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Vintilă Ivănceanu: From Oneirism to the Neo-Gothic

Abstract: This study analyzes the works that Vintilă Ivănceanu (1940-2008) wrote in Romanian. A member of the oneiric movement of the 1960-70s, Ivănceanu adhered to the principles of “aesthetic oneirism” defined by Leonid Dimov and Dumitru Țepeneag. His first book, the micro-novel entitled *Până la dispariție* (*To the Point of Disappearance*), presents the detention of a political protester from the hallucinating perspective of a ceaseless delirium generated by the tortures to which the protagonist is subjected. The second, *Nemaipomenitele pățanii ale lui Milorad de Bouteille* (*The Extraordinary Misadventures of Milorad de Bouteille*), uses the same technique of oneiric collages, but is imbued with humor, satire and a Gothic that is reminiscent of the Middle Ages. Finally, the fanciful poem *Vulcaloborgul și frumoasa Beleponja* (*The Vulcaloborg and the Beautiful Beleponja*) resumes the medieval theme of human teratology through a surge of playful imagination.

Keywords: Romanian Literature; Oneiric Movement; Vintilă Ivănceanu; Neo-Gothic.

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Vintilă Ivănceanu was born in Bucharest in 1940 and passed away in Morocco in 2008. Together with more renowned writers such as Dumitru Țepeneag and Leonid Dimov, he belonged to the Romanian oneiric movement, founded in the late 1960s and dismantled by the Romanian communist censorship in 1972. Following the ban on publishing imposed on the members of this movement, Vintilă Ivănceanu emigrated to Austria, where he continued to write and publish poetry, fiction and essays, founded a publishing house, Rhombus Verlag, together with his wife Heidi Dumreicher, directed theater productions and taught at the Institute for Theatre Studies and at the Institute of Electroacoustic Music in Vienna.

The members of this movement practiced the poetics of “aesthetic oneirism”,¹ which, according to Dumitru Țepeneag, was predicated on the notion that dream should be subordinated neither to a metaphysical goal (the dream visions of Romanticism), nor to a psychological one (the Surrealist conception of dreams), but rather to an artistic purpose. Oneiric associations are used by these authors as an utterly lucid technique of literary creation. Vintilă Ivănceanu’s poetic and prose writings make

ample use of oneiric architecture, producing a universe in which reality is constantly undercut by delirious and hallucinatory insertions, gothic narratives, dark fairy tales and absurd literature.

The two books of fiction that Vintilă Ivănceanu published in Romania before his exile, namely a micro-novel and a collection of short stories, triggered ambivalent responses among literary critics, who were astounded by the writer's propensity towards iconoclasm and by his boundless penchant for inventiveness and playfulness.² Like in the early prose of Dumitru Țepeneag, *Exerciții* (*Exercises*, Bucharest, Editura pentru Literatură, 1966) and *Frig* (*Cold*, Bucharest, Editura pentru Literatură, 1967), Vintilă Ivănceanu's works draw upon the avant-garde tradition of the interwar period, using the technique of Dada and Surrealist associations in order to challenge and undermine the narrative patterns of realistic prose that dominated postwar literature. They can be regarded as literary experiments in the spirit of the New French Novel and of the *Tel Quel* literary review, but also as deconstructions of the dominant literary discourse, anticipating Derridean post-structuralism and Romanian postmodernism.

The micro-novel *Până la dispariție* (*To the Point of Disappearance*, București, Editura pentru Literatură, 1968) is reminiscent of the "minimalist" novels of Samuel Beckett, *Molloy* or *Malone Dies*. Vintilă Ivănceanu follows – "to the point of disappearance" – both the destiny of a character, Ion Dragalina, and the narrative discourse itself. The book overlaps the level of fiction with that of metafiction: the events in which the character is involved serve as a parable for the trials and tribulations

of writing. The plot of the novel parodies the literature of soviet and communist propaganda featuring illegalists who were caught and interrogated by State Security, who were subjected to torture but heroically refused to confess or betray their cause. It was probably the impression that the book was a critique of Nazism, capitalism and the bourgeoisie that enabled it, at that time, to escape censorship.

