roots are found in the baroque.

The third section of the paper is dedicated to an incursion whose object is the *Poietics of Mateiu I. Caragiale's Work*. In the first chapter, we propose a brief definition of the term of poietics, as it appears in Irina Mavrodin's conception²³. We consider that, from the perspective of Mateiu Caragiale's work, a poetic approach is necessary, as the poet takes on the role of *poeta faber*, a painstaking craftsman attentive to details, with no tangence to the idea of creative inspiration. In support of our affirmation, we bring the argument of the long gestation of his works, confessed by the author himself, as well as the hustle and bustle of ideas (not many, but revisited, analyzed deeply, rethought) which renders dynamic the hidden "laboratory" of his creation."

The second chapter reconstitutes a Mateian *Biographical Fragmentarium* structured in three subchapters. The first, "The Return of the Author," justifies our interest and the critics for the life of Mateiu Caragiale through human and literary relationship with his father, as well as the particular status of his personality, through the bizzare facets of his character and through the uniqueness of his existential itinerary. As Ion Vlad states in *The Reading of prose*, "beyond the stated rapport between the biography of Mateiu I. Caragiale and his work,"²⁴ the author of *Craii de Curtea-Veche* lives devoured by the world of this work. Of course we were interested in this genre of biographical approach, by no means the anecdotal one.

We adopt here, too, the point of view of Matei Călinescu, according to whom when a re-reader knows the biography of an author, he will be inevitably tempted to find in his fictions the traces of (auto)biography and in the (auto)biography that is fictional, a manifestation of self envisioning, of reverie, of the fantastic games of an artist. That this hermeneutical path may lead to confusions, haphazard hypothesis and even to interpretive absurdities, is evident; that is why some critical methods avoid it at all cost (the purely textual criticism, structuralism), although it appears naturally in the process of reflexive reading."²⁵ We support our interest as far as concerns Mateiu Caragiale's life also on the study of Eugen Simion *The return of the Author. Essays on the Author-Work Relationship*, a study which was supposed to be called in the first intention of its author *Contre Sainte-Proust*, in order to mark as the critique himself asserts, "a double distancing: towards

²³ Irina Mavrodin, *Poietică și poetică*, București, Editura Univers, 1982.

²⁴ Ion Vlad, *Lectura prozei*, București, Editura Cartea Românească, 1991, cap. "...Această carte de înțelepciune" (*Mateiu I. Caragiale*), p.49.

²⁵ Matei Călinescu, *Mateiu I. Caragiale: recitiri*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Biblioteca Apostrof, Colecția Ianus, 2003, ed.cit., pp.63-64.

biographical criticism (Sainte-Beuve) and towards the rendering absolute of the dissociation made by Proust between the între "man who writes and the man who lives."²⁶

The second subchapter of this chapter captures *A character of his own existential "geography"* in several portraits of Mateiu, penciled by literary historians and critics (G. Călinescu, Tudor Vianu, E. Lovinescu, Ion Vartic) or by friends of the Caragiale family (Cella Delavrancea), who place him in the gallery of the dandies. Beyond these portraying sketches, we note that the being in love with history who is Mateiu, which transpires in the pages of *Craii...*, also reveals itself in daily life through the garb, through the exploration of personal genealogies, real or imaginary, through the attitude stuck in the the image of a dandy. All these appear to generate a rupture between him and the reality of the present, but paradoxically the chasm is filled with the reading of the pages in the *Diary*, the *Agendas*, the *Letters* and the other non-literary texts, which testify about an individual who is always looking to satisfy his social ambitions and aspirations, to get ahead, to "strike luck," to the point of self mystification, through the construction of an imaginary, false biography which he illicitly maintains even in real life. At the moment of his marriage to Marica Sion, through bastard son through his own will, finally having control, almost a decade after the death of his father, over personal identity. One can notice in this gesture the fact that "the state of legend and mystification in which the author of *Craii had* wallowed had become at Mateiu a second nature, a natural mode of existence."²⁷ The fragile mask which thus insinuates itself on Mateiu's face hides a refused identity but at the same time reveals a torn personality, isolated from the collectivity, in crisis and in permanent search for legitimacy.

A retrospective look at the letters addressed to N.A. Boicescu will confirm "the symbolic separation from the environment," as the period of their composition coincides with that in which Mateiu was drawing his crown as a count and has the illusion of being inscribed in a particular aristocratic descendance. Not finding in the past convincing evidence of his noble descent, he concentrates his efforts in the present and in the future on the elaboration of a life program with a hint of utopia which would radically differentiate him not only from his own family, but also from the rest of the entire world. In the symbiosis work-biography, the program also seeps through to the level of literary creation.

The eye permanently turned towards a past inevitably superior and the quite dramatic anchoring in a present which unfortunately rarely responds to Mateiu Caragiale's demands and

²⁶ Eugen Simion, *Întoarcerea autorului. Eseuri despre relația autor-operă*, București, Editura Minerva, Colecția Biblioteca pentru toți, 1993, vol. I, *Cuvânt înainte*, p.1.

²⁷ Constantin Popescu-Cadem face această observație în notele ce însoțesc documentele biografice prezentate în *Mateiu I. Caragiale – un personaj. Dosar al existenței*, volum coordonat de Al. Oprea, realizat în colaborare cu Barbu Brezianu, Barbu Cioculescu, Vasile Drăguț, Alexandru George, Tașcu Gheorghiu, Dumitru D. Panaitescu, Maria Polojințev, Constantin Popescu-Cadem, Aurelia Creția și Ruxandra Mihăilă, București, Editura Muzeului Literaturii Române, Colecția Biblioteca Manuscriptum, 1979, p. 288.

needs, place the writer in the role of "double man," specific to the baroque, of baudelairian decadent *homo duplex*. If at the biographical level the researchers have identified the mask of the dandy on his face, the work delivers characters who distance themselves substantially from the model. In fact, Angelo Mitchievici partially contests Mateiu's belonging to the class of true dandies, considering him, like his artistic heroes, a Lord, "downgraded, decadent formula of dandy-ism,"²⁸ whose studied and copied gallantry slips towards the grotesque, the kitsch, towards the suffocating excess of the rococo. Let us not forget that the rococo is the stage of crisis, of decadence, of the baroque. In this context, we do not believe we are making a hazardous claim when we assert that in the Mateian prose writings, the Narrator (under his mask we see an authorial projection) and the characters, all lovers of the past but at the same time living in a modern world, albeit in dissolution, embody baroque models in decadent key.

In the third subchapter of this chapter, entitled *Caragiale: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost of Literature*, we have captured one of the biographical elements which has caused much analytical ink to flow: the relationship with his father, relationship for which he was blamed or applauded, an obsessive relationship both for Mateiu and for the restless seekers of the substances in his life and his work. We have insisted on nothing but the social and psychological implications of the father-son relations, placed by Al. Oprea in an phrase we assume ourselves: "the paradoxical form of imitation"²⁹; we were also interested in the inter-textual horizon of the creations of the two writers, which we have researched in detail in a successive chapter.

