

**MINISTERUL EDUCAȚIEI, CERCETĂRII, TINERETULUI ȘI SPORTULUI**  
**UNIVERSITATEA „1 DECEMBRIE 1918” ALBA IULIA**  
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**DOCTORAL THESIS**  
**(ABSTRACT)**

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**Ph. D. Candidate:**

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***CONSTANTIN VIRGIL GHEORGHIU – MONOGRAPHICAL***  
***STUDY***  
**(ABSTRACT)**

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After 1989, the wave of translations, editing, reprints, correspondence, etc., gave the reader a relatively new literary world: writers in exile. Among them, admired and / or disputed, C.V. Gheorghiu plays an important role. Unfortunately he remained in the consciousness of perception as the author of one book, *The 25th Hour (1948)*, which brought him fame abroad, making around the world, but that just arrived in Romania in 1991.

The unpredictable and contradictory personality of the writer involved him in many scandals since 1949, he and his work becoming the target of criticism coming from both the French and especially fellow exiles. Neither during the post-December Romania Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu fully enjoys a favorable understanding, views on his work and life are controversial and some topics are really sensitive.

The fact is that such a writer cannot be understood or placed where he belongs, in "the normal corpuscles of Romanian literature", without a guide, without variation of the synthesis he was lost, but were later cleared.

Such a guide we want to be ourselves, the present paper addressing all segments of life and work of Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu, because deep research of the two sectors leave room for new interpretations, additions, nuances, and a return, even in the "twenty-fifth hour" of the writer's work, we consider extremely necessary.

There are two themes that we have proposed for development in this "monographic study". The first is to provide a panorama of the personality and creation of a writer who tried to impose himself in many cultures / languages by promoting the Romanian spirituality, and the second, a unique one, (we consider) the analysis and classification on cycles of Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu's novels, due to issues and correspondence with episodes of his life, and therefore to establish an essential coordinated work that we withdraw from the structure but not only.

Our thesis, *Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu - monographic study*, is therefore structured in eleven chapters during which I tried to treat all the literary segments in which the writer has worked and also establish the defining elements for each.

Believing that in order to understand a writer and the meaning of his work is important to know the opinion of critics and the historical context of the age in which he worked, the first chapter of the thesis, *Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu in consciousness of criticism and Romanian immigration*, summarizes the two important aspects regarding the definition of man and the investigated writer.

It is well-known that C.V. Gheorghiu's work, written and published largely in exile, represented during the critical time, both home and abroad, an "apple of discord", some have perceived and appreciated him friendly, others criticized and even condemned him as being an impostor who only wanted public recognition. Browsing the bibliography at the end of the paper,

allows us to state that, concerning the critical perception of C.V. Gheorghiu's work, there were formed two adverse camps inside of both the French and Romanian criticism. Thus we have chosen to present this chapter by placing opinions from supporters and opponents moving within both critics (dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc.) as well as memorial pages or news reports on both areas in which C.V. Gheorghiu lived: the Romanian and French, to illustrate the various controversies about his life.

Before knowing the success on foreign land, it should be noted that the writer C.V. Gheorghiu has enjoyed a positive perception in his native country consecrating himself as a poet and appreciated reporter: he is awarded the royal Foundations prize for the poetry volume *Calligraphy on snow*, and the first volume of reports, *The banks of the Dniester burn*, has a resonance at the time. Assessments on this volume are gathered in the Annex of the next report *I fought in Crimea*, and confirm the resounding success. Among these there are those of Tudor Arghezi, Perpessicius, Petre Manoliu, Miron Radu Paraschivescu, etc.

Forced to leave the country by setting the Soviet communism which could not offer what he most valued - freedom – C.V. Gheorghiu arrives in France in 1948 and in the same time with the publication of the novel *The 25th Hour*, he manages to be noted among the promoters of French culture. Names like André Rousseaux, Max Paul Fouchet, Maurice Nadeau, Robert Kanters welcome the emergence of the novel, being recommended for reading. Appreciations for the novel came to the emergence by Mircea Eliade and George Uscătescu who praise the novel, seeing it as "an extraordinary book."