Still, the true allegorical reference of the novel, which readers could not possibly miss, was to the totalitarian communist regime. The "illegalist" Ion Dragalina is the generic man who was pursued and persecuted by the Security, the organ of control and repression of the People's (and then of the Socialist) Republic of Romania. At the beginning of the second chapter, the narrator evokes his father's years in prison, the author possibly tapping traumatic memories related to the persecution of his family. However, the narrator recounts these experiences using a first-person narrative, constructed as a series of hallucinating perceptions and delusional associations of a character who is subjected to interrogation, torture and isolation. Several scenes suggest his condition as a prisoner who has no chance of salvation: a walking possession order, handcuffs, striped pajamas, water jets, a barred cell, etc.

The torments and tortures to which Ion Dragalina is subjected are pushed to the grotesque and absurd limits. Aiming at the prisoner's anatomical and mental dissolution, they remind one of the horrors inflicted by the Romanian totalitarian regime in prisons such as the penal facility from Pitești in the 1950s: "Restlessness, confusion, delirium, and blackout. Blood transfusion. Fever, chills, chills, fever,

parasites in the small intestine, crawling rash, broken capillary walls, worms in the alveoli of the left lung, perforation of the intestinal wall, worms are migrating, the biliary duct is getting obstructed, sunken temples and cheeks, tired eyes, sunken in the orbits, a dulled sense of taste, cramps in the muscles of my fingers, heavy head, an asthma crisis, the conductivity of the specific tissue decreasing.”³

The antitotalitarian parable acquires Kafkaesque connotations and dimensions. Unable to run away, or to glimpse a way out and follow it, Ion Dragalina has the impression that he is turning into a crab, like the protagonist in *The Metamorphosis*. Like Joseph K. in *The Trial*, he is convinced that the people of the regime have realized that they cannot make him cave in and will end up murder him, because “murder is the mystique of powerlessness.”³ Another author of the absurd that the novel evokes is Eugen Ionescu. Just like Beranger witnessed powerlessly the transformation of those around him into rhinos, Ion Dragalina is forced by the torturers to turn into a... rhombus. Pressured into internalizing the axiom that “the Rhombus is the cornerstone of the Universe,”⁴ he has the impression that not only his persecutors, but also the rest of the people, the buildings and the church are turning into geometric figures. Metamorphosing into a rhombus becomes a symbol for the brainwashing process by which the totalitarian system aims to reduce individuals to acquiescent pawns, to mere numbers without identity.

The value the protagonist of the novel defends with all the resources of his mind and body is his freedom. In the narrator’s words, “freedom is not a moral norm, an ethical convention or a legal notion, but

– watch out, amateurs of definitions! – freedom is the instinct which overcomes the instinct of self-preservation and pushes man to the maximum level of the possible.”⁵ For Ion Dragalina, freedom is a vector of existence, the sole axis of survival for a human being who is increasingly battered, physically and morally. The protagonist succeeds, at one point, in escaping, but ends up being caught and imprisoned again. His form of liberation remains, however, a spiritual one: salvation through memory, evasion into hallucination and delirium, the construction of an enhanced reality, capable of blowing up the stifling universe of incarceration and torture.

Vintilă Ivănceanu uses the oneiric technique, as defined by his colleagues with a stronger theoretical vocation, Dumitru Țepeneag and Leonid Dimov, in order to render his protagonist’s stream of consciousness. Ion Dragalina appears to be suffering from a relentless delirium, trapped in a state of derealized consciousness, which perceives the objects and events of the outside world filtered through the dark veil of the nightmare. The syntax of the episodes reconstitutes the unpredictability of the associations from the dreams. For example, at the beginning of the book, the protagonist is thrown into a prison cell and goes through a series of scenes that succeed one another like an oneiric flux: the figures on the dial of the watch disappear, the room is getting smaller, a bump grows “terribly fast” and bursts, discharging an oily blue liquid, a bark is heard from behind the bed, the protagonist slides on skis down a mound of snow, the barking dog turns out to be a wolf, etc.