Bringing into question with great subtlety and theoretical grounding the problem of modernism's crisis, Sanda Cordoș asserts that "the separation from the other is, in modernism, an incontestable fact"³⁰ whether or not the other is the predecessor or the immediately neighboring contemporary, which leads to living on the coordinates of individualism and of an incurable solitude, a solitude "loftily assumed" and "painfully endured," as Jacques Le Rider³¹ asserts. Illustrating the relationship with the predecessor, the very definition of modernism contains a radical opposition towards tradition, towards the past, symbolized by the image of the son who stands up unwavering to his father. At a superficial level, this phenomenon seems to mirror itself as well in the real relationship between Mateiu and I.L. Caragiale.

Al. Oprea asserts that Mateiu subjects himself to a paradoxical form of copying through the permanent preoccupation to do everything that represents the contrary to his father's preference, to

²⁸ Angelo Mitchievici, *Mateiu I. Caragiale. Fizionomii decadente*, București, Editura Institutului Cultural Român, Colecția Vocabular, 2007, p.32.

²⁹ Al. Oprea, *Mateiu I. Caragiale – un personaj. Dosar al existenței*, ed.cit., p. X.

³⁰ Sanda Cordoș, *op.cit.*, p.30.

³¹ Jacques Le Rider, *Modernitatea vieneză și crizele identității*, traducere de Magda Jeanrenaud, Iași, Editura Universității "Al. I. Cuza", 1995, p.45.

the point of not living his own life, "but another, built in opposition to that of his 'rival'."³² Ion Vianu's observations are in agreement with Al. Oprea's: "With the exception of the literary passion, Mateiu Caragiale's development is done by opposition to paternal predications."³³

Read in a modernist key, the eternally conflictual relationship between Mateiu and his father appears as a longing for a brutal break with the past, but it will not bring him, in Sanda Cordos's terms, "a liberating happiness."³⁴ If Mateiu set out to write a radically new work, different from his father's, his aspiration was a partial failure: the researchers of his creation have discovered islands of intertextuality with that of his parent. Moreover, the production at any cost of the absolutely new, by relating to his father's work, has led to a form of artistic sterility, manifested through the reduced number of Mateiu's literary pages.

The third chapter dedicated to the poetics of the Mateiu work is entitled *The Writer's "Library"* which we examine for the revealing the cultural under layer standing at the base of such a provocative work. In an exercise of visual imagination, we consider that we can picture the Mateiu "library" in a spacial display on three levels, to which access is gradual, concentric, in depth, from the outside towards the inside. We outline the "shelves" of this library of the writer thus:

"The **explicit** library" which contains names of characters (real or imaginary), titles and authors (from all art spheres) cited directly by Mateiu Caragiale in his literary texts, in his *Diary, Agendas, Letters* or in articles, studies, writings, and reading notes;

"The **implicit** library" which is restituted by the commentaries occasioned by the literary or nonliterary creation; this level of the writer's "library" has a special status, as it contains references to texts anterior to the Mateiu work, but from the "post-Mateiu" reader's perspective contains references which stretch to works posterior to Mateiu's writings. "The self-referential library" which references its own texts and its own existence through the technique --heraldic at its origins-- of "mise-en-abyme."

These are examined in detail in three distinct subchapters, which bear as title the very names we have ascribed to the "shelves" of the Mateiu library, and which another subchapter is added, dedicated to the possible *Precursors and Followers in Romanian Literature*. We have leafed through Mateiu's "explicit library" at the level of the author's every text and we have observed that he provides an important number of names and livresque which testify to the self-taught effort of the writer to build for himself a culture as vast as possible, with roots both in the area of serious, valuable information, and that of the trivial, even the frivolous. Both in the literary texts, and in the ones at the border of literariness, one notices Mateiu's interest for the literature of remembrance, of

³² Al. Oprea, *op.cit.*, p.XV.

³³ Ion Vianu, *Investigații mateine*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Biblioteca Apostrof, Colecția Ianus, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2008, p.15.

³⁴ Sanda Cordoș, *op.cit.*, p.27.

confessions, of exhibiting the ego, for texts which restore the private history of certain personalities or for texts which outline history from a personal, particular perspective. Mateiu's curiosity for the biographies of certain characters (especially from the milieu of the nobility) masks the intense preoccupation for his own biography, which will determine him to write, in his own turn, memory pieces.

One of the challenges of the "explicit library" is represented by the "epigraphic inscriptions," mottoes found, in Matei Călinescu's opinion, like "some musical-semantic keys"³⁵ at the beginning of a text or of some chapters. They function as paratextual elements which become decoded with a careful rereading and have the role of leading the reading, a fact which attests Mateiu's profound conscience as a writer who leads his reader. In essence, Mateiu does not seem a very selective reader, but rather a collector of curiosities since, along with important works figuring in the "library" he bears with himself, obscure texts are also found, authors who are second rate, or even forgotten by the history of literature. This "library" confirms his self-taught, "dilettant" spirit, as he characterizes himself in his letters. His reading open themselves up towards various fields, in a chaotic, unguided, unsystematic way. The only field in which he becomes a professional, through his own efforts, but without a diploma is heraldry, a minor peripheral historical discipline, however deeply connected to visual symbolization, of ascribing the status through imagistic representation and to the recognition, the authentication of nobility. If in heraldry he becomes a professional through readings and theory, in literature he gains his status as a professional, a writer through reading and practice, even though "he is the author of a single novel, *Craii de Curtea-Veche*, of a single story, *Remember* and of the three brief short stories which make up *Sub pecetea tainei*."³⁶

"The implicit library" restored by the critical comments addressing Mateiu's writings hosts various name and references; the fact that research has found in his literary creation artistic kinship of the most diverse kind determines us to understand why critics declares Mateiu impossible to inscribe in a precise literary direction. In the study of the "implicit library" of Mateiu's work we will insist on an aspect which has marked, in fact, the biography of the writer as well: the relationship with the father figure. Some exegetical voices have recognized numerous intertextual threads between the prose of the father and that of the son (Perpessicius, T. Vianu, Pompiliu Constantinescu, Alexandru Paleologu, Mihai Zamfir, Gheorghe Grigurcu, Matei Călinescu), others contest any form of artistic kinship (Vladimir Streinu, Alexandru George, Liviu Petrescu). The balance line between these two options is represented by the commentators (E. Lovinescu, Al. Oprea, Teodor Vârgolici) who capture the closeness and the distancing between Mateiu and Ion Luca through several defining features of each of their art (the toiled expression, the lofty artistic

³⁵ Matei Călinescu, *op.cit.*, p.81.

³⁶ Angelo Mitchievici, *op.cit.*, p.7.

conscience which generates a certain creative sterility, the preservation of mystery, the projection into the fantastic of the narrated events).

That which we have called the "self-referential library" is a space of intertextuality which includes the allusive comments which connect a Mateian text to another Mateian text, or the text to himself. The phenomenon of reflection one's own texts in themselves or in the writer's subsequent texts is not which should be judged solely as a consequence of the much discussed narcissism from which Mateiu has incontestably suffered. His narcissism, which appears also because of the ambiguity of the Narrator's status in the Mateian prose in relationship with the author himself, has as extenuating circumstance the lofty artistic conscience acquired, the aspiration and the effort of permanent perfecting which have dominated the existence and creation of the writer.

