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**PHD THESIS ABSTRACT**

**MIRCEA NEDELCIU - ONTOLOGY OF THE COMPLEMENTARY**

**PhD Supervisor:**

**Prof. univ. dr. habil. DIANA CÂMPAN**

**PhD Candidate:**

**IEPURE (GÂLEA)GABRIELA ANAMARIA**

**Alba Iulia**

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Born as a form of literary “dissidence”, The Generation of the 80’s, builds its identity by “the aesthetic predilection as a form of living, biographically and culturally” (Ștefan Borbely) and the denial of the political authority. The later will generate, following the Revolution from 1989, a suspension of the generationist project. Caught between two “temporal cracks”, a past in which it is positioned antagonistically from the very beginning and a future that offers cultural, territorial and professional openings never thought of before, having a destiny of memory opposed to any form of authority, The Generation of the Eighties, was forced to adapt quickly to a new structure, to reinvent itself. However, the predilection for aesthetics at the expense of politics marks the destiny of these writers who tend to build a post-revolutionary Romanian literary life: they set up new literary magazines – *Vatra*, *Euphorion*, *Familia*, etc, new literary associations – ASPRO, PAC – they attend universities or even establish them – The University of Brașov – but they do not get involved in politics but for a small number of them. We can speak about an islanding of The Generation of the 80’s, by a double crack – initially a form of revolt, and finally one imposed by the history of the time, through a paradigm shift that could not have been foreseen.

Historically, The Generation of the 80’s, appears on the background of the "cultural revolution" that activates the myth of the perilous homeland and of the evil plot in the "stage of communist nationalism" (Eugen Negrici). At the peak of the process of re-dogmatization of Romanian culture and under the psychosis of the return to socialist realism, the Romanian writers opted either for the true recording of the small reality in its entirety, as a response to the unique mystifying discourse of the age, or for avoiding any artistic conventions and asserting the self-reflexive character of the literary text through metatextual games. Three seem to be the nuclei underlying the assertion of a "literary generation": literary cenacles present in all university centers – Monday Cenacle and “Junimea” Cenacle in București, “Echinox” in Cluj, the ones in Brașov, Iași, Timișoara, The Iași Poetry Colloquim, 1978, an event at which Laurențiu Ulici invited a group of young writers on stage to read their creations and launch the collective volumes *Aer cu diamante* (Mircea Cărtărescu, Traian T. Coșovei, Florin Iaru, Ion Stratan - 1981), *Cinci* (Bogdan Ghiu, Alexandru Mușina, Romulus Bucur, Ion Bogdan Lefter, Mariana Marin - 1982), *Desant '83*, (Mircea Nedelciu, Sorin Preda, Nicolae Iliescu, Cristian Teodorescu, George Cușnarencu, Ioan Lăcustă, Constantin Stan, Marius Bădițescu, Emil

Paraschivoiu, Hanibal Stănculescu, Ion Bogdan Lefter, Gheorghe Iova, Gheorghe Crăciun, Gheorghe Ene, Valentin Petculescu, Mircea Cărtărescu, Mihai Rogobete, Maria Holmeia).

From the representative authors of the 80's Mircea Nedelciu is known as an exponent of the first wave, having a special destiny, today a canonic writer. He is present in literary histories, in textbooks of Romanian language and literature, as a writer of the 80's. Many pages have been written about him either in collective volumes or in monographic research. The two dimensions of the Nedelcian writing are, in the passage of time, the criteria of critical reception and inclusion of the prose writer either in the category of *photographic realism* or *experimental textualism*.

In fact, his presence in literary histories seems to begin and end with this mark of textualism, technical virtuosity, if we refer to the first taxonomy made by Radu G Țeposu in *The tragic & grotesque history of the 9<sup>th</sup> dark decade* and to the most recent work of Nicolae Manolescu, *The Critical History of Romanian Literature*. Pages dedicated to Mircea Nedelciu are found in the studies about Romanian postmodernism: Mircea Cărtărescu, *Romanian Postmodernism*, Gheorghe Perian, *Romanian Postmodern Writers*, Mihaela Ursa, *The Eighties and Promises of Postmodernism*, Adrian Oțoiu *Border Traffic. Prose of the '80 generation, Transgressive Strategies I and Bifurcated Eye, the language of the chassis, the Prose of the 80's generation, Transgressional Strategies II*, Carmen Musat, *Subversion Strategies. Incursions in Postmodern Prose*, Florentina Sâmișăian in *Romanian Postmodern Prose* or Florin-Claudiu Turcuș in *Autonomy of aesthetics as a subversion in Romania's narrations of the 1960's and 1980's*. Monographic research must also be mentioned, of which the books written by Al. Th. Ionescu, *Mircea Nedelciu-monography*, Valeria Bîlț, *Adventures in the interior courtyard of postmodernism* and Adina Dinițoiu, *Mircea Nedelciu's Prose. The power of literature in front of politics and death*. Another category of studies show dimensional configurations at the level of space, Ionuț Miloi – *Significant Geographies. Space in Mircea Nedelciu's the short-stories*, or the Nedelcian imaginary from the perspective of the relations between the human being and the totalitarian society in which he lives in the doctoral thesis of Ramona Hărșan, *Amoralism and the search for identity in the prose of Mircea Nedelciu*.

Such a list of critical works seems to suggest the exhaustion of the meanings of the Nedelcian work. However, we can notice that two are the research ways: on one hand, exhaustive monographies, that want to deal with the whole Nedelcian work, with stress on his short stories and relatively little space given to his novels, on the other hand research ways that allow his inclusion in the generational dimensions or the postmodernist model. The works of Ionuț Miloi and Ramona Hărșan open up the critical research towards the themes of the Nedelcian universe, either by analysing a spatial model in his short stories, or by identifying the

human hypostases from the perspective of the relations between the individual and the communist society.