Letters of congratulation for the novel *The 25th Hour*, coming from different personalities of the world complete and support critical assessments enjoyed by C.V. Gheorghiu being obvious that the writer and priest C.V. Gheorghiu has enjoyed, with few exceptions, a warm welcome from the adoptive country.

Arrived in Romania, the novel that brought worldwide notoriety to C.V. Gheorghiu, *The 25th Hour*, I wrote in the chapter for supporters both favorable opinions and those of critical post-December period. Among those who reviewed the novel favorably and place themselves in the supporters' camp of C.V. Gheorghiu's work is also Marian Popa, Constantin Cubleșan, Mircea Popa, Glodeanu Gheorghe, Dumitru Micu, Anton Cosma, Ion Simuț.

The first controversial views in what concerns C.V. Gheorghiu, begin from the period of exile and refer to the character of some his works. Onset of the first book, media and French criticism did not cease to praise it, but immediately after the conflict related to C.V. Gheorghiu's anti-Semitism, many exegetes of his work, led by Gabriel Marcel have criticized and condemned him as though forgetting completely the previous praise.

Remaining on French land but to a different perception of the work and the various controversies of the writer's life, namely in terms of the Romanian nationals also exiled, we find in the pages of their *Memoirs* or *Journals* conflicting opinions. The most vehement of the charges made against C.V. Gheorghiu come from his compatriots including Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran, Sanda Stolojan, Monica Lovinescu, Virgil Ierunca, Neagu Djuvara, so among strangers he enjoys more the appreciation of those who have adopted him and less his Romanian brothers'.

From the Romanian post-December criticism we can include in this camp Cornel Ungureanu, Mircea Zăciu, Nicholas Florescu.

The chapter also includes a review of *Studies and current research* and the reporting and short analysis of specialized works such as the two theses: that of Afif Hamdan and Mirela Drăgoi and the recent work of Mr. Constantin Cubleșan *Stopover in cruise - Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu*.

The theme itself of the thesis, *monographic study*, emerges from the second chapter, *Bio-bibliographical reference marks*, by capturing the most important events in the writer's life, clarifications on some confusions about some of these, editorials or even scandals in which C.V. Gheorghiu was involved. In the section *Reconstructed Portrait* I tried, based on the opinions of two people who knew C.V. Gheorghiu: Marie Welsch, author of a book about the writer's work, and Mihai Ranin Constantin, currently artistic director of Theatre of Deva, who met the writer in France and whom I have received even an interview. The two views, of Marie Welsch and Mr. Mihai Ranin Constantin, people who knew C.V. Gheorghiu in the privacy of his home and whom they talked with about life and God, deny the accusations made by some representatives of Romanian emigration, and retrieved, it seems, by some Romanian critics. Moreover, we can strengthen the idea supported throughout the paper that they were due to small jealousies or animosities of time which generally characterize a human life.

The first segment of our view regarding the writer C.V. Gheorghiu's work is found in chapter three, *The Poet*. By analyzing the four volumes of poetry we identified two of them, by evoking childhood homeland, strong *Autobiographical overtones* (*The poet's daily life* and *Calligraphy on snow*), and the other two (*Armand Călinescu* and *Hour of prayer*), *Political attitudes and perceptions*, by evoking the reality of political figures and the sacrifice for the country. Some Christian values, probably arising from mystical discussions held by the child Virgil with his father, priest Constantin Gheorghiu, we find sometimes in the poetry of C.V. Gheorghiu and featuring them in our Bible Echoes section. We cannot really speak of a religious poem of C.V. Gheorghiu, but rather a lyric one permeated by a "diffused religion" which does not have an explicitly religious title or biblical themes, but which expresses, without doubt, a Christian living.



The activity as a *Publicist* conducted by C.V. Gheorghiu for about six years is little known to the public although it was an important "step" in the writer's evolution from being a poet to the writer. Beginning in this field by *writing Miscellaneous fact* heading to various newspapers of the time (*The Word, Romania, The Time, Information of the day*, etc.) we find him later in the pages of time making *literary chronicle*. So I captured and analyzed in *chapter three* of this thesis, (unique as we consider) the *Publicist*, articles in time periodicals supporting the activity under the two headings.