At the base of self-reference lies the metaphor of the mirror. The "technical" term which defines the phenomenon is "mise en abîme," a heraldic term originally, but lent to the language of painting, formula launched by André Gide. In his essay about specular narration, Lucien Dällenbach³⁷ reduces the numerous realities covered by the "setting in abyss" to three essential figures: "the simple reduplication" (a rapport of semblance of the fragment with the work which includes it), "the infinite reduplication" (the fragment maintains with the work a rapport of semblance and includes, in its own turn, another fragment which maintains with the first a rapport of semblance) and "the aporheic reduplication" (the fragment includes in his own turn the work which contains it). From among these methods, Mateiu Caragiale uses the first and the last. Simple reduplication is found, for instance, in the relationship established between the three Mateian prose writings and their titles which mirror themselves in a few textual sequences. In certain textual sequences of *Craii de Curtea-Veche*, the setting in abyss is achieved in two directions: a fragment reflects another text, outside the text which contains it, but inside the work as a whole of the same writer, on the one hand, and on the other hand achieves an aporheic reduplication, through the allusion to the novel which includes it (such as the confession of the Narrator at the beginning of the chapter *Cele trei hagiâlăcuri*, referring to the friendship with Pantazi). An immense intertext can be deciphered between all the pieces of the mateian creation, even among those at the border of literature, as in an infinite palimpsest, created as though to contribute to a de-fictionalizing of the texts. This permanent self-reference, facilitated by the homodiegetic discourse, has its roots in the 18th century, much beloved by Mateiu, century in which the novel (hegemonic form of fiction in all its epochs of existence) formulates conventions about the strategies of de-fictionalizing, about a

³⁷ Lucien Dällenbach, *Le récit spéculaire. Contributions à l'étude de mise en abyme*, Paris, Seuil, 1977.

"rhetoric of de persuading the reader that he finds himself before texts of "diction" and not of "fiction," in Gérard Genette's terminology."³⁸

The last subchapter in the *Writer's "Library"* casts a look at a possible *Precursors and Followers in Romanian Literature* discovering lines of convergence of Mateiu Caragiale's work with previous writings and subsequent creations on the level of approaching the baroque and balcanism and that building a Bucharestian mitologem. Neagoe Basarab, Miron Costin, Dimitrie Cantemir, Ion Budai-Deleanu are the predecessors that literary history and criticism credits as representatives of a baroque filiation in Romanian literature and in this direction, as precursors of Mateiu. The names which dominate the literary family of those that configure Bucharest's space and spirit are partially coincidental with those that stand out in the balcanic filiation: Ion Ghica, Anton Pann, Nicolae Filimon, Alexandru Macedonski, I.L. Caragiale. In this line of our literary balcanism Tudor Arghezi, Ion Barbu, Panait Istrati, Eugen Barbu, Ștefan Agopian, Fănuș Neagu also inscribe themselves. In the trajectory of a literary tradition, in the baroque, balcanic, or Bucharestian filiation, Mateiu Caragiale loses his status as last descendant. In a synthetic look, we notice the relative recurrence of the same names, never mind the perspective of the research of Mateiu Caragiale's predecessors' and successors in Romanian literature. The fact is not to be ignored and comes to underline the integrity of the Mateian creation in a diacronic representation which does not exclude some roots, some mental patterns, the belonging to a certain tradition, the journey in a space of intertextuality which does not diminish its singularity.

A particular case of posterity's intertextual dialogue with Mateiu's work is that of a reader who can call himself "Mateian," through the constant interest shown in time to the biography and creation of the inter-war writer. This is Ion Iovan, himself a writer, who has imagined the *Ultimele însemnări ale lui Mateiu Caragiale însoțite de un inedit epistolar precum și de indexul ființelor, lucrurilor și întâmplărilor în prezentarea lui Ion Iovan. (The Last Notes of Mateiu Caragiale Accompanied by an Epistolary as Well as an Index of Beings, Things, and Happenings Presented by Ion Iovan)*.³⁹

Together with *Tratament fabulatoriu* and *Zodia scafandrului*, Mircea Nedelciu's novels, in which Mateiu appears as a literary projection, or as a character (albeit episodic) Iovan's book employs itself a fragment from the writer's existential geography, in symbiosis with elements of theme, style, language, and literary universe, demonstrating programatically the fact that intertextual dialogue can move towards the space of biography, not just of the work. The phenomenon is very interesting, if we judge it as a new fictionalization of the Mateian biography

³⁸ Mariane Iliescu, *O poetică a romanului românesc*, lucrare de doctorat, coordonator științific Prof. dr. Ion Vlad, susținută la Facultatea de Litere a Universității "Babeș-Bolyai" Cluj-Napoca, 2003, p.7.

³⁹ Ion Iovan, *Ultimele însemnări ale lui Mateiu Caragiale însoțite de un inedit epistolar precum și de indexul ființelor, lucrurilor și întâmplărilor în prezentarea lui Ion Iovan*, București, Editura Curtea Veche, 2008.

according to that attempted by Mateiu himself. The fictionalization of the biography takes place at the same time with the partial defictionalization of the work, since the self-reference inside the Mateian prose writings operates a distancing from the imaginary universe, but this gesture is just a narrative trick as the Mateian creation is, paradoxically, one which is profoundly anti-mimetic.

The last chapter of the third section of the paper, entitled *Literary Forms*, takes into discussion the literary genres and species to which Mateiu's texts can be assigned, or refuse to be assigned. The difficulty in "classifying" the writer, the flight from the "burdening armor of epithets"⁴⁰ as a sign as the vitality of the work, as Marian Papahagi said, validates itself at a formal level through the refusal of the Mateian prose writings to answer to the exigencies of a precise literary species; the lyrical writings, on the other hand, stands out through the preference for the fixed form of the sonnet. The situation has generated in criticism, gain antagonistic views, which we solely inventory and briefly comment upon. Also, we try to find pertinent solutions in accordance with the reality of the work, meaning that we demonstrate Mateiu's preference for hybrid and therefore modern literary forms, except for the youth poems, which have the role of assuming and consuming a tradition, by means of the fixed form they practice. The antagonistic solutions at the formal level which his creation registers allow us to situate the author in a chiaroscuro baroque light: in his work another situation occurs again in which opposites are reconciled through the coexistence of fixed, pure forms with hybrid, non-defined forms, in which distinct literary species cohabitate through a phenomenon of contamination which erases the borders between genres, allowing thus the opening of some forms towards territories that do not rightfully belong to them, that are forbidden in a traditional delimitation. Mateiu Caragiale's entire creation draws its sap through the cohabitation of the lyrical with the epic. Drama is almost excluded. Perhaps the rejection of drama as a literary genre is a new manifestation of the rebellious attitude towards his father.