The present research aims to comprehend the writings of Mircea Nedelciu from the perspective of the configurational levels of the work – short stories and novels – starting from both the aesthetic options of the author expressed in articles and interviews published before 1989 and from a cosmological model of the postmodern universe whose defining features are found in the Nedelcian imagination. A postmodern cosmological model, ontology of the complementary, materialized in the permanent transgressions of rhizome beings, into a universe that can be framed in a network maze, in the classification of Umberto Eco, with a pulsating temporality. It is a perspective that combines hermeneutical research with that of sociology and the theory of culture. The paper is composed of four chapters: *Literature as an representation of identity, A poetics of the complementary, The pulsating temporality, The human being as a structural link of relationships.*

The theoretical articles, correspondence and interviews with Mircea Nedelciu reveal the conscious assumption of a postmodernist model of writing as a form of aesthetic revolt, a form of enchipering in the battle that the writers of that period wore with ideological censorship. In the same sense, the writer confesses, the writer's gaze moves towards a small humanity, the peripheral environments of the great city, or human beings forced to radical transformations in the process of industrialization of Romania, people with an uncertain professional and social status that experience existential uncertainties. A world in distress, wandering between the village and the city or even inside the big city, in the absence of landmarks, unable to sit in a matrix place. An ever-moving humanity, heterogeneous, exemplary identities, in a communist society that requires the existence of the "new man," condemning to uniformity. A permanent transgression of boundaries - spatial, temporal, or identity - that is part of a postmodern cosmological model, the ontology of the complementary.

The chapter devoted to the Nedelcian poetics, *Literature, as a representation of identity*, starts from the idea of a post-war literature that has the ability to capture "unsettled identities" (p.17) which become exemplary, the forms chosen by the writers of the eighties being necessary to encompass the model of a disoriented humanity. Literature thus returns to one of its primordial functions, that of identity representation, in a process of recovering Platonic mimesis whose object becomes human existence. It just does not offer an *imago mundi*, but makes a rhizome with the world.

The features of rhizomatic writing are defined by Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. An Assemblage Book, which makes a rhizome with the World built on the principle of "the lack of a

center". Between the imaginary and the real world, tension relations are established, the World being an Outside of the Book that is an Outside of the World in a process of uninterrupted becoming. Such a creation can no longer be deciphered from the perspective of the known tripartite - reality (World) - fact (Book) - subjectivity (Author) - but these Deleuzian 'plateaux' become lines / sets of a part of an assemblage within which there are semiotic, material or social continuum. To such an artistic representation the plurality formula is specific which was used by many of the postmodern writers, its ideal being the display of the multitude of events, historical determinations, individuals, groups, writing techniques on the same page (p.18). The Nedelcian writing can be inscribed in this rhizomatic dimension, the two levels of narrative construction marking a dual orientation. On one hand, it is possible to decipher the homology between the construction of the Book and that of society at the level of the second epic, of the text as a body developed especially in the metatextual passages. The tree structure of the communist society, with a single force of power that imposes the official discourse and the fixed, stereotyped language of the time of the epoch, has its correspondent in a configuration of writing that marks the dynamics of the boundaries between fictional and non-fictional by the presence in the text of the Author with his own name. A demiurgic presence, whose authority is incontestable, it is a testimony to the authenticity of such a writing, constantly dismantling the fiction, warning the Reader with the confessed purpose of creating resistance to manipulation (page 21). Its totalitarian position becomes transparent from the relationship with the characters whose destinies are maneuvered from the position of the Puppeteer, with a sequence of events absolutely randomly presented or with the Reader, which it provokes to an incessant reflection on the world, the reality or their own becoming. On the other hand, the Romanian society frozen in the party directives opposes possible worlds, multiplied by the plurality of languages or metaphors of textuality.

The coordinates of a rhizomatic Nedelcian writing can be found in the theoretical articles of the writer. Understanding literature as a form of social intervention, the entire Nedelcian writing is under the sign of anthropogenicity, the function of literature being to build man, to seek the truth about man, in a world where the writer feels the duty to grow, to educate his resistance to the manipulation of the individual (p.22). In this sense, the literature aims at an integral capture of reality, becoming a "prose of existence" or "textistence", while metatextuality has the role "to reproduce the functioning of social structures ". In the attempt to delineate from textualism - Nedelciu being framed from the beginning in the category of textualists - the writer defines it as a way of transcribing the intimate and cultural experiences of man, the metaphors of textuality being instruments that allow the transcription of plurality, diversity of reality and



which educates the resistance to manipulation by forcing the Reader to a "question-reading", the only one that allows him to form his own vision of the world and not to unconditionally embrace the Author's. In fact, the Reader is a "new character" that engages in a dialogue with the Author, while characters lose their established roots - physical / moral / psychological portrayal – manifesting themselves as either "verbal streams" or as part of a mass-body.

Dialogue is the nucleus of the Nedelcian constructions, a condition of rhizomatic writing. Literature becomes a "box of resonance" of the world in which the writer lives, while each Book is a "fragment of dialogue with the World" (p. 18) for regaining of a natural position in the real world in which everything is in dialogue. The polyphonic construction of this type of writing is another option testified and realized through the plurality of messages in the fictional space entered into dialogue "the authentic messages of the author (with his own name) and of the real people (documents, live transmissions, quotations, argotic expressions, etc.). ) (...) the authentic message of the cultural history of humanity (the narrator, the auctoral voice, the characters who manage them both), but also the authentic message of the reader who begins to issue as soon as he has suspended the text by his own questions. (Mircea Nedelciu, *Dialogue in short prose*, p.19 in our work). When Nedelciu defines his writing as a "realism of the attitude towards the real" he opens the possibility of multiplying the aesthetic codes, moving away from the actual realism by mixing the literary code with the radio or cinema codes in an attempt to capture the life slices of a kaleidoscopic reality. The dialogue among these aesthetic codes manifests simultaneously in the fictional space and illustrate the complexity and depth structures of the imagined world, a world that is in a permanent relationship with the contemporary real world of the author.