Living in an unreal and bohemian world, specific to poets and artists in general, real-world implementation led him to experience the realities of life. While many fellow poets gave him no chance, but even more they condemned him for his decision, C.V. Gheorghiu persevered in fulfilling his desire, and managed to become known in the journalistic world creating a method that consists of *Miscellaneous fact*, but without totally leaving apart literature, obvious element by inserting lyrical passages and how to narrate the facts. The "Recipe", one's own, after which the article is written, is based on capturing, from the very beginning, the reader through the so-called *catchphrase* and continues by exposing the facts to increasing suspense. The components of that *Miscellaneous fact* set by C.V. Gheorghiu as being original, were also identified in his articles in time periodicals.

Writing *Miscellaneous fact* meant that a different step was exceeded, the release of "disability poetry" and also the beginning of a long way towards prose that will really push him forward. Going through the C.V. Gheorghiu writer's prose works, one can easily see his predilection for accurate rendering of the realities of life, surprising it in all stages, undoubtedly derived from the activity of reporter for *miscellaneous fact*.

A fairly large percentage have, in C.V. Gheorghiu 's journalistic repertoire, perhaps close to the *Miscellaneous fact*, the articles on literature; he wrote about Romanian and foreign books, magazines, and literary debuts. It should be noted however, that this concern is rooted in the period in which he was an active member in the drafting Committee of the journal "Crai Nou" in Chişinău, publishing poems and reviews or articles of literary criticism.

The publishing work done by C.V. Gheorghiu during the nearly six years, was quite intense and varied also - *Miscellaneous fact*, *chronicle of military tribunals* and *literary chronicle* - always showing an extraordinary capacity for adaptability. That he managed to pass to another guild emphasizes its value as a writer, because only a really talented one can juggle genres and activity areas as diverse as C.V. Gheorghiu did.

In the fourth chapter we surprised the war reporter activity of the writer C.V. Gheorghiu embodied in the literary stories burn through the three reports *The banks of the Dniester burn, I fought in Crimea* and *The submarine "Dolphin" in the siege of Sevastopol*.

The literary aspect of C.V. Gheorghiu's reports is obvious and motivated in the same time due to the quality of a poet of a reporter just out the front. Like a "questing", as he was considered by Teodoreanu Ionel, C.V. Gheorghiu exploits the Romanian front starting from land, air and reaching down into the hell of the sea. However it cannot be denied the document looking at the information provided about the struggles of liberation of Basarabia or on submarine development.

War reporter activity is also shown in the autobiographical work of C.V. Gheorghiu. After a long time, when things began to be more settled, both historically and in the life of the writer, who suffered from the literary work done just before leaving the country, C.V. Gheorghiu wants to make the first revelations about that period, either as a confession or integrating them as a subject for his novels.

The first work in which the author gives some explanations about his work as a journalist, the books resulting from this experience and the accusations made is the novel *Man traveling alone*, considered by specialists as a third volume of *Memoirs* and the second is represented by the first volume *Memoirs, Witness of the 25th Hour*. The justification of the young reporter is evident in both works, seen as keeping what was claimed and described, what is sometimes lacking is the bitterness, replaced with calm, patience, wisdom, acceptance and resignation, skills acquired in "time", as a result of some experiences which have shown that "there is a second and a third point of view".

The sixth chapter entitled, *The Novelist*, has a dual role: to help to complete the panorama of the writer's work and also to achieve the second objective of our thesis by establishing an essential coordinate of C.V. Gheorghiu's novelistic prose.

Analyzing the first and only novel of the writer published in the country, *Last hour*, you can see a confirmation of a direction which will emerge in the novel that brought him success abroad, *The 25th Hour*. It is about a predilection for the theme of time, the title itself claiming this attraction, but also an issue of some "obsessive projections" capable to bring man in situations of balance, distrust, internal analysis and ultimately self-destruction.