Sometimes, the oneiric delirium boils down to a verbal delirium, free associations

of words and sentences. Here is a sample: "I'm mocking. The coachman is getting plastered on pines. The intuition of the road alone is remembered as an adagio. Memento mori. The difference between *between* and *in-between* builds insight. The escape follows the normal path, the heating develops stinginess. Notre dames. Milanesa mat. Coat hanger. Old clothes, old clothes, pull your father by the nose. Potato plugs of in the visors of the knights. Grave-diggers ingurgitate the harrowed soil. In the grids, the train staff, reliable. I take her out on a straight line, from the low caliber balls I knight the princess, I bestialize her on the stripe of the fir tree root. O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum! The barber cuts hair. I cut the vines of the inevitable jungle. I escape on rationed foods."⁶

The narrator acknowledges that "my speech is fraught with residue, with effluvia", but adds, significantly, that in them can be found the "terrible aurora borealis girl."⁷ It is as if we were witnessing a Big Bang of words, the initial explosion of all languages, of the Romanian language in any case. In fact, it is an implosion rather than an explosion, the entropy and final extinction of language and thoughts. The protagonist's oneiric stream is heading for an implacable black hole, "to the point of extinction". That is why the novel resembles the transcript of a near death experience, in which all the images of the world appear before the protagonist's eyes. Every noun, adjective or verb brings a last glimpse of a thing that is on the verge of disappearing from the horizon. The external reality turns into naught at the same time with the last few traces of memory, with the last words that reflect them. The death of the character is seen from inside the continuum of a

consciousness whose last images and words are progressively erased.

The collection of short fiction entitled *Nemai pomenitele pățanii ale lui Milorad de Bouteille* (*The Extraordinary Misadventures of Milorad de Bouteille*), published by Cartea Românească Press in 1970,⁸ consists of fantastic-absurd sketches. It is presented as the "work" of Milorad de Bouteille, a fictional author who allegedly lived in the twelfth century. The body of texts is prefaced by a pseudo-introductory study, in which Vintilă Ivănceanu assumes the persona of a fictional biographer, who retraces the life and deeds of Milorad's parents (Dorothea de Glefenhand and Nevermoor de Bouteille) and of Milorad himself.

The first section of the book, presented as a foray into literary history, parodies the trite assumptions of critical research which accompany the editions of classical works. This introduction is an intriguing Bildungsroman, which imitates not an epic species (the novel), but a critical species (biography). The author of the eulogistic and, at the same time, (self)ironic biography of Milorad de Bouteille identifies himself as Vintilă Ivănceanu, but the inserts with the diary pages from his own life are alternatively dated 1969 and 1914, which renders the narrator's identity as fluid.

The alleged literary historian reconstructs the biographies of Dorothea, of Nevermore and of Milorad, compiling all sorts of fake documents of the time, invented in the spirit of an irrepressible fantasy: chronicles and horologia (of Tom the Spaniard, Joachim of Flanders, Georg of Berbant), registers and incunabula, scholarly and encyclopedic treatises (about vampires or arquebuses), coats of arms and heraldic insignia, engravings and paintings

of family portraits, legends and oral traditions, chapters of legislation, memoirs, annals and records, private diaries, notes on the margins of book pages, correspondence, as well as the comments and analyses made by other pseudo-researchers on the subject (Măgăoaia Piruleț, Prof. Paese, Prof. Mamamira from the University of Pleligord, Prof. Tapiru from the University of Hârc). The “scholar Vintilă Ivănceanu” puts together all these invented sources, supplements and amends them, quotes some scholars, polemicizes with others, makes erudite psychoanalytical or theosophical references, but also jestful sociological comments.

This composite discourse creates a gothic medieval universe. The de Bouteille family was ostensibly founded in the eighth century by Helgo Lupul (Helgo the Wolf). His descendants live in the gloomy Gromo Castle from the Palatinate of Glefenhand (or another similar political entity of the Roman-German Empire). The father of Milorad, the protagonist, is called Nevermoor. He is an eccentric manic-depressive, who goes from bouts of brutality and antisocial revolt to periods of asceticism and philosophical meditation or alchemical research. His mother, Dorothea, a woman of a fatal beauty, is a predator. She is accused of vampirism and burned at the stake as a witch. Milorad himself is a scholar and a precocious writer, concerned with magical and cabalistic issues. According to legend, he has made a pact of knowledge and creation with the forces of the occult.