The configuration of the Nedelcian prose universe was pursued from a triple perspective: the geography of the lived space, the temporality, and the hypostases of the being that inhabits this imagined world. In the second chapter, *A poetics of the complementary*, we sketched out the features of a world built on the model of a rhizomatic maze or network maze (Umberto Eco, *Antiporfiriu*, p. 29 in our work). It is a structure specific to a postmodern society, supported by scientific, mathematical or physical theories of the twentieth century, which define a spatial model built on sometimes contradictory images and mathematical patterns, unifying in a "pangeometry", thus having plurality as an constitutive element. The scientific model is the basis of Ioana Em. Petrescu's theory of positively understood postmodernism, as a sum of counter mathematical models, whose knowledge requires a "complementary thinking" "able to ground the complementary ontology" (p. 28) The postmodern cosmological model proposed by the Romanian theorist has a generating point *the individual*, a category that transforms from an external, passive observer of nature into a participant, in a relationship of mutual involvement

with the observed universe, thus "dynamic node, structural node of relations" (Ioana Em. Petrescu, *Modernism / Postmodernism. A hypothesis*, p. 28 in our work). A cosmological model of a dynamic, processual, world-woven fabric of events in which the individual no longer lives up to the modernist agony of tearing, but assumes it, understanding that Everything can only be acquired by a unification of fragments.

We consider that graphically this geometric philosophy corresponds to Eco's Network labyrinth, which is indefinitely expandable, without indoors or outdoors, unlimited because each point is born from a new connection and the intersection points of the lines are marked only from the perspective of the life experiences that the being lives in those places. A geography that cancels out the Renaissance ideal of absolute knowledge, rational thinking, introducing *a conjectural and contextual knowledge, a weak thinking* (Umberto Eco) specific to postmodernism. The rhizome is a symbol of this geometric unfolding of the world, being a process of establishing the multiples in a world-text, in the terms of Deleuze & Guattari, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia 2. Thousands of Plates* (p. 32) The defining principles of this structure are: connection and heterogeneity through which language is specific to the semiotic manifestations that profess polyphony through relationships established with the social field that generates them; the crowd that replaces the one or the multiple and announces the disappearance of the hierarchical organization; the meaningless and random rupture, the a-centered or non-hierarchical system defined by a succession of states. A processual, continually evolving world, a polyphonic space model whose mobility moves deeper than a mythical geography. The Nedelcian prose generates this prose model of the world, not through a real geography that is rhizomatically built, but precisely from a procedural perspective, of the constant becoming into a world whose boundaries, limits, territories are demarcated by the permanent transgression of the character.

The inner fictional spaces - of the character, the narrator or the author (Pia Brânzeiu (coord.), *Space in the contemporary Anglo-Saxon novel. Heterocosms / heterotopias*, p. 12 in our work) are also organized in subspaces: real, imagined-utopian or distopic-, heterotopic or narrative-a general location in a region or country . In Nedelciu, the actual space, the one in which events take place, is usually a liminal one, a threshold or border space that pushes the character to overcome boundaries and generates a permanent crossing, while the space generated by storytelling fits into real geography of Communist Romania from the period 1950-1980 (with the only exception, the novel *The Woman in Red*). The spatial rhizomatic model is recognizable both in the imagined, lived and non-fictional space, the space of the page being sprayed through

inserts of different types, blanks, etc. Our research will stop on the fictitious interior space, the one lived or the representative one.

We consider that a geography of Nedelcian spaces is built according to the relationships that the being establishes with the places they cross, and is not a site delineated one. From this perspective, we considered necessary a theoretical delimitation of places and non-places (*II.3. Place and non-place*). Marc Auge defines the two spaces in terms of a polarity, having as a landmark the relationship between the participant observer and the spaces he crosses. Thus, the anthropological place is under the sign of three defining features: it is a scene of a life experience, a place where the word can be produced and generates a narrative. In a postmodern world based on consumption, however, we witness the proliferation of non-things, crossing points that exclude the establishment of real relations and real communication, being marked by uniformity, sets of impersonally established rules, assuming a common identity, that of the traveler. The author lists them: rail, highway, motorways, airports and train stations, hotel chains, virtual spaces, a passenger space considered an archetype of a non-place.

Obligated to comply with rules, driven by impersonal indications, maps, tourist guides, etc., the individual no longer has the opportunity to live in a significant way, and he experiences the feeling of disorientation. However, their qualities can be recovered later through the narratives that are born and which can give them a positive dimension. Closed between the Romanian frontiers, in a totalitarian society, the Nedelcian individual does not have access to this type of space, but the uniformity of the Romanian spaces is obvious. The steps to build a so-called terrestrial paradise radically transform the Romanian world from the 1950s to the 1980s. The villages in the process of urbanization, the cities extended overnight over the administrative boundaries, swallowing old rural settlements at their edges, the building of factories, even confectioners, restaurants are all designed in terms of functionality, any aesthetic dimension disappearing. These will be the spaces that Nedelcian characters cross in search of their own identity.