We suggest the possibility of interpreting the Mateian poems on three levels which ultimately constitute a single vision. Firstly we consider *Pajere* as the youth laborator of the later work, without minimizing the importance that they have as independent writings. In these poems Mateiu practices, through an exercise disciplined by the rigor of the verse, the language of the future prose writings which have consecrated him as a writer. The unity of the cycle of poems, which has not appeared as a volume except posthumously, is not generated solely by language, by the literary motives or the heraldic references it concentrates, but by two other clusters of meaning which allow us to glean the other two interpretative levels: firstly the *Pajere* are the verbal transcribing of certain portraits, masks in a baroque theater, and of some views taken out of an art gallery, and secondly

⁴⁰ Marian Papahagi, *Eros și utopie*, ediția a II-a, postfață de Ion Pop, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, Colecția Discobolul, 1999, p.45.

the photographic landscapes and the celebrated characters descend from the baroque epoch and announce spaces, images, feelings, "confessions," and recognizable figures in later prose writings, notably in *Craii de Curtea-Veche*.

Considered by some researchers as the ultimate point of Mateian, esthetics, the prose writing *Remember* institutes, in our opinion, a hybrid form, situated between long and short story a literary form in which one can distinguish without difficulty features of the novel, but can also very easily delineate features of the story. It is a long story through the discipline and rigor of the construction, through the preference for dilemmatic characters, through the setting in the abyss, the mood, the chiaroscuro, the dark and the bizarre which read into its narrative substance, through the capacity of "...effacing the line between the real and the unreal."⁴¹ Also a long story through "the force of recreating life, credible, with deep verisimilitude," through the essentializing of the narrative event. It is, simultaneously, a short story, because it employs first person narration, whose narrator is involved in the action and later assumes the mission of relating, reliving through the memory. It belongs, at the same time, to the privileged territory of the short story through the capacity to build and to maintain suspense, to preserve the secret lying at the heart of the outcome.

Similar to other researchers, we also strongly believe in the living together, and concomitantly the confrontation of the epic with the lyric in *Craii de Curtea-Veche*, in an impure literary form which is, in our opinion, irrefutably a novel, but a poetic novel --in the sense ascribed by Irina Mavrodin⁴², in whose guise it is that which expresses a subjectivity or, with a Proustian phrase, "the way in which the world is seen by a conscience."⁴³ In this sense, *Craii de Curtea-Veche* defines itself as a poetic novel and at the same time as a parable-novel, meditation-novel on the Being, genesis ontology and the reading of the Book.

Among all of Mateiu's prose writings, *Sub pecetea tainei* has the most complicated situation at the level of the literary form, since the contaminations among species are more numerous. In our opinion, the text has police novel features (or a project of the former, or even anti-police novel, were we to accept Matei Călinescu's opinion), species thus recuperated in an original form, but especially as a frame narrative. Of no small importance is the detail according to which, as Adrian Marino maintains, "the novel à tiroir, Rahmenerzählung, constitutes a "typical" baroque formula, with ancient ascendance."⁴⁴ Of no small importance is the memory writing dimension of the Mateian text which, overlapping with the structure of the police frame story, is similar to the species of the memories written, this time, with two hands. The tendency to defictionalize through the existence of a sole auditor, of a sole narrator, through the narratorial-authorial status of the narrator-

⁴¹ Anton Holban, *Opere*, III, București, Editura Minerva, 1975, apud Ion Vlad, *Aventura formelor. Geneza și metamorfoza "genurilor"*, București, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, Colecția Akademos, 1996, p.125.

⁴² Irina Mavrodin, *Romanul poetic*, București, Editura Univers, colecția Eseuri, 1977.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p.63.

listener brings this Mateian prose close to the territory of border literature, especially since the narrator-writer ascribes to it the role of memory writings. *Sub pecetea tainei* appears as an original, bizarre, hybrid memory writing literary form written with two hands and as a frame narrative with an anti-policier core.

The Diary also has a hybrid character, containing large passages of narrative recollection, of turning towards the crucial events in Mataiu's past. It intersects with the species of memory writing, since it registers many life fragments from distant periods that the author comments and invests with significance, meditations, and passages of self-analysis seemingly refusing daily deeds and momentary impressions which would have preserved the purity of the diary form. Mateiu's preference for memoirs (as it also becomes apparent from the "explicit library") has a motivation in the line of the author's enlisting in the baroque paradigm. The subjectivity enclosed in the writings of a confessional type reveal "el hombre secreto," "el discreto," "el prudente," typically baroque. Hence the inclination towards history and the obsession of the decline. According to Mircea Muthu, the baroque "is a constant of our literary balcanism"⁴⁵ and has a compensatory function, becoming aware of its belatedness complex and recuperation of a historical stage. The *Agendas* have a sober air, at times even banal and boring, but speak about the temporal succession of certain existential events more or less important which Mateiu Caragiale remembered under the impression of the lived moment and mark the beginning of a new stage in his life through the marriage to Marica Sion. In reality, they fulfill the role of a diary in which the writer records daily events and the moods of the moment lived. Here the notation is fugitive, concise, rarely set in a sentence. If the *Diary* pins events and feelings from the past, sidestepping the significance of its name, and the *Agendas* contain passages which project their notations into the future, this translates itself through the fact that Mateiu flees the present, rejects it, since he does not feel one bit comfortable in it, and his writings represent forms of evasion from his actual time, from the daily present. If the *Diary*, *Agendas*, and *Correspondence* represent for the literary creation a part of the laboratory intending to be "secret," the letters have in their own turn an anti-chamber of elaboration comprised of the concepts of letters, prepared by Mateiu in the case of receiving new orders and decorations from kings, the Pope, or princes. They comprise rules of drafting mail and official forms of address from the West.

The fourth part of the paper examines *A Few Baroque Elements in Mateiu I. Caragiale's Prose Writings* in their textual embodiment. In the first chapter we clarify a few *Definitions* of the symbols and endeavor to understand in which manner two of the constants of the baroque spirit materialize themselves: **the labyrinth** and **metamorphosis**, calling, of course, in the weave of

⁴⁴ Adrian Marino, *op.cit.*, p.251.

significances on the other ones as well (the mask, the mirror, the theater, the crisis, death, etc). We delineate them not only as literary motives, but also as symbolic patterns in the weaving of the text, at a structural, narrative, thematic, and even pragmatic level of reception, as "obsessive metaphors" which structure "the personal myth" of the author, in the terms of the psychocriticism⁴⁶. We have used as guides in our undertaking the studies of Paolo Santarcangelli, Mircea Eliade, and Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant's *Dictionary of Symbols*.

All the other five chapters of this section of the paper are dedicated, in turn, to the prose writings of Mateiu Caragiale, both the literary ones, and those at the border of literariness. The first of these is entitled *Remember. The Remembrance of the labyrinth and the labyrinth of remembrance* reconstitutes the initiating quests through the labyrinths which can be detected at the level of this mateian creation, through their reference to other baroque constants. The symbols that structure the labyrinthine weaving of initiation are the Sphinx, the number seven, blue, red, illness, the mirror (materialized as painting, water, window), the bridge, the crossroads, the night, the metamorphosis, death.

