THE MIRRORS OF COMMUNISM
IN
THE EYES OF A WOMAN

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Article code 589-205

Abstract: *A novel perspective on communist and post-communist society is what Gabriela Adameșteanu accomplishes in her novels. Although she problematizes all of the symbolic areas present within the space of the former "Iron Curtain", the Romanian writer chooses to supplement the meanings: the entirety of totalitarian and post-communist history is seen from the perspective of a female character. Through this maneuver, Gabriela Adameșteanu manages to develop the social mirrors, on the one hand, and the mirrors of femininity, on the other, and, through these, the mirrors of a history that remain unclear, even beyond communism. It is likely that, if the whole history of communism in the former Communist Bloc were written in the feminine, we would be reading an entirely different history, more authentic and closer to the truth.*

Key words: communism, post-communism, Gabriela Adameșteanu, feminism, history in the feminine, women in history, women in communism

Gabriela Adameșteanu possesses what one might call an analytical mind, capable of tracing social equations down to the most insignificant interactions and corollaries. I have always been convinced of the fact that, if she wanted to, she could write a Joycean novel effortlessly and with infinite pleasure. With every opportunity, she has confessed to steering away from identifying with the femininity in her novels, wishing for the reader to observe

the neutral distance of the authorial voice. Wishing, she says, to be a writer, not a "writeress." I do not believe any serious critic to have fallen into the trap of feminine writing when reading her. On the contrary. However, the fact that the map and psychology of femininity, with all of its political, social and psychological vibrations, owns the most significant real estate in Gabriela Adameșteanu's books is just as obvious.

The writer belongs among those analytical persons who are foreign to musicality, but are in love with individual chords. Of all things, she has strived to create the miniature map of an era, but has fallen in love with her sketch. And when you travel many paths accompanied, it is not the journey that matters anymore, but your partner. Thus, Letiția Arcan, the protagonist, will transcend the depicted era, even if the stated intention of the author has always been focusing on the era. If you do not believe me, try to read her novels while disregarding the aforementioned heroine.

At the same time, the protagonist has captured the rhythm and experience of the author, flipping a past spent in areas that had otherwise been barren, by amplifying certain *stationary relationships*, as is the case in *Fontana di Trevi*. This uncovering – let us call it a *tactical retrospection* – dominates Gabriela Adameșteanu's novels, which is not at all by chance.

By writing about characters who are captive in instigating eras, the author has validated first of all, little by little, the era itself. There is no escape with such a supracharacter. You either arm it through implosions or you certify it through ambiguity. Gabriela Adameșteanu prefers the first technique, capitalizing on the implosions of the characters. This is her structurally contradictory method.

The era escapes the chrysalis of monologues and debates like a three-dimensional poster from which the reader gets to see sometimes the geometry, and sometimes the way in which the destinies of the protagonists who are ready for self-annihilation intertwine, as none of them loves life beyond socialization. I would venture to say that, without the urban loneliness, the writer's heroes atrophy. They agonize. That is why, in many cases, they cling to the past as if it were the most implausible future.

Letiția Arcan / Lelia Arcașu cannot understand her past without the past of others. In all of her novels, Gabriela Adameșteanu resembles a person who cannot comprehend