Space as a proximity relations system between points of the site is a concern of Michel Foucault in *Another Kind of Spaces*. We retain from this study the concept of *heterotopic space* which is defined by the utopian establishment of a different order than the real one, in a temporality that dilates, compresses or is fragmented according to the experiences of being. Foucault identifies the heterotopias of crisis, deviation or compensatory, who is fragmented according to the feelings of the human being. Foucault identifies the heterotopias of crisis, deviation or the compensatory ones, whose traits are generated by *the relationship with the historical society*. (pp.36-37)

The relational dimension of the Nedelcian spaces is reflected in their liminality (*II.4. Liminal experiences*). An overview of the studies devoted to this concept illustrates its integration into the common existence of the individual. Presented in the writings of Arnold van Gennep, the concept of liminality is associated with the magical-religious practices of primitive societies, being defined as the trait of a margin or threshold space that the human subject crosses in the ritual from neophyte to initiate. Transitional state, liminality implies the existence of thresholds of a material nature, borders, borderlines or any territory between the known place and the one that the being tends to discover. Victor Turner transfers this concept into the social and cultural sphere of society, saying that any life experience involves a liminal stage, transgressions of the human subject between social, institutionalized social structures (p. 41). An "interstructural situation" is defined as a transition between different states - the state being any type of cultural or socially recognized stability. In this context, liminal entities are placed in a specific territory "betwix and between" being recognizable by three characteristics: existential liminalism, geographic marginalization, and social inferiority. Bjorn Thomassen (p. 42) transfers the concept into the social theory of modern societies subject to change and transition either in times of crisis (wars) or by establishing a market economy. In the author's view, we are witnessing an implosion of liminality through the excess of violence, crime, excessive sexuality at the expense of normal behaviors. Individual liminal experiences are usually ritualistic and mark the passage through different moments of life (baptism, puberty, menstruation, engagement, marriage, death), but they can be unexpected - the state of ambiguity caused by the death of someone dear. At the level of the groups are mentioned the graduation or initiation ceremonies in a cult, but also the existence of ethnic, sexual or religious minorities, as well as the groups of emigrants / immigrants. The whole society can enter into a liminal process either in case of natural catastrophes or in the context of wars, revolutions or totalitarian regimes. Shifted to society as a whole, the liminal moment is one of uncertainty and creativity at the same time, marked by the renunciation of a previously known and accepted order and the attempt to construct a new order, time of reflection and ramblings upon the set of rules and reformulation of ideals and identity. Just that, without the precise spatio-temporal context, specific to the magical-religious ritual and the ceremonial master, these axial moments in the history of humanity can acquire negative connotations: the future is unknown, no better order than the old one can be guaranteed and the role the spiritual guide can be taken by pseudo-leaders to disrupt the evolution of society through the imitation process.

These situations mark the instigation of a permanent liminality, the petrification in a phase of dissolution and anxiety. Communism is defined as a case of permanent liminality by

artificially maintaining the feelings of revenge, hatred and suffering. Thomassen's opinion is also supported by Arpad Szarkolczai (p. 44), who proposes a philosophical analysis of the concept. The sequential order of the magical-religious ritual is in fact the structure of any life experience, says Szarkolczai, who considers that sociology was born precisely through the analysis of the liminal moments of society. Transitions from one society to another and the individual crisis they cause can not be understood beyond liminality. Man's life experiences or the "experience to experience" must be understood in the terms and succession of ritualistic experiences: the renunciation of known determinations, the liminal stage in which man is pushed to overcome the boundaries and the final stage, that of acquiring of a new identity. The metamorphosis of the individual implies, on the one hand, the presence of a material boundary or the destruction of the territorial organization known by the annulment of the Center-Margin relationship, on the other hand, its "pushing" to overcome the known limits, the previous conditions accepted and recognized by the society. A totalitarian society, however, is one of social liminalism or schismogenesis and acts as a limitative situation on the being, causing the alteration of identity.

Nedelcian space (*II.5.*) is a rhizomatic one generating a poetics of the complementary. Through the permanent movement of the characters - hiking, wanderings, expeditions, journeys, commuting, etc. - understood as transgressions of boundaries, any place can be connected to another in an uninterrupted geometric unfolding, an endless maze. Transitions from one location to another, the alternation of places and non-places, and even the presence of heterotopic sites are points / nodules in the characters' identity trajectories, be it the manifestations in this narrative or the incursions in the past or even the future. The attempt to establish a relationship with these places, to turn them into matrix topos, to experience significant life experiences is the element that generates the defining features. We observe as constant the impossibility of living inside the crossed spaces, the state of permanent liminality, the struggle or disorientation, dimensions of the being, which, by multiplication, acquire exemplary value. In such an evolution, crossed or discovered places get to have liminal qualities, becoming thresholds, "betwix and between" and can generate permanent liminality. However, the individual continues their identity route, in a specific turn to "complementary ontology".

A mapping of Nedelcian space, without being able to make detailed descriptions of this living space, allows for a few delineations: small spaces / boundless spaces, urban / rural spaces, public spaces / private spaces / transient spaces, etc.

A special place is occupied by the means of public transportation, real in between areas, which become themselves the topos of the communist world. The archetype of the non-place at Marc Auge, these are heterotopic spaces by excellence through the bundle of relationships they

establish with the locations around them, and in Nedelciu's work they become true heterotopias of compensation. The bus or rate, the interceptor of the shuttle between the village and the town – of the peasants who became labourers in the big factories, the "gray hats" or the intellectuals assigned to the village - acquire the size of a true character in *A crossing* (prose from the *Adventures in a inner courtyard*). Following the destiny of a young engineer, G.B., the narrator launches into a bus history, a liminal space, threshold between two worlds, whose features are fixed by repeatability. An area of freedom filled with commuters, beings with suspended identities during the journey, a true agora, the place of confessing the most intimate experiences of life, expectations, and ethical maturity. Transit area that generates the feeling of belonging to a stable group, cancels the state of solitude or uncertainty, which allows the character true revelations: G.B. discovers that he might be loved by Claudia, the young woman who came to Bucharest in search of another destiny. A playful erotic experience can become real, profound, a chance to experience authentic life, so a saving experience.