Vintilă Ivănceanu appeals to motifs and symbols of the “enchanted thinking” of the Middle Ages with the stated goal of stimulating the pleasures of imagination and reading, which are now somewhat

stale because of modern practices of literature. The lucid-ironical game with the fantastic and the macabre corrodes the sterile and grumpy seriousness in which, as the author indirectly suggests, modernity has locked itself, and reactivates the vital creatures of fantasy. The narrator himself confesses, in his diary pages inserted ad-hoc, that he received the ghostly visit of Dorothea. This is an ingenious metaphor for the oneiric art practiced by Vintilă Ivănceanu, an art that is summoned to life like a buried specter. Milorad is explicitly referred to as a personification of the Imagination, of the writer’s repressed nocturnal personality. Through the character, the author has access to a submerged universe, populated by a “world of small fish living on dry land and elephants living in the oceans, a world of cats writing sonnets and dogs loving Amazons, a world of knights marching around on the bottom of an unknown ocean and manicurists playing the harp.”⁹⁹ Milorad de Bouteille is the personification of oneiric art (which, of course, features a Bacchic element), just like Euphoriion embodied Goethe’s conception of poetry. Defending his “monster” character from the attacks and the criticism of his “literary colleagues”, Vintilă Ivănceanu pleads for the unlimited freedom of the imagination, in an era (the late 1960s) in which Romanian culture was striving to shake off the directives of socialist realism.

The second section of the collection brings together the “work” of Milorad de Bouteille, 53 picaresque, fantastic-absurd sketches, in which the principle of phantasmatic pleasure oversteps the boundaries and separations between reality and dream, between the natural and the metaphysical, between historical epochs, between

lifelikeness and hapchance. Some of these short fictions focus, as in a flash, on supernatural figures, creatures or occurrences: an old wizard with detachable limbs (*Sam cel negru – Dark Sam*); a bicycle that an old man rides down into the other world (*Roata din față – The Front Wheel*); a mystic cloud that paralyzes a gang of robbers (*Târziu – Late*); a mermaid that appears in a drop of water under the microscope (*Mătura și o picătură de apă – The Broom and A Drop of Water*); a hand with eleven fingers (*Când a sosit poliția – When the Police Arrived*); an aristocrat whom is actually a wolf (*Sfârșitul unei vendette – The End of A Vendetta*); an evil bird – a phoenix undergoing anamorphosis (*Trei zile cântară sub ferestre – For Three Days They Sang under the Windows*).

Another series of stories starts from some typical scenes – stereotyped in popular fiction – which are then “resolved” in an absurd manner: a lascivious woman in a room has her cat kiss the portrait of a man who is gazing at her scoldingly (*Bărbatul încruntat și plictisit – The Bored Frowning Man*); the joust for the hand of the princess is won by a fierce knight who has an aquarium with a goldfish instead of a head (*Cu lancia în cumpănire – With the Spear in Equipoise*); a notorious drunk asks his master to let him spend a night in the basement of the castle and comes across a pool of wine, on which a swan floats (*Renumitul bazin – The Famous Pool*); an old man who, by stepping on an unlucky rung, is blinded by a hand sticking out of the wall (*Bastonul alb – The White Cane*); the doctoral student who, instead of a thesis, places a cabbage on the professor’s desk (*Profesorul Karlig – Professor Karlig*), etc. It is difficult to reproduce the “jokes” that, at the end of

the sketches, derail into non-sense. Vintilă Ivănceanu plays with literary clichés, creates certain expectations through his narratives, which he then dismantles logically and stylistically, without proposing any fantastic (epiphanic) finality, or a psychological one (in the manner of the failed acts or involuntary memory).