The title *Remember* and the manner in which Mateiu introduces his reader to the world of the story entitle us to assert that the text sets itself from the beginning in the horizon of initiation, in the sense of a retrospective, conscious look at a "life" experience of the narrator which passes, through writing, into an esthetic experience. The onset of the story *Remember* inscribes itself under the sign of a tricking of the senses, of a mix between reality and unreality, of life and dream, of truth and illusion, in the sense of the perception of existence under the species of duality, of oscillation, in a baroque vision. In the context of the illusion generated by the deception of the senses, the ego becomes the true subject of reality, "the sole leaning point in establishing the real,"⁴⁷ a phenomenon specific to the baroque mentality, where the ontic moves from the object towards the subject as Corin Braga rightfully notes.

We can distinguish in the novel two labyrinth paths: the first is that of the young narrator's peregrinations through 1970 Berlin and of the meetings with Aubrey de Vere, and the second builds itself in the memory of the narrator in seven years' time. They are concentrically circumscribed, in the sense that the labyrinth path of memory in which the narrator detaches himself and takes on the exclusive role of narrator includes through mirroring the one of the event lived in the past, in which the narrator also held the role of character, witness, and unmediated participant in the happenings. Despite the complication and the sinuosity, all labyrinths, therefore the Mateian ones as well, are

⁴⁵ Mircea Muthu, *Alchimia milenului*, București, Editura Cartea Românească, 1989, cap. *Însemnări la o categorie tipologică: barocul*, pp.171-182.

⁴⁶ Charles Mauron, *De la metaforele obsedante la mitul personal*, traducere de Ioana Bot, aparat critic, bibliografie și note pentru ediția românească de Ioana Bot și Raluca Lupu, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 2001.

⁴⁷ Corin Braga, *10 studii de arhetipologie*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, Colecția Discobolul, 1999, cap. *Visul baroc – simbol al colapsului ontologic*, p.111.

governed by order, but a specific, personal order. The first in itinerary of initiation, that of the Berlin youth, is subordinated to the logic of a bohemian existence, of self-taught educational acquisitions, governed by the verbs "to scatter" and "to wander." Knowledge is in this case somewhat unruly, unguided and subordinated to the subject's own will. This fact bears both advantages and disadvantages. In the first category are inscribed the feeling of a complete freedom and the possibility of selecting the educational fields in a personal manner, according to one's own interest and tastes. The main disadvantages consist of the chaotic assimilation of certain experiences and in the danger of the superficiality of the self-teaching act.

The second journey is an initiation marked by the subjective chronology of memory. They both articulate their aisles, crossroads, and obstacles in the same points, the ones decided by the memory of the teller, that is why we consider that the reconstitution of the labyrinth of memory also leads us towards the reestablishment of the original itinerary of initiation. The circular inscription of the two labyrinths has as a result the very text of the story *Remember*, whose narrator constructs himself as a writer through the exceptional "life" experience al cărei narator se construiește pe sine ca scriitor prin excepționala experiență de "viață" (we are speaking about the biography of the Mateian writer) lived in Berlin and through the experience of its recollection. The revelation of his status as a writer will take place only later, in the text of *Craii de Curtea-Veche*, in a setting in the abyss which has to do with the internal intertextuality of Mateiu Caragiale's work.

The salvation of the experience acquired in a superior form in the face of degradation brought about by the passage of time comes from the very zone of the esthetic, since the exit from the labyrinth, a place of self revelation in Andrei Plesu's opinion, is realized in *Remember* through creation, as in a rediscovered paradise, capable of ordering the chaos. "The told labyrinth" is a variant of reflection which references the metaphor of the mirror, so present in the baroque, in mannerism: "our share of shadow" is re-attainable on the condition of awareness, of feeling mediated through reflection. Moreover, the mirror builds an abstract labyrinth of total unreality and illusion, it incorporates simultaneously the real and the unreal, through the reflection of the former in the latter at imaginary, fictional level, not in the least concrete, palpable. Thus, the written text, which calls on personal history, through a non-mimetic fictionalizing evocation which erases the borders between dream and life, becomes a mirror of the being who narrates and narrates himself. At the end of the two labyrinth itineraries two types of outcomes outline themselves: that of the story *with* Aubrey de Vere, which remains "under the seal of the secret," and that of the story *with* the Narrator, *about* Aubrey de Vere, which has as a final point the very text of the story *Remember*. The itineraries of initiation, labyrinths touch their center, therefore do not inscribe themselves in the decadent vision of the de-structuring role of the labyrinth, but in the baroque perspective of this thematic and symbolic element.

At the center of the Mateian labyrinths in this prose is **the book**, the literary texts itself, born out of the experience of the Berlin nights, and the narrator who builds himself as a **writer**. In this sense we can consider *Remember* a **poetic art**, as Ion Vartic⁴⁸ termed it.

The next chapter, entitled *Craii de Curtea-Veche. The Circular Reflection of the Pluri-axis Labyrinths* discovers in the novel the patterns of the labyrinth in a structure a lot more complicated than the one in the story. *Craii de Curtea-Veche* develops the poetic art generated in *Remember*, enriching the Mateian labyrinths with new elements, but maintaining the symmetry of the textual construction, itself a labyrinth which orders the chaos. A first sign of symmetry is the structuring of the novel in four chapters: the first and the last correspond to each other circularly, like the sunrise and the sunset, since they enclose an awakening and, respectively, a symbolic falling asleep, and the *hagialâc-s* are doubled by confessions in the chapters in the middle of the text. A second symbol of symmetry could be the metaphor of the waltz sung at the pub in Covaci, which marks both the entering into the labyrinth and the departure from it at the end of the journey of initiation. The waltz, music in general, represent a victory over time, through the capacity of subjecting it through order, through measure, through rhythm. The motif of the waltz is followed and accentuated by the third indicator of symmetry: the motif of death, present in *Întâmpinarea Crailor* in Pirgu's anticipation of Paşadia's death, and in *Asfinţitul Crailor* in the actual death of the latter and of Pena Corcoduşa. A fourth sign of symmetry can also be identified in the temporal obsession which dominates all four parts, either through the precision, or through the rendering ambiguous or canceling of the chronological landmarks.

As in *Remember*, the entrance into the labyrinth of the story is provoked by the presence, this time invasive and insistent, of a letter and of the imprecision of the boundaries between the real and the unreal, in this case between sleep and wakefulness, underlined by the loss of temporal coordinates. The exit from time marks symbolically the beginning of a journey of initiation, as the consequences of this journey of knowledge project into timelessness, the becoming of the being transposing itself in a literary text with salvaging virtues in relation to the passage of time, in the novel for which it takes "notes."

The labyrinths of *Craii...* are multiple and take shape on diverse levels. There is a temporal labyrinth at the level of the narrative events in the novel, as well as one which closes in itself the biographies of the characters, whose fingerprints are possible to reconstitute in confessions or *hagialâc-s*. The most important labyrinths are those of the characters, as they are circumscribed by the central labyrinth of the novel: that of the narrating character who projects himself onto the other heroes, as in some mirrors displayed circularly, and assumes their existential and knowing experiences towards the enrichment of his own becoming. The plurality of the labyrinths of the

⁴⁸ Ion Vartic, *Clanul Caragiale*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Biblioteca Apostrof, 2002, p.187.

characters leads to the birth of the plurality of narratorial voices, an aspect easily found in the structure of any modern novel. The triad of narratorial voices from *hagialâc-s* subordinate themselves to that of the narrator, with a unifying role. The Narrator's self construction is equivalent with that of self construction in the role of Writer and the creation of a Book. The labyrinth of the Writer has a double axis: that of his biography as a character of the novel and that of the story he builds at a textual level (which has an exploded chronology, chaotic, modeled by the secret mechanism of evocation, of the telling often subjected to involuntary memory or of telling according to the narrator's own, willful logic of the auctorial narrator).