Also the train has the size of a heterotopic compensation space in the story of Gioni Scarabeu from *8006 from Obor to Dālga*. If his role is marked by relations established with other sites precisely through the traveled routes, in this case we find that the existence of the character is consumed inside the personal train, in wagons populated by a motley world, having thus a compensatory function. The kingdom of Gioni Scarabeu, the "Prince of Book Sport," the 8006 train from Obor to Dālga gives the young man an identity option, consecrating an already built destiny during the adolescence period in the periphery. In the above-mentioned train, Gioni lives in a microuniverse of the marginalized, the atmosphere being extraordinarily rendered by Nedelciu through transcriptions of the colorful, argotic languages and multiplication of the communication instances. A kaleidoscopic reality, a scene of Caragialean descent, both sad and amusing. In the train space, the land of perdition, the world of Gioni is built. After an accident at the workplace followed by temporary loss of vision, Gioni becomes Ion, discovers the pleasure of reading, makes university studies, and has the revelation of pure love. In search of this love, namely Greta, the young woman who took care of him during his hospital stay, Ion makes another journey. This time, the train only has its basic function, the means of transport, favoring the cultural reflections of the protagonist.

A double connotation, marked at the scriptural level by assuming two different narratorial perspectives, acquires this means of transport in the text *Journey to Negation* (Vol. *Adventures in an Inner Courtyard*). Here, O.P. starts from Bucharest to Parâng to escape from the world that annihilates him by the negation of repartition. The identity crisis, confessed by almost Proustic incursions into layers of the past, leads to the ultimate physical disappearance of the character,

apparently lost in the mountains. The train ride through Bumbesti-Livezeni mountain pass reveals the founding of a new world of workers' colonies who have worked to build the new order of society and give the individual revolt the emblematic value of a generation. The same character travels the road from Bucharest to Tulcea to get the denial, on the plane. Simulacrum of the great mythological expeditions, foundation of the world expeditions, the flight aims to obtain the negation from the Tulcea School Inspectorate for O.P. not to practice as a teacher in the town received at the ministerial placement. The gesture, common during the Communist period, gets initiative dimensions in the negative, the young man confessing that he is in search of his own negation, a total, absolute one. Such a state of mind generates rebellion against the attitude of a stewardess, a gesture that complements the image of the rebel built at the clothing level.

Perhaps the most obvious symbol of heterotopic spaces is the ship. Heterotopia par excellence, in Michel Foucault, the ship places the traveler in an area with no geographic and sometimes even administrative determinations, being equally closed and open to the immensity of the water. Generator of liminal experiences by the way the movement is added to the contemplation of the landscape and of its own interiority, the ship places the traveler outside any boundaries - physical or moral. Ana Cunpănaș, the central character of the novel *Woman in Red*, crosses twice the ocean to and from the native village, Lunga. A first journey that brings her home after 15 years spent in America is marked by a tense state of the woman looking for existential landmarks. Excessive alcohol consumption - in the years of American prohibition - amplifies the woman's contradictory states, aware of the superficiality of her marriage with Alexandru Sage, who lives with the hope of recovering a matrix place. A second journey, this time to America, after the divorce of her second husband, Sage, casts her into an area of absolute liberty. Separated of any connection with the worlds in which she lives, the Romanian one who she feels estranged or the American one in which he can not integrate, Ana experiences more or less moral feelings in a space of the ship that avoids becoming. Originally in the mysterious hypostasis of the traveler-spectator, retired, alone, superior, then living the erotic ecstasy with a village boy named Ghiță, whom she finds in Constantinople and pays his ticket, but bored leaves him to Naples to finally throw herself in the arms of a fascinated student. She confesses only to him her entire existence, the intimacy of her tormented soul. Ana's confession, left in the manuscript, as the Authors point out, interladed with the psychoanalytic observations of the young man, reveals the alienation of the character.

Urban / rural duality gains new dimensions at Nedelciu. A construction of the world that is explicit in the work in Braudel's terms: each site has a "narrow center", some "secondary

regions" and "enormous outer margins" whose flexible borders allow them to stretch to the edges of another center. Without a quantitative analysis of these spaces, we can see on a qualitative level, preserving the perspective on the lived, representative space, a uniformity of the urban and rural areas, in both cases the atmosphere is strange. The Great Communist City extends artificially over the former villages of the periphery and turns them into Margins only at the administrative level, while the villages tend to the urban image by imitation, by modifying the Center on a formal level, the emergence of new constructions. In both situations, we are in an intermediate area, even a threshold, not only through formal elements, but mainly through the alienated life experiences of the characters.