The climax of this medievalizing or (neo)Gothic direction is represented by the “epic” poem entitled *Vulcaloborgul și frumoasa Beleponjă* (*The Vulcaloborg and the Beautiful Beleponja*, 1971). In the literature of the Middle Ages, revisited in postmodern fashion by Leonid Dimov in his poetry and by Vintilă Ivănceanu in his stories, a thematic area of great interest to readers was teratology. The edges of the known world for the ancients and the medievals, the fabulous Indies, the Land of the Seres (silk cultivators – China), the Land of Gog and Magog (Siberia), South-Saharan Africa, etc. were populated by a series of fantastic animals and monstrous races. On medieval *mappae mundi* were drawn and, sometimes, even encased in small boxes like in some panopticon jars beasts and semi-anthropomorphic species such as lions, leopards, winged griffins, flying snakes, bats, asps, scorpions, ants as big as mice, crested snakes, *dentiron-ti*, night ravens, phoenix birds, etc., as well as cynocephali (dog-headed men), *blemmyae* (headless people, with their eyes, nose and mouth on the chest), *amyctyrae* (with lips so big that they served as an umbrella), *androgyns*, *antipodeans* (who walked upside down), *artibatirae* (who walked on all fours), *astomi* (people without mouths, who feed only on the scent of fruit), bearded ladies, *microbii* (who lived only eight years, and whose women conceived at the age of five), *Cyclops*, *enotocoetes* (whose feet

had the heel forward and the toes at the back), *epiphagi* (with eyes on their shoulders), giants, *himantopodes* (with long legs, as thin as straps), *hippopodes* (with horse legs), people with horns, *ichtiophagi* (who spent hours under the water and fed on fish), *macrobi* (long-lived), *ocypodes* (who ran faster than horses), *panotii* (with huge ears in which they wrapped themselves at night), pygmies, raw-meat eaters, red-legged people, *sciapodes* (people with a single, giant foot, which offered them shade from the sun in summer), *sciritae* (flat faced people, without noses), women with eyes that shone at night, *parossites* (people without noses and mouths, with a single hole, through which they sipped drinks with a straw), six-handed people, people with furry feet, with a dog's tail, troglodytes (who lived underground), people who were born old and died young, etc.¹⁰

In Antiquity and the Middle Ages encyclopedists used the edges of the *oecumena* as a sort of laboratory for imaginary experiments on human nature. In this space of creation that was still in full swing, animal and human teratology represented a kind of unfinished, failed attempts by a deity that had aimed to create the perfect species that inhabited the known world. In a gigantic combinatorial game, the limbs of various races were recombined into new figures, which transgressed the patterns of normal nature: winged lions, horse-bodied men, dog-headed men, etc. The fabulous Indies were some kind of crypt or attic for the Europeans' repressed phantasms, for the monsters that haunted the collective unconscious.¹²

This medieval imaginary is revisited by Vintilă Ivănceanu through the lens of a post-modern neo-Gothic style. As stated above, aesthetic oneirism, defined by Dumitru

Țepeneag and Leonid Dimov, aims not only to unshackle nocturnal visions, but to deploy a lucid strategy of reconstructing reality according to the criteria of dreams. It is a textual assemblage technique, which uses fragmentation, collage, deformation and playfulness to create unreal, fantastic or absurd images, figures and characters. As noted by Ion Pop, "the poet proceeds, so to say, in Picassian and Daliesque manner, deforming the image to the point of grotesque deliriousness [...] oneirism by definition, I mean, the oneirism of shifting, random, evanescent images competes with verbal automatism, encouraged by sounds. *Images* are, in any case, only rarely and very relatively outlined; the overall impression is rather one of fracture, of disjunction, of hazardous verbal collage."¹³

In Romanian literature, Vintilă Ivănceanu's teratological figures draw their sap from Urmuz's mecanomorphic characters, which combine biological elements with human artifacts, Turnavitu, Algazy, Grummer, Fuchs, etc.¹⁴ The twelve monsters from *The Vulcaloborg and the Beautiful Beleponjă* – the Vulcaloborg, the Pcovăț, the Lilibrada, the Centaushohaim, the Piu, the Helsingform, the Eventricula, the Retemort, the Ciuc, the Gudrunofag, the Strâmbosepor, the Beleponja – make up a bestiary which, thanks to the ludic register, has an enchanting and funny effect rather than a gothic or horror one. With a freedom pushed to its last limits, Vintilă Ivănceanu breaks down the anatomy of the animal and the human regna into a plurality of elements, which he then reassembles like lego pieces. The traditional definition of the imagination as a combinatorial function of simple representations is illustrated in exemplary manner here. The Vulcaloborg "has four parrot wings / And