The geometry of the labyrinth of each of the "ego's" guides who narrates draws itself in a specific profile and keeps account of the side of personality represented by the respective character in the totalizing figure of the Narrator: Pantazi corresponds to the heart, fantasy, Paşadia to the head, the intellect, and Pirgu to the side of the shade, the senses, the urges. In the platonic/neoplatonic triad of the faculties of the soul, Pantazi would be the correspondent for Psyché, Paşadia for Nous, and Pirgu for Epithymia. In order to legitimize them as guides, the Narrator draws complex portraits and in evolution for his three companions, often using the technique of evocation, especially their evocation in a subjective perspective; he is not interested in their real biographies, but mostly how he himself perceives them. Every character exerts over the Narrator a transfer of significance, as everything relates to his ego, and in the end there remains only him, witness to the events happened. The lords who contribute to the Narrator's initiation appear as well individualized characters, but their role in the initiation transforms them in archetypal figures, a fact which allows us to glean a surpassing of their baroque dimension.

The *hagialâc-s* and the confessions individualize the journeys of initiation of every character and build themselves up through a technique of approaching and distancing of the watcher-listener-teller. As Alina Pamfil notes, in *Craii de Curtea-Veche*, "the world is contemplated, seen from the outside by an involved witness, of the same blood as the heroes."⁴⁹ It seems a paradoxical form of initiation, but the complete interiorization of this exteriority occurs in the symbolic dream of the narrator in the end. The triad scission of the narratorial being corresponds to the baroque situation of the "spectators in inter-worlds," the text defining itself, in the opinion of Alina Pamfil, on the heels of Rosario Assunto, as a "self-representative representation." The complete being of the main "hero" is born at the end of the novel, "centered," unified, surpassing thus the typically baroque scission, in the unifying onirical perspective from the last pages of the Mateian prose writings. The three *hagialâc-s* evolve as itineraries of initiation on two axis: that of Pantazi and that of Paşadia lead the narrator in space and time, in the spiritual and the livresque, decipher the signs of the world

⁴⁹ Alina Pamfil, *Spațialitate și temporalitate. Eseuri despre romanul românesc interbelic*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacopress, 1993 (*Mateiu I. Caragiale: poetica melancoliei*), p.89.

under the zodiac sign of emotion, of uttering, of creation, of the esthetic, producing, in a symbolic order, an ascension towards the celestial, the sacred, the imaginary.

The *hagialâc* which has Pirgu as guide, circumscribed in the second chapter and extended in the last, descends him in the inferno of "the life lived," in the concreteness of the real in its engrossed and malign expression represented by the "real Arnoteni." In this context, the real-unreal proportions change: "life dreamed" seems more real than "life lived," which seems a dream due to its incredible, shocking character. Conjugated, the two fundamental offer the possibility of total initiation. The chapter *Celor trei hagialâcuri* with quite a precious lecture key: it reveals the deliberate character of the labyrinth construction of the text and the realization by the Narrator of having taken a journey of initiation, to which he subjects, in fact, voluntarily. The full revelation is achieved in two ways. The first is the apothotic dream in the end, considered by Vasile Lovinescu "the fourth *hagialâc*"⁵⁰ of the lords, the most important of all, the one that confirms, in fact, the dimension of initiation of the entire labyrinth journey. The second is a way exterior to the textual body of the novel and appears only as a suggestion: the gesture of transposing the experience in written text through the melting of the real and the imaginary horizons into one. From this point of view, the oniric universe and the livresque one are similar, since they both host worlds simultaneously real and illusory, impalpabile and project ideal visions which valorize the fashioning becoming of the creative being.

If *Remember* reconstructs through anamnesis the initiation of the Narrator in the universe of Western civilization, *Craii de Curtea-Veche* lead the initiation in the space of the East, both of them being achieved in the capitals --sacred-prophane labyrinth centers-- of certain countries representative for the European cultures of the West-East axis. Berlin and Bucharest function as centers of tension which sum up symbolically, in complementarity, but also in reciprocity, under the sign of the double, the Apollinic spirit of the Western world and the Dionisiac spirit of the Eastern world.

The next chapter of the paper discovers the *Tridimensional Geometry of the Labyrinths* in Mateiu's last creation, *Sub pecetea tainei*. We distinguish in this prose writing a global labyrinth, two main labyrinths, accompanied by two other secondary ones, as in a tridimensional construction. The first among them, and the most important, as it also subordinates all the others, is the textual labyrinth, which stretches out on the entire surface of the text, which values the present of the narrative as the present of the text's birth in writing, which reveals the structure of the narrative planes of the story in its role as written text, in which the character is the narrator himself in the guise of the writer, a guise which is not explicitly defined, but is deduced from Teodor Ruse's conviction that his memories will not be lost, meant as they are to be put into writing by the

Narrator. It is the labyrinth which gains contour in the act of writing and practically swallows all the other labyrinths. Specific to it are the fragments out of which the portrait of Master Rache is gradually composed, the descriptive digressions and the explanatory passages of the narrator in the guise of narratorial and authorial voice, the transcribing of one's own lines and of Master Rache's lines alternatively in direct and indirect speech.

The first among the main labyrinths is the one in which the initiation of writer narrator is achieved and which has master Rache as guide, and temporally it is situated in the week before the writing and the characters are the very dialogue partners. The second one is the labyrinth of Teodor Ruse's professional and personal memory, retrospective labyrinth which is constructed through the activation of the mechanisms of recollection, on the two stories of the alternation past-present. They all subordinate, in a satellite-like display, the spacial and temporal labyrinth, absorbed and multiplied by each of the main labyrinths. One can distinguish, floating over all the other labyrinths, a linguistic labyrinth, in which the figurative meanings abound, which lead towards a euphemising of the speech, thus illustrating the typically baroque technique of ambiguity. The effort of dissociating these labyrinths does not annul their coexistence lor, the obligation to respect the weaving of relationships which complicates their structure.

The textual labyrinth which employs the Narrator's initiation represents a completion of the labyrinth plane outlined in the other two Mateian prose writings, writings which have each effected a metamorphosis in the status of the Narrator, through the accumulation of experience, of knowledge, of creation. The ending of the story *Remember's* writing has meant a first ritualistic death of the writer-narrator, but also a promise of rebirth through a new creation. Indeed, *Craii de Curtea-Veche* registers his rising, and its finish a new ritualistic death which promises a new life in another text, which will be *Sub pecetea tainei*. This succession of ritualistic births and deaths is associated with the image of the mirror, through a poetics of reflection, of setting in abyss. The finalizing of a text presupposed an initiation. The writing of a new text necessitates a new initiation, with other models, another guide, in other truths of knowledge, but heeding the same imperative of secrecy and the same ritual of symmetry, of circularity of the narrative.