In the area of the countryside (II.5.2 *Desecrated spaces*), we are witnessing an unceasing search for the native sacred village, a mysterious and eternal home, an image that begins the world, recoverable only at the level of imagination, as professor Valedulcean confesses in *The Field Raspberry*. For Zare Popescu, an orphaned character, this *home* is present in the first authentic-memory document, but it has negative connotations, being a lost place. Built around a raspberry bush, displaced from the mountain to the plain - symbol of the tenacity of adaptation - the home is surrounded by weeds and by the remnants of an authentic peasant household - granary, hogsty-now-abandoned, the memory being concentrated on the day he is torn from this place. A land of childhood that has never been recovered, *home* is the place searched throughout the novel, even if Zare says he has nothing to do with those people who have been parents and he does not want to know them. The dimensions of the natal village, Burlești, are configured with overlapping images, detached from the perspective of narrator characters who visit or remember it. Gelu Popescu nicknamed Meșteru, starts a detectivist investigation, and gives us another description. The raspberry bush from teacher Popescu's yard placed near the street fence is the common element. Gelu's view captures the unhealthy plant, which, through fixed and static geometry, creates the illusion of harmony. An almost unknown village, built in antithesis with Creangă's Humulești by intertextuality, Burleștiul – name of grotesque resonance - acquired the dimensions of Zare and Radu A. Grințu's life experiences, being altered by the devastation / hostility that marks the history of their families. In the relationship with neighboring villages, the stories about Burlești, told around the brandy cauldron, have a constant theme of madness - the teacher's daughter, Zare's mother who goes crazy when she realizes that her first husband did not die on the front and was betrayed. The same degradation of his native place is also revealed by Radu, son of Grigore of F. (*Pockets with fists, pockets with sweets*), returned to the village to find answers to the question of destiny's exterior determination. Two images of the collectivization reveal the loss of harmony: the party in his honour, the cutting of the forelock, in



which the whole breath of the village comes, a true ancient banquet celebrating the life and image of the crowd in the train station waiting for the train, gray, brown or black hats, hurry, without speaking, fierce. The individual's relationship with the community is generated by the pressure of the group or the society, leaving the village for the city is no longer a step of a new destiny, but a rupture of authentic values. And yet, in the posthumous novel *The Sign of the Diver*, written during Mircea Nedelciu's illness, the writer recovers the native rural place and gives it value of *centrum mundi*. Diogene Sava, the author's alter ego, returns home to present her future wife, Veturia, to his parents. A journey with a double connotation, physical and spiritual, of the young man whose existence is still from birth under the sign of the exceptional. Returning to the village whose history reveals us through multiple incursions in the past, Diogene arrives early in the morning at the parental home. The narrative perspective is transferred to an omniscient voice, the eye gets cosmic proportions to bring us into the family yard at a time when the whole community is heading for that place, at a group work. In this atmosphere the entrance of the couple is directed. The future family being a promise of the continuity of the ancestral life experiences.

Even if in the Nedelcian prose work altered images of the Romanian village persist, we consider that the delineation of the plain village from that of the mountain is necessary. If the plain villages (p.75) crossed by Zare Popescu or Radu A. Grintu (*The Field Raspberry*) and Luca Meteo (*Fabulatory Treatment*) are under the sign of forced urbanization specific to the epoch, a transformation marked even at the architectural level by the appearance of some absurd constructions and the disappearance of patriarchal moral values, as well as the life experiences of the protagonists, the mountain villages to which the same characters come (p.73) still preserve some of its ascendant magnificence and symbolism, allowing, even temporarily, states and authentic feelings. A special place dedicated to *the border village (II.5.2.4.)* from the novel *The Woman in Red*, not only from the point of view of the threshold, but also of the reality / fiction report testified by the Authors (p. 78).

The city, namely the "great city," Bucale, can be inscribed in a real geography, but it is portrayed as a subversive denial of the Center and wandering to the edges and the periphery (II.5.2.7.). A labyrinthical space of permanent wandering, whose Margins and Center are arbitrarily deformed, the big city seems an stone-still "Secondary Zone," a place in between, a city without coherence or harmony. The short stories of the first volume, *Adventures in an interior courtyard*, which have as a theme the search for identity, reveal such an urban geography. The character-narrator, The Painter, The American and Rolly wander in Bucharest, which refuses to be contemplated, between the Center and the Margins, terrified by the

impossibility of communicating, in search of a "common language". A space of the new bourgeoisie, an immoral world in *Fabulatory Treatment*, or of excess and coldness - not just a meteorological phenomenon, but also a metaphor of communism - in *The Sign of the Diver*, Bucharest remains in all Nedelcian prose a fragmented, chaotic space of misery and alienating experiences. These dimensions are also reflected in the *intimate* spaces present in Nedelciu's work. Whether it is the *inhabited house* (p. 96), *the room in the basement* (p. 99) or *the attic* (p.100), we witness a proliferation of "private space heterotopias". The atmosphere is amplified by the hyper-realism of the descriptions, the abundance of details, being a suffocating one of the city that "got into their blood" - "small, dusty attics, winding streets, smelly garbage bins."

A special category is *the plain, the forest, the mountain* - places of the natural space, the *horizontal* limitation - the plain, the *vertical* - the mountain - or the *depth* - the forest. If the mountain generates a „height psychology”, the field is specific to the feelings of space immensity, but also to the dispersion in the absence of a total view, and the forest becomes, in Bachelard's terms, "a space of quiet transcendence." Here, beings are allowed real life experiences - adolescent love, explorations of other identities - always suspended, promised as escape or disappearance of the character, assimilated to fiction. The mountain is the topos of the physical disappearance of the characters in the identity crisis, the promise of a new life experience both in the *Journey to Negation* and in the *Nora or the ballad of the fairy of Balea-Lac* or *Fabulatory Treatment*. Space of the boundlessness - silence is perceived to be of a magical nature - the plain offers the opportunity to explore other natural instances opposed to the "artificial" ones generated by the city to the four youths from *Adventures in an Inner Courtyard*. A trip with the tent, in the middle of the winter, gives them a first hour of free breathing. Symbol of fictional worlds, the endless field offers the possibility of transfiguration. Experience is continued in a posthumous published text, *The Giant and the Weird Bird of Our Dreams*, an exhortation to action against contemplation. The four young men walk through the vastness of the plain in search of photogenic stones, and the experience proves to be beneficial by assuming the traveler-explorer's hypostasis. The goal is to "soak the skin of the soles" - it is also reiterated in *Trip in the Fields*, the expression having an initiatory value from the perspective of the event, the experience of experience, with the participation of the beings who profess a bookish living in the world through a sketched reference identity "we stayed in libraries". The escape from the city proves to be difficult and causes physical suffering "we had to go through it as if we had jumped some fences of over one meter high, bloody spiky fences", but it remains the only experience that deserves to become literature.