just one leg with the paw of a crocodile. / [...]/ It has no sex and no hands, nor does it possess any eyes. / It is true, however, that its beak ends in / Two panther's teeth."¹⁵ The Pocovăț appears thus: "Then I opened the window and I saw / How from a yellow and perfectly ground stone / The spines of a hedgehog the size of a pine tree jutted out / And two rods sprouted up from the spikes / Ending in seven fingers / Each finger having the nail of a cow. / And there also sprang out an arm with a closed palm/ And, alas, how great and green did / The eye / Open at the center of the fist."¹⁶

Deconstruction / reconstruction does not manifest itself only at the semantic level of imaginary figures, but also at the semiotic level of language. Imitating and, to a certain extent, exacerbating the freedoms of language to the heights of parody, which Nichita Stănescu was also experimenting with at the time, Vintilă Ivănceanu exploited the most diverse sonorities, from popular rhythms ("Piu, Piu dearest, / Piu, you cutest, / Who made you / So small, so blue, / With a leg jutting from your throat / And with three ears under your snout?")¹⁷ to eulalia ("Ciuc the animal/ Rubber horsical / With bear-wolf livers/ I'd kiss its slithers").¹⁸ One of the monsters, the Strâmbosepor, symbolizes this function of deformation and alteration, of language "distortion": "The Strâmbosepor presents itself / Like a mouth top down. / The Strâmbosepor sleeps and says: / One sun – two sunies / one fox – two foxies, / One sky – two skicicles".¹⁹ Using such a mixer of words and of phrases, the lyrics become a kind of kaleidoscope in which syllables and meanings are rotated in any position: "Gudrunofag, lord of the canines, / Fool with the bust of a white crow, / Kill us, us

kill, skull, / Gudrunofag, Fagodrunung, Drugun."²⁰

Just like in the Babylonian poem *Enuma Elish* the mother of all teratological creatures was a primordial female figure, Tiamat, in Ivănceanu's poem the monster of monsters is Beleponja: "A tan jellyfish. / Four breasts under the armpits / And a cage under the breast / Rocking like a little boat, / Shining like a star, / And inside the cage / A blue sex between two gendarmes. / And from the cage appear / The three legs of a gazelle / And their soles end in / Roses in a nacelle".²¹ The Beleponja is proclaimed by all members of the monstrous assembly as "the Woman of our dreams". To win her favors, the suitors engage in a death-and-life struggle in the thirteenth chapter of the "fairy tale". The number 13 is indeed ominous, for the monsters kill and destroy each other, in a genuine carnal apocalypse, which scatters around clouds of limbs and chunks of bodies. The teratological creation ends up in a hecatomb, in a Brownian decomposition of the suitors' anatomical parts. The twelve monsters correspond, in a reversed register, to the archetypal image of the twelve apostles, in which the spirit is replaced by flesh and the body, and from which the sacred is ousted by the monstrous. Instead of ending on a note of apotheosis, like all tales of initiation in which, after defeating the beasts, the hero marries the princess, Vintilă Ivănceanu's fairy tale ends catastrophically, through the relapse of the entire gallery of characters into death, into the precosmogonic chaos.

The cause of this "Big Crunch" of the imaginary universe appears to be the Beautiful Beleponja herself. The effect she has on those around her is not erotic, harmonious and relational, but divisive and destructive.

The Beleponja is not orphic Eros, the primordial deity that ensures the coherence of the world, but Eris, Strife, War, the destroyer of worlds. Under her influence, the Great Anthropomorph does not spiritualize, but dismembers and annihilates himself. The Beleponja works like black holes in contemporary cosmology, absorbing and dissipating the matter fallen into the net of her gravitational pull. She causes the implosion of the fictional world and the absorption of the purely gangrenous flesh represented by monsters into the amorphous mass of matter that is devoid of spiritual light.