I gave an ample space to the novel *The 25th Hour* trying to treat as many points of analysis as possible. We showed in this way both *Modern techniques*, such as the "metaroman" or "mise en abîme" and *Generalized meanings* by interpreting the present symbols in the novel: the name of the village, the title of the novel or even the characters, through the evolution of whom we discover the symbolism of the novel *The 25th Hour* extracted mostly of the dehumanization, because the living experiences lead to a drying up of the individual from what is freedom, beauty, truth, therefore - the human. The subchapter *Construction features of characters* emphasizes *the human as a "technical slave"* or the opposite of *character's*

*sensitivity*. During his journey, Johann Moritz suffers from ill-treatment capable to desensitize the man, to elicit any sign of hope for good and put in the category of man-machine, but its sensitivity must be observed in relation to those lived, events that would normally not be allowed any man to still have the power of contemplation of a landscape or a feeling.

The presence of the character Traian Korugă enables the identification of *Philosophical subtleties*, for the deepest of philosophical ideas of the novel are found in its lines condemning the modern and hypertechnological society, ideas that can create a bond with the Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdiaev's work, *The kingdom of Spirit and Caesar's kingdom*.

Johann's character similarities of C.V. Gheorghiu to Rebreanu's Ion and by reflecting the world in all its complexity I found some *realistic elements* such as description, focus, conflict and some counterarguments in this respect.

The chapter concludes with a comparison between the novel *The 25th Hour* and the film with the same title by emphasizing rather the present disparities and thus strengthening the idea that literature and film may not be substituted, as each turns to other means of expression and another language.

Reading the entire work of the writer C.V. Gheorghiu and the biography of the man C.V. Gheorghiu is impossible not to note the correspondence and interference of the two. In fact the writer admitted this characteristic of his work confessing and classifying it as intended. Regarding the research on perfect matching of the work with life in general, but also for the writer C.V. Gheorghiu, I would say that it is impossible, because you cannot find all the events and emotions of a man's life.

Based on these findings we tried to discover the location of C.V. Gheorghiu's work on the axis autobiographism / vs. autobiography / vs. biographism and to what extent cataloging some novels as autobiographical is correct.

Using the definitions of the three terms given by the specialized works, we concluded that only two of the novels by C.V. Gheorghiu can be called autobiographical - *The 25th Hour* and *Man traveling alone*, choosing to place the rest of the work in a different point of axis that is biographism. Because not all the novels written by the writer of our research are autobiographical, meaning that they are not based on moments of his life, but because verifiable biographical elements are inserted, leads us to relate it to this concept. Biographism means recovery of subjectivity, which is turning of the author in the text and can be translated through a speech focused on the exploitation of particular events, biography, the daily fact attended by the author, returning to the everyday life of all biological, mediocre and vulgar features.

We demonstrated in the subchapters for this segment of the writer C.V. Gheorghiu's activity, by grouping the cycles of his work, that there is a link between the structure of the text

and a collection of unconscious memories of their author: Moldova, sealed fate, the Soviet, generally presenting a point of view supported by his own experiences and the reality itself. In other words what is identified to *obsessive metaphors* which implicitly form the *personal myth* and which seems to be in the origin of a topic. Thus the task at this stage of our research was to uncover the repressed tendencies of the Ego, to reveal the true reasons of these mental events and their impact on the author's social life.

Establishing a portrait of the writer calling on his life is not crucial in achieving our goal, but focus on key events likely to be aware of the unconscious personality of the author is required. Appealing to C.V. Gheorghiu's past, his birthplace, the family environment we have made some useful associations in our approach and by overlapping several works we have revealed some common elements.

What is obvious and clearly echoes from C.V. Gheorghiu's work, and *personal myth*, is the desire to present episodes, places, people, experiences of his life. It is important to discover the origin of this trend.

In many notes on novels or interviews C.V. Gheorghiu thinks he is "the poet of Christ and of Romania", although he had never written poetry when leaving the country, and in exile he devoted himself almost entirely to prose. We consider therefore that this title has a different interpretation, namely the qualities that a poet must have in his view were the starting point in his work. C.V. Gheorghiu has done all his life like a poet and saw in his work a means of training and also preserving some moments in the evolution of society in which he lived. Beautiful images, rich in metaphors and comparisons that send to poetry, poetic language used by the author to tell us his message of life, faith and hope are present throughout his work, giving also a warm and charming note, thus setting the essential coordinate of C.V. Gheorghiu's work, namely to evoke moments and personal experiences, implemented to the idea of a poet (I, a creative).