A fantastic dimension of the Nedelcian prose of Eliadesque influence, can also be deciphered in the spatial analysis (II.5.6. *Fantastic Spaces*). *The Phalanstery* of the Valea Plânșii (*Fabulatory Treatment*) is such a frontier space, threshold between worlds and times, compensation heterotopia (p.109). Split from reality, the phalanstery allows access only to the initiates, and from the perspective of the constructions reveals an original harmony. It is a historical, ethical and identity border. Founded by grandfather Marcu (Mateiu Caragiale's bookish hypostasis), Gulianu's mansion, the center of this space, becomes a symbol of the conscious assumption of a fake, noble, compensatory identity. All this space is populated by beings experiencing identity crises, looking for a *personal time center*. The phalanstery is also a utopia of the Communist society, which disappears devoured by flames. An experimental construction, the phytotron is in the prose of Mircea Nedelciu a symbol of human intervention that marks the exit from reality and the entrance into a parallel universe with fantastic valences (p. 114). The author wants to see the impact of this topos with multiple values from the moment of its construction. The moment is surprised as a sudden intrusion into the quiet life of the village of the plains in *The Brick Rooster*, of the strangers who build an experimental laboratory to the surprise of the peasants who guided themselves after the signs of time in agriculture. Existence in this space comes out of the traditional or even normal pattern. It is "a sort of huge greenhouse" in which everything is controlled, humidity, temperature or light, the experimental laboratory is a symbol of possible, obvious artificial worlds in *Journey Around the Native Village*, while in *Fabulatory Treatment* the space is used for scientific experiments, utopian and "proctopia," practical advances to the future. The significance of the double calendar reveals to us not only the possibility of existence in simultaneous temporal plans, but also the relationship of interdependence between present and future and the treatment of the present depending on its impact on the future. So, a realistic and achievable dream, identifying, according to future developments, the optimum conditions of plant development, the balance being possible only with the condition of love.

From the perspective of temporality, Chapter III, *Pulsating Temporality*, illustrates a permanent search for a "personal time center". The fragmentation of discourse is marked by a pendulation between different time layers in an attempt to capture the simultaneity of living. A historical time marked deictically or by insertions, which can be approximated between 1950, the year of birth of many protagonists, and 1980 - only in the *Woman in Red* history goes back to 1914. The Nedelcian world reveals itself in a rhythmic, pulsating temporality. We consider this to be the appearance of a Deleuzian-time image, in which a *present of the past* merges with a *present of the present* foreshadowing a *present of the future* of the rhizomatic being. It is

*chronic* time materialized in *layers of the past, simultaneously assumed, or peaks in the present that predict the future*. In a permanent search of the self, the Nedelcian character discovers a temporality in the dissolution. We refer, first of all, to a time of communism that we have placed under the sign of *permanent liminality*, a schismogenesis, a defining element of existential alienation. At the level of individual experiences, we notice the prevalence of missed maturation, again liminal temporality. Whether it is the discovery of a degraded past in identity quests, of a memory that breaks and amplifies the dissipation of the Self, or the theme addressed is the *war - by excellence time of the dissolution -*, the Nedelcian temporality is marked by *imponderability and reversibility*, time that objectifies a triple crisis, of the sign, the object and subject, confessing a chaotic perception over the human being and the universe.

The present is depicted in various forms. The *peaks of present*, the materialization of a direct-time image at Gilles Deleuze, are generated by the Nedelcian *live transmissions* that capture the existence of the being in a *moment's instantaneity*, the installation of an *inner duration* at the time of the event, a permanent confrontation between an interior trying to also reflect an exterior from which any logic of associations has disappeared in *Christian the Voyager, Messages, Animal Fair, Rooster Dance or Moreno Style Challenge* (p.148). Another category of the present is that of temporal liminality, whether it is associated with the *pressure of totalitarianism* (Zeal Strike), with the adolescence or youth of the character (*Freefall in the Field of Poppies, A Crossing*), the genealogical conditioning (*The Field Raspberry*) or the project to "create the point" (*Fabulatory Treatment*). A special category of the *temporality in dissolution* is the novel *The Woman in Red*, where the descent into the historical past towards the years of world conflagrations and the collapse of the empires is interwoven with the temporality of the emigrants -in the fictional plane of the novel- and with the time of the border, of the confinement of communism, in the metadiegetic plane, of the writing of the novel. *The past* (p. 188) is under the sign of the same identity crisis, both in individual transformations perceived as a succession of *significant micro-times* in the *Tundra Chrysanthemums* or *Simple Progress*, as well as in the non-representativeness of the war, a period of crisis summed up in the small histories of the protagonists in *The Field Raspberry* and the *History of the Bakery no. 4*. Lastly, we also discover a series of *utopian temporalities*,(p. 213) time of escape from the ordinary life, of heterocronia in *Fabulatory Treatment* or the fantastic jump in the future in *And Yesterday Will Be a Day* and *The First Exile at the Chronoscope*.