"The symbolic unifying branching of duration and oldness,"⁵¹ specific to frame narratives, confirm the importance of temporality in the construction of Mateian works, underlying the obsession for the devouring time, obsession which traverses the entire creation of the writer: the image of the lady at the masquerade ball in the last story of the series gains symbolic value in the old photograph and found again as a great revelation, a photograph which functions as a form of survival; in the first story, the wife of Gogu Nicolau preserves in time the same habits, the same

⁵⁰ Vasile Lovinescu, *Al patrulea hagialac*, București, Editura Cartea Românească, 1981.

behavior as in the time of her husband's life, as if wanting to ignore the disappearance of the man, but the photograph worn by her in the brooch becomes effaced in time, like the memory of the one mysteriously disappeared.

In the labyrinth of Masterul Rache, all three histories recalled by the old policeman are crossroads of his labyrinth and enclose within them exceptional secrets, felt as such by the very person who narrates them. In the labyrinth of the Narrator, the first story represents an initiation in the secret's manner of production, the second constitutes an initiation in observing the structure of the story, and the third, a synthetic initiation in both, with the mention that the absence of the ending transforms into failure the initiation into the structure of the story, or strengthens the poetics of the secret. The insistence on this poetics of the secret leads the story towards a sliding into the fantastic.

At the level of the textual labyrinth textual, the fact that secrets remain unrevealed does not mean that they cut the stories short, that these have no outcome; in the order of the classic succession of the literary subject, in all of Master Rache's stories there is a curtain fall at the end, be it that it covers the secret, or that it leaves it partially in sight: the first ends with Gogu Nicolau's case becoming classified and his widow's continuation of her existence, the second ends with the death of the minister and his wife. The outcome of the third story is the very refusal of an outcome, a fact which makes it possible for the secret to remain complete: the identity of the Lady and of the possible wrong doers is not revealed, the way the case is solved is a mystery, just as the manner in which the photograph of the Lady has come into the ownership of the Narrator. The poetics of the absolute secret seems thus demonstrated, but Master Rache himself, its protector and advocate breaks it by telling the narrator, and the latter breaks it through the act of writing, so the secret can never be complete.

The initiation of the Narrator is real, but registers a failure in the plane of his work: the transcribing of Master Rache's stories, which could have multiplied ad infinitum, since he had "a bag full of memories," puts very little demands on his creative capacities and the acquisitions during the initiation even though, through the copy, it presupposes an assuming of the type of universe evoked by his guide. In this way, it produces the impossibility of the believable finalizing of the text and a dilution of his quality as a writer, as "the semiology of infinite copying is opposed to that of absolute creation."⁵² The Narrator becomes an anti-narrator, for he attributes no story to himself, following, perhaps involuntarily, the line of a model imposed by the standard of frame narratives in the Romanian literature between the two World Wars: the authorial narrator from *Hanu*

⁵¹ Sergiu Pavel Dan, *Povestirile în ramă. Ipostaze universale și românești ale unei structuri*, Pitești, Editura Paralela 45, Colecția Deschideri, Seria Poetică și teorie literară, 2001, p.117.

Ancuței. If at Sadoveanu the authorial, homodiegetic narrator, is a simple member of the audience, therefore has a "rather ornamental form,"⁵³ at Mateiu Caragiale, although he has an obviously restricted role, the status of writer, declared, and that of apprentice who becomes initiated in the secrets of storytelling and will later note the things heard advances its signification, magnifying its attributes. He is the one who leads the text towards the crossing of two thresholds, through the act of writing. The first, from the oral, a premiss of anonymity the ephemeral, to the written, a promise of immortality and of public recognition, and the second, from the ontological experience to the gnoseological.

The next to last chapter of this section, *Memoirs. Crises and Healings*, has as working material Mateiu's diary writing, the *Jurnal* and the *Agenda-Acta-Memoranda*. We have discovered in them both the signs of the different crisis undergone by the he who wrote them and the manner in which the healing occurred, as well as the labyrinth pattern specific to the literary prose writings.

The Mateian *Journal* also contains, in fact, a few memoir sequences for whose writing the writer used the daily entries in the *Agendas*, the latter rather taking on the role of the journal. Thus, the *Journal* written under this title is a secondary text, a piece of writing developed with clear analytical intentions, based on a primary text through the true daily observations are made which, in the haste of recording, are not concerned with keeping the details and moreover contain numerous elements which are of only tangential interest to the critic or the literary historian, a fact which has lead to Perpessicius's summarizing of some passages, judged as insignificant, in the transcription and the translation of the manuscript pages of the Mateian *Agendas*. This is also a form of mirroring, of migration of one text to another, or auto-intertextualization, of doubling of perspective, of filtering of the experience written down to obtain essences, a few truly valuable, special existential sequences. It is a form of mystification, of rendering the discourse artificial, of processing it in order to build behind words the portrait of a man wearing a mask, but a willfully vulnerable mask since it leaves the real face of the writer to be guessed in places, like in a childlike play of hide and seek with the self and the others. This undertaking reflects amply the Mateian perfectionism, his inclination towards the refinement of the written text, be it that it belongs to the esthetic field, or that it lies at the outskirts of literature, or that it is addressed to the great public, or that it is kept, at least declaratively, only for oneself. What's more, the polishing and completing labour for the notes in the *Agendas* in order to obtain the writings in the *Journal* corresponds to a metamorphosis, itself baroque in origin, a transformation through multiplication and through the deepening of the detail. This esthetic gesture can be interpreted as a method specific to the writerly

⁵² Victor Ieronim Stoichiță, *Efectul Don Quijote. Repere pentru o hermeneutică a imaginarului european*, traducere de Ruxandra Demetrescu, Gina Vieru, Corina Mircan, București, Editura Humanitas, 1995, cap. "Copiind ca odinioară" sau *Degas și maestrul*, p.240.

⁵³ Sergiu Pavel Dan, *op.cit.*, p.114.

laboratory, in which Mateiu experiments literary techniques and prepares artistic creations, but also as a breaking of the promise to dedicate the lines in the *Journal* to himself. The use of the *Agendas* as a source for later writing the *Journal* coincides with an attitude through which Mateiu imposes on himself a distancing from the immediate event, a temporal distancing which brings along a psychological one as well, generating a sedimentation and decantation of the accumulations of lived experiences, in order to re-work them esthetically. Paradoxically, the interval thus born guides the substance of the memoir accounts in the *Journal* towards a labyrinth ordering. We distinguish at the level of this Mateian text two sinuous galleries, intrinsic labyrinths: the labyrinth of writing and the labyrinth of the mist of notes. We can also decipher a labyrinth unfolding as far as concerns the reception and life of the *Journal* after the death of its author as well, as if the sinuous pattern present in the entire Mateian work would have also contaminated the manner in which the *Journal* was reconstituted by the editors.