Since childhood flirting with the idea of poetry, talent inherited from his mother and that writing is a holy thing as his father told him we concluded that the writer C.V. Gheorghiu formed his personality based on the location required by the family that is to sing, like a poet, in his work the love of freedom, God and Romania. And because love requires total dedication and loyalty, C.V. Gheorghiu understood to respect these goals, especially through his work, in which he saw a connection between him and the future society and also a shield to defend *personal myth*.

The seventh chapter entitled *The essayist* deals with two works for this segment. Translated into Romanian by Maria-Cornelia Ică jr., the volumes convey the writer C.V. Gheorghiu's memories on his childhood and his youth. The titles chosen by the translator are

significant and restore the theme of each volume. This volume appeared in France in 1965, from the *25ème heure à l'heure éternelle* is translated as *My father, the Priest, who ascended to heaven, Memories from a theological childhood* and it is obvious that evokes the writer's father's figure, and for the other volume being considered an essay, emerged in France in 1968 *Porquoi m'a-t-on appelé Virgil*, suggests the title *How I wanted to become holy, Other memories from a theological childhood*, suggesting again its theme very well, meaning the evocation of the theological childhood and adding those two phrases *Memories from a theological childhood* and *Other memories of a theological childhood* underline clearly the connection between them, by continuity and completion.

Both works are divided into chapters having connection and continuity between them, but it is worth mentioning the deep feelings that penetrate their pages, some closely related to the divine-human moments spent in childhood, others in special relationship with his father who inspired the whole conception about his life with advice and explanations.

Virgil Gheorghiu's village, as it is presented by the writer himself, is like a piece of heaven forgotten deliberately by God in the way of time. The history of place has a mythical character and sends back to the "immortals" Dacians. The image of the village, as of childhood and even the father is a dual one: one that is directed gently to the world, and one devoutly to heaven seems to open for this people, to protect them, whenever they are in trouble.

C.V. Gheorghiu is the author of two volumes of *Memoirs*, which occurred nine years away from each other, first published by Plon in 1986 and the second in 1995 and published by Le Rocher in Romania in 1999 and 2001.

*The eighth chapter, The diarist*, begins with the analysis of the first volume, entitled *Memories. The witness of the 25th Hour* which makes reference to the novel *The 25th Hour*, the autobiographical elements that inspired him in his writing, and also allows us to understand the history of pre-communist Romania in the reconstructed vision of the writer, a nationalist and sentimental vision of a valuable witness, through his work as a journalist in Bucharest, between the wars period, the political tensions around the Romania outbreak of world War II. Overall, the volume can be considered a historical chronicle, as it contains a lot of data about historical events or personalities, but the literary character, lyrical at times, is given by the writer's experiences rendered in relation to those presented or experienced.

It is obvious that the first volume of memoirs of C.V. Gheorghiu contains many historical events more or less known to the simple reader. I tried for a deeper understanding of history, to put forward these events presented by C.V. Gheorghiu with those found in the specialty works. We have not proposed to discuss the history of our country, but only to emphasize the preference for presentation (or failure) of some events and personalities of C.V. Gheorghiu, to somehow

identify the author's point of view about the events related, not to condemn the author for some omissions or insistence on presenting events.

The second volume of C.V. Gheorghiu's *Memoirs* is subtitled *The freedom temptation*. I saw early in the *Memoirs*, that freedom represents for C.V. Gheorghiu the most precious thing of human life on earth, the only one which really closes him to God. In association with *temptation*, and the quotation at the head of the volume "Are there people and countries to which I may not have been sent by my Lord to search for Him?" could mean that freedom was always a temptation, a test for C.V. Gheorghiu, through which God tested his patience and faith. But going through this "true autobiographical novel" we see that freedom is more a goal, a need, and not a temptation, which sometimes he had to miss.