In a universe defined by the mutations produced in the sciences, by the non-Euclidean mathematics theories and sometimes contradictory mathematical models, human existence is defined in terms of a *new anthropocentrism*. (IV. *The being as a structural node of*

*relationships*). If Modernism is understood as a crisis of the Renaissance episteme, of the individual perceived transcendently from the position of the passive observer of space, the mutations of the theory of Einstein's relativity and of the quantum physics allow the establishment of a scientific model of a *world-fabric of events* from which the absolute concepts of space and time disappear. In this *world-fabric*, the being is revealed to us as a process, not as a substantially individualized entity, which opens the possibility of defining an "ontology of the complementary" understood in terms of a continuous becoming that dissolves the closed, determined structures and establishes multiplicity. In a world of perpetual becoming, the being is built up by the relationships it establishes, not by its substance, becoming *the relationship itself*. The loss of the transcendental status of the individual is also found in the relation observer-observed object, the one observing nature being placed in the observed world, in a process of building the Self at the very moment of this observation process.

The Communist period is marked by the crisis of the individual, the manifestation of the being split both at the level of self and in relation to the Other or with God, one artificially generated by the absolute power. A fragile identity, permanently threatened, isolated from the traditional values of the community and thrown into a world of political matters, struggling to find its way to be human. The communist society is one of the liminal permanence.

In the terms of Jean Baudrillard, duality, the inner division of the being generates the manifestation of the spectral. Modern spectrality is associated with the individual's existence in an urbanized community that has departed from the traditional one from the point of view of the dialectics of the individual and of the collectivity through integration into the mass consumption and multiplication of communication networks. It is not about a ghostly spectrality, but an inner one that involves dedoubling, multiplying, decomposing the individual into several faces, and which, by generating interior alterity, underlies the re-construction of identity. Fragmentation and dispersion allow the experience of the diversity of the Others, but also of the Self through descent into the unconscious. The ego is no longer defined as Indestructible Unity, the Mythical One, but through the diversity of relations it establishes in the manifestation of its plurality, an "ontology of the complementary". These steps are integrated by Mihaela Ursa into a non-anthropocentric model of the world built on the Holon figure, a figure defined by the relationships established in a hierarchy.

Communism is, however, as a legitimating structure or metanation, a period that requires an annulment of the alterity of the being, positively understood here, as a manifestation of diversity. Stillness in the final stage of a liminal process, communism is understood as such a permanence of liminality (p. 245) in the sense that during this period the state of war was never

left behind as Bjorn Thomassen and Arpad Szakolczai think. Permanent liminalism thus becomes a defining concept of totalitarian societies, whose absolute and ossified order is generated by a series of ethical, ethnic or social pseudo-values. This schismogenesis acts on the being as a limit situation, a force majeure event that generates a certain type of behavior. *The character - relationship node* guides the whole becoming of the universe, the spatio-temporal coordinates, by reference to a limit of its existence - the death, the totalitarian power, generally a liminal time. Incursions in the past, in the individual or collective unconscious, in the personal memory or the memory of the world, or living in simultaneous peaks of the present are materializations of potentiality, the only ones that give sense of human existence in a fragmented world in which the possibility of attaining Truth or restoring the original harmony is impossible.

The choice of the 80's Generation writers for marginal environments is associated, both in their interviews or theoretical studies, and in the context of critical reception, to the defining features of the new literary paradigm (p. 248). On the one hand, we can talk about a *biographism*, the presence of the writers' own life experiences in the fictional universe, the writers being themselves in the situation of commuting from the city to the countryside as young graduates or wandering in search of a job. On the other hand, we notice a double orientation towards the sources of inspiration or the purpose of the literary creation, both subordinated to the effects of the totalitarian regime, in the Romanian society of the 70's and 80's. We can talk about an option for short stories as a form of rebellion and equally *the authenticity* of such *textual microrealism* (Mircea Cărtărescu). Nedelciu's choice for a peripheral world, for marginal environments, however, is not synonymous to the illustrious common existence or insignificant creatures, since attention is drawn to beings experiencing liminal life experiences, youngsters animated by an intense activism that, even when it fails, offers potential alternatives to human becoming.

We opted for the analysis of *metaleptic characters* (p.252) in the terminology of Gerard Genette, characters that cross the Nedelcian prose, themselves being also rhyzomatic structures. The rhyzomatic dimension of the Nedelcian character can be seen from several perspectives. On one hand, a rhyzomatic identity is born of a plurality of selves of the being, each confessing the suitability to a slice of life, past, present or future, manifested in a process of becoming of the character that is no longer completed by the recovery of the Self, but with the acceptance of the existential polyphony. On the other hand, the ontological condition of the characters appears to be rhyzomatic whose belonging to a certain real / fictional plane is ambiguous through the postmodernist procedures of the author's *metaleptic incursions* in the fictional space or by their *metaleptic incursions* along the works of the same author. The figures of the orphan (p.255), the

hero / activist (p. 258) of the bohemian (p.260) rebel (p. 265) or nomad (p. 276), give us as many hypostases of these dis-located beings. The configuration of the self is done on a cultural and social background, the intimate body denies verbalization, the fixed identity is eluded. Without the awareness of belonging to a matricial place, the characters cross different spaces in search of a sense of existence, which is refused to them.

In conclusion, Mircea Nedelciu's prose becomes significant in understanding a way of configuring the world from an already historic era. Above the context of its elaboration, the fictional work of Mircea Nedelciu can be understood today as part of a *cultural memory* and from the perspective of *the configuration model*. Beyond a surface structure, puzzling for an unseen reader, perhaps overly experimental, we often see a depth structure that witnesses the existence of the being in the liminal time of communism, a way of assuming authentic, free and responsible ethical options in - a time when literature had the power to "reshape man", and fiction became practopia.

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