At the end of Antiquity and during the Middle Ages, starting with *The Physiologus*, bestiaries began to be interpreted as complex allegories for various human types and behaviors.²² The pelican appeared as a symbol of the Father, the Phoenix as a symbol of Jesus, the wild donkey – the devil, the coot – the faithful man, the unicorn – the clean man, the hyena – the idol worshipper and the heretic, the fox – the liar and trickster, etc. Of course, taking into account the playful freedom Vintilă Ivănceanu displays, it is useless to look for moral metaphors in the figures of the twelve monsters. However, the character of the Beleponja seems to bear a more obvious fantastical significance. In Ivănceanu's volumes of poetry, Ion Pop identifies a specific erotic complex: the female appears most often as a devouring

mother, with a womb as large as Moby Dick, who cannibalizes her lovers.²³ Along the same idea, the Beleponja seems to be driven by the fantasy of an incestuous love, the gendarmes that guard her blue genitals suggesting the prohibition of this attraction. From this perspective, the hecatomb of the monsters is the direct phantasmatic consequence of the anguish of incest.

Such psychoanalytical insights are thrown in disarray by the playfulness and all-governing irony. Aesthetic pleasure is generated, Vintilă Ivănceanu suggests, by pure, free play with literature. It is no wonder that – seen through the prism of such books, in which the principle of reality is undermined by oneiric techniques, in which the past (the Middle Ages) is revisited in a neo-Gothic spirit, in which generic limits are straddled intertextually, in which conventions of any sort are dismantled (self-)parodically and in which discourse is dismembered in textualist fashion – the oneiric movement has been defined by the generation of the 1980s as a precursor of Romanian postmodernism.

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NOTES

1. See the collection of theoretical studies Leonid Dimov, Dumitru Țepeneag, *Momentul oniric*, edited by Corin Braga, București, Editura Cartea Românească, 1997.
2. See Nicolae Balotă, in *România literară*, 13, 1971; Mircea Braga, in *Tribuna*, 15, 1971; Dan Laurențiu, in *Luceafărul*, 9, 1971; Mirela Roznoveanu, in *Tomis*, 3, 1971; Ruxandra Cesereanu, in *România literară*, 30, 1991.
3. Vintilă Ivănceanu, *Până la dispariție*, București, Editura pentru Literatură, 1968, p. 51.
4. *Ibidem*, p. 61.

5. *Ibidem*, p. 31.
6. *Ibidem*, p. 85.
7. *Ibidem*, p. 92.
8. *Ibidem*, p. 91.
9. Vintilă Ivănceanu, *Nemaipomenitele pățanii ale lui Milorad de Bouteille*, București, Cartea Românească, 1970.
10. *Ibidem*, p. 88.
11. See Corin Braga, *Le Paradis perdu au Moyen Âge. La quête manquée de l'Éden oriental*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2004, pp. 253-273.
12. See Idem, "Le corps en chantier des races monstrueuses dans la pensée enchantée du Moyen Âge", in Claude Fintz (ed.), *Les imaginaires du corps en mutation. Du corps enchanté au corps en chantier*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2008, pp. 57-74.
13. Ion Pop, *Poezia românească neomodernistă*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Școala Ardeleană, 2018, pp. 574-575.
14. Corin Braga, "Urmuz. Mecanismele onirice ale prozei absurde", in *Psihobiografii*, Iași, Polirom, 2011, pp. 27-43.
15. Vintilă Ivănceanu, *Vulcaloborgul și frumoasa Beleponjă*, București, Cartea Românească, 1971, p. 6.
16. *Ibidem*, p. 8.
17. *Ibidem*, p. 14.
18. *Ibidem*, p. 22.
19. *Ibidem*, p. 26.
20. *Ibidem*, p. 24.
21. *Ibidem*, p. 30.
22. See *Fiziologul latin* & Richard de Forunival, *Bestiarul iubirii*, bilingual edition, edited, translated from Latin and Old French, notes and study by Anca Crivăț, Iași, Polirom, 2006.
23. Ion Pop, *op. cit.*, p. 575.