The presence of religious emotion is felt and can be found without much effort throughout the work of the writer-priest C.V. Gheorghiu through the interpretation of actions, responses and gestures of the characters. The courage, the force that animates the characters, the power to accept destiny are elements which are consistent with the divine and taken from the One they feel an eternal living. The world depicted by C.V. Gheorghiu is one in which man is detached from everyday cares and is committed to creating a world where the faith in God dominates, which enlightened and guided his life, too. Following the faculty of theology at Heidelberg and vested priest in 1963 in Paris, I found it necessary to capture this segment in our view in *the ninth chapter* entitled *The religious man*.

In a first stage we identified and exemplified as *Aspects of faith in C.V. Gheorghiu's view* the character of Christian teaching, love, tolerance, sensitivity, respect, freedom, prayer, truth and trust.

Having a rich religious knowledge C.V. Gheorghiu lectured on various theological topics and wrote seven books for purely religious purpose (*Saint Jean Gold Mouth*, 1957, *Muhammad's life*, 1962, *The Youth of Dr. Luther*, 1960, *Patriarch Athenagoras' life*, 1969, *Christ in Lebanon*, 1979, *Eloge of Korea*, 1980, *Korea, the beautiful stranger from the far East, at the Olympic Games*, 1987). Among them there is one with a hagiographic character, *Saint Jean Gold Mouth*, and other three which are *Muhammad's life*, *The Youth of Dr. Luther*, *Patriarch Athenagoras' life*, by the fact that they have important people of religious life and also high representatives of faith in God. The book *Christ in Lebanon* is a tribute brought by our writer to the Maronite people, a trip to its spiritual history, marked by sacred faith in their mission on earth and that dedicated to Korea is a historical panorama that reveals „the origin and courage of the Korean people.”

In addition to the approximately 38 volumes of prose, which include novels, short stories, war stories, autobiographical works and essays, and four volumes of poems, published in the

country and abroad, C.V. Gheorghiu left seven unpublished manuscripts. On some, such as *The Young Saint* (novel), *I am the friend of robbers* (novel), *Horse thieves* (short stories), *Croix de bois sur la Mer Noire* (stories, 1942), we learn only from their list in some specialty studies. Others are mentioned in the prefaces to some of his books, as in the case of the manuscript *The Carpathian Dracula*, written according to Thierry Gillyboeuf in 1985.

But researching the archive C.V. Gheorghiu located at the Romanian Academy Library I had the privilege to discover reading and to analyse in chapter ten, *unpublished works*, two manuscripts, entitled *Why killing Limitrof?* and *Ambrosius of Milan (340-397)*. If the first one is a novel that might join those included in the cycle *The miseries of a sealed fate*, the second is a biographical-theological work, being placed in the cycle of religious works, a constant coordinate found in the works of C.V. Gheorghiu.

In the archive C.V. Gheorghiu, established after 1998, when Mrs. Ecaterina Gheorghiu, the writer's wife, donated to the Romanian Academy Library some important documents related to her husband's life and work, there are also many letters from friends, well-known personalities and from people whom he never knew but who wanted to express their admiration and respect for C.V. Gheorghiu's activities or read works. The letters received by C.V. Gheorghiu, read inside the Academy Library and analyzed in *the eleventh chapter, From the correspondence of C.V. Gheorghiu*, gave us some answers, revealed and supported the writer's personality and have enabled us a chain of details. It should be noted however that most of them are letters of congratulations, from friends, personalities or ordinary fans, caused by various Christian festivals and various editorials and activities of the writer, thanks, invitations to events, or telegrams of condolences to Mrs. Gheorghiu for her husband's death.

Appendices include copies of representative documents of the writer's life such as a certificate of admission to the camp, various diplomas, letters as well as several articles from miscellaneous fact or literary chronicle written by C. V. Gheorghiu in periodicals.

Taking into consideration all the aspects of C.V. Gheorghiu's work and arguing every idea with citations or significant examples, we concluded that the writer's works in prose are a reference to the reality faced during his life, an eternal communion with loved places, the longing for a homeland solace, a justification and clarification on some negative aspects in order to distance himself from them, a testimony about specific events of his time and, not least, a life lesson in which we find ourselves, the readers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.