The labyrinth of writing, in which the text disposes of a linear conformation is a deciphered and orderly one, and the data are registered with a certain precision, with two exceptions generated by Mateiu's imprecision in dating; the mistake probably belongs to those who have gathered the memoir pages posthumously and have tried to unify them in a coherent whole. The labyrinth of the notes' content has a structure complicated by the selective, subjective flux of memory. The extrinsic labyrinth, that of the Mateian journal's life after the death of the writer seems a replica, at the symbolic level, of the Egyptian myth of Isis and Osiris: the manuscripts of Mateiu Caragiale's notes were reconstituted, assembled and transcribed by those who had access to them, later translated and published. This type of labyrinth is recognizable in the case of the writer's *Agendas* as well.

All the strata and substrata we manage to decipher and interpret in the Mateian *Journalul* orient the interpretation towards a conclusion which certifies the baroque dimension of the writer's figure: that of a being placed in eternal crisis, in perpetual scission, who has fixed on a mask which he assumes completely, with which he identifies for the biggest part of his life, even though, under the same pressure of interior rupture, it moves it partially, letting show in the nostalgic depth of his figure another aspiration, other dreams, censured by the discipline of the self-imposed life program, by existential accidents, by a "kind of self-destruction instinct," or by an inexplicable lack of initiative and dynamism" of which he complains and blames himself in the *Journal*. The scission, the crisis are equivalent to the most significant feature of the baroque type artist. The need to write a diary belongs to the battle field of self construction that Mateiu along his entire existence. The self-mystification to which he subjects himself takes place in a self initiation, in the progression through an existential labyrinth does not fully satisfy the writer's aspirations. The contradiction between the self wanted in the process of self mystification and the self resulted in this, between the mask

craved for and the one acquired in time produces a rupture, contributing to the deepening of the crisis. The construction of the self takes place through a behavioral discipline and a self-taught apprenticeship. The exorcising to which he constrains his own body, the interior emancipation he imposes on himself is summed up in the last three years of his life in the program of "regeneration," of "reform," of "descoundrelization" (timid beginning in 1931, under the name of "aera nova," intensified in 1934-1935 and in the year of death), maintained through the periodic noting in the *Agendas* of certain almost sacred formulas, with almost incantatory value, like a mantra ("cave, age, tace," "energy, firmness," "business is business," "morgue, snobism," "calm, glacial coolness). The *Journal* is a self fiction which gives meaning to existence and which could, in Mateiu Caragiale's case, solve the crisis, the interior conflict, confirming its healing mission.

The last chapter of the fourth section of the paper reconstitutes the *Portrait of the Artistului as a Young Man* in Mateiu's private *Correspondence*. If the diary closes in on itself through the author's will which forbids someone else's access to its content, the correspondence operates an opening, a coming out of the shell which provides another side of the writer, put in a relational situation with an other. Placed in an intermediary space, in a Purgatory of creation, the correspondence, attentive to the outlines of the face mirrored, proves to be more careful than the diary in the quality of the language used as well.

The youth correspondence pages with his friend N.A. Boicescu are very important from several perspectives. In the first place, they are written in a Romanian language contaminated with a few German words, and especially a few Frenchisms, more or less adapted. Also, at the linguistic level, licentious references insinuate themselves, which bring Mateiu's language close to that of Pirgu. In the second place, they seed with references to the aristocratic world. The adoption of a precious idiomatic code, but also loose, and the aspiration to know and to identify oneself with the world of the nobility produce an estrangement from oneself, by falsifying some feelings and natural gestures with the purpose of being taken for another. This period of adolescence and of youth seems to be the most effervescent for Mateiu as far as concerns putting on the hat of the snobului, of the dandy. Later on, even though he does not give up these aspects of his existence, growing mature brings with itself a certain calmness, a curbing of the energy, a discretion closer to the patterns in which fall the gestures characteristic of a true dandy, in line with Brummel. In the third place, in the youth letters one must look for the roots of the Mateian self-mystification and of the crisis this generates. The disguise, the false aristocratic identity, the staging of an ideal ego, deformed and deforming do nothing else, in essence, than hide the void in real life: the absence of aristocratic identity, the boring existence, the mediocre material condition, the sadness. But the most efficient therapy seems to be the very fact that he has a dialogue partner, to whom he can reveal both his real face, and the one he is trying to compose. The correspondence with friend Boicescu has the same

therapeutic role as the *Journal* later but in both cases self-healing is the result of an acute self-analysis.

The drafts of different Mateian writings, the fragments left over from the writer's literary projects, the articles published in the press of the time, the reading notes all these allow us to distinguish the baroque hypothesis of the "homo artifex," from the writer's "poeta faber." They are part of the secondary laboratory of creation and represent the testimony to a self-taught labour of forming the personality Mateiu's and torturing polishing of the literary texts. On the other hand, the memoirs and the correspondence illuminate the creator who "speaks himself," who "dispalys" his self, who represents another profile of the baroque face of the writer. In fact, this is the appearance in which Mateiu shows up in his literary pieces as well, and the itineraries of initiation on which he guides his authorial narrator (the character Narrator) represent a testifying to this truth.

The fifth section of the paper outlines the conclusions of the entire scientific endeavor which set out to decant the baroque dimension of Mateiu Caragiale's works. Throughout this demonstrative undertaking, the "obsessive metaphors" which lead to a Mateian "personal myth" could be established. The "obsessive metaphors" can be classified, in the writer's work, into categories found in a rapport of subordination. Thus, life as dream, living in crisis, the doublings, the control over one's own biography, the composition of the face through superposition or changing of masks, the metamorphosis, the mirror, the obsession of death all these are constituent pieces of a Mateian imaginary universe subordinated to an obsessive totalizing metaphor: that of the recurring image of the labyrinth, which leads to the circumscription of personal myth centered in initiation, on the *hagialâc*. The itineraries of initiation are presented in Mateiu Caragiale's work as structures which compose an imaginative matrix. Confronted with biographical events, by means of the empirical data known, but also through the mediation facilitated by the memoir texts and by correspondence, these elements, which are also some baroque constants, prove themselves to be a reflex of the writer's unconscious personality.

We have discovered in all of Mateiu's texts a way of organizing and a textual substance arranged in the logic of the labyrinth. Labyrinth can be traced at the level of the content, at the level of the form, at the level of the entire Mateian work, at the level of real and at the self mystifying biography of the writer. The series of Mateian labyrinth opens up, at the level of the work seen as a whole, with his lyrical creations, through which he institutes himself as a writer. From this point forward, Mateiu becomes a sort of self-taught apprentice in writing, setting off on a journey of initiation whose crossroads, meant to complete his creative destiny, are all of the prose creations, both the literary ones, and the ones at the border of literariness.

After the review and underlining of the Mateian "obsessive metaphors," we consider that the work, which we place after the obsessive baroque emblem of the labyrinth, has revealed a personal

myth in which one can read the same intertwined structure, but also one of initiation, difficult, but also revealing, full of crossroads, but also illuminated by a redeeming center. Through a projection of ordering symmetry (order which is no stranger to the labyrinth), closing the circle in an image of "uroboros," this salvaging core of the personal myth of the labyrinth is the very work of the writer, for whom his entire creative and existential effort has organized itself, consciously or unconsciously, as a perpetual initiation.

The final section is the *Bibliography* consulted for the achievement of research and of the paper, organized thus: *Editions of Mateiu Caragiale's Works, Theoretical and Critical Papers, Articles from Periodicals, Art Works, Internet Sites.*

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